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## **Russia's Policy in Northeast Asia and the Prospects for Korean Unification\***

**Alexander Lukin**

Russia's policy towards Northeast Asia cannot be understood independently of its general Asian strategy, primarily its pivot to Asia, which has practically become an official policy after 2014. There are various views about when this pivot actually began. Some see it in the distant past; others claim it dates back to the second half of the 1990s when Russia's leadership became disappointed with the one-sided policy of the West; still others link it to the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2014.

Russia's general strategy is based on the fact that the international system is gravitating towards multipolarity. It is trying to create its own independent Eurasian center of power in the multipolar world of the future and build constructive and equidistant relations with other major powers. For Russia, the maintenance of security and stability in East Asia is not only a foreign policy goal, it directly involves the resolution of an internal strategic problem—the development of its Far Eastern regions.

It will be easier for Russia to deal with the new "leftist" government in Seoul. Most Russian experts do not share the opinion of some of their Western colleagues who expect an imminent collapse of the North Korean regime. It is hard to say what the relationship between Russia and the United States will be like. On the whole, it is clear that Russia will continue to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue. It will have no major objections to reunification and, regardless of its confrontation with the West, will closely work on this issue with China, which is unlikely to be happy about reunification for its own reasons.

**Keywords:** Russia, East Asia, Korea, USA, China

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Russia's policy towards Northeast Asia cannot be understood independently of its general Asian strategy, primarily its pivot to Asia which has practically become an official policy after 2014. There are various views about when this pivot actually began. Some see it in the distant past; others claim it dates back to the second half of the 1990s when Russia's leadership became disappointed with the one-sided policy of the West; still others link it to the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2014. Without going into detail, we can say that Russia has long considered itself part of Europe and generally part of the Western world, at least since the 18th century. At the same time, it has always been aware of the geopolitical realities and while moving eastward, constantly sought to establish relations with Asian states, mainly in order to secure its eastern borders and use trade and economic cooperation with them for developing its own remote eastern regions. Such attempts were made in Soviet times and of late, but the crisis in Ukraine has created a new reality and atmosphere of deep mistrust with its European partners. This gave a serious boost to Russia's pivot to Asia, which before 2014 was no more than a tendency but afterwards became a fait accompli.

Russia's general strategy is based on the fact that the international system is gravitating towards multipolarity. It is trying to create its own independent Eurasian center of power in the multipolar world of the future and build constructive and equidistant relations with other major powers. However, having encountered extreme hostility and a serious threat from the most powerful American-European center in recent years, Russia is trying to coordinate its efforts against this threat together with other centers of power, primarily the Asian ones (China, India), other BRICS members, and non-Western international organizations (the SCO, ASEAN).

Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov, who oversees the country's Asian policy, says Russia plays a major constructive role in Asia. "Russia does not seek to rearrange the balance of power in its own favor but wants to build a system of interstate relations in the region that would guarantee stability and prosperity for all. We have no doubt that the modern regional architecture should be based on the principles of inclu-

sive economic cooperation, and equal and indivisible security.”<sup>1</sup>

Moscow's general approach to problems of security in East Asia was formulated by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov at the plenary session of the 6th EAS on November 19, 2011, when he declared: “The strategic goals of Russia in East Asia are to help secure peace, stability, and prosperity here, to strengthen mutual trust and assist sustainable economic development. This positive agenda, in its turn, is intended to facilitate Russia's integration into the regional architecture of security and cooperation, the task of modernizing its economy and the uplift of Siberia and the Russian Far East.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus, for Russia, the maintenance of security and stability in East Asia is not only a foreign policy goal, it directly involves the resolution of an internal strategic problem—the development of its Far Eastern regions. Russians express concern over the intensification of contradictions between traditional and newly-rising players in the region, and the lack of a comprehensive system of security, such as there exists in Europe.

A year later, at the 7th EAS held in 2012, Lavrov introduced the idea of a multilateral dialogue on the formation of a sustained and reliable architecture of security and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, and the need to work out a range of framework principles for interstate relations.<sup>3</sup> According to the explanations of Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov, while drafting this document, its Russian authors were guided by international and regional instruments in the field of security based on universally recognized norms. They also employed provisions

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1. Igor Morgulov, “Vostochnaya politika Rossii v 2016 gpdu: resul'taty i perspektivy” [Russia's Eastern Policy in 2016: Results and Prospects]. *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 2, 2017. <<https://interaffairs.ru/jauthor/material/1799>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).
  2. Statement by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the 6th East Asia Summit Plenary Session, Bali, Indonesia, November 19, 2011. <[http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/182318?p\\_i](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/182318?p_i)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).
  3. Speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey V. Lavrov at the plenary session of the Seventh East Asia Summit, Phnom Penh, November 20, 2012. <[http://www.mid.ru/press\\_service/minister\\_speeches/-/asset\\_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/134194](http://www.mid.ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/134194)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia of 1976 and the EAS Declaration on Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations adopted at the 6th EAS in November 2011 as well as a number of main ideas contained in the Russian-Chinese Joint Initiative on Strengthening Security in the Asia Pacific of 2010. Morgulov also pointed out that as a long-term objective Russia sees a legally binding document on security in the “Greater Asia Pacific.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus, Russia aims not to create a new structure of security in the region, such as the OECD, but to work out some principles on the basis of the experience of the existing structures. Yet none of these directly covers Northeast Asia.

## North Korea and Russia’s Policy in Northeast Asia

Northeast Asia as a region is the closest to Russia and, naturally, is always the focus of its attention. Countries located in this region—China, Japan, and South Korea—are its major Asian trade partners. According to Igor Morgulov, Russia believes that the situation in Northeast Asia gives cause for serious concern since instability factors are increasing. One of the main factors he mentioned was the situation on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

For the geopolitical and economic reasons stated above, Moscow is developing increasingly close relations with Beijing. Russian-Chinese rapprochement has become the basis for consolidating and developing numerous formats of cooperation in the region, such as the SCO, the integration of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative, the emerging comprehensive Eurasian partnership (or

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4. Igor V. Morgulov, *Russia Reconnecting with East Asia*, 27th Asia Pacific Roundtable, 3-5 May 2013, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <[http://isis.org.my/attachments/apr27/PS7\\_Igor\\_V\\_MORGULOV.pdf](http://isis.org.my/attachments/apr27/PS7_Igor_V_MORGULOV.pdf)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

5. Interview by Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov with Jiji Press news agency, Japan, March 17, 2017. <[http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/maps/jp/-/asset\\_publisher/zMUsqsVU9NDU/content/id/2694158](http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/maps/jp/-/asset_publisher/zMUsqsVU9NDU/content/id/2694158)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

Greater Eurasia), and consolidation of the BRICS group. Nevertheless, seeking to diversify its ties, Russia is also trying to develop and deepen cooperation with other countries in the region. Much success has been achieved in relations with Japan, especially during Shinzo Abe's premiership. They were formalized and furthered during President Vladimir Putin's visit to Japan in December 2016, when apart from major progress in trade, economic, and investment cooperation, the leaders of the two countries also made a statement concerning joint business activities on the disputed South Kuril Islands, which Japan calls its Northern Territories.

As for South Korea, Russia greatly appreciates its refusal to join anti-Russian sanctions and develops cooperation with it in many areas. One of the most important area involves joint efforts to find a solution to the Korean peninsular nuclear issue.

Support for the international regime against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been repeatedly confirmed as an official goal of Russian foreign policy. Russia's inclusion in international sanctions against Iran and North Korea, despite its desire to weaken them, is the strongest reaction in its history to the fact of proliferation or its possibility. This is due to three factors.

First, as is officially declared, as one of the most influential members of the nuclear club and a major world power, Russia bears special responsibility for maintaining world security and resists any attempts to undermine it through WMD proliferation. Second, Moscow well understands that countries that are acquiring or could acquire these weapons, above all Iran and North Korea, are its neighbors, and their entry into the nuclear club creates a direct threat to Russia's territory. Third, considering the reduced capacity of Russia's conventional weapons, nuclear weapons have become ever more important for it as a means of containment. Moreover, in conditions of reduced economic and political influence compared to Soviet times, nuclear parity with the United States remains the only attribute of a superpower, putting Moscow on par with Washington. The spread of nuclear weapons significantly devalues Russia's role and influence in the world.

## **The Korean Peninsula and Russia's Approach to Northeast Asia**

Moscow continues to actively participate in the political process for resolving the nuclear crisis on the peninsula; it has consistently condemned North Korea's missile launches and nuclear ambitions, and supports the UN position on these issues (for example, on North Korea's missile launches in July 2006 and a nuclear test conducted in October of that year). Russia directly participated in preparing Security Council Resolutions 1695 and 1718, which introduced sanctions against Pyongyang and called on it to stop its nuclear programs, and also in Resolutions 1874 (2009) and 2094 (March 2013), which toughened these sanctions. Moscow also supported Resolution 2270 (March 2016) after North Korea conducted a fourth nuclear test, and Resolution 2321 (November 2016) which further strengthened sanctions.

