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THESIS

**U.S. FOREIGN POLICY FOR NORTH KOREA:
FLEXIBILITY IS THE BEST POLICY**

by

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June 2006

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**U.S. FOREIGN POLICY FOR NORTH KOREA:
FLEXIBILITY IS THE BEST POLICY**

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ABSTRACT

The North Korean nuclear weapons program poses a challenge to stability in Northeast Asia. The United States' foreign policy with North Korea takes a hard-line position, and cannot solve this problem unilaterally and must rely on support from the other countries in the region. Solving this nuclear issue is only one piece of the stability challenge in this region.

North Korea's nuclear program gained international attention when it signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985, threatened to withdraw in 1993, withdrew in 2003, and stated it has a nuclear weapons capability in 2005. The Six-Party Talks were initiated with the goal of stopping and dismantling North Korea's entire nuclear weapons program, and has had limited success. Previous negotiations between North Korea and the United States have ended with one party, usually North Korea, failing to uphold its part of the agreement. The Six-Party Talks may be successful, but may take decades. It comes down to the question, is the United States pursuing the best foreign policy toward North Korea?

This thesis examines North Korea's nuclear program history, how it perceives itself and others, reviews the current U.S. policy, recommends a flexible policy, and proposes a method of implementation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

North Korea, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is located in Northeast Asia, bordering three countries. To its north, North Korea shares a 1,416km border with China as well as a 19km border with Russia. As it is the northern part of the Korean peninsula, it shares its southern 238km border with South Korea, also known as the Republic of Korea (ROK). North Korea's west coastline borders Korea Bay and the Yellow Sea, and its east coastline borders the East Sea, and has a total coastline of 2,495km. Its geographic size in land (120,410 sq km) and water (130 sq km) is slightly smaller than the state of Mississippi. Topography in North Korea is mostly mountainous, having roughly 20 percent of the land arable. Pyongyang is North Korea's capital.¹

North Korea was founded in 1948, and since then has been in isolation. The state has very few trading partners outside of China and Russia, and does not have diplomatic relations with the United States. Information we, in the United States, receive about North Korea largely comes from other countries. This limited access to information makes it hard for us to understand the state and its actions when it interacts within the international community, as is rarely done.²

Is the United States pursuing the best foreign policy toward North Korea? This thesis will examine the current U.S. policy and provide reasons why a flexible policy would work better than the current hard-line approach. Solving the nuclear issue is only one piece of the stability challenge in Northeast Asia. The key to implementing a flexible foreign policy toward North Korea is the ability for the United States to see the policy with a North Korean lens in ways that serve U.S. interests.

¹ Korea, North, "The World Factbook," <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html> (accessed August 13, 2005).

² Don Oberdorfer. *The Two Koreas* (Basic Books, 2001), 7.

The North Korean nuclear program poses a challenge to stability in Northeast Asia. The United States' foreign policy with North Korea takes a hard-line position, which primarily focuses on North Korea's nuclear program. This thesis will argue that a more flexible foreign policy with North Korea is to be preferred.

This thesis will examine North Korea's nuclear program history, how it perceives itself and others, provide a review of the current U.S. policy, recommend a flexible policy, and propose a method of implementing the flexible foreign policy.

In Chapter II, one will understand North Korea's nuclear program capabilities as well as how it may have had its beginning. Chapter II will also provide a short description of the DPRK's nuclear program, highlighting its joining the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and its safeguard agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This chapter will also address both the 1994 and 2002 crisis and what actions were taken by the United States to overcome these events.

It is important to understand how the North Korean regime sees itself and how it views the situation that it is in. Chapter III examines the nuclear situation through a North Korean lens. Understanding North Korea's view and mindset of its leader, Kim Jong-il, is important for implementing a successful and influential foreign policy. Future U.S. negotiations and foreign policy will make more sense after understanding why North Korea pursued a nuclear weapons capability. The United States leadership must understand the current situation and how the North Korean regime views the latest agreement from the Six-Party Talks, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and how these impact on North Korea. The recently researched archives of North Korean allies by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars sheds light on the North Korean leader's thoughts and allow the United States leadership to predict future actions. The archives reveal how the North Korean regime viewed the need for nuclear

weapons and the NPT. Insight into North Korean past actions will allow U.S. policy makers the ability to craft policy that will influence positive North Korean regime behavior.

The United States has taken a hard-line stance against North Korea, as the method for halting North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Chapter IV will address the current policy, which asserts that the United States will not officially make deals with North Korea until that state takes positive steps toward dismantling its nuclear weapons program. The United States is using the Six-Party Talks as a means to reach complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's nuclear program. Parties to these talks are the United States, South Korea, Japan, North Korea, China, and Russia. In addition to foreign policy, the United States implemented a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in 2003, which is aimed at limiting North Korea's illicit transfer of nuclear knowledge to other states. These measures though sufficient to keep up the pressure, but are insufficient to induce behavior change.

The United States has a presence in Northeast Asia, both in South Korea and Japan. Reunification of the peninsula is an ultimate goal for both Koreas, however the means to this end are quite different. This is where the flexible foreign policy becomes the preferred way forward. Chapter V introduces a flexible foreign policy that would stabilize the region. The current policy precludes entering into bilateral agreements with North Korea. However, South Korea believes this would be a good move on the part of the United States, to establish a bilateral agreement with North Korea. Right now, the United States is the only involved country that does not have such an agreement with the DPRK. The ability to use both the PSI and NPT, if North Korea reenters into the treaty, may work toward stabilizing the region. The Six-Party Talks may be another forum that could stabilize Northeast Asia, if it can serve as a roadmap toward normalizing relations between the two Koreas. In this context, the United States needs to reexamine its role in Northeast Asia. The United States should pursue a policy to have regional actors share burdens and take the lead and responsibility for the region.

The final chapter will compare the United States' current hard-line approach and flexible foreign policy options toward North Korea. This thesis prefers a flexible policy approach by the United States. A nuanced and flexible foreign policy will have a greater positive impact in Northeast Asia and also provide insightful prospects of halting the North Korean nuclear program. This chapter will also propose an implementation method for the flexible policy. As soon as open dialogue is established, this proposed flexible policy can be implemented. It will progress in a phased manner, and North Korea will receive incentives as it successfully completes each phase. The key to success in this endeavor is cooperation and open dialogue for all parties involved. In this case, the initial parties to this strategy will be the Six-Party Talks members, which include the United States, South Korea, Japan, Russia, China, and North Korea. Each has a part, as the proposed solution seeks to use these Six-Party Talks as a roadmap for reaching the goal of security and stability in Northeast Asia.

II. THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM HISTORY

North Korea has an indigenous nuclear weapons program capability. This chapter will describe how this program began, and then trace its nuclear history highlighting its joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its safeguard agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Following these events, North Korea entered into a continuing international nuclear crisis, after which the Agreed Framework came into play and diverted a potential confrontation. There were limited successes, but this agreement ultimately failed to stop North Korea's nuclear weapon program. Events continued that eventually led to the official declaration by North Korea: possession of a nuclear weapons capability. These nuclear developments were shaped by North Korea's geographic and historical context.

A. DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIETS AND CHINESE

The North Korean nuclear program had its beginnings as early as the end of World War II, with most of the nuclear assistance coming from either the former Soviet Union or China. The Soviets mined uranium from ore in the region for its own nuclear weapons program. Following the Korean War, North Korea and the Soviet Union signed agreements of cooperation in nuclear research. North Korean scientists went to study at the Soviet Union's Dubna Nuclear Research Center, and the Soviets provided a small research reactor for Yongbyon. This experimental research reactor was under IAEA safeguards, because of the agreement between the two states.³

Since the end of the Korean War, North Korea has anticipated an invasion by the United States. The Soviets had a vested interest to control North Korea as much as it could, because the Soviets did not want to enter into a war with the United States. The Soviets were concerned that North Korean provocations against South Korea would escalate and had the potential to start a war that

³ Don Oberdorfer. *The Two Koreas* (Basic Books, 2001), 251.

involved the United States. North Korea depended on the Soviets for military, political, and economic support beginning in 1949.⁴

Following China's nuclear test in 1964, North Korea approached China for nuclear research assistance. China turned down the request, because it did not see the utility for the smaller Korean state having a nuclear weapon capability. This did not deter North Korea from making the request again in 1974. China again turned down this request.⁵

Intelligence analysts believe North Korea set out on its own nuclear program sometime in the late 1970s. By this time, the DPRK had a large pool of scientists who had studied nuclear science in Moscow and also developed nuclear related departments in its universities. These included a nuclear physics division and departments in nuclear electronic engineering, nuclear fuel engineering, and nuclear reactor engineering. Satellite images in 1982 caught the signs of possible construction of a nuclear reactor, on which analysts believe construction began around 1979. It is believed that Kim Il-sung provided the authorization to begin its nuclear weapons program. An ore processing plant and nuclear fuel fabrication plant were built about the same time. When the 5-MWe reactor became operational in 1986, North Korea had begun construction on the first of two more graphite reactors. Construction of a large radiochemical, which was for reprocessing operations laboratory began in 1987.⁶

B. JOINING THE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

North Korea acceded to the NPT on December 12, 1985. When a new member enters into this agreement, the new state negotiates its safeguard agreements of nuclear material and equipment with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The negotiating period for this step is normally 18

⁴ Dana Steinberg, "Newly Available Evidence Offers Insights Into North Korea's Thinking, Actions." Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. 25 April 2005, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=topics.item&news_id=116812 (accessed May 18, 2005).

⁵ Oberdorfer, 252.

⁶ Young-sun Ha, "Nuclearization of Small States and World Order: The Case of Korea," *Asian Survey*, (Vol. 18, No. 11, November 1978): 1134-1151. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-4687%28197811%3A11%3C1134%ANOSSAW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2> (accessed March 4, 2005).

months. North Korea took its time and moved methodically slowly, not approving its safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) until seven years later on April 10, 1992. Once the safeguards had been agreed upon, North Korea submitted its declaration of nuclear facilities. After a state submits a statement that declares all its nuclear related facilities, the IAEA sends a group of inspectors to each of the sites to make sure the state is complying with the agreements and regulations. For North Korea, the IAEA inspections began in May 1992.⁷

North Korea submitted its nuclear declaration to the IAEA in early May, so inspections could begin later the same month. The report provided details of its uranium mining sites, nuclear plants, and other nuclear related facilities. These included two uranium mines and concentration plants, two large nuclear reactors under construction at Yongbyon and Taechon, as well as small nuclear reactor and critical assembly at Kim Il-sung University.⁸

By the time North Korea finished safeguard negotiations and the inspections began in May, it had conducted more reprocessing than it had declared. North Korea had shut down its reactor in 1989 for about 100 days, which was reported in the open press. Neither the United States nor other countries took action when North Korea undertook these actions. The strategy used by the international community was to have North Korea join the NPT and then bring them under compliance.⁹ During the 1992 inspections, however, the IAEA discovered evidence that North Korea had reprocessed more plutonium than it had disclosed. North Korea provided the IAEA with a sample that was supposed to show the IAEA that North Korea had only performed a single reprocessing operation. The IAEA determined that the sample did not match what the North Koreans were saying. The sample contained different byproducts than what you would expect to see if the sample had only been made from

⁷ "Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards," In Focus: IAEA and DPRK, March 2005, <http://www.iaea.org> (accessed March 4, 2005).

⁸ Michael J. Mazarr, *North Korea and the Bomb* (St. Martin's Press, 1995), 83.

⁹ Joseph Cirincione, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), 244.

plutonium from a facility that conducted only one reprocessing operation. This fact meant North Korea had produced more plutonium than it had declared to the IAEA and to the international community, which sparked the international nuclear crisis.¹⁰

C. CRISIS AND AGREED FRAMEWORK

This crisis occurred at a time when both the United States and South Korea were in the midst of presidential elections. The IAEA board of governors held a closed-door session in February 1993, at which time sensitive imagery was shown as evidence of deceptive practices by the North Koreans to hide its nuclear program. The IAEA was then ready to take the case to the United Nations Security Council, if North Korea did not comply. As the pressure mounted from the IAEA, the U.S.-ROK Team Spirit exercise that began on March 9, 1993 added more tension to the situation. Team Spirit is a military exercise that practices the steps taken to bring troops onto the Korean peninsula in the case of war. Although this exercise was scaled down, it still involved around 120,000 South Korean and American troops.¹¹

North Korea viewed this exercise as a potential invasion against North Korea to preemptively strike its nuclear program. Citing the NPT escape clause on defending supreme national interests, North Korea announced on March 12, 1993 that it was withdrawing from the treaty. Under the treaty protocol, the withdraw of a state party does not take effect until after a three-month waiting period, which set a deadline of June 12 for successful negotiations to keep them in the treaty.¹²

Negotiations began with North Korea soon after its announcement of intent to withdrawal from the NPT. On the very last day, North Korea announced it would suspend withdrawal from the treaty, however it saw itself in a different category other than being a party to the treaty. The IAEA was then permitted to

¹⁰ Oberdorfer, 270.

¹¹ Oberdorfer, 276-9.

