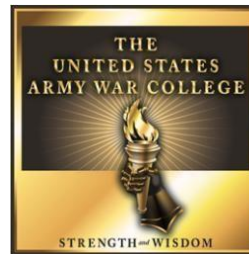


# North Korea: New Policy for East Asian Security and Stability

by

Colonel Stephen H. Bales  
United States Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2015

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release  
Distribution is Unlimited

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 01-04-2015		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b>	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> North Korea: New Policy for East Asian Security and Stability				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Colonel Stephen H. Bales United States Army				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Dr. Richard C. Bullis Department of Command, Leadership, and Management				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> Word Count: 9244					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The challenge of North Korea's drive for a nuclear arsenal represents a wicked problem for the United States, its allies, and the international community. Solving this problem requires critical thinking that addresses the interests of all parties, addresses divergent points of view within the context of the history of the Korean peninsula, and correctly assesses the implications of a selected policy and strategies. The current United States policy of complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea will not achieve its end. This stalemate requires a new policy approach. After an analysis of the history of conflict on the Korean peninsula and the current five-decade long stalemate, analysis of the Kim regime, and a review of national interests; this paper will propose a new policy. This new policy, a New Détente, will in the short-term achieve stability of North Korea, improve security and stability in the Northeast Asia-Pacific region, and in the long-term provide a path to peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. This new policy offers the greatest possibility of securing United States' national interests while supporting the interests of North Korea, China, and United States allies and partners in the Northeast Asia-Pacific region.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Détente, nuclear weapons, China, Japan, South Korea, Kim Jung Un, Kim regime, juche, songun					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 48	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b> UU	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UU	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UU			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)</b>



USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**North Korea: New Policy for East Asian Security and Stability**

by

Colonel Stephen H. Bales  
United States Army

Dr. Richard C. Bullis  
Department of Command, Leadership, and Management  
Project Adviser

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the United States Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013



## **Abstract**

Title: North Korea: New Policy for East Asian Security and Stability  
Report Date: 01 April 2015  
Page Count: 48  
Word Count: 9244  
Key Terms: Détente, nuclear weapons, China, Japan, South Korea, Kim Jung Un, Kim regime, juche, songun  
Classification: Unclassified

The challenge of North Korea's drive for a nuclear arsenal represents a wicked problem for the United States, its allies, and the international community. Solving this problem requires critical thinking that addresses the interests of all parties, addresses divergent points of view within the context of the history of the Korean peninsula, and correctly assesses the implications of a selected policy and strategies. The current United States policy of complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea will not achieve its end. This stalemate requires a new policy approach. After an analysis of the history of conflict on the Korean peninsula and the current five-decade long stalemate, analysis of the Kim regime, and a review of national interests; this paper will propose a new policy. This new policy, a New Détente, will in the short-term achieve stability of North Korea, improve security and stability in the Northeast Asia-Pacific region, and in the long-term provide a path to peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. This new policy offers the greatest possibility of securing United States' national interests while supporting the interests of North Korea, China, and United States allies and partners in the Northeast Asia-Pacific region.





## **North Korea: New Policy for East Asian Security and Stability**

The security situation on the Korean Peninsula is more precarious than ever . . . [North Korea's] diplomatic isolation and its chronic economic crisis will in the long term increase instability.

–Han Min-koo<sup>1</sup>  
Korean Minister of National Defense

In 2008, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) abandoned Six-Party talks addressing North Korea's nuclear weapons program.<sup>2</sup> Since 2008, negotiations have remained largely in a stalemate, except for a brief period in 2011 and early 2012 when bilateral negotiations between the United States (U.S.) and North Korea gathered some short-lived momentum.<sup>3</sup> North Korea's relentless pursuit a nuclear arsenal represents a wicked problem<sup>4</sup> for the U.S., its allies, and the international community. North Korean possession of a nuclear weapon does not pose an existential threat to the U.S. or any of its key allies in the region. It does represent a significant destabilizing effect in the region and signifies a serious threat with potentially catastrophic effects for all. Solving this wicked problem requires a critical analysis that clarifies the interests of all parties, addresses divergent points of view, considers the historical context of the Korean peninsula, and correctly assesses the implications of the success or failure of a selected policy and strategies.<sup>5</sup> What policy should the U.S. pursue to achieve the goal of a stable and preferably denuclearized Korean Peninsula? The purpose of this paper is to address these difficult questions. After an analysis of the history of conflict on the Korean peninsula and the current five-decade long stalemate, analysis of the Kim regime, and a review of both U.S. and North Korean national interests; this SRP proposes a new policy to ease current tensions and provide short-term stability on the Korean Peninsula. It will also enhance security and stability in the

east Asia-Pacific region. In the long-term, it could provide a path to peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

### The Road to a Nuclear North Korea

For centuries, the Korean Peninsula and the Korean people have endured invasion, war, and occupation. The current Korean War beginning in 1950, was not the first significant conflict on the Korean Peninsula. It was just the most recent. Invasions, subjugation, and betrayal dominate the history of the Korean peninsula and the Korean people. The U.S., China, Japan, and Russia have played the various roles of invader, friend, ally, and betrayer of Korea and the Korean people for centuries. These actions by global and regional powers on the Korean peninsula, particularly since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is easy to understand the deep rooted bitterness and animosity among the Korean people. North Korean distrust of the U.S. contrasts sharply with the symbiotic relationship the U.S. maintains with South Korea. To understand the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula today, one must understand the history of strife on the peninsula, the character and role of leaders in both the North and South, and the relationships of the global powers with both North and South. This history frames the opportunities and challenges the U.S. faces to achieve a denuclearized North Korea.

#### Korea before World War II

First attempts at U.S. involvement on the Korean Peninsula date back to 1845. Koreans rebuffed this initial attempt to gain economic access. Then in 1866, the U.S. sent the armed merchant ship, the *General Sherman*, on a trade seeking mission. Upon arrival, Korea refused entry of the ship, thereby resisting “invaders” as they had done for centuries. The *General Sherman* then proceeded up the Taedong River and reached Pyongyang. Near Pyongyang, allegedly led by Kim Il Sung’s great-grandfather, villagers

stretched ropes across the Taedong to stop the intruding vessel and then sent canoes filled with firewood down the river that set the *General Sherman* on fire. They succeeded in sinking the ship and killing its crew.<sup>6</sup>

In 1871, the U.S. sent a second military expedition to Korea to gain economic access. A five-warship contingent from the Asiatic Fleet, carrying 1230 men, again met stiff resistance and withdrew. In 1882, the U.S. signed a treaty with Korea which included a circumspect “mutual defense” clause. It gained the sought-after economic access. United States companies rapidly established public services companies and imported U.S. oil and non-perishable foods. Also, U.S. corporations acquired interests in a Korean goldmine. Despite this treaty, in 1900 the U.S. began to endorse Japanese desires to annex Korea. In 1905, hoping to blunt Russian expansion into East Asia, President Theodore Roosevelt approved this annexation. Secretary of War Taft reached an agreement with Japanese Prime Minister Katsura giving Japan freedom to annex Korea in return for assurances that Japan would not seek annexation of the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> Given this “secret pact”<sup>8</sup> and buoyed by its victory over Russia, Japan established a protectorate over Korea in 1905.<sup>9</sup> The Japanese occupation forced the first leader of North Korea, Kim Il Sung, into exile in China and ultimately the Soviet Union. He then served in the Soviet Army and lead guerrilla operations in China and Korea.<sup>10</sup>

### World War II, Division of the Peninsula, and the Seeds of War

In 1942, State Department planners initiated planning for the post-war military occupation of Korea, citing potential threats to post-war security in the Pacific. Options ranged from Roosevelt’s “four-power ‘trusteeship’” to the ultimate Soviet–U.S. divided occupation of the peninsula. In preparation for the imminent surrender of Japan; on 10