Russian diplomats say that Russia strictly and fully observes all of the UN Security Council restrictions aimed at stopping North Korea's nuclear programs. The latest report released by a group of experts from the UN 1718 Sanctions Committee (DPRK), which monitors how countries comply with Security Council resolutions, did not make a single complaint about Russia, which convincingly proves Russia's commitment to its obligations.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, one should not ignore the fact that relations with other anti-Western regimes, no matter what they are, become increasingly valuable for Moscow amid its confrontations with the West.

For this reason, as Russian Ambassador to North Korea Alexander Matsegora has stated, Russia consistently abides by the essence and spirit of the understanding reached by the UN Security Council members: "These restrictions, no matter how harsh they are, must not have a negative impact on the socio-economic development of the DPRK and the lives of its people. So we do not recognize any of the additional sanctions imposed against Pyongyang by certain countries outside the Secu-

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6. Alexander Matsegora: koreyskie problemy možno reshat' tol'ko mirnym putyom [Alexander Matsegora: Korea's Problems can be Only Solved by Peaceful Means], TASS, February 10, 2017. <<http://tass.ru/opinions/interviews/4012956>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).



rity Council (such as the EU), consider them illegitimate and, therefore, ignore them.”<sup>7</sup>

Russia is utterly critical of Pyongyang's actions, but it also lays blame on the opposite side as it strongly believes that the United States is trying to make use of these tensions for achieving its own goals in the regions. For example, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov expressed regret that “Lately there have been no indications of easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Despite the position of the international community, which was reflected in the Security Council's resolutions on the issue, Pyongyang continues to develop its missile and nuclear capacity. This in turn is being used by the opponents of the DPRK as a pretext for stepping up military activities and deploying advanced military equipment in the region.”<sup>8</sup> He also condemned the tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles which were being prepared at the time, stressing that they would cause a consolidated response in the world”.<sup>9</sup>

In a March 2017 comment, the Russian Foreign Ministry cited both North Korea's missile launch on March 6 and the start of large-scale joint exercises by U.S. and South Korean armed forces “modelling offensive operations against North Korea” as the two events aggravating the situation on the Korean Peninsula and called all parties concerned to show restraint and to seek comprehensive political and diplomatic solutions.<sup>10</sup>

Most Chinese experts believe that while the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) in South Korea is useless against Pyongyang and Russia, the sophisticated radar capabilities included in it could be used to track China's missile systems. This would give the United States a major

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7. *Ibid.*

8. Interv'y u zamestitelya Ministra inostrannykh del Rossii I.V.Morgulova agentstvu “Interfax” [Interview of Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia I.V.Morgulov with Interfax News Agency], February 10, 2017. <[http://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2634790](http://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2634790)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

9. *Ibid.*

10. Comment by the Information and Press Department on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, 6 March, 2017 <[http://www.mid.ru/en/maps/kp/-/asset\\_publisher/VJy7Ilg5QaAII/content/id/2668115](http://www.mid.ru/en/maps/kp/-/asset_publisher/VJy7Ilg5QaAII/content/id/2668115)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

advantage in any future conflict with China.<sup>11</sup> According to Major General Luo Yuan, a researcher at the Chinese Military Science Academy, the U.S. is “building an encirclement of anti-missile systems around China, and the only missing link is the Korean peninsula.”<sup>12</sup> This is an obvious case of the U.S. anti-Chinese military strategy that stimulates Russia’s support for China and Russian-Chinese military cooperation. Russia supports this view as a matter of principle and out of solidarity with China.

In Russia there is also a widespread opinion that the deployment of the U.S. THAAD system in South Korea is aimed not so much against North Korea, but against China. According to a leading Russian expert, Georgy Toloraya, Russia should recognize that China expressed great concern on the THAAD issue and had “all good reasons, because the system, and, more precisely, its radar and warning devices actually cover the entirety of North-Eastern China at a distance of 2000 kilometers”. In his view, this “reduces the possibility of a retaliatory blow from China, and thus violates the strategic balance in the region.”<sup>13</sup>

So, Russia and China jointly opposed U.S. plans to deploy THAAD missiles in South Korea. Officials of both countries condemned this plan on many occasions in 2015 and 2016. In March 2016 Foreign Ministers Sergei Lavrov and Wang Yi at a joint press-conference warned that they will respond. Wang Yi said that Beijing believed these plans “to be directly damaging to Russian and Chinese strategic [national] security” and that “such plans go beyond the defense requirements in the region, violate the strategic balance, and would lead to a new arms race.” Lavrov called

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11. Adam Taylor, “Why China is so mad about THAAD, a missile defense system aimed at deterring North Korea,” *The Washington Post*, March 7, 2016. <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/03/07/why-china-is-so-mad-about-thaad-a-missile-defense-system-aimed-at-deterring-north-korea/?utm\\_term=.d5c410707fba](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/03/07/why-china-is-so-mad-about-thaad-a-missile-defense-system-aimed-at-deterring-north-korea/?utm_term=.d5c410707fba)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

12. Zhang Yunbi, “China, Russia to hold first joint anti-missile drill,” *China Daily*, 05.05.2016. <[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/cn\\_eu/2016-05/05/content\\_25067674.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/cn_eu/2016-05/05/content_25067674.htm)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

13. Georgy Tolotaya, “Deployment of US Missile Defense System in South Korea Revives Ghosts of the Cold War,” *Valdai Discussion Club*, July 7, 2016. <<http://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/south-korea-ghosts-of-the-Cold-war/>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

on the U.S. and South Korea “not to shelter behind the excuse that this [deployment] is taking place because of the North Korean reckless ventures.”<sup>14</sup>

After the deployment began, the Russian Foreign Ministry commented that this course of events “may have grave consequences for global and regional strategic stability. A new destructive factor is emerging in Asia Pacific, which may aggravate an already tense security situation in the region by undermining efforts to find solutions to the nuclear and other issues confronting the Korean Peninsula and triggering an arms race in the region, including with respect to missiles.”<sup>15</sup>

At a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se on February 18, 2017 Sergei Lavrov expressed a need to “renounce policies aiming to build up the regional military infrastructure and address the existing issues by force,” and called for “a collective search for solutions to various issues by political and diplomatic means” in order to ease tensions in Northeast Asia.<sup>16</sup>

In the negotiations on the conditions of sanctions, Russia, like China, usually tried to soften the sanction regime. This is linked to two factors. First, in the Russian leadership there is real fear that the sanctions will lead to an uncontrollable breakdown of the North Korean regime. In this case, Russia as a neighboring state will face a whole range of problems, from the possibility of a nuclear threat caused by North Korean nuclear weapons falling into the hands of uncontrolled groups to a massive flood of refugees into its territory. To these prob-

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14. N. Korean nuclear issue should not be pretext for America to deploy air defenses in region – Lavrov, RT, 11 March, 2016.< <https://www.rt.com/news/335211-north-korea-nuclear-russia-china/>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

15. Comment by the Information and Press Department on the deployment of a US missile defence system in South Korea, 9 March, 2017.<[http://www.mid.ru/en/maps/kr/-/asset\\_publisher/PR7UbfssNImL/content/id/2670833](http://www.mid.ru/en/maps/kr/-/asset_publisher/PR7UbfssNImL/content/id/2670833)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

16. Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s meeting with Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, 18 February, 2017.< [http://www.mid.ru/en/maps/kr/-/asset\\_publisher/PR7UbfssNImL/content/id/2648135](http://www.mid.ru/en/maps/kr/-/asset_publisher/PR7UbfssNImL/content/id/2648135)> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

lems one can add that military actions on an even larger scale could occur on the peninsula. Second, within the ruling elite there still exists strong emotions from the time of the Cold War, in accord with which the DPRK is, whether irresponsible or not, a partner in confronting attempts by the USA and its allies to dominate Asia. From this point of view, its complete disappearance from the map of the world is seen as harmful.

Moscow's actual position is intermediate between these groups. It supports international forces to restrain North Korea's nuclear program, but it has taken a comparatively soft approach. Russia actively participates in solving conflicts on the Korean Peninsula through negotiations. Not opposing direct negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington that may lead to normalization and Russia prefers a multilateral process with Moscow playing an active role. Russia attaches special importance to the Six-Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear program, the significance of which must be seen in the context of its general policy in Asia.

Russia had big hopes for the Six-Party Talks, where it headed a working group and believed it would be able to work out security measures for Northeast Asia. It assumed that after resolving the North Korean nuclear problem this group could turn into a continuously functioning mechanism in support of security in the region that is important for Russia. The interruption of these talks naturally buried these hopes. Russia insistently calls for a continuation of the Six-Party Talks, seeing in them not only a means for resolving a concrete problem, but for a wider perspective in support of security in Northeast Asia as part of the future structure of security in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, in which it could play the leading role. Of course, Moscow would welcome any resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem, including direct negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington; however, a six-party mechanism would be most desirable in all respects.