¹² Steven Aftergood, "Nuclear Weapons Program," June 9, 2003 <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nuke/> (accessed March 4, 2005).

conduct limited inspections, although the IAEA's goal was to verify that North Korea was in full compliance. The IAEA inspectors were limited to inspecting only the sites declared by North Korea to the IAEA.¹³

During May 1994, North Korea discharged fuel from its 5-MWe nuclear reactor. When this was done, the IAEA was not able to conduct any verification tests on the core fuel, which would have provided a more accurate picture of the fuel's history. The initial inconsistencies had not been addressed, and this action by the North Koreans did not help the situation. The IAEA sent a specialist to sample the fuel from the reactor, but when the specialist arrived, he was not able to sample the fuel, although he did observe some of the fuel being unloaded. He reported back that it was a mess and nothing could be learned from the manner that North Korea had discharged the fuel. It is believed that North Korea had a total of roughly 8,000 spent fuel rods from this reactor, and may have begun reprocessing operations, but the IAEA was not able to verify whether or not this was the case. The IAEA Board of Directors then suspended all non-medical technical assistance to North Korea. Former President Carter was able to defuse the situation with a trip to North Korea later that same month. These events led to the Agreed Framework, an agreement between the United States and North Korea.¹⁴

Approximately one month after former President Carter had visited North Korea, Kim Il-sung died of a heart attack on July 8, 1994. Talks were still going on in Geneva, because the North Korean party had not been told of his death. After learning of his death, the party left Geneva to return to North Korea, however it continued with the talks in August.¹⁵

This framework was solidified on October 21, 1994. The United States committed in this agreement to supply North Korea with two light water reactors (LWR) that had the capacity of generating 2,000-MWe and to provide 500,000

¹³ Steven Aftergood.

¹⁴ "Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards"; James Foley, "North Korea continues nuclear programme," <http://www4.janes.com> (accessed on March 4, 2005).

¹⁵ Oberdorfer, 343.

tons of heavy fuel oil annually to fill the energy gap while the reactors were being constructed. A LRW is considered proliferation safe, because the spent fuel rods contain a small amount of the plutonium isotope needed for nuclear weapons production, which is the opposite condition of fuel rods from North Korea's graphite reactor. Spent fuel rods from a graphite or heavy water nuclear reactor contain rather large amounts of the plutonium isotope desirable for nuclear weapons. In addition to nuclear and economic assistance, the United States and North Korea would establish diplomatic relations if this framework progressed in a positive way. The United States would also lift the trade embargo on North Korea, initiated during the Korean War. North Korea committed to freeze and ultimately dismantle its graphite reactor and associated facilities by the time construction was completed and operation of the LWR began. This framework also led to the creation of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which would finance and supply the reactors. Although the crisis was not yet over, it was on its way to being resolved.¹⁶

There were many deadlocks and setbacks from the beginning. The Agreed Framework aimed to have the first LWR operating by 2003. As part of the agreement, North Korea would be in full compliance with its safeguards before any of the key nuclear components would be delivered. Due to numerous reasons, the start of construction was delayed and did not begin until February 2000. Concrete was poured August 7, 2002, which meant the first nuclear components would have been scheduled for delivery in mid-2005. Since this program met with several more delays, the operational date for the first reactor has slipped from 2003 to 2007; the date for delivery of these nuclear components has not been made. Some nuclear experts believe this new target date will be much later than 2007 if it gets back on track and runs through to completion.¹⁷

The IAEA began to take steps to begin inspections to bring North Korea into full compliance. During talks in October, North Korea acknowledged having

¹⁶ Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, February 25, 2005, <http://fpc.state.gov/c4763.htm> (accessed March 16, 2005).

¹⁷ Ibid.

a clandestine uranium enrichment program for making nuclear weapons. Apparently this program was started in the early 1990s with assistance from Pakistan. The IAEA requested information in November 2002 about this program from North Korea, but received no response. KEDO, with input from the United States, suspended the December shipment of heavy fuel oil.¹⁸

In late December 2002, North Korea lifted the freeze of its nuclear program and restarted operations at its Yongbyon nuclear facilities. It also restarted the 5-MWe reactor. North Korea cut the seals and disabled IAEA surveillance cameras around its nuclear facilities and ordered the IAEA inspectors to leave the country. In January 2003, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT to be effective January 11, 2003. It stated that its reason for withdrawal from the treaty was the stoppage of the heavy oil shipments and charged that the Bush administration planned to conduct a pre-emptive nuclear strike on North Korea. On April 10, 2003, North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT became effective.¹⁹

Following these events in January, the Bush administration established a three-party forum to discuss the North Korean nuclear issue. Included in the first meeting in April 2003 were the United States, North Korea and China. Following this first meeting, the Bush administration approached South Korea and Japan pledging to include them in future meetings. Four months later, the first Six-Party Talks met in China, as Russia was included. Successive meetings in August 2003, February 2004, and June 2004 were not able to achieve any significant breakthroughs. Most of the blame is focused on North Korea.²⁰

D. DECLARATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In February 2005, North Korea officially announced that it had nuclear weapons. This public announcement came as a shock, in the fact the state

¹⁸ Mark E. Manyin, Emma Chanlett-Avery, and Helene Marchart, "North Korea: A Chronology of Events, October 2002-December 2004," *CRS Report for Congress*, January 24, 2005, <http://fpc.state.gov/c4763.htm> (accessed February 8, 2005); "Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards."

¹⁹ Manyin, Chanlett-Avery, and Marchart.

²⁰ Ibid.

made it official. Its current declaration of having a nuclear weapons capability is another tool it can use to play off of the other countries in the region.²¹

Since the nuclear declaration, North Korea has been playing this new bargaining chip quite well. In the past months, many articles in the news have focused on the North Korea nuclear issue, covering broad topics as the latest stance on the Six-Party Talks to its dealings with other countries.²² In April 2005, news about North Korea's potential ability to strike the United States deflected the focus from Iraq back onto North Korea. This item caught lots of attention, because it involved a highly visible politician, Senator Hillary Clinton, and the Defense Intelligence Agency²³. A May 2005 trip report by Selig Harrison, offers limited insight of North Korea's thinking process. North Korea feels it is on a more equal footing with the United States and has taken offense to the harsh rhetoric by Secretary of State Rice, naming them "an outpost of tyranny." North Korea feels it cannot enter into the Six-Party Talks while under pressure, because it must be able to demonstrate to both its people and military that North Korea has the respect of a sovereign nation and of a powerful military.²⁴ Headlines in June 2005 linked North Korea with support to Iran, offering more than missile technology. North Korea is known for its ability to build underground facilities, which is the assistance it may be providing Iran. North Korea has assisted other countries with tunneling equipment in the past.²⁵

The recent admission by Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan, admitting that he sold enrichment machines, drawings, and technical data to North Korea is hard to disprove and still maintain credibility. When the news first broke in February 2004, North Korea and Pakistan denied the allegation. Pakistan investigated and

²¹ Niksch.

²² Con Coughlin, "North Korea to Help Iran Dig Secret Missile Bunkers," *London Sunday Telegraph*, June 12, 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/> (accessed June 12, 2005).

²³ David S. Cloud and David E. Sanger. "Agency Says North Korea Able to Mount Warheads on Missiles," *The New York Time*, April 28, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/> (accessed April 28, 2005).

²⁴ Selig Harrison, "DPRK Trip Report," *Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network Special Report*, May 10, 2005 www.kinu.or.kr (accessed May 12, 2005).

²⁵ Coughlin, "North Korea to Help Iran Dig Secret Missile Bunkers."

the allegation bore truth, proving North Korea and Khan wrong. It appears that the proof is in the favor of the United States. North Korea's nuclear program has had a negative impact on its foreign policy. North Korea has a few things left to bargain with. With all of this mounted against them, it is difficult to believe that North Korea still believes it will have victory over the south. North Korea still sees it as being only a matter of time.²⁶

North Korea is skilled in using rhetoric, which has been used successfully as a deterrent and as another way to start a dialogue. Just as Kim Il-sung did when he was leading North Korea, his son is following in the same footsteps. As a way to keep what little economic and subsistence it can, North Korea may be using the only bargaining chip it has left. The country now has limited resources and attempted economic reforms in 2001. Since these reforms have not been as fruitful as North Korea had hoped, its announcement in 2002 of pursuing the ability to enrich uranium may be seen as a return to the earlier brinkmanship days. If this is the case, the United States can expect delays and stalling tactics when implementing policy with North Korea.²⁷

Brinkmanship is North Korea's strongest and best used tool. Common elements of this are used time and again. These include being opaque with its objectives, presenting itself as victims of aggression, and presenting itself as the underdog. These skills aid North Korea in getting what it wants and then stalling negotiations. By joining the NPT, North Korea was able to get nuclear technology from the Soviet Union in the form of at least a graphite reactor. After it signed the NPT, it was able to successfully stall IAEA inspectors from inspecting its undeclared nuclear sites. To this day the IAEA does not have an accurate accounting of the fuel from the 5-MWe graphite reactor. Brinkmanship was first displayed in 1993 during its first action to withdraw from the NPT. This

²⁶ David Albright, Corey Hinderstein, "Unraveling the A. Q. Khan and Future Proliferation Networks," *The Washington Group Quarterly*, (Vol. 28, Issue 2, Spring 2005): 111-128; "Re-imposition of sanctions feared: US aid may be jeopardized – official," *The DAWN Group of Newspapers*, 2004, February 5, 2004, <http://www.dawn.com/2004/02/05/top5.htm> (accessed March 19, 2005).

²⁷ Paul French, "Economy Root to N Korea Crisis," *BBC News*, April 12, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4437001.stm> (accessed June 11, 2005).

skill eventually landed them the Agreed Framework, which would revamp its nuclear program, however it would lose its bargaining power in the future if this were to happen.²⁸

From the Dear Leader's perspective, Kim Jong-il probably understands that the nuclear program is the most powerful bargaining chip he has left, and he seems as skilled in bargaining as his late father, Kim Il-sung. Kim Jong-il has been preparing his country for the time of the United States invasion and now sees it may be on the horizon. The nuclear issue may also be his only way to keep the United States from invading. Due to how the operation in Iraq has developed, it is easy to understand that Kim Jong-il believes that it may be a matter of time before the United States focuses on North Korea.²⁹

The latest round of Six-Party Talks in August and September 2005 provide the latest illustration how North Korea plays its nuclear bargaining chip. Initially stalling, slowly coming to the table, stalling again, and then finally coming to an agreement, North Korea seemed to be serious in resolving the nuclear crisis once and for all. At the end of the Six-Party Talks on 19 September, North Korea agreed to dismantle its nuclear program, return to the NPT, and to allow monitoring by the IAEA. The other five countries agreed to provide a security guarantee, energy, promote trade, promote economic exchanges, and discuss providing LWRs at the appropriate time.³⁰

By the next day, the situation was back to normal. In this case, normal means anything other than what you would expect. North Korea announced the next day that it would withdraw from the agreement if the United States did not

²⁸ James R. Lilly, "The "Great Game" on the Korean Peninsula," Working Papers in the Asia Pacific Research Center. October 1997, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/lii01/index.html> (accessed March 14, 2005).

²⁹ "Q&A: North Korea's Nuclear Threat," BBC News, May 6, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2340405.stm> (accessed June 11, 2005).

³⁰ "ROK's Yonhap Chronology of Developments in DPRK's Nuclear Issue, Six-Party Talks," September 19, 2005, <http://www.yonhapnews.net/Engservices/3000000000.html> (accessed 22 September 22, 2005).

provide the LWR first. The next round of Six-Party Talks was scheduled for November 2005, where this item was to be discussed at length, if it were not negotiated and settled beforehand.³¹

From November 2005 through the May 2006, no new rounds of Six-Party Talks were scheduled. The issue keeping North Korea away from the negotiations is the United States' handling of North Korea's alleged financial misconduct. The United States accused North Korea of counterfeiting U.S. currency and applied financial sanctions on a Macao-based bank. The United States views this as a separate incident from the nuclear issue. North Korea blames the United States for not having negotiations and views this as a threat to its regime.³²

The United States worked with China, attempting to get North Korea to return to the Six-Party Talks, and North Korea has rejected the offer. North Korea's position remains that it will not return to these talks until the United States lifts the financial sanctions.³³

Meaningful dialogue and negotiations with North Korea will be greatly enhanced when we understand how North Korean leaders think and are able to perceive events through a North Korean lens in ways that better serve U.S. interests.

³¹ Sonni Efron, "A New Tilt Toward N. Korea," *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 2005, p. 1.

³² "North Korean Envoy to Russia Blames US for Break in Six-Party Talks," Open Source Center, April 6, 2006, <https://opensource.gov> (accessed April 8, 2006).

³³ "North Korea Reportedly Rejected Chinese Call for Resumption of Six-Nation Nuclear Talks," NTI May 8, 2006 <http://nti.org> (accessed May 8, 2006).

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III. NORTH KOREAN PERCEPTIONS

The nuclear threat from North Korea is the lynch pin of regional security in Northeast Asia. One of the ways to combat the nuclear threat has been the initiation of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) by the United States. This chapter will attempt to view the PSI through the DPRK's eyes and propose an option that would resolve the current crisis. By examining its past activities, current activities, and its possible perception of the PSI, this chapter shall attempt to describe a course North Korea might take, which could lead to regional security.

The ultimate goal for North Korea's deceased Great Leader, Kim Il-sung, was the unification of the two Koreas. His son, Dear Leader Kim Jong-il, who took over following the Great Leader's passing in 1994, continues with the same goals. The Great Leader Kim Il-sung believed it to be his right to unify Korea through any means necessary, especially by force. In order to get close to the DPRK mindset, one must attempt to view events through a DPRK lens. This chapter shall review the past to see how it may change our view of the future, look at events following the Korean war, such as a failed assassination attempt and the capture of the USS Pueblo in 1968; the ax murders in 1976; how the DPRK established and views its nuclear program, and then provide a succinct review of its current activities to draw out trends. The content assesses its recent nuclear declaration and the standing of the Six-Party Talks, and then delves into how the DPRK may perceive the PSI. Lastly, options that North Korea may have will be identified, and the option that would favor its goal will be spelled out.