August 1945 Assistant Secretary of War John H. McCloy met with Colonel Dean Rusk and General Charles Bonesteel of the Departments of State and War to discuss the division of Korea. They chose the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel as the dividing line between U.S. and Soviet military occupation, leaving the centralized capital of Seoul to the U.S. Soviet forces entered northern Korea on 8 August and were flowing south. McCloy cabled the proposal to the Soviets on 11 August, which they accepted “silently, without comment or written agreement.” General MacArthur’s General Order Number One reflected this division of Korea as it also directed Japanese forces in China and northern Vietnam to surrender to Chiang Kai-shek, thereby serving as “the first critical act in the Cold War division of East Asia.”<sup>11</sup>

Acknowledging his service with the Soviet Union fighting the Japanese, Soviet intelligence selected Kim Il Sung as the first Korean leader of the Soviet occupied North Korea.<sup>12</sup> In South Korea, the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) (predecessor to the CIA) eased the exiled Syngman Rhee into leadership.<sup>13</sup> Thus began the Cold War and the seeds of the Korean War, which exploded in 1950. As Bruce Cummings has noted, “Korea is the place where the Cold War arrived first, where it never ended and never left, and where we can still see it on cable television.”<sup>14</sup>

The U.S. Army XXIV Corps was assigned occupation duty in South Korea. Since the OSS already had Syngman Rhee in place with the approval of MacArthur, the XXIV Corps formed the new South Korean government around this de-facto leader. Rhee understood the U.S. opposition to Communism, so he led a staunch anti-Communist regime in the South. To assist Rhee in forming his new government, U.S. leaders selected “several hundred conservatives,” to serve in Rhee’s administration. They had

cooperated with the Japanese occupiers, but they understood the workings of the Japanese-Korean government that was in place.<sup>15</sup> MacArthur and Hodge directed the Japanese government in Korea to continue its administration until relieved. The Rhee-led government then repressed political activism in the South. As Hugh Deane describes it, this repression “was the realization of an anti-Communist, counterrevolutionary policy decided in Washington and embraced by the CIA and by Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo.”<sup>16</sup> The State Department had predicted a revolutionary upsurge in Korea in the vacuum created by Japan’s defeat.

By 1945, the newly established CIA reported a growing class struggle between left and right political wings in the South. Cumings explains that, “Extreme Rightists” exerted their control over the political formation of the Korean government in the U.S. occupied zone. This development of a separate Southern government outpaced Soviet efforts in the north to establish a Korean government.<sup>17</sup> The Soviets slowly vested control to Kim Il Sung who formed the various “committees” working within North Korea to provide influence and control. The result was a state firmly in Communist control, but not a satellite. Kim Il Sung masterfully balanced North Korea’s relations with both the Soviet Union and China. However the state he formed was more like Chinese Communism, rather than Soviet Communism.<sup>18</sup> The government in the South formed around a right-leaning, anti-communist, and anti-revolutionary nucleus while the government in the North formed around a pro-Soviet, pro-communist ideology.

Based on this history and U.S. actions before and immediately following World War II, Dean asserts, “The [Korean War] started in 1945 and it was begun by the United States.”<sup>19</sup> Given the divergent formations of the governments north and south of the 38<sup>th</sup>

parallel under Soviet and U.S. control, frictions continued to mount. Coupled with additional anti-Communist actions by President Truman and “hardening [of] American policy,” the possibility of any accommodation between the North and South to form a united Korea through the U.S.-Soviet Union Joint Commission was improbable and ultimately impossible.<sup>20</sup> Cumings advances a second explanation, one that most likely explains the true roots of the North-South conflict. He asserts the Korean War started in 1932. After the Japanese occupation of Korea and China, they established a puppet state in Manchuria, called Manchukuo. A guerrilla movement led by the Chinese Communist Party formed to resist Japanese occupation. Starting in 1932, a small minority of Koreans aided this resistance movement, supposedly led by Kim Il Sung. Kim’s heirs trace the conflict back to this point in history, using it as a central episode of their current state narrative. Victor Cha documents significant differences between the official North Korean story-line and documented accounts of Kim’s actions during this time. Contrary to the state narrative, Kim commanded a Soviet Army special reconnaissance brigade at the end of the of World War II.<sup>21</sup>

Some Koreans also supported the Japanese occupation and served in the Japanese army hunting down Korean and Chinese guerillas. Key among these was Kim Sok-won, who was the commander of South Korean forces along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel in 1949. Park Chung Hee, future head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency and leader of a coup in 1961, also served in the Japanese Army. Cumings asserts that, “This Manchurian crucible produced the two most important leaders of postwar Korea, Kim Il Sung and Park Chung Hee.”<sup>22</sup> Given this history, North Koreans view South Koreans as blood enemies. North Koreans, “Saw the war in 1950 as a way to settle the

hash of the top command of the South Korean army.”<sup>23</sup> Cumings then claims that, “The Korean War was (and is) a civil war.”<sup>24</sup> This context explains the deep-rooted social tensions, still unmistakable today, between North and South Koreans, between the Kim regime and the South Korean government.

### The Cold War Explodes on the Korean Peninsula

In 1949, Korean People’s Army (North Korea) units started to return from their support of the People’s Liberation Army in the Chinese civil war. These units returned battle-hardened and armed with weapons and war-making materiel. Kim Il Sung used these tested and equipped units to form the core of his ever growing Army. By 1950, Kim had formed three divisions from these troops. In the North, Stalin courted Kim while in the South the U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles coached and supported Rhee.<sup>25</sup> Relying on support from their Cold War adversaries, Russia and the U.S., Kim and Rhee continued building their armies and preparing for conflict.

With the infusion of battle-tested and well equipped troops from the civil war in China, the growth of the South Korean military, and increased rhetoric on both sides of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, tensions along the border started to mount in the spring and summer of 1949, evident in a series of clashes along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. In May 1949, one four-day South-initiated battle demonstrated the volatility of the impending conflict--a Korean civil war. During this battle, two infantry companies from South Korea defected to the North. Kang Tae Mu commanded one of the companies. He was disenchanted by the U.S.-dominated Rhee regime in the South, and he was drawn by Pyongyang radio propaganda. Kim greeted him as a patriot and promoted him to general by the age of 29.<sup>26</sup> These border clashes and incursions persisted throughout 1949 and into 1950.

Throughout this period, Kim Il Sung continued to balance his relationships with Stalin and Mao. Kim also promoted prospects of unification of the Korean peninsula under his regime. As clashes along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel continued to intensify, Stalin cautiously advised Kim not to attack the South, but to continue expanding his military capability to counter the growing Southern strength and to punish frequent Southern incursions into North Korea. However, by the winter of 1949, Stalin had changed his position and informed Kim that he felt the North could successfully invade the South. In April and May 1950, Kim visited both Mao and Stalin and advised them of his intent to attack the South at an unspecified time. Both Stalin and Mao acquiesced banking on a Korean revolutionary success that supported both their national interests.<sup>27</sup> By the end of 1949, U.S. Ambassador Muccio described the attitude in South Korea: "There is increasing confidence in the Army. Aggressive, offensive spirit is emerging . . . More and more people feel that the only way unification can be brought about is by moving north by force."<sup>28</sup> Just one week prior to the start of the war, John Foster Dulles visited Rhee. Again, Rhee pressed for direct U.S. support to defend the Republic of Korea and to support a "justified" attack into North Korea to unify the Korean peoples.<sup>29</sup> The stage was set for the start of what Americans know as the Korean War--actually a Korean civil war, whose origins can be traced to the early 1900s.