Russia calls for resuming Six-Party Talks despite Pyongyang's skepticism and its expressed desire to conduct direct negotiations only with the United States. Russia believes that "for all the importance of

the North Korean-U.S. contacts, the nuclear and other Korean Peninsular problems can be resolved only by building a reliable mechanism for maintaining peace and security in Northeast Asia. This means that all countries in the region should jointly work on creating a mechanism and, thereby a formula for resolving the Korean Peninsular nuclear issue as its essential part.<sup>17</sup>

In the current situation, Russia urges all of the countries concerned to show restraint and refrain from actions that could bring the world to the point of no return. According to Morgulov, Moscow is ready for constructive cooperation with all interested sides in order to resume negotiations as soon as possible, but this will require Washington and Pyongyang to show their readiness as well. It will be impossible to resolve the current stalemate without that.<sup>18</sup> "We propose to look at the situation in a comprehensive way in order to break the vicious circle of tensions, when in response to North Korean nuclear missile "experiments" the U.S. and its allies step up exercises and other military activities, which in turn prompt Pyongyang to take new defiant actions. Our common goal is to ensure the solution of the problems of the Korean Peninsula by peaceful political and diplomatic means in the context of general military and political de-escalation, the creation of a durable peace mechanism that would provide solid security guarantees for all the countries in the region," — Morgulov told the Japanese Jiji Press news agency in March 2017.<sup>19</sup>

Morgulov believes that the Korean Peninsular problems, including the nuclear one, necessitate a comprehensive solution. Denuclearization can only be achieved by easing military-political tensions and dismantling the confrontational architecture in Northeast Asia. But doing so will require all parties to give up old stereotypes and take an innovative approach.<sup>20</sup>

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17. Alexander Matsegora: koreyskie problemy mozhno reshat' tol'ko mirrym putyom.

18. Interv'yū zamestitelya Ministra inostrannykh del Rossii I.V.Morgulova agentstvu "Interfax."

19. "Interview by Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov with Jiji Press news agency.

20. Interv'yū zamestitelya Ministra inostrannykh del Rossii I.V.Morgulova agentstvu "Interfax."

## Opinions on the Prospects for Unification

It would be an exaggeration to say that the Russian leadership is seriously thinking about the prospects and consequences of the possible unification of Korea. As any other government, it is weighed down by its own current problems. The official position is to support the establishment of one democratic Korea, for which it believes that the Koreans themselves must decide through which scenario unification will proceed and how it will occur. Perhaps the clearest expression of this position came from the Russian Ambassador to South Korea, Konstantin Vnukov, at the Diplomat's Roundtable in May 2011: "The matter is that the situation on the Korean peninsula directly affects security of the Russian citizens, who live in the neighboring Far East regions, influences the large-scale rapid development plans of these Russian territories. By the way, from this point of view establishment in the future of the democratic, prosperous and friendly towards us united Korea fully reflects Russian political and economical interests."<sup>21</sup>

The prospects for Korean reunification are widely discussed by experts with various opinions. The dominant view is that, for Russia as a whole, the establishment of a single, powerful Korean state is beneficial. From an economic point of view, this would be a trade partner, whose level of development would be more favorable for cooperation with Russia, than, for example, with a more developed Japan, but at the same time possesses more contemporary technology than China. In the political sphere, Russia has never had serious conflicts with Korea, and it has no border problems. Additionally, there are no fears about a Korean migration to Russia (as opposed to China), since Korea, on the whole, is more developed, and in the past Korean migrants showed their best side; they quickly assimilated and contributed significantly to the Russian economy. From the point of view of geopolitics, a more powerful, united Korea can become a useful counterweight to a rising China, and will likely conduct a more independent foreign policy since the threat

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21. Speech of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. K.Vnukov at the Diplomat's Roundtable, May 29, 2011. <http://russian-embassy.org/en/?p=591> (date accessed June 30, 2017).

of war from the north would disappear, as would the need to rely on Washington for its defense.<sup>22</sup>

The majority of experts note that Korean reunification is a matter for the distant future since the governments of both Korean states, which use nationalist slogans for propagandistic aims, in fact, fear unification. They note that since unification, more likely than not, would proceed in the form of South Korea swallowing the North, as was the case, for example, with Western Germany absorbing Eastern Germany, the North Korean elite is fearful of losing their power and privileges and even of being charged with crimes against their nation. The South Koreans do understand that unification with such an extremely backward state would require enormous outlays and, possibly, lead to political and social instability.<sup>23</sup> They also noted that unification would hardly be allowed by China, unwilling to lose a “socialist” ally and gain in its place a rather strong economic and geopolitical competitor.<sup>24</sup> Only a small percentage of experts with the most pro-West and anti-North Korean attitudes believe that the crisis in the DPRK is so deep that unification will occur in the near future. There are, however, some doubters to whether a unified Korea would be useful for Russia.<sup>25</sup> Above all, these are politicians and

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22. S.V. Khamutaeva, “Problema ob’edineniia Korei v Rossiiskoi istoriografii,” [The Problem of Korean Unification in Russian Historiography], *Vestnik Buriatskogo gosuniversiteta*, No. 8, 2010, pp. 252-55. <<http://www.bsu.ru/content/pages2/1073/2010/HamutaevaSV2.pdf>> (date accessed June 17, 2017); Alexander Lukin, “Russia’s Korea Policy in the 21st Century,” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, Vol.18, No.2 (2009), pp. 43-46.

23. Andrei Lan’kov, “Tsugtsvang Pkhen’iana: Pochemu Severnaia Koreia ne poidet Kitaiskim putem” [Pyongyang’Stalemate: Why North Korea will not Follow China’s Example], *Rossiiia v global’noi politike*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (2013), pp. 187-97. <<http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/Tcugtcvang-Pkhenyana-15962>>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

24. “Komu nuzhna edinaia Koreia?” [Who needs a United Korea?] *Radio “Golos Rossii,”* August 16, 2010. <<http://rus.ruvr.ru/2010/08/16/15981397/>>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

25. Konstantin Asmolov, “Ob’edinenie Koreia—kakie problemy stoit ozhidat,” [Korea’s Unification: What Problems One Should Expect?] Part 2,» *NEO*, April 15, 2013. <<http://ru.journal-neo.org/2013/04/15/korean-unification-what-problems-should-we-expect-part-2/>>>(date accessed June 17, 2017).

experts close to communists and nationalists, who do not want to lose one of the last fortresses of world communism and a determined battler with the hegemony of the West. As a model of unification, should it happen all the same, they suggest various forms of confederation and speak of the need for unity through a new state in the South as in the North.

### **Possible Changes under Trump and New Leaders in Seoul**

We are witnessing two contradictory tendencies in Washington and Seoul. The Trump administration seeks to assume a tougher stance on North Korea. At the same time, South Korea's new government is likely to be more moderate towards Pyongyang.

The official Russian reaction to the election of the new president in South Korea was positive but it did not go beyond the usual protocol. President Putin sent a congratulatory telegram to Moon Jae-in, praising fruitful bilateral relations and confirming readiness for joint work for a build-up of cooperation in various areas.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time Russian experts expressed considerable hope. Georgy Toloraya maintained that the new government in Seoul would try to change its relationship with most of its major partners. According to Toloraya, Park Geun-hye spoiled relations with practically everyone: North Korea, China, and Japan. Only relations with the U.S. remained normal, although this is something that Park was blamed for. Moon Jae-in's main change would be improving relations with Pyongyang. This would be "not the result of tactical thinking, but his deep convictions"<sup>27</sup> as a supporter of the line of Roh Moo-hyun and Kim Dae-jung. However, Toloraya doubts that Moon Jae-in's initiatives for improving relations with North Korea will be successful because of the opposition from Washington and lack of interest in

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26. "Putin congratulates new South Korean president," TASS, May 10, 2017. <<http://tass.com/politics/945150>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

27. Georgy Toloraya, "What Issues does the South Korea's New President Face?" *Valdai Discussion Club*, 12 May, 2017, <http://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/south-korea-new-president/>.



Pyongyang.

Among other possible changes Toloraya mentions improving relations with China which is a must since China is its first trading partner, and with Japan, although he is sceptical about the ability of the new president to renegotiate agreements with the U.S. on anti-missile system deployments because of U.S. opposition. However, "some compromises are possible. It may be possible to turn Chinese irritation toward the U.S., but relations with a key partner are a very serious foreign policy issue. South Korea will need to preserve relations with Trump, but at the same time not become pressured by the new administration, which is decisive regarding both the North Korea situation and the idea that South Korea should pay more for mutual defense. These are not simple tasks."<sup>28</sup>

Russian experts began to express hopes for a serious deepening of cooperation with both North and South Korea. They mention the energy sector, building the Transpolar Sea Route, a revival of the Khasan-Rajin joint project in which Russia can participate, an electricity grid in North-east Asia reaching to South Korea, China, and Japan, which in September 2016 was supported by Putin at the Eastern Economic Forum, and generally building mutual cooperation between Moscow, Pyongyang, and Seoul.<sup>29</sup>

Most Russian experts do not share the opinion of some of their Western colleagues who expect an imminent collapse of the North Korean regime. Alexander Matsegora believes that "attempts to base one's strategy on the expectation of its impending fall are not only far from reality but are also quite dangerous. One must talk and bargain with Pyongyang, and understand clearly that this is the partner we all will

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28. Georgy Toloraya, "What Issues does the South Korea's New President Face?" *Valdai Discussion Club*, 12 May, 2017, <http://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/south-korea-new-president/>.