A. REUNIFICATION

Since the end of the Korean War, leaders in Pyongyang believe the United States will invade the DPRK. Following the Korean War, the Soviets had a vested interest to control the DPRK as much as it could. The Soviets, ruled by Stalin, did not want to enter into a war with the United States, and North Korea depended on the Soviets for military, political, and economic support beginning in 1949. In order to regulate North Korea, the Soviets developed a two-part

formula, the Stalin formula. The first part was clear, which said the DPRK would not make an independent decision to attack the Republic of Korea (ROK). Before the DPRK could attack South Korea, it would need to get an approval from Moscow and have the consent of its allies. The second part of the formula stated that if the ROK or the United States attacked the DPRK, North Korea would be allowed to defend itself. This second part of the formula turned out to be a loophole that the Dear Leader, Kim Il-sung, would exploit by disguising its attacks on the ROK in the hopes the ROK would strike back.³⁴

The DPRK formulated a plan to assassinate the ROK President, Park Chung Hee in January 1968. North Korea also captured a U.S. Navy vessel later in the same month in an attempt to deflect attention from the failed assassination attempt. Another bold attempt by the DPRK to invoke a military response from the ROK occurred in 1976, an event which came to be known as the Panmunjom Ax Murders.³⁵ Later in the 1970s to early 1980s, the DPRK started down the nuclear path.³⁶

North Korea attempted to assassinate the ROK President in 1968. The goal of this action was to provoke either a revolution or start a military coup, and then the DPRK would be waiting for the new ROK government to ask for military assistance, which would then lead to the unification of the peninsula. A group of commandos conducted a raid on the Blue House, the equivalent of the U.S. White House, in January 1968. The endeavor failed, and the DPRK did not inform the Soviets of this before or immediately after. In the minds of the DPRK, this was not an invasion but an assassination attempt.³⁷

The fallout from this event was greater than North Korea ever expected. In order to cover up its failed assassination attempt, within the same month the

³⁴ Dana Steinberg, "Newly Available Evidence Offers Insights Into North Korea's Thinking, Actions." Posted April 25, 2005, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=topics.item&news_id=116812 (accessed May 18, 2005).

³⁵ Kathryn Weathersby, "The Enigma of the North Korean Regime: Back to the Future?" *Ilmin International Relations Review* 10, 1 (Spring 2005):13.

³⁶ Young-sun Ha, 1136.

³⁷ Weathersby, 13.

DPRK captured a U.S. Navy vessel, the USS Pueblo, off its eastern coast. Neither the Soviets nor any of the DPRK's allies were informed ahead of time of the USS Pueblo's capture. This action put the Soviets in an awkward position, as the Soviets had to support North Korea. As this situation calmed down, the Soviets reiterated its stance within the second part of the Stalin formula that its agreement was purely defensive in nature. The Soviet leadership expressed its interest in supporting North Korea if the attack was unprovoked.³⁸

This did not stop the DPRK from requesting military or economic aid. The Soviets visited the DPRK five months after the USS Pueblo event, sending Deputy Head of the Council of Ministers, V. N. Novikov, to Pyongyang. Kim Il-sung attempted to use this visit to his advantage. He presented his case for increased military support, hoping his argument would make the point. He argued that the ROK received advanced military equipment from the United States as a result of the USS Pueblo event. The Soviets pointed out that North Korea bore the responsibility, because the attempted assassination prior to the attack on the navy ship also contributed to the United States providing this military assistance.³⁹

Another bold attempt by the DPRK to provoke a military response from the ROK occurred in 1976, an event which came to be known as the Panmunjom Ax murders. The DPRK explained the incident in the DMZ as being staged by the United States. North Korea made the case to an East German military delegation, emphasizing the difficulty of deciding if such actions were deliberate United States provocations or just an accident. Kim Il-sung provided an explanation as a deliberate provocation, in order to make the presidential election more favorable for President Ford. He stood by the fact that the United States struck first. He further explained that the United States did this routinely, stating that President Johnson staged the USS Pueblo incident, President Nixon

³⁸ Weathersby, 14-17.

³⁹ Weathersby, 23.

organized the spy plane incident in 1969, and now President Ford was trying to stir up the world with this little tree incident.⁴⁰

B. NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The nuclear issue has become the DPRK's most popular means for getting international attention. The reasons why North Korea pursued its quest for nuclear weapons remains unclear. North Korea was motivated by both a sense of regime survival and possibly prestige. The acquisition of nuclear weapons requires a certain level of scientific expertise, and North Korea had this expertise.⁴¹

North Korea acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on December 12, 1985. The usual time for a new member to finish negotiating the safeguards is 18 months. North Korea did not approve its safeguard agreement with the IAEA until seven years later on April 10, 1992. Once the safeguards had been agreed upon, North Korea submitted its declaration of nuclear facilities and the IAEA inspections began in May 1992. It would be brought out later that North Korea had a clandestine uranium enrichment facility, which would be capable making a uranium-based nuclear weapon.⁴²

During one of the 1992 inspections, the IAEA discovered evidence that revealed the DPRK had reprocessed more plutonium than it had disclosed. This led to further inspections. The DPRK refused to comply with a special IAEA inspection, which led to tensions. Former President Carter was able to calm the situation, as Kim Il-sung agreed to freeze his nuclear program. This action led to the 1994 Agreed Framework, where North Korea would freeze its nuclear activity and have the IAEA conduct inspections verifying the freeze. The IAEA inspections began again and were again denied access.

In October 2002, North Korea stated in unofficial terms that it had the ability to enrich uranium. It was later learned that the enrichment technology had come from Pakistan. This started the second crisis, where the heavy fuel oil

⁴⁰ Weathersby, 24-5.

⁴¹ Young-sun Ha, 1139.

⁴² "Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards."

shipments were halted. North Korea then restarted its nuclear program, kicked out all the IAEA inspectors, and then announced its withdrawal from the NPT effective January 2003. North Korea cited the halted shipping of heavy fuel oil in December 2002 and said that the Bush administration was planning a pre-emptive nuclear strike, as its justification for its treaty withdrawal. This led to the Bush administration initiating Six-Party Talks.⁴³

Even with these recent events, the Six-Party Talks give the DPRK the potential to enter into the real world, provided it was prepared to change its behavior of proliferating material. The next round of talks, when they meet, will be successful, only if the DPRK wants them to be successful. The arrangement, involving all of North Korea's neighbors at once, prevents them from playing one party against the other. One factor that may impact the talks is the PSI. The maritime exercises hosted by Singapore⁴⁴ and Japan⁴⁵ might have signaled to North Korea that it must change its ways. If North Korea does not change its behavior, its existence as a country may be threatened.

We know the DPRK has taken part, at least as a recipient, in the illegal transfer of nuclear technology. This fact was discovered during the time Libya was dismantling its nuclear program. Libya acknowledged that it was acquiring the nuclear technology through Pakistan's A. Q. Khan. The President of Pakistan denied this allegation, however Pakistan did conduct an investigation. Pakistan found that not only had Khan supplied Libya with nuclear material, but had also supplied Iran and North Korea. Khan first denied the accusations, and

⁴³ Larry A. Niksch, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program*. CRS Issue Brief for Congress. May 6, 2005.

⁴⁴ "Singapore Hosts PSI Exercise 'Deep Sabre,'" August 17, 2005. <http://www.nti.org> (accessed August 17, 2005).

⁴⁵ "Japanese Regional Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Maritime Interdiction Exercise (Team Samurai '04)," <http://www.state.gov> (accessed March 17, 2005).

then later he admitted to selling nuclear related items to these countries. During a national apology broadcast to the Pakistani people, he said that he did this alone without government involvement.⁴⁶

Pakistan was one of the DPRK's trading partners when it came to WMD technology. It is believed that A.Q. Khan made numerous visits to North Korea, during one of which he was allegedly shown three nuclear devices. This information became public two months after Khan admitted to selling North Korea nuclear technology and equipment for uranium enrichment.⁴⁷ The DPRK has not officially admitted to conducting uranium enrichment operations, other than the one statement in 2002.

C. PSI PERCEPTIONS

As part of an effort to stop global shipments of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials, President George Bush announced a new initiative at the end of May 2003, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), an action resulting from the December 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction. This national strategy recognized the need for a more robust tool to stop the proliferation of WMD, and PSI is the more robust tool that fits within the existing international framework of treaties and agreements.⁴⁸ PSI is aimed at interdicting WMD shipments before they reach their destination. PSI is not an organization, but rather a voluntary activity that receives neither special nor specific funding. To be effective, PSI will need to bring together and apply intelligence, diplomatic

⁴⁶ Larry A. Niksch; Spencer Abraham, "The Eisenhower Institute Presents: Secretary Spencer Abraham Department of Energy," <http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/presscenter/release64-04.htm> (accessed May 25, 2006).

⁴⁷ Daniel A. Pinkston, "Foreign Assistance and Procurement for the North Korean Nuclear Program," Center for Nonproliferation Studies, *Asian Export Control Observer*, (Issue 1, April 2004): 19-21.

⁴⁸ "National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction," U.S. State Department. December 2002, <http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/200212/WMDStrategy.pdf> (accessed March 17, 2005).

means, law enforcement, and other available tools in order to prevent the WMD related technology or materials shipment from getting to the country or state of concern⁴⁹.

The PSI began with eleven countries and has now grown to seventeen. In the beginning, these countries met, developed, and published the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles. These principles, agreed to in Paris September 4, 2003, provide the parameters for when a PSI member state can/should interdict a suspect ship, airplane, or vehicle. The principles state that a PSI member shall:

1. Undertake effective measures, either alone or in concert with other states, for interdicting the transfer or transport of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. "States or non-state actors of proliferation concern" generally refers to those countries or entities that the PSI participants involved establish should be subject to interdiction activities because they are engaged in proliferation through: (1) efforts to develop or acquire chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems; or (2) transfers (either selling, receiving, or facilitating) of WMD, their delivery systems, or related materials.
2. Adopt streamlined procedures for rapid exchange of relevant information concerning suspected proliferation activity, protecting the confidential character of classified information provided by other states as part of this initiative, dedicate appropriate resources and efforts to interdiction operations and capabilities, and maximize coordination among participants in interdiction efforts.
3. Review and work to strengthen their relevant national legal authorities where necessary to accomplish these objectives, and work to strengthen when necessary relevant international law and frameworks in appropriate ways to support these commitments.
4. Take specific actions in support of interdiction efforts regarding cargoes of WMD, their delivery systems, or related materials, to the extent their national legal authorities permit and consistent with their obligations under international law and frameworks, to include:

⁴⁹ "The Proliferation Security Initiative," U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, USINFO Publications. June 2004, <http://www.state.gov/products/pubs/proliferation/> (accessed November 21, 2004).

a. Not to transport or assist in the transport of any such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern, and not to allow any persons subject to their jurisdiction to do so.

b. At their own initiative, or at the request and good cause shown by another state, to take action to board and search any vessel flying their flag in their internal waters or territorial seas, or areas beyond the territorial seas of any other state, that is reasonably suspected of transporting such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern, and to seize such cargoes that are identified.

c. To seriously consider providing consent under the appropriate circumstances to the boarding and searching of its own flag vessels by other states, and to the seizure of such WMD-related cargoes in such vessels that may be identified by such states.

d. To take appropriate actions to (1) stop and/or search in their internal waters, territorial seas, or contiguous zones (when declared) vessels that are reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern and to seize such cargoes that are identified; and (2) to enforce conditions on vessels entering or leaving their ports, internal waters or territorial seas that are reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes, such as requiring that such vessels be subject to boarding, search, and seizure of such cargoes prior to entry.

e. At their own initiative or upon the request and good cause shown by another state, to (a) require aircraft that are reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern and that are transiting their airspace to land for inspection and seize any such cargoes that are identified; and/or (b) deny aircraft reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes transit rights through their airspace in advance of such flights.

f. If their ports, airfields, or other facilities are used as transshipment points for shipment of such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern, to inspect vessels, aircraft, or other modes of transport reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes, and to seize such cargoes that are identified.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ "Proliferation Security Initiative, Statement of Interdiction Principles," *NPT Briefing Book*, p. T-34, [http://www.mscis.soton.ac.uk/Site_Files/site_resources/Briefing_Book_2004_\(PrepCom_version\).pdf](http://www.mscis.soton.ac.uk/Site_Files/site_resources/Briefing_Book_2004_(PrepCom_version).pdf). (accessed June 14, 2005)

PSI is operationally active, and numerous countries have shown some level of interest in supporting this new activity. The focus is to develop the interdiction principles through exercises, which include maritime, air, and ground interdiction. Four exercises were conducted in 2003: an air tabletop exercise and two maritime exercises in the Mediterranean, and one maritime exercise in the Western Pacific. Exercises completed during 2004 included one war-game, two ground, two air, and four sea exercises that took place in the United States, Europe, the Caribbean, the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean. The draft plan for 2005 and beyond calls for six exercises and one war-game per year.⁵¹ The latest PSI exercise completed in 2006 ended April 6, which was an Australian hosted three-day air interdiction / Command Post Exercise (CPX). Only the week prior a two-day maritime interdiction / CPX was hosted by the Netherlands.⁵²

Croatia is the fourth country to have signed ship-boarding agreements with the United States under the PSI, the other three being Liberia, Panama, and the Marshall Islands. These countries have given permission for the United States to board and inspect one of their flagged vessels, if it is suspected of carrying cargo that is destined for a WMD program. This is a success story, because Liberia has the world's second largest number of vessels under its flag, second only to Panama. These two states roughly account for approximately one third of all worldwide shipping.⁵³ This greatly increases the number of ships that may be tracked if a country uses a ship under one of these flags.