Following the clashes throughout 1949, Kim Il Sung began to plan an offensive into the South in October 1949 to seize the Onjin Peninsula and Kaesong. In April, Stalin gave final approval for this offensive and offered his counsel and support to Kim. In May, Stalin informed Mao of his support of Kim's planned offensive. Although unclear, the change Stalin refers to in the international situation was the success of the



1949 Chinese revolution and the U.S. alliance with Japan. On the morning of June 25, 1950, Kim Il Sung launched his offensive in the Onjin area to unify Korea. South Korea counter-attacked into Haeju.<sup>30</sup> Open war for rule of a unified Korean peninsula exploded. North Korea's well-prepared, Soviet-backed, and seasoned forces rapidly pushed south as South Korean forces collapsed and retreated south in disarray. By the end of June, over half of the Republic of Korea Army was dead, missing, or captured; only two capable divisions remained. These conditions prompted the U.S. to enter the war. On the evening of June 24, 1950, Secretary of State Acheson decided to take the issue to the United Nations. Over the course of the next two days, Acheson formulated and gained President Truman's support and approval for U.S. aid to the Republic of Korea. Initial U.S. air and naval interventions quickly followed passage of the U.N. resolution.<sup>31</sup>

On July 7, 1950, the United Nations Security Council issued Security Council Resolution 84 calling for "prompt and vigorous" international support "to assist the Republic of Korea in defending itself against armed attack and restore peace and security to the area."<sup>32</sup> The resolution further requested the U.S. to designate a commander of a unified command to counter the North Korean attack. The Soviet Union was not present for the vote.

Over the course of the next three years the war ebbed and flowed north and south as attack, counter-attack, penetration, allied intervention, Chinese intervention, naval battles, air battles, and bombardments decimated the Korean peninsula and terrorized the Korean people. The Korean War saw the virtual collapse of all South Korean forces and near defeat of them and their U.S. allies at Pusan. The North's

guerrilla movement fostered by Kim Il Sung, long thought defeated in 1948 and 1949, resurfaced and harassed U.S. and South Korean forces aggressively and persistently. In late August and early September 1950, North Korea made its last great assault on the Pusan Perimeter. As Kim Il Sung stated, the war had reached an “extremely harsh, decisive stage.”<sup>33</sup> As it turned out, this was the “high water mark” of North Korean attacks in the South, its attempt to reunify the peninsula unfulfilled. In mid-September 1950, MacArthur launched the highly successful Inchon Landing which severed North Korean supply lines, collapsed their attack on the Pusan Perimeter, and sent them--for the first time--streaming north in disarray before the newly formed United Nations forces. This counter attack took North Korean forces by surprise, Kim Il Sung lamented, “We were taken by surprise when United Nations troops and the American Air Force and Navy moved in.”<sup>34</sup> North Korean forces withdrew to the Yalu River as United Nations forces pursued. Captured documents indicate this was a planned withdrawal awaiting the entry of Chinese forces to blunt the United Nations advance and push them back south. After the Chinese intervened and began pushing United Nations forces south, North Korean forces attempted to envelop and cutoff these retreating forces.<sup>35</sup>

China initiated covert support of the Kim Regime as early as August 1950. Mao made an early decision to support North Korea against invasion; or he felt obliged to repay them for their support of the Revolution. By late November 1950, Chinese and North Korean forces continued their withdrawal north. But on November 27, 1950, they launched their counter-offensive in the form of a double envelopment that cut United Nations lines. Republic of Korea and United Nations forces once again collapsed and withdrew south, losing thousands in the pitched, brutal battles that ensued. The

situation grew so dire that on 30 November, President Truman “rattled the atomic bomb” saying, “The United States might use any weapon in its arsenal to hold back the Chinese.”<sup>36</sup> Although China was clearly willing to fight in support of North Korea, Stalin was not. He was willing to let the U.S. take all of Korea and accept it as a “neighbor in the Far East.”<sup>37</sup> China’s extended to restoring the previous 38<sup>th</sup> parallel border, not unifying Korea. United Nations forces blunted the last Chinese attack south. Then fighting stabilized along the current demarcation line. Fighting, often bloody and brutal trench warfare, continued for another two years until a cease--fire Armistice halted open warfare in mid-1953.

#### Armistice but not Peace

Throughout negotiations that began in July 1951 and were promoted by the Soviet Union in the United Nations, the U.S. continued to reserve the option to use nuclear weapons. The U.S. also continued to develop and test nuclear weapons, to include cannon--launched tactical nuclear weapons. In mid-May 1953, President Eisenhower informed the National Security Council that using nuclear weapons against China was a cheaper option than conventional war. The Joint Chiefs of Staff ultimately recommended using nuclear weapons to end the war. There is little evidence to show that the U.S.’ “use” of atomic weapons as leverage to reach an armistice were successful. Repatriation of POWs was a constant point of friction throughout the negotiations. Finally, on July 27, 1953, three of the four primary combatants signed the armistice, but South Korea refused to sign. This achieved a tenuous peace on the Korean peninsula, which is divided demilitarized zone. Technically, the Korean peninsula remains in a state of warfare.<sup>38</sup>

General Nam Il, representing the Korean People's Army and the Chinese Peoples' Volunteers, and Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, Jr., representing the United Nations Command, signed the armistice.<sup>39</sup> The signatories to this armistice remain an important point. Although a U.S. general signed the armistice, he represented the United Nations Command, not the U.S. South Korea did not sign the armistice. The United Nations and North Korea were technically at war in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 84, not the U.S. and North Korea. A current North Korean demand is for the U.S. to join them in a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War.

So the conflict between North Korea and South Korea persists. The Kim regime remains in power in North Korea. The South Korean government has suffered through the pains of a growing democracy; yet it has emerged as a flourishing western-style democracy that is prospering economically. On the other hand, North Korea has become increasingly isolated, repressed politically, and depressed economically—struggling for survival. North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles represents a continuation of the Korean War—an unfinished civil war for the unification of the Korean peoples. In Kim Jun Un's view, the continuation of his father's pursuit of nuclear weapons is the only way to deter U.S. aggression and ensure his regime's survival.

#### The Nihilistic Kim Reign and The Great Successor

As Bruce Cumings notes, "Korea is an ancient nation, and one of the very few places in the world where territorial boundaries, ethnicity, and language have been consistent for well over a millennium."<sup>40</sup> He further claims that, "Korea also [has] a social structure that [has] persisted for centuries."<sup>41</sup> This is most true in North Korea, a

homogeneous nation-state, in which the Kim regime has successfully resisted change and preserved the ethnicity of the Korean peoples. Victor Cha describes North Korea as, “A hermetically sealed Cold War anachronism.”<sup>42</sup>

The Great Leader, Kim Il Song’s ascension to power following World War II cemented the Kim family’s grip on power in North Korea. It generated a dynasty for Kim Jong Il, the Dear Leader, and current leader Kim Jong Un, the Great Successor. The death of Kim Jong Il in 2011 thrust the formerly unknown Kim Jong Un into the international spotlight.<sup>43</sup> Kim Jong Un maintains the dynasty’s iron rule in North Korea, as his father and grandfather did before him. The Kim regime has suppressed, imprisoned, starved, and deprived the North Korean people of virtually any hope of a modern lifestyle. Most North Koreans exist on less than 1500 calories a day with little protein in their diet. North Koreans view beef as a delicacy that is eaten only once per year. Despite these dire hardships, the North Korean people view themselves as the “Chosen People,” born into the purest race, residing “in the most innocent, virginal, and virtuous society in the world.” They regarded Kim Jong Il as a strong leader who protected them from the “evils of the world.”<sup>44</sup> This is the nation–state Kim Jong Un now controls.