29. Toloraya, *ibid.*, Tat'yana Shchenkova, "Bratstvo kol'tsa: smozhet li Rossiya probit'sya v elektroenergetiku Vostochnoy Asii" [Brotherhood of the Ring: Will Russia be Able to Fight Her Way into the Electrical Energy Industry of East Asia], *Moscow Carnegie Center*, May 5, 2017, <<http://carnegie.ru/commentary/69851>> (date accessed June 17, 2017).

have to deal with both in the immediate and distant future.”<sup>30</sup>

It is hard to say what the relationship between Russia and the United States will be like. On the whole, it is clear that Russia will continue to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue. It will have no major objections to reunification and, regardless of its confrontation with the West, will closely work on this issue with China, which is unlikely to be happy about reunification for its own reasons.

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30. Alexander Matsegora: koreyskie problemy možhno reshat' tol'ko mirrym putyom.

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## **Russo-Japanese Relations from a Regional Perspective\***

**Stephen Blank**

The present crisis over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs obliges us not only to ponder Korean issues extremely carefully, but also to subject the complex interstate relations of the six parties involved to closer scrutiny. One example of those relations is Russo-Japanese relations. Accordingly, this article examines the role that the Korean issue, particularly North Korea's aggressive nuclear and missile programs and the consequences thereof, play in Russo-Japanese relations and the efforts to normalize them. We find that not only do North Korea's actions exacerbate the contradictions between Moscow and Tokyo, but Russia is also unprepared to make any concessions to Japan on any of the major security issues in the bilateral relationship's agenda, including the North Korean issue. This fact calls into question the soundness of Tokyo's assessment of prospects for this normalization and the likelihood of Tokyo achieving its hope for goals from this process.

**Keywords:** Russia, China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea

### **Introduction: The Regional Dimensions of Russo-Japanese Relations**

The present crisis over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs requires us to not only ponder Korean issues extremely carefully, but also to subject the complex relationships among the six countries involved to closer scrutiny. One example of those relations is Russo-Japanese rela-

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tions. Indeed, both sides have been discussing or negotiating a rapprochement and normalization for five years with little or nothing to show for them except, possibly, for some transitory and evanescent prestige gains for Russia from the summit in December 2016.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, those discussions occurred in the context of over sixty years of inconclusive negotiations between Russia and Japan to bring about a peace treaty ending World War II and normalizing bilateral relations. At the same time, no one should think that there is little or no connection between these bilateral relations and the larger regional security issues in North-east Asia such as the current Korean crisis or the impact of China's increasingly assertive behavior.

Indeed, both the trajectory of those bilateral relations as well as the current Korean crisis demonstrate that the reverberations from the recent failure at the December 2016 summit to achieve Russo-Japanese normalization, despite Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's best efforts, will not be confined to the bilateral relations of Russia and Japan or to those two states alone. Neither is that failure an accidental or temporary situation. For five years Tokyo has chased after Moscow to rebuild a strategic dialogue, or even normalization of the bilateral relationship, with nothing to show for it. As we noted above, Moscow's gains are ephemeral at best. Furthermore, the current Korean crisis arguably could decisively impress upon the Abe government in Tokyo because of the fact that it has embarked upon a fruitless quest.

In this respect the Korean crisis as well as the complex Sino-American "minuet" already demonstrates that the bilateral normalization of Russo-Japanese ties cannot be discussed, let alone pursued, outside of a deep assessment of the broader regional framework. Nevertheless the vast majority of analyses of the current dialogue between Moscow and Tokyo focus almost exclusively on their bilateral relations and omit consideration of broader Asian security issues such as China and Korea's places in this relationship. As Michito Tsururoka observed, Russo-Japanese relations in general, and efforts to normalize them in particular,

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1. Sergey Radchenko, "How the Kuril Islands Are Testing Shinzo Abe's Statesmanship," [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com), December 22 2016.



cannot ever be dealt with as a purely bilateral issue.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately these omissions skew our ability to analyze the issues and underestimate Japanese if not Russian reasons for this effort at normalization or the consequences of the outcome to date of those efforts. They also lead both analysts and governments astray in their attempts to analyze this relationship and its regional context. Consequently it is arguable that both sides are failing because they are, to a considerable degree, prisoners of their own misperceptions, if not delusions.

Japanese analysts do not hide the fact that security considerations have driven the Abe government's quest for normalization with Russia. As Michito Tsururoka has written in a recent assessment of the Russia-China-Japan triangular relationship,

Regardless of the perceptions — negative or positive — that people from the two nations have of each other, Tokyo needs to deal with Moscow in the context of Japan's strategic environment, which obviously includes the rise of China and the role of the United States in Northeast Asia. For Moscow as well, how to deal with Tokyo cannot be separated from its overall regional and global strategy.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, it is no secret that Japanese policymakers still believe and hope that a deal with Russia will facilitate Russian movement away from China towards Japan even if it is merely a modest gravitation.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, they still assert that the rationale advanced in 2013's National Security Strategy remains the driver of this quest. As Tsururoka writes,

The Abe government's fundamental reason for seeking to improve

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2. Michito Tsururoka, "Strategic Considerations in Japan-Russia Relations: The Rise of China and the U.S.-Japan Alliance," Shoichi Itoh, et al, *Japan and the Sino-Russian Entente: The Future of Major-Power Relations in Northeast Asia*, Seattle: National Bureau of Research Asia, NBR Special Report No. 64, 2017, p. 19, [www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org).
  3. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
  4. Celine Pajon, "Japan-Russia: Toward a Strategic Partnership?" *Russie.Nei.Visions* No. 72, Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), September, 2013, [www.ifri.org](http://www.ifri.org); Gilbert Rozman, "Introduction," in Gilbert Rozman Ed., *Japan-Russia Relations: Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance*, Washington, D.C.: Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2016, pp. 5-7.

relations with Russia has been consistent and importantly stated before the Ukraine crisis and Russia's isolation from the West. The National Security Strategy (NSS) adopted in December 2013, argued that "*under the increasingly severe security environment in East Asia, it is critical for Japan to advance cooperation with Russia in all areas, including security and energy, thereby enhancing bilateral relations as a whole, in order to ensure its security.*"<sup>5</sup>

Neither is this just a recent perception of Japanese aspirations that an agreement with Russia might move it away in some degree from China and closer to Japan. Even in 2013, Japanese analysts claimed to see increased signs of Russo-Chinese discord.<sup>6</sup> Since then, Japanese analysts have consistently held to a line that perceives mounting discord and suspicion between Beijing and Moscow, a perception that considerably differs from what the best Western analyses are seeing, especially as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to much greater Russian dependence on China.<sup>7</sup> For example, Foreign Minister Wang Yi recently stated that bilateral relations between them have reached "a historic maximum" and are stronger than they have ever been and are based on mutual interests, not external factors like a shared antipathy toward the U.S.<sup>8</sup> And his counterpart, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov essentially agreed when he stated, "I fully share your view that Russia and China bear special responsibility for the maintenance of the stability in international relations and preventing unilateral attempts to use force to settle

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5. Tsururoka, p. 14.

6. Celine Pajon, "Japan-Russia: Toward a Strategic Partnership?" *Russie.Nei.Visions* No. 72, Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI), September, 2013, [www.ifri.org](http://www.ifri.org).

7. Leon Daiske Oberbauer and Alexandra Sakaki, "Japan's Debate Over Russia and the Ukraine Conflict," *Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik*, [www.swp.de](http://www.swp.de), October, 2015, [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/zeitschriften-schau/2015ZS03e\\_skk\\_Oberbaeumer.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/zeitschriften-schau/2015ZS03e_skk_Oberbaeumer.pdf); Marcin Kaczmarek, *Russia-China Relations In the Post-Crisis International Order*, London: Routledge, 2015.