The PSI is not limited to interdiction, but also committed to cooperation in preventing individuals, companies, or rogue nations from becoming WMD facilitators. North Korea has been a U.S. foreign policy challenge, since it decided to restart its nuclear installations at Yongbyon and to withdraw from the

⁵¹ "Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Exercises 2005-2006 Schedule," http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/training/wjtsc05_psi.ppt (accessed February 17, 2005).

⁵² "Calendar of Events," May 2006, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/c12684.htm> (accessed May 2, 2006)."

⁵³ Richard Boucher, "The United States and the Republic of Croatia Proliferation Security Initiative Shipboarding Agreement," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/47039.htm> (accessed June 14, 2005)

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Bush administration has four main objectives for its strategy to have North Korea dismantle its nuclear program. The strategy has been to terminate the Agreed Framework; withhold any United States reciprocal measures until North Korea has taken steps to dismantle its nuclear program and make other military concessions; apply diplomatic and economic pressure by an international coalition; and through PSI, plan for future sanctions and interdiction of North Korean maritime and air shipping. One of the goals of PSI is to cut off or impede North Korea's exports of WMD-related technology and materials to other countries, so as to constrict its income from these sales. Export of WMD and illegal drugs make up a large source of income, which maintain the political elite and military in North Korea.⁵⁴

PSI becomes an important addition to the existing treaties already in place. Again, PSI is not an organization, like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), nor does it replace the NPT or any nuclear free zone treaty that is already in force. The PSI is conducted by states that have the common interest of stopping the spread of WMD technology and materials. The United States felt so strongly about this idea that it submitted a resolution to the United Nations Security Council. Resolution 1540, which addressed the heart of the PSI interdiction principles, was passed in April 2004. It encourages all of the member states to enforce disarmament treaties to which it is a signatory and establish effective domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery means.⁵⁵

The North Korean United Nations Permanent Representative submitted a letter to both the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council requesting immediate action be taken against the PSI exercise in Japan, 25-27 October 2004. North Korea perceived the exercise as a potential pre-emptive strike against them, and further stated that PSI was an illegal leverage into the internal affairs of independent UN member states. The DPRK stated that

⁵⁴ Larry A. Niksch, 4.

⁵⁵ "Resolution 1540 (2004)," United Nations Security Council, April 28, 2004, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions04.html (accessed April 28, 2004).

participation in this exercise by those states involved with the Six-Party Talks would create an obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula⁵⁶

Concern still exists that PSI will not work, because all states must participate for it to be effective in stopping the flow of WMD related technology and material. While this is true on the surface, there is a silver lining. If some states do not participate, then that non-action by itself limits the area of the proliferation. As the majority of states pledge support and join, that action may be felt in future negotiations. Some impact can be seen in the Six-Party Talks that are attempting to resolve the nuclear challenge on the Korean peninsula. PSI has already made its way into the talks, through Japan's and Singapore's hosting of PSI exercises. This has drawn attention to the serious nature of stopping the spread of WMD material. North Korea is isolating itself through its own decisions.⁵⁷

The language used in the PSI is similar to language found in the Wassenaar Arrangement, not specifically naming or labeling a state as a proliferation concern. This allows states the option of handling other states in an ambiguous fashion, not having to be as bold as the United States that has a list of such states of concern.⁵⁸ The Wassenaar Arrangement, established in 1996, contributes to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies. Through national policies, participating states seek to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities, and are not diverted to support such capabilities. This Wassenaar Arrangement began in 1995 with discussions

⁵⁶ "Prevention of Armed Conflict," United Nations General Assembly Security Council, Identical letters dated October 25, 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, <http://www.un.org/ga/59/documentation/list5.html> (accessed October 26, 2004).

⁵⁷ Mitchell Reiss, "North Korea's Legacy of Missed Opportunities," <http://state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/> (accessed November 22, 2004).

⁵⁸ Andrew C. Winner, "The Proliferation Security Initiative: The New Face of Interdiction," *The Washington Quarterly*, (Vol. 28, Spring 2005): 133.

leading to an agreement among the 33 founding members, to begin a new type of multilateral cooperation to control nuclear weapon-related dual use equipment and technology.⁵⁹

The PSI is seen as illegal by the DPRK. It is perceived as leverage into the affairs of United Nations member states, and aimed at stopping North Korean trade with other countries. North Korea perceives this as a way the United States is attempting to cause regime change. Preparations for exercises that support PSI are seen in the same light as other major exercises, as a preparation and practice for invasion. The DPRK accuses the United States of being oppressive and argues that PSI is a violation of international law, which always draws attention from the international community. North Korea only hints at this, because it does not have exemplary standing itself in international law. The more leverage North Korea can get from this by showing it is oppressive, the more it diminishes the United States' influence with PSI.⁶⁰

Understanding its past and present activities along with its view of PSI, there are four policy options that the DPRK may take, which shall be explained below. The most likely policy North Korea may pursue would be in the state's best interest. It is important to keep in mind that the policy option may not be the best choice for stabilizing the region, because regime survival seems to be the most important. This is illustrated by the fact that the international community believed the regime would collapse soon after the death of its Great Leader, Kim Il-sung. We are now eleven years past that mark and the DPRK is still in the mix, so to speak.

The common thread between the United States and the states in Northeast Asia is the nuclear threat. This thread is wearing thin, because of the different approaches each of these countries wishes to pursue. The most important country to understand is the DPRK. Once you understand why it is doing what it is doing, the task of figuring out a palatable resolution becomes

⁵⁹ "Genesis of the Wassenaar Arrangement," <http://www.wassenaar.org> (accessed April 3, 2006).

⁶⁰ "Identical letters dated October 25, 2004.

much easier. Currently the United States is the only state taking the hard-line approach, which will not achieve the goal of containing or changing the behavior of the DPRK. The objectives in this endeavor, realizing a denuclearized peninsula and dismantling North Korea's nuclear program, can only be achieved when all involved move ahead as one.

Having all PSI participants act as one has been, and will continue to be, the most difficult part. Developing a plan, agreement, or treaty will take time, but will be successful in the end unless conflict were to erupt. Within the U.S. administration, there are disagreements on the best way to handle this nuclear issue. This was best illustrated in a non-official war game simulation in Washington D.C., exercised by the *Atlantic Monthly*. After reviewing the past situation, the group of participants was not able to agree on a solution to stop the DPRK's nuclear program. Recommended solutions ranged from conducting a strike against the nuclear facilities, to containment, to engagement. The lessons learned from this simulation are worth noting here. The first is that the situation will probably not get any better over time. The second lesson is that the United States may be hurting itself by having only multilateral talks instead of agreeing to engage in bilateral talks with North Korea. The last lesson is that the biggest danger the United States faces is the transfer of nuclear material to a terrorist or terrorist group.⁶¹ North Korea has four options, which are in the best interests of the DPRK and may or may not lead to regional stability. In option one, North Korea uses PSI as leverage and gains a better position for itself as it is going into the Six-Party Talks. In this option, the DPRK would argue that PSI is discriminatory and is aimed at disrupting its shipping, thus impacting its trade and commerce.

Option two would be that the DPRK is able to establish bilateral agreements with the United States, establish a small base of talks that lead to economic and trade relations, and then move to major points such as unification of Korea or dismantling the nuclear program. In this option, North Korea may be

⁶¹ Scott Stossel, "North Korea: The War Game," *The Atlantic Monthly*. Vol. 296 Issue 1. (July/August 2005): 107-108.

able to undermine U.S. authority by gaining the support of South Korea. This may be achieved by North Korea as it describes Team Spirit or an equivalent ROK-U.S. joint exercise as being treacherous activity by the United States, which negatively impacts its trade. This is illustrated by the DPRK mobilizing the work force to reinforce the military, thwarting a U.S. invasion that will begin following one of the major exercises.

Option three describes the DPRK starting a nuclear arms race. This could be remotely possible if North Korea were to conduct a nuclear test. Tensions in the region may increase if it were to outsource a test to a third country, such as Iran. Iran would be the only candidate that could have an interest in conducting a nuclear test for North Korea. North Korea supplied missile technology to Iran during the 1980s and 1990s.⁶² If a nuclear test in this situation were to occur with a nuclear warhead that Iran could mate to one of its missiles, it would benefit both and North Korea would not need to conduct its own nuclear test.

The fourth option would have the DPRK accede to the demands put on its nuclear program and enter the world order. The DPRK comes clean and enters into negotiations. This would potentially lead to economic aid packages, normalized relations and security guarantees from the United States, North Korea being removed from the terrorist list and no longer labeled part of the “axis of evil.” Most of these benefits are similar to those in the earlier 1994 Agreed Framework. Had the 1994 Agreed Framework continued successfully to its end, the DPRK would have benefited by receiving light water nuclear reactors, heavy fuel oil until the reactors came on-line, normalized relations with the United States, lifting of trade restrictions, and a nuclear security guarantee.⁶³

When comparing these policies with one another, the third policy is the least likely scenario, as long as Iran remains a member of the NPT. As stated earlier, all of the states in the region believe it would be a bad situation for the DPRK to have a verifiable nuclear capability. It is not in the best interest of North

⁶² Daniel A. Pinkston, “CNS Special Report on North Korean Ballistic Missile Capabilities,” March 22, 2006, <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/pdf/060321.pdf> (accessed March 31, 2006).

⁶³ Larry Nicksch. pp. 12-13.

Korea to start an arms race. By doing so, it would quickly alienate the states that are providing it support, by sending the wrong signals. In this sense, the DPRK would be hard pressed to make an argument that it was the victim or was being victimized by the other state's practices of stopping the arms race. This would be especially true if it was to conduct a nuclear test.

Both the first and second policy options seem plausible, but neither is in the best interest of the DPRK. The first policy would suit the DPRK in the beginning, but would lead to more of the same. The DPRK would not be able to get any traction and not be able to gain any influence. In this case North Korea could probably survive, however it likely would continue to limp along just barely surviving. The second policy option is a bit better than the first, but it also is not in the DPRK's best interest. Its past will come out to haunt them if it follows this option. As North Korea plays the victim when describing the injustice done to it, similar to the Soviet reaction when its Great Leader asked for more aid in 1968, the international community will remember that the DPRK probably bears some responsibility that caused that situation.

The first three policies all focus on the nuclear issue as the main issue. Human rights begin to play a part in this as agreements are made. It is in the best interest of the DPRK to keep out agencies that would report on its alleged human rights abuses, from its perspective. If the DPRK enters into one of these first three policies, it could lead to opening its doors faster than it would be able to control. This might lead to a much larger migration of refugees into both China and/or the ROK.

One of the most important things to remember is North Korea wishes to enter into agreements under its own terms. This would be quite a difficult feat to accomplish if economic and other assistance packages were good only if North Korea was able to meet human right standards. This may be one reason for them not to use any of these three policies as a path to follow.

D. GOALS

For the reasons stated above when comparing the policies with one another, it is most likely the DPRK would follow the fourth option. The DPRK has come or will soon come to the realization that it cannot survive forever in its current state. In a similar way, the Great Leader came to the realization the two Koreas could not be united by force, because he would not be able to overcome the powerful destruction from the threatened use of nuclear weapons. In a similar fashion, the Dear Leader may not have a regime at all if he maintains the status quo. In order to be a leader, one must have people to lead. The Dear Leader Kim Jong-il would be sentencing himself and his people to a terrible end if he is not able to come to the table as seen through the eyes of his military and public, a sovereign state entering into negotiations on its own terms.

Taking all of this into account, one issue stands out. The DPRK has been doing the same thing all these years, because this approach has worked for them. U.S. policy toward North Korea is similar to the hard-line policy the United States had with the Soviets. It worked well with the Soviets during the Cold War, but the DPRK is not the Soviet Union and this is no longer the Cold War. Another point brought out at the end of the war game simulation, was the response from one of the participants, Robert Gallucci, to the fact the United States would not negotiate with the DPRK because it had cheated in the past. Gallucci's response was that the Soviets cheated on most of the deals, however we were better off at least having a deal. He made a similar response to people who say negotiating with the DPRK is rewarding bad behavior. His response was that he was not out to teach people lessons, but more interested in the national security of the United States. The main question comes to this: Are you better off with this deal or without it? The point being, one is better off with a deal than without one.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Scott Stossel, 108.

IV. CURRENT U.S. POLICY

North Korea poses a challenge to both Northeast Asia and the United States interests, because of its nuclear capability. This chapter examines the current U.S. foreign policy toward North Korea. The United States has taken a hard-line stance against North Korea, as the method for halting North Korea's nuclear program, and will not officially deal with North Korea until that state makes positive steps toward dismantling its nuclear weapons program. North Korea must adopt measures that lead to the complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of its entire nuclear program. The United States will use the Six-Party Talks (United States, South Korea, Japan, North Korea, China, and Russia) as the negotiation strategy to reach CVID. This chapter begins by presenting background information explaining how the nuclear situation led to the Six-Party Talks. Then this chapter will address the current status of the talks, and then end with a discussion addressing the potential outcome and impacts on the participants. Both the positive and negative points in pursuing the current U.S. foreign policy toward North Korea will be discussed.