As Kim Il Sung consolidated his power in North Korea, his ideology of *juche* evolved and grew to represent North Korea as the true defenders of Korean ethnic identity and nationalism. The English translation of *juche* means “self-determination.” In practice, *juche* equates to national “self-reliance” and North Korean independence, self-sufficiency, and preserver of the Korean identity. *Juche* consists of four tenants: (1) man is the master of his fate; (2) the master of the Revolution is the people; (3) the

Revolution must be pursued in a self-reliant manner; and (4) the key to the Revolution is loyalty to the supreme leader, Kim Il Sung.<sup>45</sup> *Juche* identifies capitalists and imperialists as enemies and propagates a commitment to class struggle that will win the Revolution. While Marxist-Leninism focuses on the ultimate collapse of the state under worker pressure, *juche* focuses on the Korean state and the ultimate reunification of Korea under Kim leadership. In 1970, the Party adopted *juche* as the formal, sole guiding principle of the state. *Juche* guides internal politics and control as well as its international relations. Kim masterfully used the *juche* principles to sustain his delicate relationships with both the Soviet Union and China while ensuring independence from external powers and the furtherance of the Revolution. Methodical, daily indoctrination sessions have “seared” *juche* into the psyche of every North Korean. Kim Il Sung was the brain, the party the nerves, and the people were the skeleton and muscles of North Korea. Indoctrination drove two messages of obedience: (1) without the brain, the rest does not function; therefore, there must be complete loyalty; and (2) independent thinking is not needed, since this is handled by the brain.<sup>46</sup>

*Juche* had transformed from a method of control to a “cult of personality” by Kim’s death in 1994. Kim and the regime destroyed thousands of Buddhist temples and Christian churches. They incarcerated over a hundred thousand Christians and spread vicious rumors about missionaries. Kim grew up in a Christian household and observed Christian principles until he fled to China during the Japanese occupation. Then Kim undertook efforts to replace God with himself. Propaganda portrayed Kim as more loving, benevolent, just, and virtuous than all other deities.<sup>47</sup>

The Dear Leader, Kim Jong Il, played a significant role in his father's regime. He drove the propaganda machine, inspired by his love of movies, especially the American classic, *Gone with the Wind*. Through his vast propaganda efforts, Kim deified his father through a complex set of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms<sup>48</sup> and the transformation of the Korean Communist system into the current cult-of-personality regime.<sup>49</sup> These included the extensive indoctrination sessions discussed earlier, strict control of the North Korea media to propagate the national message, scripting the "state narrative" concerning the purported deeds of Kim Il Sung, and putting North Korea on "juche time."<sup>50</sup> Opulence surrounded, and continues to surround the Kims--vast mansions, thousands upon thousands of monuments, and luxuries of every type. The Soviet Union detested this materialism: it contradicted the global socialist movement. An only Stalin should enjoy such luxuries. Kim Jong Il relished this life of luxury and decadence. He had vast movie collections, played Western video games, listened to Western music, and reportedly loved the National Basketball Association (NBA). During one visit, Secretary of State Albright even presented him a Michael Jordan autographed basketball.<sup>51</sup> Kim expanded his comforts and extravagancies while the "chosen people" suffered horribly during his "reign" as the second leader of North Korea.

Kim Jong Il was nothing like his father. He was short, rotund, reclusive, and lacked the experience of revolutionary struggle his father endured. He never served in the military. Unlike his father he was insecure in every way. To compensate for these insecurities and to build credibility, Kim sponsored terrorist attacks in the 1970s and 80s. He continued these throughout his rule. His success as the propaganda master and sponsorship of terrorism helped him rise through party ranks. In 1972, he gained

election to the Party Central Committee, then to the Politburo where he served as secretary for organization and guidance which ensured his position as successor.<sup>52</sup>

Some evidence indicates Kim Jong Il ran North Korea from as early as 1985. Thus Kim was in power when the global socialist movement died with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, South Korea began to clearly outpace North Korea, and North Korean industry began to crumble due to mismanagement and dilapidation. The ultimate affront to Kim occurred when South Korea secured the 1988 Summer Olympics. In 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to gain access to nuclear weapons technology from the Soviet Union. North Korea pursued a path to securing the ultimate deterrence against perceived U.S. and South Korean aggression--a nuclear weapon. In 1994, North Korea made their intentions clear and public when they recovered fuel rods from the nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, the first step to gathering plutonium for nuclear weapons. After Kim Il Sung's death, Kim Jong Il pursued a "military-first," or *songun* policy.<sup>53</sup> He placed himself as chairman of the National Defense Commission (NDC). This positioned the NDC, not the party, as the center-piece of the state. This changed North Korea profoundly--the military, not the party's revolutionary culture, now dominates the state.<sup>54</sup> Kim Il Sung leveraged the military to secure his base of support and attempted to develop a *juche* focused defense sector that would generate income for the struggling nation.<sup>55</sup> These acts forever endeared the military to Kim Jong Il.

Kim Jong Il selected Kim Jong Un, his third son, as his successor only a little over a year prior to his death.<sup>56</sup> The U.S. and the world know little about the inner workings of North Korea and less about Kim Jong Un. Prior to 2010, only one known picture of him existed.<sup>57</sup> As a teenager, he attended a German-language school in



Switzerland for two years under the alias Pak Un. Like his father he loved basketball and the NBA and played often while in Switzerland. He took courses in government and democracy, even a class on the 2000 U.S. presidential election. After returning to North Korea, he enrolled in the military academy and graduated in 2006. After assuming power, the North Korean propaganda machine churned out his super-genius image and “godlike acts,” deifying him as his father and grandfather had been. Like his father, he lacked the “revolutionary” credibility of his grandfather. He has expended significant effort to build credibility with the North Korean military and China. He has built this credibility through aggressive and obtuse acts such as sinking the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan* and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. To acquire the military’s admiration, he has made numerous visits to China to sustain their delicate relationship, which grows ever more strained with these bellicose acts.<sup>58</sup>

Kim Jong Un will relentlessly protect the honor of the Kim legacy and the survival of the Kim regime. Fortunes and money pale in importance to the Kim regime’s political control.<sup>59</sup> Kim Jong Un has proven spiteful and volatile in his quest to consolidate power. In one extreme and unusually public denouncement, Kim arrested and subsequently executed his former mentor and uncle, Jang Song Thaek. Kim’s very public chastisements of opponents and high profile in North Korean media are unlike his father’s and grandfather’s approach to power and dominance.<sup>60</sup> Some reports indicate Kim executed Thaek by stripping him naked and letting ravenous dogs eat the supposed second in command and “admitted” coup leader alive.<sup>61</sup> Mike Chinoy, a senior fellow at the U.S.-China Institute at the University of Southern California, flatly stated, "This is about as brutal and ruthless a signal that could possibly be conveyed--

that Kim Jong Un is in charge and that anybody who seeks to create any kind of alternative power center is going to get destroyed politically and, in the case of Jang Song Thaek, physically as well." <sup>62</sup> He characterized this purge as, "The most dramatic, highly visible shakeup in the North Korean leadership in decades." <sup>63</sup>

Kim Jong Un and the North Korean government consistently make outlandish statements and threats toward South Korea, Japan, and especially the U.S. In February 2015 in response to U.S. sanctions and possible cyber warfare in the wake of the Sony hacking, the North Korean News Agency proclaimed a threat of a "most disastrous final doom on its mainland." <sup>64</sup> The pronouncement touted the capabilities of all branches of its military, including its cyber warfare and nuclear strike capabilities. It proclaimed a "*juche*-oriented strategy and tactics and unique war methods," that would defeat "the gangster-like U.S. imperialists." <sup>65</sup> Kim perpetuates the *juche* ideology of his grand-father while asserting North Korea has the ready capability to attack the U.S. Homeland with a nuclear weapon. The military remains the centerpiece of Kim Jong Un's reign, just as in his father's regime. He relies on the military to fortify his power as the Great Successor.