8. China's Foreign Minister Wants You to Know: Russia is Beijing's Best Friend Forever," *The Moscow Times*, March 8, 2017, <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/chinas-foreign-minister-wants-you-to-know-russia-is-our-best-friend-forever-57366>.

conflicts and crises.”<sup>9</sup> Among other things Lavrov was saying that it is up to Washington to refrain from “unilateral” activities that threaten North Korea, hardly a response to Tokyo’s anxieties. Indeed Russia recently vetoed a UN resolution on North Korea while Lavrov derided the U.S.’s previous policy of “strategic patience” for not being patient and imposing harsh sanctions on North Korea even though Moscow had voted for many of those sanctions.<sup>10</sup> And for all China’s displeasure at Pyongyang’s nuclear and missile policies this has also been its stance even as it puts pressure on North Korea. Indeed, regarding Korea, Moscow has long followed Beijing’s lead even as it tries to enhance its own standing there and this continues to be the case.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Russian analysts have actually criticized this Russian propensity to follow China’s lead on Korea.<sup>12</sup>

It might have been the case that in 2016 Russia, beginning in 2016, became concerned that China is sacrificing Russian interests in Korea to the cause of Chinese ties with the U.S. Therefore Moscow may have tried to send a hint to China of its displeasure by vetoing the resolution on North Korea that China supported.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless Moscow and Beijing

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9. “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s opening remarks at talks with Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi, Astana, April 21, 2017, [http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/meropriyatiya\\_s\\_uchastiem\\_ministra/-/asset\\_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2734437](http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/-/asset_publisher/xK1BhB2bUjd3/content/id/2734437).
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  11. Samuel Ramani, “What’s Behind Sino-Russian Cooperation on North Korea?” <http://thediplomat.com/2017/04/whats-behind-sino-russian-cooperation-on-north-korea/>, April 27, 2017.
  12. Alexander Vorontsov and Georgy Toloraya, *Military Alert on the Korean Peninsula: Time For Some Conclusions*, Carnegie Moscow Center, June 2014, [www.ceip.org](http://www.ceip.org).
  13. Georgy Toloraya, “UNSCR 2270: A Conundrum for Russia,” <http://38north.org/2016/03/gtoloraya030516/print/>, March 5, 2016; “Trump praises Chinese efforts on N Korea -The Asian Age, April 21, 2017; Christopher Bodeen, “In Beijing, Tillerson Urges China-US Cooperation on N. Korea,” <http://www.nbc->

soon enough resumed their collaboration on North Korea.<sup>14</sup> Thus even in the unlikely event that some daylight opens up between Moscow and Beijing on North Korea, it is not likely to benefit Japan's pursuit of normalization with Moscow because it is Russia that will take the more pro-North Korean line, confounding any prospect for it helping Tokyo with its real security anxieties vis-à-vis North Korea. Indeed, former Bush administration official, Michael Green, the Vice-President for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington (CSIS) recently made the point that in the six-party process and in putting pressure on Pyongyang, Moscow has been utterly unhelpful.<sup>15</sup>

Neither would divisions between Moscow and Beijing over North Korea do anything to assuage Japan's concerns about the most urgent threat it sees, namely mounting Russo-Chinese military collaboration. Indeed, since 2014 that cooperation against Japan has increased.<sup>16</sup> As Michael Yahuda observes, the attitude of Russian elites is very much in favor of enhanced collaboration.

Moscow believes that bolstering China's military position in East Asia is very much in Russian interests. As the official in charge of Russian arms exports stated in April 2015, "if we work in China's interests, that means we also work in our interests." In other words, the U.S.-led economic sanctions on Russia have made Sino-Russian strategic interests more congruent.<sup>17</sup>

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miami.com/news/national-international/North-Korea-South-China-Sea-on-Tillerson-Agenda-in-Beijing-416493283.html, March 28, 2017.

14. Samuel Ramani, "What's Behind Sino-Russian Cooperation on North Korea?" <http://thediplomat.com/2017/04/whats-behind-sino-russian-cooperation-on-north-korea/>, April 27, 2017.
15. Center for Strategic And International Studies, "Russian Roulette: Of Russo-Japanese Relations," Podcast, no. 31, June 2, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/podcasts/russian-roulette>.
16. Ken Jimbo, "Sino-Russian Military Cooperation and Japanese Defense Policy," Shoichi Itoh, et al, *Japan and the Sino-Russian Entente: The Future of Major-Power Relations in Northeast Asia*, Seattle: National Bureau of Research Asia, NBR Special Report No. 64, 2017, pp. 25-26, [www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org).
17. Michael Yahuda, "Japan and the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership," *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Lavrov's statement above and the following remarks by Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu indicate that Yahuda's observations retain their force. Thus, Shoigu openly appealed for an alliance with China in November 2014 and he recently remarked,

"Russia's strategic partner is the People's Republic of China. Bilateral military cooperation is developing actively. Primarily it is focused on the fight against international terrorism. Joint actions are regularly practiced during the military exercises - Naval interaction and Peaceful mission. The Russian Federation continues to prepare specialists for the People's Liberation Army of China. In total more than 3,600 Chinese servicemen have been trained in the universities of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation.<sup>18</sup>

Neither is Russia prepared to discuss a Russian gas pipeline to Japan allegedly because Gazprom cannot determine with any clarity what the future Japanese energy demand will be. More likely, it is unwilling to lower the price of gas to meet real market prices despite the downward global pressure on energy prices.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Russia's tempo of bomber flights into and over Japanese air space has reached a record level during 2016-17.<sup>20</sup> These flights force Japan to scramble its jets and Russia

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18. "Russian Defense Minister Shoigu: 'The Attempts Of The U.S.-Led West To Impede The Establishment Of A New, Fair World Order Are Leading To Growing Chaos... Russia's Strategic Partner Is China,'" <https://www.memri.org/reports/russian-defense-minister-shoigu-attempts-us-led-west-impede-establishment-new-fair-world>, March 3, 2017; Moscow, *Interfax*, in Russian, November 18, 2014, *Open Source Center, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia*, (Henceforth), *FBIS SOV*, November 18, 2014; Moscow, *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, in Russian, November 18, 2014, Moscow, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta Online*, in Russian, November 20, 2014, *FBIS SOV*, November 20, 2014; *FBIS SOV*, November 27, 2014.

19. Elena Mazneva and Stephen Stapczynski, "Russia Turns Wary On Japan Gas Future As Abe Heads To Moscow," <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-09/russia-turning-iffy-on-japan-gas-future-as-abe-heads-to-moscow>, April 9, 2017.

20. Isabel Leonard, "Japan's Jet Scrambles Against Foreign Planes Reach Record," <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-14/japan-s-jet-scrambles-against-foreign-planes-reach-record-chart>, April 13, 2017.

does so even as regional tensions rise in the wake of North Korea's nuclear and missile tests.

Finally, with regard to the long-standing issue of the Kurile Islands, Japanese frustration should be readily apparent to any observer. Japan, in its unceasing pursuit of reconciliation with Russia, has even prepared a plan for joint economic development of the islands largely using Japanese money, i.e. essentially a subsidy to Russia. Nevertheless, Russian opinion remains obdurate that the Kurile Islands issue is a problem "that was unambiguously solved in 1945. That is our territory. Period."<sup>21</sup> Thus, Russia refuses to meet Japan halfway, or even part way, with regard to China, Korea, energy, and the Kurile Islands. However, it demands that Japan unequivocally renounce its claim to the Islands, accept that Russia supports Beijing and Pyongyang against Japan, ignore mounting Russo-Chinese military cooperation against Japan in areas like the East China Sea, overlook Russia's refusal to sell its gas while giving Russia a large amount of trade or investment capital that, given the nature of the Russian economy, will be inefficiently utilized if not stolen.<sup>22</sup>

While it is no surprise that some Japanese analysts believed they could induce a broader transformation of Russo-Chinese relations through a rapprochement with Russia despite the visible increase in Sino-Russian intimacy, and that they had to do so to enhance Japanese security given unfavorable regional security trends, this belief has proven to be a serious delusion, especially in the wake of the recent failed summit.<sup>23</sup> As Gilbert Rozman wrote,

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21. "Russian Bid To Involve Japan In Developing Kuril Isles Questioned," [www.politcom.ru](http://www.politcom.ru), March 1, 2017 From *BBC Monitoring*.

22. Center for Strategic And International Studies, "Russian Roulette: Of Russo-Japanese Relations," Podcast, no. 31, June 2, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/podcasts/russian-roulette>.

23. Celine Pajon, "Japan-Russia: Toward a Strategic Partnership?" *Russie.Nei.Visions* No. 72, Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI), September, 2013, [www.ifri.org](http://www.ifri.org); Leon Daiske Oberbauer and Alexandra Sakaki, "Japan's Debate Over Russia and the Ukraine Conflict," *Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik*, [www.swp.de](http://www.swp.de), October, 2015, [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/zeitschriftenschau/2015ZS03e\\_skk\\_Oberbaeumer.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/zeitschriftenschau/2015ZS03e_skk_Oberbaeumer.pdf).