It is believed that North Korea has pursued nuclear weapons for quite a long time. The Clinton administration attempted to solve the problem of North Korea's nuclear weapons program with the 1994 Agreed Framework. This strategy seemed to work until the discovery of North Korea's uranium enrichment program during the George W. Bush administration in 2002. When the Bush administration replaced the Clinton administration, the strategy changed from continuing bilateral talks to a much harder line position, as seen when North Korea was labeled as being part of the "axis of evil" in the 2002 State of the Union address.⁶⁵

North Korea has a history of supporting terrorism against the United States. The U.S. foreign policy has maintained a hard-line position, for the most part, from the Reagan administration through the current Bush administration.

⁶⁵ Victor Cha, "Hawk Engagement and Preventive Defense on the Korean Peninsula," *International Security* 27, 1 (Summer 2002): 40-1.

Former President Reagan addressed the growing threat of terrorism to the United States and labeled the North Korean government as actively supporting an international terrorist campaign against the United States and U.S. allies. President Reagan cited the numerous border incidents involving U.S. military personnel getting killed and the failed assassination attempt on South Korean President Chun in Burma as examples.⁶⁶

During the Reagan administration, maintaining troops in both Japan and South Korea were in the best interest of the United States. These troops maintained a credible deterrence against aggression in Northeast Asia. The goal was to keep markets open, which was in the U.S. and allies' interest as well as preserving the free trade system in that region.⁶⁷

Former President George H. W. Bush continued the hard-line position. His administration maintained the same position of maintaining troops in Northeast Asia. He stated he would not reduce the number of troops stationed in South Korea, and the military presence will remain in South Korea as long as the South Korean government requests the U.S. presence and as long as it is in the interest of peace for the troops to remain there.⁶⁸

During a news conference with South Korean President, Roh Tae Woo, President George H. W. Bush clearly stated the U.S. policy toward North Korea would not shift from its hard-line position. The United States government would pursue contact with North Korea, but not without consulting South Korea. The United States would not start a dialogue with North Korea, just because North Korea makes such a request. By doing so, it would send the wrong signal to both South and North Korea. South Korea may believe the United States is conducting policy in the United States' own interest, and North Korea could view

⁶⁶ "Remarks at the annual Convention of the American Bar Association," July 8, 1985, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/70885a.htm> (accessed April 20, 2006).

⁶⁷ "Written Responses to Questions Submitted by Asia-Pacific News Organizations," December 4, 1987, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1987/120487g.htm> (accessed April 20, 2006).

⁶⁸ "Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Yonhap News Agency of the Republic of Korea," February 16, 1989, <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/papers/1989/89021605.html> (accessed April 20, 2006).

this as a weakness to exploit between the United States and South Korea. The George H. W. Bush administration believed it was important for the two Koreas to have direct dialogue, and the United States would work with North Korea through its South Korean ally.⁶⁹

Former President Clinton continued the hard-line position from the previous administration, however, his administration changed to more of an appeasement approach during the 1994 nuclear crisis. The policy in place at the beginning of the Clinton administration was designed to deter North Korean aggression, while simultaneously exploring new methods to reach out to the North Korean government to achieve a negotiated settlement to the refusal of IAEA nuclear inspections.⁷⁰

Signing the NPT and the following inspections spread over three U.S. administrations. Before the inspections began at the nuclear facilities, North Korea was required to submit a declaration of all its nuclear related facilities. The inspectors would only verify activity at those listed facilities. This did not give the IAEA inspectors free reign for country-wide inspections, however, inspectors were given latitude to request inspection of questionable facilities.

North Korea submitted its nuclear facility declaration, which listed facilities that were both operating and under construction. Those that were in operation included two research reactors, a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant, a nuclear fuel storage facility, a uranium mine, two uranium refineries, and its 5-MWe graphite-moderated nuclear reactor. The facilities listed as being under construction included a radiochemical laboratory, a 50-MWe nuclear reactor, a 200-MWe nuclear reactor, and a 635-MWe nuclear reactor. As part of its declaration, the DPRK reported nuclear related operations. The DPRK reported that it had extracted approximately 90 grams of plutonium from the fuel of its 5-MWe reactor

⁶⁹ "The President's News Conference With President Roh Tae Woo of South Korea in Seoul," January 6, 1992, <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/papers/1992/92010601.html> (accessed April 20, 2006).

⁷⁰ Rinn-Sup Shinn, "North Korea: Policy Determinants, Alternative Outcomes, U.S. Policy Approaches," June 24, 1993, <http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/crs/93-612f.htm> (accessed April 5, 2006).

at Yongbyon in 1990. The first inspection team arrived in the DPRK for a five-day inspection, 11-16 May 1992. Following this initial visit, the IAEA and DPRK developed an inspection schedule that included six inspections beginning toward the end of May and finishing in February 1993. These preliminary inspections would set the baseline of North Korea's nuclear program. The main focus of these preliminary inspections was to ensure that the new NPT member was not pursuing a nuclear weapons program.⁷¹

Prior to this in 1991, North Korea and South Korea signed the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North." This agreement had the potential to cease all hostilities on the peninsula and provide a path toward reunification. Its key points included recognition of each other's systems and provide for economic, scientific and cultural exchanges between the two. This also addressed the potential of opening dialogue between divided families and reopening roads and rail lines severed by the Demilitarized Zone.⁷²

The actions that led up to what came to be called the Agreed Framework began as officials investigated inconsistencies from North Korea's nuclear declaration to the IAEA. The IAEA requested to inspect two sites that were not in the declaration, which were thought to be related to waste nuclear storage. The IAEA also requested to look at more documentation that would further clear up the inconsistency, but North Korea denied both requests from the IAEA. When the North Koreans refused the inspections, it said that it refused these inspections on the grounds that the inspections might jeopardize its supreme interests. This language was derived from article X of the NPT,⁷³ and allows a member state to withdraw from the treaty.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Young Whan Khil, "Confrontation or Compromise? Lessons from the 1994 Crisis," *Peace and Security in Northeast Asia*, (Armonk, NY, 1997), 187.

⁷² Oberdorfer, 260-3.

⁷³ Joseph Cirincione, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar, "The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," *Deadly Arsenals: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction*, (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), 376.

⁷⁴ "Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards."

Negotiations began with North Korea soon after its announcement of its intent to withdraw from the NPT. On the very last day, North Korea announced it would suspend its withdrawal from the treaty, however, the North Koreans stated that it saw itself in a different category than being a party to the treaty. The IAEA was then permitted to conduct limited inspections. Although the IAEA's goal was to verify that North Korea was in full compliance, IAEA inspectors were limited to their inspection of only the sites declared by North Korea to the IAEA.⁷⁵

Approximately one month after former President Carter had visited North Korea, Kim Il-sung died of a heart attack on July 8, 1994. Talks were still going on in Geneva, because the North Korean party had not been told of his death. After learning of his death, the party left Geneva to return to North Korea; it continued with the talks in August.⁷⁶

A. SIX-PARTY TALKS

Following these events in January 2003, the Bush administration set up a three-round party talk to discuss the North Korean nuclear issue. Included in the first meeting in April 2003 were the United States, North Korea and China. After this meeting, the Bush administration approached South Korea and Japan and pledged to include them in future meetings. Four months later, the first Six-Party Talks was held in China that included Russia as well. Successive meetings in August 2003, February 2004, and June 2004 were not able to achieve any significant breakthroughs. Most of the blame for lack of progress is focused on North Korea.⁷⁷

There is great concern and eagerness to learn if North Korea has an operational nuclear weapon. It is possible that North Korea has developed and manufactured a few nuclear weapons, but there is no consensus about the numbers. Scientists in the Department of Energy (DOE), as well as analysts in the Department of Defense (DoD), have based the number of nuclear weapons that North Korea possess on the amount of fuel rods that have been

⁷⁵ "Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards."

⁷⁶ Oberdorfer, 339-41.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

reprocessed, estimated to have been 8,000. The information about enriching uranium is more troubling, because there has been no definitive answer provided as to when this project started. Most initial reports by DOE and DoD estimated the number of nuclear weapons between one and three. Currently, those estimates have gone as high as six nuclear weapons. This higher estimate is based on the amount of weapons grade plutonium (^{239}Pu) that North Korea could possibly reprocess from the spent fuel rods. Reprocessing is the method of extracting ^{239}Pu from spent nuclear fuel rods that have been removed from a nuclear reactor. Analysts are not confident one way or the other about a uranium-based weapon. The uranium enrichment question is based on when analysts believe the program started and if North Korea actually has the capability for enriching uranium.⁷⁸

After a long break, the Six-Party Talks resumed in September 2005. During this meeting the party members were able to come to an agreement and announced a joint statement at its conclusion. It was a productive meeting, and the joint statement contained six points. The first point reaffirmed that the party members agreed that the goal of these talks would lead to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful way. Within this point, North Korea announced that it had a right to pursue nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, would fully quit its nuclear program, and would return to both the NPT and IAEA safeguards in the near future. The United States announced that it had no nuclear weapons on the peninsula and that it had no intention of attacking North Korea with either nuclear or conventional weapons. The ROK stated that it did not have nuclear weapons within its territory, that it would not accept them in the future, and that the 1992 joint declaration of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should be observed. The other party members stated their respect for this goal and agreed to discuss supplying North Korea with light-water reactors at the appropriate time.

⁷⁸ Selig Harrison, "Did North Korea Cheat," *Foreign Affairs*, (January/February 2005): 100.

In the second point, all party members agreed to recognize each state, using international norms and relations. Within this point, North Korea and the United States agreed to respect each other's sovereignty, and to take steps to normalize relations. North Korea and Japan agreed to take steps to normalize their relationship as well.

The third point addressed the cooperation to promote energy, trade and investment either in a bilateral or multilateral environment. Within this point, all party members agreed to assist North Korea with meeting its energy needs. The last three points were aimed at improving regional stability, advancing the talks in a productive manner, and agreeing to meet again in November 2005.⁷⁹

While the Six-Party Talks addressed six points, the ones that stood out involved North Korea's agreeing to stop its nuclear program and to return to the NPT, and the statement of intention to provide light-water reactors to North Korea at a time to be determined in the future. The latter statement jumped to the forefront, when North Korea made an announcement the following day. In less than twenty-four hours, North Korea announced it would not abandon its nuclear program unless it received light-water reactors first. This comment not only drew attention and criticism within the United States, but also from the other party members. Tension about this provision remained high through the next round of talks that were held in November.⁸⁰

B. IMPACT WITH SIX-PARTY PARTICIPANTS

As speculated, the talks in November 2005 were not as productive as the previous meeting. The only items that resulted from the talks was that another full meeting would be scheduled for December 2005 or January 2006, and that bilateral and working level type meetings should continue until the next full meeting. The provision dealing with the light-water reactor was brought up by

⁷⁹ "Six-Party Talks End 19 Sep; Joint Agreement Adopted," September 19, 2005, <http://www.yonhapnews.net/Engservices/3000000000.html> (accessed 19 September 2005).

⁸⁰ Barbara Demick, Mark Magnier and Sonni Efron. "N. Korea Sets Condition On Nuclear Pact," *LA Times*, September 20, 2005, <http://www.latimes.com> (accessed September 21, 2005).

North Korea, but it was not pressed further. The ROK, Japan, and China agreed that North Korea should abandon its program before discussing the light-water reactor subject.⁸¹

In an attempt to deflect potential attention from the nuclear issue, North Korea announced that the financial sanctions imposed by the United States would have a negative impact upon resolving the Six-Party Talks agreements. These sanctions were applied to accounts North Korea held in a Macao-based bank, which were linked with WMD proliferation activity and money laundering. The United States had placed sanctions against other North Korean accounts in June, which were suspected in WMD proliferation activities. Another subject of diversion occurred when the United States and KEDO made the decision to stop all work on the light-water reactors, as part of the 1994 Agreed Framework. North Korea stated that this pullout by the United States caused a huge economic loss, and believed it was entitled to receive compensation for this loss. North Korea has used these two items to prevent any future progress of the Six - Party Talks. This method of moving forward may not bode well for North Korea, as the other party members agree with the United States, that this should be solved bilaterally and not as part of the Six-Party Talks.⁸²

Continuing the current path with North Korea has both potential positive and negative outcomes. The positive outcomes may include a denuclearized Korean peninsula and regional stability, while the negative outcomes potentially include indefinite instability in the region and a potential implosion of North Korea. Reviewing the past events with North Korea, it is not hard to envision the potential negative consequences. North Korea relies heavily on China for its support, although the ROK has also provided limited assistance. It is neither in China's nor the ROK's interest for the state of North Korea either to continue in

⁸¹ Philip Pan. "N. Korea Arms Talks End With Little Progress," *Washington Post*, November 12, 2005, Pg. 26, <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (accessed November 14, 2005).

⁸² "DPRK Party Organ Reportedly Claims 6-Party Talks 'Can't Resume' Amid US Sanctions," *Open Source Center* December 6, 2005, <http://www.opensource.gov> (accessed December 5, 2005).

isolation or to implode. Both scenarios will impose an economic strain on each of them, as a potential flood of North Koreans would spill over into both countries.