As demonstrated by Kim Jong Un's bizarre, aggressive acts and extreme measures used to consolidate control, Cha asserts his time in Switzerland did not "enlighten" him or make him a wellspring of change in North Korea. To the contrary, Kim Jong Un's ascentation to power in his thirties, as with his grandfather and father, ensures decades of Kim rule before another successor assumes control of the dynasty. The system in North Korea will not permit reform, at least not in its current state. International events since the end of the Cold War have forced North Korea, including its leadership elite, into deeper isolation. The collapse of communism in Europe, the

near collapse of China, and the toppling of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East deepen North Korean fears and further entrench the regime.<sup>66</sup> Kim Jong Un, like his father and grandfather, sustains a Kautilya-like attitude.<sup>67</sup> North Korea remains in a constant state of struggle, a fight for survival. Given the survivalist convictions of Kim Jong Un, coupled with the unfaltering support of the ruling elite, and to some extent, of the North Korean people, the current hardline, sanctions-based U.S. approach to completely denuclearize North Korea appears unlikely to achieve its desired end.

#### U.S. and North Korean Interests: Do they conflict?

A possible change of U.S. policy or strategy to achieve a denuclearized North Korea requires an analysis of both countries interests. An analysis of Japan's, South Korea's, China's, and Russia's interest will follow the detailed analysis of U.S.' and North Korean interests. This analysis will assist in further framing the problem and developing options for a new policy.

#### United States Interests

The 2015 *National Security Strategy* identifies four enduring national interests.<sup>68</sup> Considering the relevance of these four enduring national interests to North Korea and the Asia-Pacific region, three of them apply: security of the U.S., allies, and partners in the region, security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region; and economic access to the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>69</sup> In addition, two important interests apply: respect for human rights of the Korean people and sustained / improved U.S.-China relations. Stability and security supports the growth of the major economies in the region (China, Japan, and South Korea) and enables continued growth of burgeoning economies in Vietnam and Indonesia. Sustaining the growth of these strengthens economic bonds with enduring allies, improves economic dealings with China, and improves relations with former

adversaries in the region. The *National Security Strategy* highlights the unprecedented level of U.S. cooperation with China.<sup>70</sup> During Congressional testimony, the PACOM commander also stressed the importance of building relationships with China and their necessity for “peace, prosperity, and both regional and global security.”<sup>71</sup> Improved diplomatic, economic, and military relations with China enhance regional and global stability and security.

In Congressional testimony, the PACOM commander described North Korea as the “most dangerous and enduring challenge<sup>72</sup>” that represents “the most urgent security threat<sup>73</sup>” in the Asia Pacific. He further stressed the importance of our support to enduring allies Japan and South Korea, particularly in relation to North Korea. He recommended developing tri-lateral security relationships with them.<sup>74</sup> A nuclear North Korea is a clear threat to specific U.S. interests.<sup>75</sup>

#### North Korean interests and their Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)

As discussed earlier, Kim Jung Un will relentlessly protect the honor of the Kim legacy and the survival of the Kim regime. Fortunes and money pale in importance to political control.<sup>76</sup> This represents the North Korean BATNA. North Korea will absolutely reject anything that jeopardizes regime survival. Fortunately, since the end of the Korean War, the U.S. has never openly advanced a policy of regime change in North Korea.

As discussed throughout this paper, given the extreme isolation and resistance to openness, determining North Korean interests outside of regime survival is difficult. James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, concludes that North Korea seeks nuclear weapons to deter perceived U.S. aggression, to gain international prestige, and to use as a coercive diplomatic tool.<sup>77</sup> North Korea’s desire for international prestige--

international recognition--appears to motivate their efforts to build a nuclear weapons arsenal. North Korea consistently demands recognition as a nuclear weapons state; it demands a peace treaty with the U.S. to formally conclude the Korean War--and to be recognized as a nuclear power.<sup>78</sup> Victor Cha identifies North Korea's recognition as a nuclear state only as a means to an end. North Korea truly seeks international recognition as a sovereign "normal state." It seeks to shed the crippling sanctions, to be a principle in a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War, and to gain real acceptance as a member of the global community as an equal member.<sup>79</sup> Benjamin Habib believes North Korea pursues nuclear weapons as an economic and political tool--to protect their vital interests and to demonstrate resolve for a non-negotiable policy position.<sup>80</sup> In short, North Korea's interests focus on regime survival, international recognition, and the desire to create an economy that can bring this isolated nation out of a dark period of catastrophic decline and dramatically improve the plight of North Korean peoples. These match at least some U.S. interests--a stable North Korea, greater regional and international stability, and economic growth. At this time, North Korea has little interest in the issue of human rights or transparency. Respect for universal values and human rights remains an enduring interest for the U.S.<sup>81</sup> This divergence creates friction in any negotiations with North Korea.

#### Other States' Interests and Conclusions

How do the interests of China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan impact the goal of denuclearizing North Korea? China is growing increasingly frustrated with its exhausting ally. Despite China's frustration grows, Chinese leaders want to maintain North Korea as a buffer between them, the U.S., and its allies.<sup>82</sup> China remains the sole ally of North Korea. China leverages this bi-lateral relationship to its advantage.<sup>83</sup> After

the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia normalized relationships with South Korea. Although Russia essentially abandoned North Korea, it continues to play a role in negotiations; it balances the U.S–South Korea–Japan alliance with the China–North Korea alliance. Although its interests have significantly waned since the end of Cold War, Russia does not want to lose all influence in the Asia–Pacific region.<sup>84</sup> South Korea consistently expresses its interest in reunifying the Korean peninsula, although non-violently.<sup>85</sup> It also seeks an end to decades of tensions and hostilities on the peninsula. South Korea also enjoys a significant diplomatic and economic relationship with China it seeks to maintain to benefit both countries.<sup>86</sup> South Korea had provided North Korea with nearly \$1 billion in direct financial aid, but in 2009 it cut off this assistance because it saw no signs of reform in the North.<sup>87</sup> Japan ultimately seeks the economic benefits of reconciliation with North Korea. Normalized relations also provide a pathway for the release of Japanese citizens currently held by North Korea. Most importantly, reconciliation removes Japan’s largest and most omnipresent security threat—a nuclear North Korea.<sup>88</sup>

Overall, the interests of the major players in Northeast Asia--the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea--converge to some degree. All seek a higher order of peace, security, and stability. All want a stable North Korea to avert a humanitarian crisis that would significantly impact most states in the region. All would benefit from an open North Korea that participates as a partner, not an antagonist, in the global economy. This commonality of interests provides a foundation for a policy of reconciliation and engagement--rather than a policy of isolation, sanctions, and

immediate disarmament. Despite these common goals, the ways and means to achieve them remain divergent.

#### Current United States Policy—Is it working?

The current U.S. policy toward North Korea remains focused on total nuclear disarmament of the regime.<sup>89</sup> The U.S. approach toward negotiations to achieve North Korean denuclearization vacillates among unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral. The U.S. engages the international community, regional partners, and the United Nations to coerce or compel North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Efforts through the United Nations have resulted in the passage of four specific resolutions aimed at the North Korean nuclear weapons program.<sup>90</sup> These have achieved only episodic compliance and short-lived North Korean returns to negotiations. The 1994 Agreed Framework guaranteed energy aid in the form of heavy fuel oil to North Korea. Except for China, members of Six-Party talks failed to deliver on these promises. At the end of 2008, North Korea had received only half of the promised energy subsidies.<sup>91</sup> In 2002, the Bush Administration initiated Six-Party Talks that included the U.S., China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and Russia. The Six-Party Talks achieved some progress with an encouraging breakthrough in 2005—the issuance of a Joint Statement in which North Korea, “Agreed to abandon its nuclear weapons programs in exchange for aid, a United States security guarantee, and normalization of relations with the United States.”<sup>92</sup> But this agreement collapsed. The Bush Administration then continued to work within the Six-Party framework to advance negotiations through late 2008 until North Korea declared the process “dead.”<sup>93</sup>