Indeed, only an exaggerated notion of Japan's geopolitical weight (not evident in Russia) can account for the expectations expressed in Japan about the impact of a deal; it would turn Russia away from siding with China; it would lead Russia to accept Japan's more active military posture; and it would be the driving force for Russia to stop pressuring Japan and to cooperate, instead. As hopes for a favorable territorial deal fade, the geopolitical case is being oversold.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, signifying Russia's intimacy with China, Russia has even accepted the new deployment of Chinese ICBMs in Heilongjiang near their common border with equanimity and sees it as posing no threat.<sup>25</sup>

### **Korea as a Factor in the Bilateral Equation**

Therefore, the impasse in Russo-Japanese relations also affects Russia and Japan's relationship regarding the North Korean nuclear program that threatens Japan and to some degree Russia, even if in the latter's case it is an indirect threat.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, both Russia and Japan could benefit substantially from a reduction in the threat to regional if not international security posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile programs even if Japan views the North Korean threat as secondary compared to the threats posed by China. Even if the North Korean threat is not the main preoccupation of either Russian or Japanese planners, that threat is rapidly growing in saliency as North Korea's missile and nuclear capabilities grow. Indeed, Abe has labeled the North Korean threat as "substantially more serious than in the past" and has openly mulled over the idea of giving Japan's defense forces an open-ended order to intercept

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24. Gilbert Rozman, "Introduction, Gilbert Rozman, Ed., *Japan-Russia Relations: Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance*, Washington, D.C., 2016, p. 10.

25. "China Reportedly Deploys ICBMs Near Russia's Border," <https://www.rt.com/news/374874-china-icbm-russia-border/>, January 24, 2017.

26. Stephen Blank, "Russia and the Two Koreas In the Context of Moscow's Asian Policy," *Academic Paper Series*, Korean Economic Institute of America, October 2015, [www.keia.org](http://www.keia.org); also in Gilbert Rozman, Ed., *On Korea, 2016*: Washington, D.C.: Korean Economic Institute of America, 2016, pp. 60-76.

North Korean missiles due to the DPRK's repeated missile tests.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the threat has clearly grown in recent times as the tension reached a point where China warned that a war involving North Korea could break out at any moment.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Abe has warned that North Korean missiles directed against Japan could possibly contain sarin nerve gas.<sup>29</sup> Abe also warned of the possibility of refugees and, displaying Tokyo's anxiety over the U.S.'s possible actions, has sought U.S. notice of any action against North Korea even if U.S. bases on Japanese soil are not involved.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, the Korean threat to Japan, just like Russo-Japanese relations, cannot be disentangled from Tokyo's agenda with Beijing and Moscow. The possibility that South Korea could share intelligence about North Korean missiles through their joint participation in the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) network with the U.S. causes a lot of aggravation in Beijing and Moscow and worsens their relationship with Japan and South Korea.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Moscow's main complaint to Tokyo precisely concerns THAAD and Japan's participation in the alliance with the U.S.

In other words, all these problems are inter-related and what happens with Russo-Japanese relations does not stay confined to the bilateral dimension of those countries' regional and overall foreign policies.

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27. "Japan PM Calls North Korea Threat 'Substantially More Serious' Than In the Past," Reuters, September 21, 2016; Ankit Panda, "Japan Mulls Open-Ended Missile Intercept Order Amid Repeated North Korean Missile Testing," *www.thediplomat.com*, August 8, 2016.

28. "'Conflict Could Break Out At Any Moment' Over North Korea: China," <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/04/14/conflict-could-break-out-any-moment-over-north-korea-china>, April 14, 2017.

29. Mari Yamaguchi, "Japan PM: North Korea May Be Capable Of Sarin-Loaded Missiles," *www.militarytimes.com*, April 13, 2017.

30. Mari Yamaguchi, "Abe: Japan Planning For Refugees In Event Of Korean Crisis," *Associated Press*, April 17, 2017, *www.stripes.com*; "Japan Seeks Notice On Actions Against North Korea, Even If US Bases Not Used," *The Japan News/Yomiuri*, April 13, 2017, *www.stripes.com*.

31. "Laura Zhou," Seoul's Tilt Towards Tokyo, Could Lead To Worst-Case Scenario For Beijing," *South China Morning Post*, August 5, 2016, *www.scmp.com*.



Rather Russo-Japanese relations are intertwined with their overall Asian relations if not their global postures. Finally, when one introduces the “wild card” of what the Trump administration’s policies regarding North Korea and China might be, it is clear that the North Korean issue urgently demands new thinking. Indeed, if a Russo-Japanese rapprochement were to occur and generate a qualitatively transformational dynamic upon either Sino-Japanese relations or the Korean challenge, that would represent a fundamental change from the current situation where Russo-Japanese relations, due to the two countries’ mutual estrangement, possess little dynamic significance for the structure or composition of Northeast Asian security relations and in the North Korean issue where both sides have little independent room for maneuver.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, Russo-Chinese relations, that are surely connected to the state of Japan’s relations with each of those governments also impact all processes connected with Korea. The fact that Russia has come to identify with China’s policies towards North Korea and its nuclearization already limits the potential for Japan to benefit from any potential rapprochement with Russia. For example, once South Korea announced it was accepting the U.S. THAAD network, the Chinese and Russian Foreign Ministries issued a joint critique and pledged themselves to follow up with further cooperation against this deployment.

Both sides expressed serious concerns over the advancement of deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile-defense system in the Republic of Korea (ROK) by the US and the ROK. Both sides agreed that the US’ non-constructive acts of unilaterally developing and promoting the deployment of strategic missile-defense systems on the Korean Peninsula and other parts of the world will pose negative impacts on the international and regional strategic balance as well as security and stability. Both sides agreed that advancing the THAAD system deployment in the ROK by the US and the ROK is evidently inconsistent with

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32. Georgy Toloraya, “Implications of Russia-Japan Relations For the Region,” Gilbert Rozman, Ed., *Japan-Russia Relations: Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance*, Washington, D.C., 2016, p. 71; Vasily Kashin, “Russian Views on Security and Foreign Policy in the Asia-Pacific and Prospects For Cooperation With Japan,” *Ibid.*, p. 81.

their claimed purpose, which will severely damage the national strategic security interests of countries in this region, including China and Russia. China and Russia firmly oppose relevant plans of the US and the ROK, and will proactively think about measures that can strengthen China-Russia coordination against the negative factors rising from the situation.<sup>33</sup>

Their joint opposition and joint commitment to countermeasures still continue unabated as they both argue that this system threatens regional and strategic stability and continue to cooperate on a joint strategy to undo or overcome the consequences of South Korea's decision to accept THAAD.<sup>34</sup>

Since North Korea's nuclearization threatens Japan and Japan is already part of the THAAD network, this decision by Moscow and Beijing certainly indicates their greater coordination in a sphere that is inimical to Japan's vital interests. This especially highlighted anti-Japanese coordination given Abe's observation that North Korea's threat is growing. Moreover, the joint threat of countermeasures against THAAD heightens the major Japanese fear concerning Russo-Chinese military cooperation.<sup>35</sup> The THAAD episode also reminds Tokyo of China's aggressiveness, for once South Korea announced its intention to join it, China began a protracted campaign of intense economic-political pressure and the familiar tactics of Chinese economic warfare against South Korea.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the THAAD issue epitomizes the gaps between Japanese vital interests and Russia (and China) with regard to the North Korean issue and to Asian security more broadly.

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33. Ministry of *Foreign Affairs* of the People's Republic of China, "China and Russia Hold the 4th Consultation on Northeast Asia Security," July 29, 2016, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjbxw/t1386345.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1386345.shtml).

34. "China, Russia Promise "Countermeasures to U.S.-Korean Defense System," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, January 13, 2017, [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org).

35. "China, Russia Agree On More 'Countermeasures' Against U.S. Anti-missile System: Xinhua," *Reuters*, January 12, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-china-russia-idUSKBN14X00J>.

36. Benjamin Lee, "South Korea's THAAD Dilemma Continues," [www.thediplomat.com](http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/south-koreas-thaad-dilemma-continues/?allpages=yes&print=yes), December 16, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/south-koreas-thaad-dilemma-continues/?allpages=yes&print=yes>; "South Korea Minister Says China Indirectly Retaliating Against THAAD," *Reuters*, January 6, 2017.

On the one hand, placement of the THAAD systems is not a subject for negotiations with Russia as long as the DPRK threatens the U.S.'s main Asian allies and the United States itself. Russia does not have any answers for the North Korean crisis besides blaming Washington for the DPRK missile program and denouncing THAAD, a program that makes eminent sense for South Korea given Pyongyang's policies.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, President Putin recently told at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum that North Korean nuclearization is the result of Washington's abuse of power.

Let us agree on a uniform interpretation of the norms and fundamental principles of international law and adhere to these rules. Because until that happens and as long as the principle that might be right is asserted, we will continue to have problems like the ones we are currently seeing in North Korea. Smaller countries can see no other way to protect their independence, security and sovereignty but by acquiring nuclear weapons. This is what abuse of power leads to.<sup>38</sup>

But from Russia's viewpoint, THAAD is supposedly redundant, not justified, will promote regional insecurity, and further North Korean aggressiveness if not new tests, and is part of a broader and excessively aggressive American policy of sending excessive arms supplies to Northeast Asia to counter North Korean and Chinese threats.<sup>39</sup> Equally, if not more importantly, Russia (and China) believe that the THAAD system will not only destabilize the Korean peninsula but also overall strategic stability in the region. In other words, both governments fear that it will be used to counter their regional nuclear capabilities which, in the final analysis,

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37. Stephen Blank, "Another Russian Failure: Russia and the Korean Question," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, March 28, 2017, [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org).