In addition, other potential pitfalls exist. In similar fashion of raising other issues and attempting to include them as part of the six-party agenda, North Korea could bring up other issues. One example could be human rights issues. Human rights issues could cause the talks to deadlock and grind to a halt. As North Korea opens up to the international community and global market, so will its vulnerabilities to international norms. In this respect, its reclusive nature has protected its authoritarian regime from outside prying eyes. The potential for this issue to rise to the top of the agenda is real, because China is known for its past human rights abuses. China, as the most powerful influence on North Korea, would also be inviting such scrutiny upon itself as these talks successfully make progress.

C. HARD-LINE STANCE

The slow progression may be another example of something that would cause the Six-Party Talks not to reach its goal. North Korea may draw attention to the similarity of the current progression of talks, with the 1994 Agreed Framework. If the party members bought into this argument, this situation could cause the talks to disintegrate. At any time, if one of the other party members supports any one of the arguments the North Koreans may make, this endeavor would surely fail. Successful cooperation with all countries involved dealing with North Korea is the key to success.

It is a complicated path, and at the same time an optimistic goal, to envision a denuclearized Korean peninsula and regional stability. The United States and members in the region were initially heading down that path in 1994 when the Agreed Framework was established. The Agreed Framework was a good deal for North Korea, and had this agreement continued through to the end, North Korea would have been able to receive the light-water reactors, heavy fuel oil at no cost, diplomatic relations with the United States, lifting of the United States economic embargo, and most likely a United States nuclear security guarantee. In return, North Korea would have frozen its nuclear program, would

have come into full compliance with the Safeguards Agreement, would have provided accurate disposition of the discharged fuel rods from the 5MWe reactor, and would have dismantled its nuclear facilities.⁸³

Through the Six-Party Talks, similar goals for North Korea are available. It remains in the best interest overall if North Korea complies with CVID. When this situation is achieved on the peninsula and it receives the commitments from all party members, the region is destined to increase in stability. As relations and trust grow between the countries involved along with the potential programs countries have stated they would support pending the outcome of a denuclearized peninsula, North Korea could potentially emerge as the biggest winner.

As the region becomes more stable, the potential for greater trade increases. North Korea could be the stimulus for trade to increase, as it would be a great source of labor. If this occurs, the peninsula as a whole would benefit. Once North Korea complies with CVID principles of its nuclear program, a potential increase in business, technology, and commercial trading will follow. As its neighbor on the peninsula, the ROK would benefit both directly and indirectly from the increased trade. All the other members in the region would also indirectly benefit from this activity.

The potential for peace and stability in the region remains an attainable goal as long as the party members continue to have a dialogue. This aspect will remain the key ingredient as the United States continues with this policy with North Korea. The difference in the current situation, when compared with the past, is the Six-Party Talks' September 2005 joint statement. As the Six-Party Talks continue to meet and make progress, however small, it will be up to all the members to remain focused on the goal. North Korea will probably continue to extend these talks indefinitely, as it will benefit from this action. Communication

⁸³ Larry A. Niksch.

diffused the tension during the 1994 crisis on the peninsula, and communication will be the key to accomplishing the goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula, and potentially a reunified, denuclearized Korea.

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V. A FLEXIBLE U.S. POLICY

Since the United States has a presence in the Northeast Asia region, it now has a responsibility to assist in regional stability. North Korea continues to be the focus related to any talks that attempt to increase regional stability. Thus far, usual forms of diplomacy, containment, and deterrence have not been able to decrease the real and perceived threat from North Korea following the end of World War II. This chapter proposes that the United States' foreign policy toward North Korea should be more flexible. After providing the background information, this chapter will examine three policy options. These options will provide background information for the next chapter that presents the recommended option and provides a possible implementation plan, which will identify the major players in the U.S. administration and proposed responsibilities.

A. REUNIFICATION

Reunification has been a goal for both Korean states, since the nation was divided following World War II. The peninsula was divided into the Soviet Union's and United States' areas of responsibility, with the understanding the two Koreas would be reunited later in time. This later time has never developed. The situation was further complicated as the south established itself as the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 1948 followed by the north establishing itself as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) later in the same year.⁸⁴

North Korea attempted to reunify the peninsula by force in 1950, starting the Korean War. North Korea understood that reunification of the peninsula was its right, and was willing to use military force if necessary to achieve this goal. This goal is reflected in North Korea's updated 1998 constitution, however, the wording is more peaceful. "The great leader Comrade Kim Il-sung is the sun of the nation and the lodestar of the reunification of the fatherland. Comrade Kim Il-

⁸⁴ Oberdorfer, 7.

sung set the reunification of the country as the nation's supreme task, and devoted all his work and endeavors entirely to its realization.”⁸⁵

South Korea was not prepared for such an attack, because it lacked the industrial base that was in the north. North Korea initially believed that the attack would cause the ROK government to collapse, allowing North Korea to defend its ROK brothers from the U.S. invaders. When the United States intervened with the United Nations, the war that was intended by the north to reunite the nation turned into an international quagmire. The military fighting ended when the armistice was signed in 1953. This event may have been interpreted by North Korea as an obstacle for reunification. Through deals and relations with the Soviets and Chinese, North Korea continued to attempt to unify the peninsula.

North Korea had an agreement from the Soviet Union, that the Soviets would come to North Korea's aid if it were invaded by the United States. Kim Il-sung made this agreement with Joseph Stalin during one of his visits. This agreement may have emboldened the north. There have been many attempted infiltrations through the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) from the north as well as minor skirmishes at sea. Two events almost restarted the Korean War. The first incident began as an assassination attempt on the ROK president, and then involved a U.S. military vessel. The second incident involved a skirmish at the DMZ. The commonality among these events is that they both involved U.S. military personnel.⁸⁶

In the first incident, North Korea sent a group of commandos to Seoul to assassinate the ROK president in 1968. This attempt failed and all the commandos were killed. In an attempt not to have attention focused on North Korea for the failed attack on the ROK president, North Korea attacked and captured the USS Pueblo. The vessel was in international waters when it was attacked, and one person was killed. This action intensified the political situation,

⁸⁵ “DPRK's Socialist Constitution,” <http://www1.korea-np.co.jp/pk/> (accessed September 14, 2005).

⁸⁶ Dana Steinberg.

especially when North Korea did not return the remaining crew to the United States. Eventually the crew was returned, but North Korea kept the vessel.⁸⁷

The second incident, in 1976, involved a US/ROK joint operation in the DMZ. The soldiers entered the DMZ to trim a few trees. North Korean soldiers attacked this group of soldiers as they were trimming the trees. During the skirmish, fatalities occurred on the U.S. side. This second event almost drew the major powers into another shooting war, since North Korea stated it was just another ploy by the United States to improve the upcoming election for President Ford.⁸⁸

The next major friction-causing event occurred later in the 1990s. It was now evident to North Korea that it would need something more than its conventional military to both reunify the peninsula and keep its own interests alive. The solution involved having a nuclear capability. The North Koreans were aware of this fact as the cold war began to develop. The DPRK saw that the only way to be one of the major players was to acquire a nuclear capability just like the Soviets and Chinese had done. After the Chinese had achieved a nuclear capability, North Korea began to show signs of interest and asked for assistance. When the Chinese would not provide assistance, North Korea turned to the Soviet Union for assistance. The Soviet Union provided nuclear assistance on the condition North Korea first enter into the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

After North Korea entered the NPT in 1985, it began to exploit the treaty. The first example was seen with inspection delays. Usually, it takes eighteen months for a new signatory to complete the process establishing the baseline of nuclear facilities and to begin inspections with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). North Korea was able to delay the treaty process for seven years. By the time the inspections began in 1992, North Korea had run its nuclear reactor long enough to change fuel. Changing the fuel would enable

⁸⁷ Weathersby, 248.

⁸⁸ Weathersby, 259-60.

North Korea to be one step closer to acquiring a nuclear capability. The next step in the nuclear fuel cycle process and weapons development process is reprocessing the spent fuel rods, the process of extracting plutonium from these rods.⁸⁹

The IAEA inspectors arrived in North Korea and began inspecting the nuclear identified facilities. As the inspections progressed, the IAEA inspectors discovered a potential undeclared facility. When the IAEA inspectors brought this to the attention of North Korea officials, the inspectors were told it was just a storage facility. The inspectors requested to inspect the facility to verify the claim, but were not allowed to do so. This action by the North Koreans immediately raised concerns with the inspectors. This incident was reported up the chain and caught the attention of the United States.⁹⁰

The incident raised international concern when the inspectors were expelled from North Korea. Tensions were high, and the United States was contemplating a surgical strike on the nuclear facilities. Former President Carter assisted the Clinton administration, by engaging North Korea in dialogue. North Korea threatened to withdraw from the NPT, however decided to remain on the last day of the notification period. An agreement was reached, known as the Agreed Framework in 1994.⁹¹

This agreement stipulated that North Korea would freeze its nuclear program in return for concessions. These concessions included two light water nuclear reactors, which would be provided to North Korea from the United States. These reactors would replace the current graphite moderated reactor that North Korea had used to acquire a source of plutonium for a nuclear weapons program. Until the light water reactors were complete and online, North Korea would receive heavy fuel oil. North Korea would use the heavy fuel oil to replace the

⁸⁹ Young-sun Ha, 1134-51.

⁹⁰ Oberdorfer, 277.

⁹¹ *Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards*. In Focus: IAEA and DPRK, March 2005, http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/laeaDprk/fact_sheet_may2003.shtml; James A. Foley, "North Korean declaration puts ball in Washington's court," Posted March 10, 2005, <http://www4.janes.com> (accessed March 4, 2005).

energy generated from its now frozen nuclear program. All of the equipment and fuel shipments would come through KEDO, a company headed by the ROK that had the support of both the United States and Japan.⁹²

The Bush administration, unknown by North Korea at the time, was willing to proceed with a bold move in 2002 that included offering economic aid and political incentives that would improve North Korean lives. As part of the Agreed Framework, North Korea was supposed to work with the United States, South Korea, and Japan to begin the process of dismantling its nuclear program. Negotiations continued in that path, although progress was extremely slow. During one of the negotiations, a North Korean official told a member of the U.S. negotiating party that North Korea was pursuing a secret uranium enrichment program. The exact details of this exchange between the two parties remain a debating point. The United States official, James Kelly, provided evidence to North Korea, showing that the United States knew it had a uranium enrichment program. The North Korean delegation then agreed and announced it was enriching uranium. The North Korean delegation team denied the allegation later and has never admitted to having such a program. ⁹³

After hearing the news of the uranium enrichment program, not only was this bold approach of offering aid and incentives not further implemented, the heavy fuel oil shipments were halted. This action of halting the fuel shipments was enough for North Korea to announce its withdrawal from the NPT. When a signatory announces its withdrawal from this treaty, the signatory must wait 90 days before the action is official. Other signatories of the treaty must also recognize the action. Since North Korea had withdrawn from the treaty previously for 89 days, it announced that it officially had withdrawn from the treaty the next day. Prior to this announcement, North Korea expelled the IAEA

⁹² Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, November 17, 2005.

⁹³ Daniel A. Pinkston. "Collapse of the Agreed Framework?," <http://www.csis.org> (accessed November 30, 2005).

inspectors again. North Korea broke the IAEA seals that marked the frozen status of the nuclear program and restarted its heavy water nuclear reactor.⁹⁴

This action by North Korea again raised tensions in the region, and another agreement was reached. This agreement became what is now known as the Six-Party Talks, which involves North Korea, China, Russia, ROK, Japan, and the United States. In fashion similar to previous negotiations that involved North Korea, the talks began with delays. Soon after the talks began, North Korea made an official announcement in February 2005 that it had a nuclear deterrent capability. In September of the same year, the first real talks began in China. By the end of the talks, the participants had reached an agreement. The joint statement from this meeting announced that North Korea would give up its nuclear program. The next day, North Korea countered the joint statement by announcing that it would only give up its nuclear program after receiving the light water nuclear reactors that were part of the earlier 1994 Agreed Framework.⁹⁵

Another meeting was held in November. There were no major steps of progress announced at the end, only that the talks would continue. The next set of working level talks scheduled for December were canceled by North Korea, because the United States froze North Korean assets in a Macao-based bank. North Korea wants to settle this issue before continuing with talks. So far, North Korea remains interested in the Six-Party Talks, and the next round was scheduled for January 2006.⁹⁶

As of the time of this writing, North Korea is no longer interested in returning to the Six-Party Talks and the financial sanctions have no effect. A North Korean official stated it is cooperating economically with China and Russia, and that additional sanctions would not cause any change.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Manyin, Chanlett-Avery, and Marchart.

⁹⁵ Sonni Efron, "A New Tilt toward N. Korea," *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 2005, p. 1.

⁹⁶ "Japan: DPRK Notifies US of Intention Not to Attend Next Rounds of Six-Party Talks," December 4, 2005, <http://www.fbis.gov> (accessed 4 December 4, 2005).

⁹⁷ "DPRK Official Dismisses US 'Sanctions', Reiterates DPRK Nuclear Deterrent," May 12, 2006, *Open Source Center*, <http://www.opensource.gov> (accessed May 14, 2006).

In late November 2005, the members of KEDO met to discuss the deliverables of the 1994 Agreed Framework. The discussion focused on the provision of providing North Korea with light water nuclear reactors. As a group, KEDO made the decision to no longer pursue the light water reactors. This decision means that the agreement to provide light water nuclear reactors to North Korea has been officially taken off the table.⁹⁸

In reviewing this short history of North Korea's journey to acquire nuclear weapons, it is clear that the U.S. foreign policy toward North Korea has not been effective in preventing North Korea from its endeavor of acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. Taking into account that containment, deterrence, and current diplomacy have not been able to resolve this regional situation, this chapter proposes to examine three flexible foreign policy options the United States should pursue. These three options will be briefly described and one will be recommended. The following chapter will then outline the how the recommended foreign policy option could be implemented.