Since taking office, the Obama Administration has maintained a policy of “achiev[ing] a complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to encourage and

finally get the North Korean regime to undertake steps that are irreversible and that are concrete to eliminate its nuclear weapons program.”<sup>94</sup> This policy focuses on “strategic patience;”<sup>95</sup> it relies on a dual-track of engagement “combined with sustained, robust pressure.”<sup>96</sup> The Obama Administration seeks to revive the stalled Six-Party Talks, while also engaging in bilateral negotiations with North Korea. In late 2011, the Obama Administration entered into bilateral negotiations with North Korea that resulted in the “Leap Day Agreement,” which included a North Korean moratorium on nuclear tests, long-range missile tests, uranium enrichment activities, and the readmission of inspectors. In return, the U.S. pledged nutritional assistance. North Korea abandoned the agreement two weeks later when it announced a planned satellite launch that it executed in April 2012.<sup>97</sup>

North Korea’s actions throughout the Obama Administration’s tenure have remained extremely erratic and provocative. North Korea has tested two nuclear weapons (in May 2009 and February 2013), conducted numerous ballistic missile launches, shelled South Korea, and sank a South Korean naval vessel. Its missile launch on December 12, 2012 demonstrated the potential of a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the U.S. homeland.<sup>98</sup> In late 2014, the U.S. Commander in South Korea acknowledged that North Korea probably has the capability to miniaturize a nuclear weapon that can be delivered with a long-range ballistic missile.<sup>99</sup> Given the apparently successful missile test in 2012 and the probability North Korea can miniaturize a nuclear weapon to fit on their ballistic missile, they can reach the U.S. with a nuclear weapon. This capability in and of itself does not represent an existential threat to the U.S. But it does represent a significant threat with potentially



catastrophic effects. At this point, the current policy of strategic patience, on-going negotiations, and sanctions remains stalled, with no clear way forward. This policy is unlikely to achieve the stated policy objective of a denuclearized North Korea. North Korea cannot afford to invest in a large, capable, conventional Army like the army it sustained prior to the early 1990s.<sup>100</sup> In contrast, a nuclear arsenal is cheaper, more lethal, and easier to sustain by an eviscerated economy on life support. Increased sanctions only do greater harm to the North Korean people while compelling the Kim regime to pursue a nuclear deterrent. As Habib argues, North Korea's nuclear ambition represents political capital for the Kim regime. The mix of incentives and pressure offered in the Six-Party and other negotiations will not achieve a denuclearization of North Korea. Habib asserts that concerted cooperative engagement, not negotiation, offers greater prospects of denuclearization.<sup>101</sup>

#### A New Détente

Facing the pressures of the Vietnam War at home and the on-going global struggle against Soviet expansion, President Nixon retooled U.S. international relations to address the realities he faced. His new approach, labeled détente, sought to open dialogue with the Soviets while blunting their expansion at every opportunity. First and foremost, U.S. national interests would guide his actions. He relied on allies, the U.S. nuclear deterrence, and linkage--linking cooperation in one area to progress in another."<sup>102</sup> Nixon sought to control the dialogue with the Soviets instead of letting them govern the agenda; he wanted to infuse patience and flexibility into international relations.<sup>103</sup>

At this point, North Korea is isolated well beyond any level achieved against the Soviet Union. Although international pressure has not shut down the North Korean

nuclear program, it has contained it. As the Soviets did, North Korea relies on its burgeoning nuclear capability to obtain concessions from the U.S. and the international community. North Korea continues to request a “peace treaty” with the U.S. These conditions provide an opportunity for a new approach to achieve a “peaceful coexistence” with North Korea.<sup>104</sup>

This SRP proposes a new policy toward North Korea--a New Détente: U.S. formal recognition of North Korea as a sovereign state and integration into the international system in exchange for North Korean concessions and behavioral change.<sup>105</sup> This policy does not require North Korean denuclearization as a precursor to any further dialogue or negotiations. Although denuclearization remains a desired end, this approach seeks a stable North Korea integrated into the international system, which would reduce its need for nuclear weapons. As Habib argues, in order to achieve denuclearization the U.S. and the international community must find some leverage to neutralize North Korea’s reliance on its nuclear deterrence as a diplomatic tool to garner concessions.<sup>106</sup> Implementation of this policy requires U.S. leaders to formally announce the policy and, most importantly, to recognize North Korea as a sovereign state before the United Nations. The U.S. should encourage Japan to follow suit.<sup>107</sup> These acts alone will wrest initiative from North Korea. It could no longer rely on the rhetoric of purported U.S. aggression aimed at overthrowing the North Korean government. As part of this announcement, U.S. leaders will also propose that the United Nations Security Council seek a peace treaty with North Korea, thereby formally ending the Korean War. As previously discussed, the United Nations Security Council must ratify a peace treaty with North Korea, not the U.S. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security

Council, the U.S. will also sign the peace treaty, giving North Korea one concession it continually requests--a peace treaty with the U.S.--although indirectly.<sup>108</sup> These initial overtures by the U.S. remove all legitimate justification for continued North Korean acts of aggression.

This policy shares portions of the current Obama Administration policies on Iran's nuclear program advanced through the P5+1 negotiations framework<sup>109</sup>—as well as its policy toward Cuba.<sup>110</sup> The framework of this policy relies on open and concerted dialogue with North Korea on a consistent and recurring basis like the one Nixon executed with the Soviet Union. In 1994, the Clinton administration proposed opening a liaison office in Pyongyang as a first step toward somewhat “normalized” diplomatic relations with North Korea.<sup>111</sup> It is now time to proceed with this initiative. The U.S. should open an embassy, as it seeks to do in Cuba, in North Korea to enable more direct, normalized relations with North Korea.<sup>112</sup> Reciprocally, the U.S. should request North Korea establish an embassy in the U.S. The opening of direct dialogue, not just negotiations, with North Korea establishes a foundation for future negotiations; it provides a channel for North Korean concessions which will garner international recognition and acceptance, thereby reducing the threat of its nuclear arsenal.

North Korea must make some concessions in reciprocity for the aforementioned U.S. concessions in order for this policy to work. Initial concessions should focus on issues that can garner good will for North Korea, without weakening its leaders or making them appear vulnerable. Consider the following possible concessions: resumption of travel between North and South Korea to enable families to reunite, release of international prisoners, and permission for international non-governmental aid

organizations to resume robust humanitarian efforts in North Korea. In exchange for these moderate concessions, the U.S. and the international community will resume aid, particularly the energy aid promised in 1990s.<sup>113</sup> Further, some North Korean assets frozen by the U.S. would be returned. If North Korea continues to moderate its behavior and reduce its aggressive posture, the U.S. should seek wider concessions from its South Korean and Japanese allies to further incentivize internationally accepted North Korean behavior. During this period of dialogue and concessions, the U.S. must maintain its physical regional military presence, particularly its anti-ballistic missile capabilities.

As this dialogue and amicable *quid pro quo* approach progresses, dialogue on more substantial international concerns must come to the table. Follow-on concessions must focus on visible reductions of North Korean aggression. First and foremost, North Korea must cease aggressive military actions toward South Korea. It must also modify its balance of military-to-humanitarian subsistence expenditures to improve its citizens' living conditions. It must permit the U.S. to resume POW/MIA recovery efforts. It must permit International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to resume inspections of the North Korean nuclear program; and it must cease further ballistic missile tests. Further, it must reaffirm its acceptance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>114</sup> This establishes the groundwork for concerted dialogue on the ultimate cessation of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. The U.S. and its allies should follow these concessions with additional releases of assets; increased influx of aid, particularly in the infrastructure sector, modifications of U.S.--South Korean military exercises; and

resumption of cooperative economic efforts to reinvigorate the North Korean economy and move it away from its *songun* focus.<sup>115</sup>

Like President Nixon's policy and the current Administration's policy, this new détente requires patience. Unlike the current U.S. policy, this policy requires flexibility and the willingness to dialogue on a near equal basis, rather than negotiating as a hegemon to a colony. To succeed, this policy will require the concerted application of all elements of national power--diplomatic, information, military, and economic. Diplomacy, information, and economic ways and means must play a more prominent role than the military element. This policy will require give-and-take by all parties involved. If pursued successfully and sustained by subsequent U.S. administrations, this new policy provides the possibility of a completely denuclearized North Korea facilitated by economic recovery and growth, by its incorporation into the international system as a responsible actor, and with reduced tensions in the East Asia–Pacific region.