38. "St Petersburg International Economic Forum Plenary Meeting," <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54667>, June 2, 2017.

39. "Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's Remarks and Answers To Media Questions At a News Conference Following Russia-Japan Two-Plus-Two Format Consultations, Tokyo, March 20, 2017, *BBC Monitoring From*, [http://www.mid.ru/en/main\\_en](http://www.mid.ru/en/main_en), March 20, 2017; Anna Kireeva, "Positive Scenario I," [www.theasanforum.org](http://www.theasanforum.org), April 17, 2017.

threaten Japan, South Korea, and the U.S.<sup>40</sup> Thus, North Korea's aggressive testing program and the response by Seoul and Tokyo to embrace the THAAD project clearly weakened any possibility for Japanese policy-makers to bring about or benefit from a supposed distancing of Russia from China and reflected a wholly opposite trend towards greater coordination of those states' policies.

THAAD also helped ratchet up bilateral polarization in Northeast Asia between the U.S. alliance system and a Russo-Chinese counter-bloc. Moscow tends to view its relationship with Tokyo in the light of its efforts to induce Japan to move out of the U.S.'s shadow. Moscow's refusal to compromise here evidently stems from the view that Japan has hitherto been unable to conduct an "independent" foreign policy and is too subservient to or dependent upon the U.S. to do so. Therefore, Russia can or at least should "impose terms" upon it. Yet, after Abe defied Washington's admonitions to break allied unity on sanctions and move forward with Moscow it seems that Putin and his entourage want not only a deal but a victory and even a wedge between Tokyo and Washington. Thus, Lavrov stated in Tokyo that, "Russia would like a large and powerful country like Japan to weigh in more on and occupy a more prominent position in international affairs."<sup>41</sup> Japan's refusal to exclude the possibility that if it recovered the Kurile Islands it would not permit a U.S. base there clearly brought home to Russian leaders, and no doubt the military as well, that it would not be so easy to separate Tokyo from Washington and that giving back the Kuriles might reawaken long-standing military fears about a U.S. military threat to Russia.<sup>42</sup>

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40. Dmitry Streltsov, "New Friends: Russia and Japan Are Finding Common Ground," *Moscow Times*, March 20, 2017, <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/new-friends-russia-and-japan-are-finding-common-ground-57472>.

41. Ruslan Kostyuk, "Making Sense of Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's Visit To Japan," *www.russia-direct*, April 19, 2016.

42. Alexander Bratersky, Igor Kryuchkov, "US Bases Have Come Into View At the Kuril Negotiations," *www.gazeta.ru*, December 14, 2016, *Retrieved From BBC Monitoring*, December 16, 2016.

## **The North Korean Connection and Its Regional Context**

This specific example also highlights how closely Japanese concerns about North Korea are bound up with its relations with Russia and China as well. Even if China remains its primary concern, Japan certainly has good reason for alarm about North Korea as its nuclear and missile programs proceed apace. Already in 2012, Richard Weitz of the Hudson Institute reported,

Many Japanese experts believe that establishing a robust ballistic missile defense (BMD) is the best course of action to protect their country from DPRK attacks while stating within their constitutional obligations and therefore alleviating South Korean fears. Japan has been developing BMD technologies with the United States in recent years, a process that has annoyed China but strengthened the Japan-U.S. military alliance. But the failure of the Six-Party Talks, which have focused on curtailing North Korea's nuclear weapon activities, to address DPRK missile developments has contributed to Tokyo's dissatisfaction with the process.<sup>43</sup>

Since then, North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have proceeded to the point where it is clear that the DPRK has potentially usable nuclear weapons, is extending their number and range, and producing ever longer-range missiles capable of hitting not only South Korea and Japan but also the U.S. As a result, the Korean situation remains as tense if not tenser than it has been in the past. This seemingly unresolvable situation cannot but add to Japanese planners' security concerns about North Korea. If ever the Korean situation demanded new approaches to regional relationships, including Russo-Japanese ties, this is the time for such creative thinking. And clearly no such new thinking took place regarding Korean developments or how it might affect bilateral relations between Moscow and Tokyo. Neither is there any sign of a rethinking process concerning Korean issues in Russia other than the intensification of coordination with China as cited above.

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43. Richard Weitz, "Regional Powers Grapple With North Korea's New Leader Kim Jong Un," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, XXIV, No. 3, September, 2012, p. 411.

Those considerations raise the question not only of whether a bilateral rapprochement with Russia was or is feasible, but also what either or both sides might gain in regard to regional security by drawing closer together. Indeed, apart from the feasibility of a rapprochement which, to be sure, is at best moot — as the recent failure shows — there are signs that Russia is gravitating ever more to China and that implies not only a failure to break the Sino-Russian entente, but also makes it impossible for Moscow to offer anything constructive towards resolving the Korean crisis generated by North Korea's ongoing nuclearization. Thus, Vasily Kashin, Senior Research Fellow at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of the Far East, recently wrote that as of 2016 both sides may avoid the term alliance, but the relationship is already something far greater than “neighborliness” or even “strategic partnership.”<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Dmitri Trenin of the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow subsequently stated,

Beijing can be assured of one thing, though. Any easing in Russia's tensions with the US and the EU will not lead to Moscow abandoning or slackening its ties with China, which today are closer and more solid than the phrase “strategic partnership” suggests.<sup>45</sup>

These observations take their point of departure from the current reality. As Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated,

As regards international issues, we feel — and our Chinese friends share this view — that our cooperation and coordination in the international arena are one of the most important stabilizing factors in the world system. We regularly coordinate our approaches to various conflicts, whether it is in the Middle East, North Africa, or the Korean peninsula. We have regular

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44. Vasily Kashin, “More Than Partnership: Political Expert Vasily Kashin on the Development of the Political and Economic Relations of Russia and China,” *Vedomosti*, August 18, 2016.

45. Dmitri Trenin, “National Interest, the Same Language of Beijing, Washington, and Moscow,” <http://carnegie.ru/2016/12/29/national-interest-same-language-of-beijing-washington-and-moscow-pub-67631>, December 29, 2016.

and frank and confidential consultations.<sup>46</sup>

Putin's own recent remarks corroborate these statements. Within days after the summit President Putin, at his annual year-end press conference for 2016, stated,

As we know the Sino-Russia relationship is now at its best. We often call it the strategic partnership which I think is not only at a political level but also at the economic one. China is Russia's largest trading partner, although bilateral trade volumes have dropped a little due to the sluggish oil prices. To my delight, our cooperation has continued to diversify. Recently, trade volumes in high-tech and manufacturing fields have grown significantly. The large cooperation projects in aviation, aerospace, energy and nuclear power look promising. — We share common views on a series of international issues. Undoubtedly, it's a key factor in maintaining stability. We cherish the relationship with China and hope to further push it forward.<sup>47</sup>

The trend forecast by Kashin and Trenin and outlined by Putin is already discernible in growing Russian gravitation towards China on the South China Sea and the Korean agendas.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, despite the Russian veto at the U.N., both Russia and China set off to shadow the supposed arrival and travels of the U.S.S. Vinson that supposedly was heading towards Northeast Asia.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the Korean treaty actually increased the Sino-Russian military collaboration that is a bugbear for Japan.

So if Russia will not gravitate away from China, even if modestly,

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46. Ministry of *Foreign Affairs* of the Russian Federation, "Statement and Answers to Questions From the Media by Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov at the Press Conference on the Results of Russia's Chairmanship of the UN Security Council, New York, October 1, 2015," *BBC Monitoring*.

47. Bol'shaya Press-Konferentsiya Vladimira Putina, December 23, 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53573>.

48. Christopher Bodeen, "Russia, China In Agreement On North Korea, South China Sea," *Associated Press*, April 29, 2016; Stephen Blank, "Paradoxes Abounding: Russia and the South China Sea Issue," Forthcoming.

49. "China, Russia Send Ships After U.S. Aircraft Carrier," <http://www.the-japan-news.com/news/article/0003643041>, April 16, 2017, From the Yomiuri Shimbun.

towards Japan and/or not contribute to progress in reducing tensions on the Korean peninsula, then normalization will neither occur nor benefit either party. Russia's closer identification with China will preclude even a modest rapprochement of any substance with Japan. Failure to effect normalization with Japan, apart from whatever deals Moscow makes with Beijing, intrinsically binds Russia to increasing dependence upon China, and prevents it from contributing to improved security in Korea or elsewhere in East Asia. In other words, failure to normalize ties with Japan substantially undermines the stated goal of Russia's Asian policy of enhancing Russia's independent standing in Asia to affect regional trends.