The first policy option would have the United States to pursue bilateral agreements with North Korea. The United States would seek agreements that may or may not involve the status of North Korea's nuclear program. A second policy option focuses on the process of actively supporting reunification of the Korean nation. This option would actively address the process of bringing the two states together, and may or may not address the nuclear knowledge that the reunified Korea would possess. A third policy option seeks to use the Six-Party Talks as a roadmap toward stability in the region, while focusing on North Korea's nuclear program. This policy option would allow the countries involved in these talks to pursue other issues, and would involve a long diplomatic process.

B. BILATERAL AGREEMENT

The option of seeking bilateral relations with North Korea has been recommended to the United States by the ROK many times. The ROK has developed a policy with North Korea over the years. Under the previous ROK

⁹⁸ "DPRK Urges US Compensation for End to LWRs, Agreed Framework," November 29, 2005, *Open Source Center*, <http://www.fbis.gov> (accessed November 29, 2005).

administration under President Kim Dae Jung, it was known as the Sunshine Policy. This policy has continued under the current Roh Moo Hyun administration. Within the United States, some politicians view the Sunshine Policy as an appeasement policy, because reciprocity by North Korea is not required. The Sunshine Policy developed in the Kim administration, seeks to provide limited assistance as a means of keeping engaged with North Korea. The United States views any assistance to North Korea without reciprocity, as an action of appeasement.

The United States does not believe that appeasement, as part of its foreign policy is a prudent way to solve issues with North Korea. The United States believes that in reciprocity, nothing is free. The current Bush administration has officially stated that it will not enter into bilateral negotiations with North Korea until North Korea has completely, verifiably, irreversibly, dismantled (CVID) its nuclear program. The United States will engage North Korea with other countries and nations in the region, but will not engage North Korea on its own. This hard-line position has softened, as illustrated in the latest rounds of the Six-Party Talks. The United States has unofficially met with North Korea separately during the talks.⁹⁹

Establishing bilateral relations with North Korea as well as improving bilateral relations with the other party members clearly has more positive than negative outcomes. The goal of this approach would be to establish what is known as multi-bilateralism or bi-multilateralism. These terms mean that each state would establish a bilateral tie with each state in the region. As all members improve bilateral relations with each other, negotiations should progress in a positive fashion.¹⁰⁰

C. REUNIFICATION

The option of actively seeking reunification for the Koreas seems to be the natural route to take. The nuclear issue is one item that continues to come up for debate. Most of the players in the region believe that a reunified peninsula would

⁹⁹ Larry A. Niksch.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

increase regional stability. When the topic of Northeast Asia comes up, North Korea is usually involved in some part of the discussion. The discussion then involves the nuclear program and the potential that North Korea has an operational nuclear capability. When discussing the possible outcomes of a unified peninsula, this nuclear item causes much concern.

A reunified peninsula without nuclear weapons would be the best outcome and a lofty goal for those involved to achieve. If this were to be the case, then Korea could be the stabilizing factor for the region. To its north, both Russia and China possess nuclear weapons. To its east, Japan is a latent nuclear power. Even though it does not possess nuclear weapons, Japan does possess the scientific knowledge and facilities to quickly translate its peaceful nuclear fuel cycle into a nuclear weapons development process. A reunified Korea could be another virtual nuclear power in the region, when both knowledge and facilities are combined.

A reunified peninsula with nuclear weapons would cause tension and friction to continue in the region. If the peninsula were reunified under this condition, the next set of questions seeks to answer with whom Korea will ally. Of course, this will depend on the process of reunification. A reunited Korea will most likely side with the country that assists it the most and has the most to offer following the reunification process. The current hope would be that Korea would ally with the United States and Japan, instead of China or Russia. If Korea were to ally with China, then the friction would remain between Korea and Japan. If Korea were to ally with the United States and Japan, tensions would remain between Korea and China.¹⁰¹

China has potentially the most to lose, depending how the two Koreas reunify. If the United States is the major player in the process, China will most likely have to deal with great pressures in its relationship with Taiwan. If the Koreas reunite, that might strengthen the argument for an independent Taiwan.

¹⁰¹ LTG William E. Odom, "The Role of the U.S. Army in Asia," in *Eisenhower Conference on the U.S. Army in Asia*, March 31, 2005, http://www.eisenhowerseries.com/pdfs/final_05/CAN.pdf (accessed July 15, 2005).

The potential of continued friction in the region following a reunification under these conditions is great. Another reason China may not want to see a reunified Korea would be the potential of U.S. forces to be close to China's northeast border. This could lead to further diplomatic relational challenges, and could be leverage that China could use against the new Korea.¹⁰²

On the other hand, China has potentially the most to gain from a reunified Korea. If China were to be the major player in reuniting the peninsula, it would gain a potential ally to balance against the United States and Japan. This would continue the regional friction and possibly start an arms race. The thought of a unified peninsula with nuclear weapons is not in the best interest of either Japan or the United States. Japan would probably develop a nuclear capability, if this situation were to come to fruition. Japan has nuclear facilities that could support a nuclear weapons program. Japan already has limited relations with China and Russia, and this would potentially make the situation worse.¹⁰³

D. SIX-PARTY TALKS AS A ROADMAP

The option of using the Six-Party Talks as a roadmap for ensuring stability in the region would utilize a combination of methods. The major points of this policy option would include some ingredients of the other policy options, such as increasing bilateral relations and supporting reunification of the Korean peninsula. Another major point this option would include involves the NPT. The current focus of the Six-Party Talks deals with the North Korean nuclear issue, which could then address its nuclear program as rejoining the NPT. A last point of this policy would include the only success of the current talks, the potential to continue a dialogue between the party members. In this case, no one method addresses the path toward stability on the Korean peninsula.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Odom.

¹⁰³ Dr. Henry Kenny. "Facing the Challenge: The U.S. Army in Asia," in *Eisenhower Conference on the U.S. Army in Asia*, March 31, 2005, http://www.eisenhowerseries.com/pdfs/final_05/CAN.pdf (accessed July 15, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ COL David J. Bishop. "Dismantling North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programs," <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil> (accessed May 23, 2006).

Working toward a nuclear free Korean peninsula is only one step removed from potentially having a nuclear free reunified Korean nation. So far, the base agreements are in place to begin both endeavors. Using the Six-Party Talks as part of this roadmap increases the probability of it coming to fruition. As the discussions continue, the members could draw from the lessons learned from Japan. Japan would be the model of a nation that is a virtual nuclear power, but still remains a nuclear weapon-free country. Under these conditions, this goal of attaining a nuclear weapon-free peninsula could be reached.

A goal of the Six-Party Talks that deals with the reunification of the peninsula would have more of a chance of success than having each country or nation in the region work it out. If only individual nations were involved with this endeavor, the process could hopelessly become deadlocked. The best example of this would be North Korea's past, where it has been able to play the countries within the region against each other. As leverage to receive military assistance, North Korea would mention to the Soviet Union that its military support did not match support the ROK was receiving from the United States. North Korea's brinkmanship has protected its regime from having to accept offerings from other nations that did not best serve its best interests.

The NPT continues to be a point of discussion when dealing with North Korea. Its withdrawal from the treaty has sparked controversy and discussion that impact areas immediately outside of the region. Engaging North Korea and having it rejoin the treaty is in the best interest of both North Korea and members in the region. The positive aspects would include the potential for North Korea to receive assistance to meet its energy needs, while engaging in legal activities.

Continuing the dialogue in the region is paramount, because communication is the key to regional stability. As long as the nations in the region are communicating, the ability to address friction is enhanced. The challenge occurs when the members in the region halt communications. A situation of silence between the regional members will never lead to a positive outcome. The frictions and distrust of one another only grow and have a higher

probability of leading to armed conflict. Signaling through actions is more dangerous than even through indirect communication. The action of one member could send the wrong signal to another member, which could lead to an armed conflict in the region.

E. U.S. ROLE IN NORTHEAST ASIA

The region is best served if the United States pursues a flexible policy with North Korea. The hard-line stance the United States held with the former Soviet Union worked during the Cold War, but it has proven ineffective with North Korea in the Post-Cold War era. North Korea's brinkmanship has served it well from the time North Korea became a sovereign state. Through past negotiations, the U.S. policy stance has remained rigid. It is now time to soften the approach and try a different approach.

Just because the carrots and sticks approach has worked in the past, does not mean it will work in the same manner for all situations. The time has come for the United States to review why the carrots are not enticing and the sticks not halting unwanted behavior. For this method to work, the carrots must be something North Korea would like to have, while the sticks are actions taken against it that it would not like. Past policies have not been effective carrots and sticks, from the viewpoint of North Korea. For this approach to be effective North Korea and United States must have the same understanding of what the carrots and sticks mean. A flexible foreign policy with North Korea has a much better chance of success, because it is able to leverage all the states in the region. By doing this, the method takes on an international carrot and stick approach. As all of the states agree on the party line, the carrots become enticing while the sticks prevent unwanted behavior.

The flexible approach will take time, but it is a much better way than containment, deterrence, or a military solution. If conflict occurs on the peninsula, the destruction and loss of human life could be devastating. Both North and South Korea gain nothing if damage inflicted sets both of them back into pre-modern circumstances. Once regional stability is in place, the rest of the pieces should be easier to put into place.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CURRENT POLICY PROS AND CONS

The U.S. current foreign policy towards North Korea includes different types of strategies, which are predominately heavy with containment and preemption, with very little attention on engagement. This strategy has good points, which include clearly stating the CVID requirements and providing incentives that keep the agreement on track. U.S. government officials stated earlier that negotiations would continue after North Korea commits to completely dismantling its nuclear weapons program. The United States and its allies have offered economic incentives as well, as part of providing an incentive for continued progress and rewarding the North Korean regime for honoring its commitment.¹⁰⁵

The CVID approach provides a straightforward path toward ending North Korea's nuclear weapons program. In this approach, the parties involved would agree on a plan that leads to the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of the nuclear weapons program. Coming to an agreement on such matters has already become problematic. When an agreement does occur, this strategy seems to have little flexibility and not much room for error or mistakes.

Providing economic and energy incentives to keep the process going is key. By presenting North Korea with these types of incentives, the United States and its allies are sending the message that this is a sincere effort and that it is a priority. This message must be understood by the North Korean regime for this to have a chance of working. Addressing these points within a negotiation dialogue is the most direct way to get the point across.

This U.S. current foreign policy towards North Korea has a few negative points to consider. What are the consequences if the North Korean regime does

¹⁰⁵ David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, "Dismantling the DPRK's Nuclear Weapons Program: A Practicable, Verifiable Plan of Action" (Washington DC: Peaceworks No. 54, 2006): 15, <http://www.usip.org> (accessed February 3, 2006).

not accept the U.S. policy? The consequences may lead to more coercive action or even a preemptive strike. If North Korea does not meet the requirements agreed upon during negotiations, there is no reason for further engagement. This seriously limits the United States and its allies to either applying more coercive measures or a preemptive strike.

Conducting a preemptive strike against North Korea is not a good option, however, it may be a consideration. The March 2006 United States National Security Strategy addresses preemption as the last option to use against a hostile adversary. The preemptive strike, in this case, would be exercising the United States' inherent right of self-defense.¹⁰⁶

A preemptive strike against North Korea's nuclear weapons infrastructure would not guarantee everything gets destroyed, because the United States does not know the locations of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons facilities. The facilities involved with the uranium enrichment program have not been identified and are believed to be underground. Another problem is the number of artillery pieces and missiles that would need to be destroyed so North Korea would not be able to retaliate against the ROK, Japan, or U.S. forces in the vicinity.

If North Korea were able to retaliate with only conventional munitions against Seoul, it would be catastrophic. North Korea possesses hundreds of missiles that can easily reach South Korea's capital. This number of missiles is in addition to the number of artillery pieces that are in North Korea's artillery range. Even though the United States and the ROK would defeat North Korea, the human damage to the peninsula is estimated to be from 100,000 to more than one million casualties.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ George W. Bush. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America" March 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/html> (accessed 17 March 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Ted G. Carpenter. "Living with the Unthinkable: How to Coexist with a Nuclear North Korea," *The National Interest*, (74, Winter 2003/2004):95.

These are some of the main consequences that will arise if the current U.S. foreign policy toward North Korea is not successful. The main point being that there is little flexibility if the North Korean leadership decides not to accept this hard-line U.S. stance.

B. FLEXIBLE POLICY PROS AND CONS

A flexible U.S. foreign policy towards North Korea has good points. These include being able to adjust and address a new situation while not being tied to one method to resolve a specific conflict. This strategy allows the negotiators to explore a wide spectrum of possible solutions, and that ability to explore a wide variety of methods provides a much greater chance of leading to a successful conflict resolution. The key is to strike a balance between the current U.S. and ROK policies toward North Korea.

The ROK government is viewed as appeasing the North Korean regime. This is in stark contrast of the Bush administration, as it believes the North Korean regime cannot be trusted.¹⁰⁸ North Korea may not be trustworthy, however, maintaining communications and engagement with a more open policy is the best way to approach a solution to bring about a nuclear free peninsula.

Having a this new policy means when the other party does one action, you are not limited to one specific counter action, but have multiple actions to choose from. In essence, all options are kept open, leaving leaders to pick the best one that fits the current situation. This point is important when dealing with a country that has been labeled a “rogue state” or part of an “axis of evil.” As previously discussed, the North Korean leadership is skilled in brinkmanship, and one way for the United States to combat that skill is with flexibility.