#### Will This Policy Work?

The probability of success of this proposed policy remains difficult to assess. Although it comes with risks, the current U.S. policy poses plenty of risks. Utilizing the feasibility–acceptability–suitability framework to assess the ends, ways, and means of the policy reveals opportunities, challenges, and risks.<sup>116</sup> From a feasibility stand-point, the U.S. has the means available to execute this policy and supporting strategies. The U.S. retains the political means and influence with its allies and partners to execute the diplomatic element. Japan is likely to follow the U.S. lead in formally acknowledging North Korea as a sovereign state and in seeking reconciliation. The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council have more to gain than lose in pursuing a final peace treaty with North Korea that brings greater stability and security

to not only the region, but to the international system. In the long term, this policy, if successful, is more economical for the United States than continuing to maintain a large deterrence presence on the Korean peninsula.<sup>117</sup>

The ways associated with this approach are wholly acceptable. From the perspective of morality, the international community will choose any approach that diminishes the likelihood of nuclear conflict and reduces the suffering of the North Korean people. Recognizing North Korea within the context of the United Nations supports international rule-of-law and international norms. Utilizing the United Nations to negotiate a final peace treaty brings legitimacy to the process. In accordance with the Constitution, the President has the authority to implement policy and negotiate international agreements and treaties. Congress retains the authority to ratify treaties and negotiated agreements.<sup>118</sup>

Suitability remains the greatest challenge to this policy approach. The ends of this policy--a stable North Korea exhibiting less hostile behavior in accord with international norms--are generally suitable. The question of what if any part would remain of its nuclear program could create substantial differences regarding the policies suitability among interested parties. As noted, Congress retains the authority to ratify treaties and negotiated agreements. Additionally, it can control implementation of Presidential policy through funding measures.<sup>119</sup> Many in the current Congress oppose President Obama's current policy approaches to Cuba<sup>120</sup> and Iran.<sup>121</sup> Regardless of which party controls the Presidency and which controls Congress, some level of resistance will arise in Congress. South Korea and Japan may also have some reservations. However the security and economic benefits they will likely gain reduces

this issue. Given China's growing impatience with North Korea and its obligation to constantly support or mollify its actions, it will likely support this policy approach. Additionally, this policy ensures that North Korea continues to serve as a buffer between China and the West. In order for this policy to be accepted as suitable, the President must build a strong guiding coalition--within the U.S. Congress, with its allies in the region, and with members of the United Nations Security Council.<sup>122</sup> A guiding and supporting coalition dedicated to this approach remains essential to its success. Although they are commonplace in Washington politics, the Administration must accept the risk of "information leaks" and work on establishing a coalition within Congress prior to public announcement of the policy. Given the rotation of the ten non-permanent members, the U.S. must make its announcements before the Security Council when it has a solid coalition of support established and represented.<sup>123</sup> The U.S. international coalition must include South Korea, Japan, and preferably China as a minimum.

This policy is feasible, acceptable, and suitable. This policy, like all policies, comes with some level of risk. Domestic resistance will present the greatest challenge to this policy with resistance from South Korea and Japan second. This policy will require concerted efforts to sustain South Korean and Japanese support. South Korea and Japan must accept initial bi-lateral dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea as part of this approach. At the opportune time, dialogue should expand to multi-lateral dialogue, including South Korea, Japan, and China. This will placate their concerns and garner their support. The United Nations should support pursuit of a final peace treaty without significant resistance. Morally and legally, this policy represents an acceptable way to achieve a stable North Korea headed toward nuclear disarmament.

## Conclusion

The challenge of North Korea's drive for a nuclear arsenal represents a wicked problem for the U.S., its allies, and the international community. Solving this wicked problem requires critical analysis that clarifies the interests of all parties, that addresses divergent cultural perspectives within the context of the history of the Korean peninsula, and correctly assesses the implications of the success or failure of a selected policy and strategies. The current U.S. policy objective of complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea will not achieve its end. North Korea has completely abandoned the Six-Party talks and is not likely to return under the Kim Jung Un regime. This stalemate opens the way for a new policy approach. The new détente policy proposed in this SRP offers the greatest possibility of securing U.S. national interests while supporting the interests of North Korea, China, and U.S. allies and partners in the East Asia–Pacific region. The new détente policy of formal U.S. recognition of North Korea as a sovereign state and support of its integration into the international system in exchange for North Korean concessions and behavioral change presents opportunities for increased security for the U.S. homeland and its allies, increased stability and security in the region, and increased economic prosperity for all in the region.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, "Hagel, Republic of Korea's Defense Minister at Pentagon," October 23, 2014. U.S. Department of State, *IIP Digital*, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2014/10/20141024310155.html#axzz3MN9gyEsh> (accessed December 19, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Glyn T. Davies, "Statement before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Relations," July 30, 2014. <http://www.uspolicy.be/headline/special-representative-davies-us-policy-toward-north-korea> (accessed October 22, 2014).



<sup>3</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, *North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 4, 2013), 7, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/202881.pdf> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Jeff Conklin, *Wicked Problems & Social Complexity* (Napa, CA: CogNexus Group, 2008), 2-3, <http://cognexusgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/wickedproblems.pdf> (accessed February 23, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Stephen J. Gerras, "Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking: A Fundamental Guide for Strategic Leaders," in *Planners' Handbook for Operations Design, Version 1.0* (Suffolk, VA: Joint Staff, J-7, October 7, 2011), C-1 – C-27.

<sup>6</sup> Hugh Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953* (San Francisco, CA: China Books & Periodicals, Inc., 1999), 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), 70-71.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2010) 103-105.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 70.

<sup>13</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 58.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>16</sup> Hugh Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953*, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 108-109.

<sup>18</sup> Hugh Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953*, 73.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>21</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 67-70.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 44-45.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>25</sup> Hugh Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953*, 82-83.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 83-84.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Hugh Deane, *The Korean War: 1945-1953*, 85-87.

<sup>31</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 11-12.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations, "Security Council Resolution 84 (1950). Resolution of 7 July 1950," *United Nations Security Council Resolution Archives*, PDF file, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/84\(1950\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/84(1950)) (accessed November 19, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 17-23.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 24-31.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 31-35.

<sup>39</sup> Columbia University, "Text of the Korean War Armistice Agreement, July 27, 1953," 2014, *FindLaw*, Thomson Reuters, HTML file. <http://news.findlaw.com/cnn/docs/korea/kwarmagr072753.html> (accessed December 22, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 37-43.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 72-73.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen J. Gerras, Leonard Wong, and Charles D. Allen, *Organizational Culture: Applying a Hybrid Model to the U.S. Army*, Research Paper (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, November 2008), 17-20.

<sup>49</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 77-78.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-82.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-86.

<sup>53</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the Songun System," *The Pacific Review*, 24:1, March 11, 2011, 44.

<sup>54</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 87-92.

<sup>55</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 46.

<sup>56</sup> Max Fisher, "Kim Jong Un just had his own uncle killed. Why?," December 12, 2013, The Washington Post online, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/12/12/kim-jong-un-just-had-his-own-uncle-killed-why/> (accessed February 4, 2015).