A flexible U.S. foreign policy towards North Korea does not have truly negative aspects. The structure of the negotiations in this new policy approach and step by step process move slowly enough to recognize irregularities. This strategy would provide both a confidence building measure and also get North Korea to buy into the situation. If North Korea attempted to take advantage of

¹⁰⁸ Victor Cha, 41.

the generosity of the international community, which potential exists, its behavior could be modified by withholding some of the economic and energy assistance. In this way, U.S. policy would continue to use the carrots and sticks approach, only with this option the carrots you use today could be used as sticks later on.¹⁰⁹ This will only occur if the flexible policy maintains engaging communications and provides an open forum.

C. POLICY RECOMMENDATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Reviewing the three policy options covered in Chapter V, this thesis recommends the option that employs the Six-Party Talks as a roadmap toward stability in the region. This policy option provides the most flexibility when dealing with North Korea. While the other two options have their positive points, the third option is able to include those positive points as well. Having all of the parties in the region involved in the outcome sends a better signal to those involved as well as to the rest of the international community.

The international community would be best served by having the Northeast Asian region come together to solve the regional tension. If a country outside of the region has the power to influence and guide negotiations to a predetermined outcome, stability may not be permanent. Members in the region may not maintain a vested interest if they feel they did not provide support. Stability would have a higher probability of remaining pervasive in the region if all of the regional members play an active role in the process. If the members solved the stability issue among themselves, then stability has a higher probability of remaining in place for a longer period of time. Since both China and Japan are major parts of the global economy, this regional stability or instability will greatly affect the international community.

Implementing this foreign policy with North Korea will involve different U.S. departments. These will include the Departments of State, Energy, Commerce, Defense, and Education to varying degrees. Each of these departments has the ability to bring a specific and special expertise to bear on formulating a successful foreign policy toward North Korea.

¹⁰⁹ Cha, 72.

The Department of State would obviously take the lead role, since the main focus of this policy would be to exercise diplomacy. This department would have three major responsibilities to carry out. The success or failure of this policy option will come down to the Department of State's ability to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea, establish a reunification working group, and coordinate as well as influence U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that conduct operations within North Korean territory.¹¹⁰

Establishing diplomatic relations with North Korea should be one of the first priorities of this policy. Diplomatic relations open a conduit of communication and should not be perceived as something only established between states that get along with each other. Diplomatic relations should be also established with states that do not get along well with each other. Having a dialogue with states with which you do not get along is still a dialogue. Having a dialogue is much better than not having a dialogue, which is an extremely dangerous situation. The usual way to establish diplomatic relations can be as simple as establishing a liaison office to deal with the state.

Both the United States and North Korea have shown signs that each is acceptable to the idea of establishing this relationship. North Korea has repeatedly asked to begin this relationship with the United States. The topic recently came up during the November 2005 talks, that the United States might be willing to establish diplomatic ties with North Korea. Not only does North Korea want this, but also the ROK has suggested that the United States establish diplomatic ties with South Korea's northern neighbor. This action would improve future negotiations. Those items that did not need the attention of the Six-Party Talks could be taken up in a bilateral forum.

When the Department of State establishes a separate reunification working group for the Korean peninsula, it would be sending a signal to North Korea. This signal would demonstrate that the United States views the reunification issue as a high priority. By establishing such a group within the

¹¹⁰ Department of State is the lead agency for all diplomatic relations with other states.

State Department, it would be able to leverage work already accomplished and focus with other State groups that are similarly focused. By working with other reunification groups, such as in the ROK and potentially China and Japan, the challenges would be more easily overcome. When these different reunification working groups from the member states work together toward a common goal, several alternatives will be generated. The ideas and proposals for reunification would not be limited to one set of cultural norms, but seen and then evaluated through a multicultural approach.

The most difficult endeavor for the State Department to accomplish would be to coordinate and have influence over all of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that enter in and deal with North Korea. An NGO usually will enter a foreign country either when asked by its citizens or invited by its government. Since the situation with North Korea is extremely fragile, this thesis proposes a more stringent approach. For this option to be successful, the United States will need to have positive control over all U.S. entities that enter North Korea. In this sense, the State Department will be the one-stop-shop for any and all services that are provided by the United States.

Coordination and influence are vital in this endeavor. The State Department would need to be able to have the power and ability to remove an NGO from North Korea, in order for this to be a successful option if something were to go wrong. As the State Department has the lead role for this policy option, it would also need to coordinate the operations of the Energy, Commerce, Defense, and Education Departments as well.

The Department of Energy (DOE) would have two primary responsibilities. These would only occur after successfully establishing diplomatic relations with North Korea. The DOE would provide its expertise in all energy endeavors North Korea would be involved with. An example where the DOE might assist North Korea would be to help determine North Korea's energy requirements and the means to meet those requirements with its current available technology. This

type of assistance would be key to North Korea, since the energy means would focus on non-nuclear methods. As an international endeavor, DOE could partner with South Korea or Japan to provide energy assistance.¹¹¹

North Korea has a developed scientific base from which to start. This fact is evident in the fact that it has declared it developed a nuclear weapons program. Its scientific expertise could be employed to improve on conventional electrical power generation as well as alternative means, such as solar or wind. These endeavors would have a positive impact on the state.

Conventional electrical power generation includes fossil fuel and natural gas plants. These plants would generate energy in the same way as they produce energy in the United States. Another way the DOE could assist would be as a member of a multi-state energy project. When the DOE and other states combine their technology and resources for a multi-state energy project, North Korea would have its scientific base increased more than if it developed such means indigenously. By applying technology available today to these applications, the plants would run much more efficiently than if North Korea had moved forward on these projects themselves. A similar statement could be said with alternative means of power generation.

Alternative means of power generation would include such projects that would harness the energy from either the sun or wind. Wind farms may have the advantage in the more mountainous regions, because of the low population. Solar technology may prove advantageous to small and remote villages. This would provide an energy source without having to rely on a large support infrastructure. These are just examples of the types of assistance the DOE could provide. The DOE could also partner with other states to provide North Korea with an efficient, alternative energy source. This might lead to North Korea producing energy sources, as well.

¹¹¹ "Department of Energy Strategic Plan," September 30, 2003, <http://doe.gov>, (accessed December 2005).

The Department of Commerce (DOC) has the mission in the United States to develop trade with other nations, so as to increase the domestic industrial capacity. In this endeavor, the DOC could provide incentives for U.S. companies to establish trade relations with North Korea. As relations between North Korean and U.S. businesses mature, another measure may include encouraging U.S. companies to establish production lines within North Korea. These measures would have a positive impact on both the United States and North Korea, and also the region.¹¹²

Increasing trade and having companies operate in North Korea is not a new idea. The ROK has begun a joint venture with North Korea just north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in the town of Kaesong. A joint industrial park broke ground in 2003, in preparation for the first 15 ROK companies to operate during the pilot phase, with the working force being from North Korea. The goal is to greatly expand this industrial complex in both 2006 and 2007, with the industrial park operating with around 250 companies¹¹³. This endeavor will generate stability, as the north will begin to be included in the global economy. This joint venture has more promise than an earlier venture conducted between Russia and North Korea. The joint venture, The Tumen Program, between China, Russia, and North Korea, with United Nations backing, was just south of the Russian border. This endeavor was based on sea trade, involving Russia, China and North Korea. The venture is still in place, but did not amount to much.¹¹⁴

The Department of Defense (DoD) has three critical roles to play in this foreign policy option. These options include maintaining a credible regional presence, continue existing or establish joint operations with the states, and validate or disprove the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) intelligence. The

¹¹² "Department of Commerce Strategic Plan FY2004-FY2009," <http://doc.gov>, (accessed December 2005).

¹¹³ "Background Note: South Korea," April 2006, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2800.htm>, (accessed May 21, 2006).

¹¹⁴ Dr. David Husband, "New Directions for Tumen Programme," http://www1.korea-np.co.jp/pk/053rd_issue/yonago/yonago03.htm (accessed May 21, 2006).

first two roles are nothing new to the DoD, while the third role would be a new undertaking. Validation of U.S. intelligence would be conducted by indirect means.

It is important for the United States to maintain its credible presence in the region during all aspects of this foreign policy option. It would be clear that the actions of the military would be directed by the State Department, as the policy matures. This is nothing new, since this is how the military is managed on the peninsula in the current situation. Troop movements of each state directly influence regional stability. When troop movements occur sporadically, the action may send an unintended signal to the other state. This unintended signal may cause the beginning of a chain of events that could lead to armed conflict. While the diplomatic means are underway, troop movements should not be in motion.

The U.S. military carries on annual exercises with some states in the region. As part of this policy option, the U.S. military should engage in and conduct limited military exercises with all of the states in the region. By beginning this interaction, both militaries would gain experience that could prove useful in the future. Joint operations should begin small and work up to a size and frequency agreeable to both parties. Conducting these exercises in the region will be another positive step as states form bilateral ties.

By keeping the military presence in a status quo situation, it can be taken out of the negotiations. The current presence of U.S. troops does not constitute a threat in the region, although North Korea sees the actions taken by these troops as a potential threat to its existence. This fact is addressed each time the United States conducts a large independent military exercise on the peninsula, or when the United States conducts joint exercises with both the Japanese and ROK militaries. North Korea announces that the actions are a prelude to invasion, which has negatively impacted its economy. Instead of working at their job, North Korea says it must halt its businesses to make preparations for

repelling the impending invasion.¹¹⁵ As the region becomes more secure, the need for the current number of troops in the region may be reduced. This would be the proper and prudent time to negotiate about U.S. troop strength and a potential drawdown in the region.

The Department of Education would have both a direct and an indirect role in the region within this policy option. Educators can provide their expertise to North Korea, providing an alternative western education model. Increasing regional awareness in the United States would be another responsibility. As important it is to have credible force projection in the region, it is just as important to have support for such a force projection within the home front.¹¹⁶

Eastern and western cultures are different, and so are the learning methods. Most states in the region emphasize learning in the early years. This emphasis is quite different when compared to the west. This emphasis of early learning continues into high school, which leads to fierce competition among students for the limited slots available to attend prestigious colleges or universities. In the west, the emphasis in education is not felt until much later, as students reach high school.

As part of providing support for the region indirectly, the U.S. domestic education structure should emphasize educating students about the Northeast Asia region. Just as students learn about the history and relationships of European states, education should equally emphasize the history and relationships of the states in Northeast Asia. As the U.S. public understands the situation, the public should be more supportive of the foreign policy that improves regional stability.

This flexible U.S. policy has the potential to be implemented as soon as the Six-Party Talks resume. As soon as the agenda is set, the United States would be able to begin implementing this policy. The implementation would take time, and should focus on long term goals. One model for dismantling the North

¹¹⁵ Weathersby, 261.

¹¹⁶ "Department of Education Mission," <http://ed.gov> (accessed December 2, 2005).

Korean nuclear weapons program in three phases was developed by the United States Institute for Peace. This model shows how the Six-Party Talks can be used as a roadmap to dismantle the North Korean nuclear program.¹¹⁷

The first phase addresses the need for North Korea to freeze its program. North Korea would need to declare all of its facilities, equipment and components involved with the nuclear weapons program. The next part of this would be the disabling of all the items declared, and finally verification that these actions have been completed.¹¹⁸

The second phase would fully implement the CVID in the current U.S. policy. This phase would also address removing all key nuclear items. This would include but not be limited to plutonium production related equipment, uranium enrichment related equipment, and other materials related to either plutonium or uranium-based nuclear weapons production.¹¹⁹

The third phase would address North Korea returning to the NPT and adhering to international monitoring of any residual or nuclear related technology by the IAEA. This would include but not be limited to medical radiological isotope production or procurement, any nuclear power reactors, and former nuclear weapons program technology that has transitioned to other uses. This phase would last indefinitely.¹²⁰

These phases would progress as the Six-Party Talks proceed. The incentives for North Korea would increase as it progresses toward total dismantlement. Not only would the United States provide incentives, but also the other members. It is important to let North Korea know what is expected and also what it can expect when it successfully completes the current phase. It is also important to let North Korea know what incentive or incentives it can expect to receive after successfully completing the following phase. By proceeding in

¹¹⁷ Albright and Hinderstein, "Dismantling the DPRK's Nuclear Weapons Program," 18.

¹¹⁸ Albright and Hinderstein, "Dismantling the DPRK's Nuclear Weapons Program," 19.

¹¹⁹ Albright and Hinderstein, "Dismantling the DPRK's Nuclear Weapons Program," 20.

¹²⁰ Albright and Hinderstein, "Dismantling the DPRK's Nuclear Weapons Program," 20.

this manner, this strategy leverages confidence building measures (CBMs). A CBM is used to lessen tension before, during or after a conflict.¹²¹

The United States will greatly improve regional security and stability in Northeast Asia when it follows a flexible foreign policy towards North Korea. The first steps will be small, but the end goal of a stable and secure region will be a huge success. By using the Six-Party Talks as a roadmap, the United States and its allies will be able to finally accomplish the goal of attaining a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. Using the economic and energy incentives to keep North Korea engaged with taking positive steps toward that goal will be possible. The key to this successful endeavor will rely on open and clear communication.

¹²¹ Holly Higgins, ed, "Building Nuclear Confidence on the Korean Peninsula," in Proceedings of the July 23-4, 2001 Workshop, <http://isis-online.org> (accessed May 23, 2006).

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