<sup>57</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 65.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-104.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>60</sup> Max Fisher, "Kim Jong Un just had his own uncle killed. Why?."

<sup>61</sup> Rodong Sinmun, "Kim Jong Un's executed uncle was eaten alive by 120 hungry dogs: report," January 3, 2014, ABC News Online, <http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/news/2014/01/03/22156917-kim-jong-uns-executed-uncle-was-eaten-alive-by-120-hungry-dogs-report?lite> (accessed February 4, 2015).

<sup>62</sup> Tom Watkins, "North Korea says leader's uncle was executed," December 12, 2013, CNN Online, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/12/world/asia/north-korea-uncle-executed/index.html> (accessed February 4, 2015).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Molly Hunter, "North Korea Warns US of 'Disastrous Final Doom,'" February 4, 2015, ABC News online, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/north-korea-warns-us-disastrous-final-doom/story?id=28711834> (accessed February 11, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 105-109.

<sup>67</sup> Roger Boesche, "Kautilya's Arthashastra on War and Diplomacy in Ancient India," *The Journal of Military History* 67, no. 1 (January 2003), 17-18,

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/195624508/9EDDFE67E16B4AA6PQ/7?accountid=4444> (accessed 17 April 2014).

<sup>68</sup> Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 2.

<sup>69</sup> Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, no page number given.

<sup>71</sup> Samuel J. Locklear, "US Pacific Command before the House Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture," 10 March 2014, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/SpeechesTestimony/tabid/6706/Article/8597/pacomhouse-armed-services-committee-posture-statement.aspx%20> (accessed March 2, 2015), and Samuel J. Locklear, *USPACOM Strategy*, 2013, <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMStrategy.aspx> (accessed August 20, 2014).

<sup>72</sup> Samuel J. Locklear, "US Pacific Command before the House Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture," 10 March 2014, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/SpeechesTestimony/tabid/6706/Article/8597/pacomhouse-armed-services-committee-posture-statement.aspx%20> (accessed March 2, 2015)

<sup>73</sup> Samuel J. Locklear, *USPACOM Strategy*, 2013, <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMStrategy.aspx> (accessed August 20, 2014).

<sup>74</sup> Samuel J. Locklear, "US Pacific Command before the House Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture."

<sup>75</sup> Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 11.

<sup>76</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 14.

<sup>77</sup> James R. Clapper, *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, (January 29, 2014), 6, <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/130312/clapper.pdf> (accessed July 21, 2014).

<sup>78</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery, *North Korea*, 8.

<sup>79</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 15.

<sup>80</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 47, 52.

<sup>81</sup> Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 2.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas Plant and Ben Rhode, "China, North Korea and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons," *Survival*, April 1, 2013, 61-63, <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2013-94b0/survival--global-politics-and-strategy-april-may-2013-b2cc/55-2-07-plant-and-rhode-aac3> (accessed March 2, 2015), and Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2012), 17, 342-3.

<sup>83</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 315-19.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 351-69.

<sup>85</sup> Glyn T. Davies, "Statement before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Relations," July 30, 2014. HTML file, <http://www.uspolicy.be/headline/special-representative-davies-us-policy-toward-north-korea> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>86</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 323-328.

<sup>87</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 53-54.

<sup>88</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 371-385.

<sup>89</sup> Embassy of the United States, Brussels, Belgium, "North Korea - United States Policy Toward North Korea: a Dossier," <http://www.uspolicy.be/dossier/north-korea-united-states-policy-toward-north-korea-dossier> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> Glyn T. Davies, "Statement before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Relations," July 30, 2014. Available from <http://www.uspolicy.be/headline/special-representative-davies-us-policy-toward-north-korea> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>91</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 53.

<sup>92</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, *North Korea: U.S. Relations, Nuclear Diplomacy, and Internal Situation* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 4, 2013), 11, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/202881.pdf> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>93</sup> Glyn T. Davies, "Statement before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Relations," July 30, 2014. HTML file, <http://www.uspolicy.be/headline/special-representative-davies-us-policy-toward-north-korea> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>94</sup> Embassy of the United States, Brussels, Belgium, "North Korea - United States Policy Toward North Korea: a Dossier," <http://www.uspolicy.be/dossier/north-korea-united-states-policy-toward-north-korea-dossier> (accessed October 22, 2014).

<sup>95</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery, *North Korea*, 5.

<sup>96</sup> Glyn T. Davies, "Testimony of Glyn T. Davies Special Representative for North Korean Policy before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: U.S. Policy Toward North Korea," March 7, 2013. HTML file, [http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Ambassador\\_Davies\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Ambassador_Davies_Testimony.pdf) (accessed October 22, 2014), 5.

<sup>97</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery, *North Korea*, 7.

<sup>98</sup> Timeline of the North Korean Nuclear Program, February 17, 2015, *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_North\\_Korean\\_nuclear\\_program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_North_Korean_nuclear_program) (accessed March 2, 2015).

<sup>99</sup> Zachary Keck, "US General: North Korea Can Miniaturize Nuke Warheads," October 25, 2014, *The Diplomat*, HTML file, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/10/us-general-north-korea-can-miniaturize-nuke-warheads/> (accessed March 2, 2015).

<sup>100</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 48-50.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>102</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 703-714.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 745-746.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 746.

<sup>105</sup> Students in Seminar 5, including the author, of the U.S. Army War College Academic Year 15 resident class collaboratively developed a similar policy as part of the National Security Policy and Strategy Course capstone exercise.

<sup>106</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 60.

<sup>107</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 371-372.

<sup>108</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery, *North Korea*, 8.

<sup>109</sup> Laura Smith-Spark, "P5+1 and Iran agree on nuclear negotiation framework in Vienna," February 20, 2014, *CNN*, HTML file, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/20/world/europe/iran-nuclear-talks/index.html> (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>110</sup> Dan Roberts and Rory Carroll, "Obama and Raúl Castro thank pope for breakthrough in US-Cuba relations," December 17, 2014, *The Guardian*, HTML file, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/17/us-cuba-diplomatic-relations-obama-raul-castro> (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>111</sup> Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian E. Rinehart, *North Korea*.

<sup>112</sup> Jeff Mason, "Obama hopes for U.S. embassy in Cuba before April summit in Panama," March 2, 2015, *Reuters*, HTML file, <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/exclusive-obama-hopes-u-embassy-cuba-april-summit-013335192.html#1w0DeD0> (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 53.

<sup>114</sup> Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 88.

<sup>115</sup> Benjamin Habib, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme," 44.

<sup>116</sup> J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., "A Survey of the Theory of Strategy," in *The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues 1, Theory of War and Strategy, 5th ed.* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, July 2012), 16, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubid=1109> (accessed 18 April 2014).

<sup>117</sup> United Nations, "United Nations Security Council," 2015, HTML file, <http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/> (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>118</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress," June 1, 1999, U.S. Department of State homepage, HTML file, <http://fpc.state.gov/6172.htm> (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>119</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress."

<sup>120</sup> Caitlin Huey-Burns, "Congressional Reaction Mixed to Cuba Policy Shift" December 17, 2014, *Real Clear Politics* homepage, HTML file, [http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/12/17/congressional\\_reaction\\_mixed\\_to\\_cuba\\_policy\\_shift\\_124998.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2014/12/17/congressional_reaction_mixed_to_cuba_policy_shift_124998.html) (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>121</sup> Ed O'Keefe, "Congress members react to the Iran nuclear deal," November 24, 2013, *The Washington Post* homepage, HTML file, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2013/11/23/congressional-reaction-to-the-iran-nuclear-deal/> (accessed March 3, 2015).

<sup>122</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 20-24, 51-66.

<sup>123</sup> United Nations, "United Nations Security Council," 2015, HTML file, <http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/> (accessed March 3, 2015).