What might be particularly regretful here is that as late as early 2016 Moscow took a hard line on North Korean nuclear testing, possibly in order to signal to Japan a desire to improve relations with Japan. This tactic seemed to have short-term benefits for Russia in improving the atmospherics if not substance of Russo-Japanese ties and in eliciting calls by prominent Japanese politicians such as the Vice President of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, Masahiko Komura, for deeper economic cooperation and collaboration against the DPRK's violation of UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>50</sup> This episode even led Lavrov to say in January 2016 that both Tokyo and Moscow shared a desire for stability on the Korean peninsula to obtain a "fruitful trade, economic, and investment relationship."<sup>51</sup> In the end, despite North Korea's unremitting threats to Japan and South Korea and the benefits to be had from closer collaboration with Japan and South Korea on the Korean issue, Moscow deferred to China and North Korea.

Thus, the North Korean nuclear and missile program has generated a crisis that also includes Japan and South Korea's acceptance of the THAAD system for very well-founded reasons. These developments as a whole, including the current flare-up of the Korean crisis, have predictably further intensified the regional tendencies towards bipolarity between the rival American and Chinese alliance network and eroded

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50. Samuel Ramani, "Russia, Japan, and North Korea's Nuclear Test, [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com), January 25, 2016.

51. *Ibid.*



the already slim possibilities for Russo-Japanese collaboration. Seoul clearly had no choice but to respond to Pyongyang's ceaseless provocations and threats and, equally predictably, its decision triggered not just further Sino-Russian unity on Korea and against Seoul and Washington, but also impinged negatively on Russo-Japanese relations.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles are coming ever closer to threatening Japan's air defense zone and territories, including its waters.<sup>53</sup> North Korea is not the only missile threat facing Japan.

More than any other nation in the Western-Pacific, Japan has been proactively procuring and upgrading its BMD capabilities in response to the medium- and long-range missile threats emanating from the DPRK. Additionally, Japan's 2015 Defense White Paper cites Beijing's anti-satellite tests, the expansion of anti-access area denial (A2AD) capabilities, and the development of hypersonic glide vehicles to overcome missile defenses, as increasing concerns to Tokyo.<sup>54</sup>

Lastly, Seoul's suggestion that it could share missile intelligence and data on North Korean missiles with Washington and Tokyo will further enrage China and lead it to make even firmer demands on Russia than it

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52. Bodeen; Emanuele Scimia, "China and Russia Concerned Over America's Anti-Missile Moves," *Asia Times Online*, August 16, 2016, [www.atimes.com](http://www.atimes.com); Guy Plopsky, "How Russia Is Bolstering Missile Defense In Its Far East," [www.the-diplomat.com](http://www.the-diplomat.com), August 2, 2016; Stephen Blank, "Missile Defense in Korea Further Roils Russo-American Relations," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 22, 2016, [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org).

53. Anna Fifield, "North Korea's Military Buildup Isn't Limited To Its Nukes," [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), June 7, 2016; Choe Sang-Hun, "Kim Jong-un Hails Firing of Submarine Missile As 'Greatest Success,'" [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 24, 2016; "North Korean Submarine Missile Launch Shows Secretive Program Picking Up Steam," [www.associatedpress.com](http://www.associatedpress.com) August 24, 2016; "North Korea's Submarine Success," *Wall Street Journal*, [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com), August 24, 2016.

54. Stefan Soesanto, "U.S. Missile Defenses in the Age of Everything: From BMDS to IAMD: Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations for the Asia-Pacific Theater," *Issues & Insights*, XVI, No. 6, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016, p. 7.

has in the past not to forge a partnership with Japan. For if intelligence sharing on DPRK threats begins, Beijing and probably Moscow will take it for granted that such sharing will expand to encompass their threats against the U.S. and its allies as well.<sup>55</sup> Given Japanese threat perceptions that would be a logical step for them to take.

At the same time, the Japanese view about the benefits of a deal with Russia does not sufficiently account for the regional security equation. An agreement that would have broken Western solidarity on the sanctions and incline Japan away from the United States would be seen in Pyongyang as validating the North Korean belief dating back several years that the “northern triangle” of China, Russia, and the DPRK is stronger than the U.S. alliance system, that fractures within the latter could be exploited to enhance the DPRK’s security, and that North Korea could proceed in relatively unmolested fashion to full nuclearization.<sup>56</sup>

Certainly, based on previous experience, there is no reason to believe that Moscow will do anything to mitigate Japanese security anxieties, by virtue of Japan’s being in the line of a direct threat from North Korea, e.g. Moscow’s indifference to the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, Russia’s joining with China in opposing the deployment of the U.S. THAAD missile defense system in South Korea against the North’s missile threats not only chooses China again over a Western orientation, it also reaffirms the Russian government’s belief that those missile and nuclear threats are not serious enough to merit defenses, a stance that is equally offensive to Japan and South Korea.<sup>58</sup> Tokyo also cannot support the Russian belief that the crisis on the Korean peninsula,

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55. Laura Zhou, “Seoul’s Tilt Towards Tokyo Could Lead To Worst-Case Scenario For Beijing,” *South China Morning Post*, August 5, 2016, [www.scmp.com](http://www.scmp.com).

56. *Asan Forum* Gilbert Rozman, “North Korea’s Place in Sino-Russian Relations and Identities,” *The*, IV. No. 6, November-December, 2015, <http://www.theasanforum.org>.

57. Hiroshi Kimura, “Putin’s Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula: Why Is Russia Losing Its Influence?” Hiroshi Kimura, Ed., *Russia’s Shift Toward Asia*, Tokyo: Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2006, p. 164.

58. Stephen Blank, “Missile Defense in East Asia and New Trends in the Russo-Chinese Partnership,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, March 16, 2016, [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org).

however difficult North Korea is, originates in Washington's threat to unseat the regime in Pyongyang.<sup>59</sup> So a bilateral accord with Moscow offers little tangible security benefits to Tokyo, at least regarding North Korea.

In addition, North Korea's 2016 tests of a hydrogen bomb and of missiles have only tightened alliance bonds among Japan, South Korea, and the United States. This apparently comports with Pyongyang's intentions because it puts greater pressure on China, a classic North Korean move.

The United States also used the North's test to tighten a trilateral alliance with Japan and South Korea, a relationship that China has long viewed as a check on its power. "This is exactly what North Korea wanted," said Go Myong-hyun, a research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul. "If its erratic behavior drives South Korea closer to the United States, China will feel more surrounded, and that will give North Korea room for maneuver."<sup>60</sup>

Similarly the recent Japanese agreement with South Korea on comfort women, also brokered by the U.S., clears the way to even stronger ties with the ROK and more intimate three-way alliance activity, including defense coordination, among Tokyo, Seoul, and Washington. Unfortunately that agreement has subsequently come under enormous pressure given Japan's excessive reaction to a South Korean monument to those women. But that pressure does not vitiate the argument in favor of the intrinsic value of tripartite cooperation among Tokyo, Seoul, and Washington.<sup>61</sup>

Why, under the circumstances, would Japan prefer the illusion of

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59. Stephen Blank, "Russia and the Two Koreas In the Context of Moscow's Asian Policy," *Academic Paper Series*, Korean Economic Institute of America, October 2015, [www.keia.org](http://www.keia.org); "St Petersburg International Economic Forum Plenary Meeting," <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54667>, June 2, 2017.

60. Choe Sang-Hun, "With Nuclear Test, North Korea's Leader Assumes Role of Instigator," *New York Times*, January 8, 2016, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).

61. Mintaro Oba, "Japan's Terrible Mistake on 'Comfort Women,'" [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com), January 14, 2017.

Russian support and investment opportunities and a bad agreement with Russia that breaks the Western united front against Russian aggression in Europe (whose success would only embolden both Beijing and Pyongyang) to the clear security benefits of this strengthened alliance remains quite unclear. Certainly the risk-reward calculus here does not point to the benefits of this which might have been normalization at the expense of allied solidarity. Moreover, to the extent that Russia continues to evade making commitments on the Kurile Islands — Japan's apparent prime objective — unilateral weakening of the anti-Russian coalition for mere intangibles also makes little or no sense in this context. In other words, Russia neither can nor will do much, if anything, to alleviate Japan's security anxieties regarding North Korea (or China) even if they reached an accord on the islands and on normalization. In that case, failure to agree about the Kuriles, a fortiori, precludes any regional gains from Japan regarding Korean issues from any agreement with Russia.

The North Korean crisis also shows why Japan cannot aspire to a successful strategy of somehow being a broker between Russia and the West in return for some of the Kurile Islands because Russo-Chinese coordination on Korea is directed against vital Japanese interests. For Russia and Japan to work together Moscow would have to break with Beijing here and that is not happening. Clearly, under the present circumstances the possibility that Moscow might act in this way is virtually unimaginable. And despite Putin's calls for a "harsh" international response to North Korea, there has not been a strong Russian response.<sup>62</sup> In fact, Ambassador Grigory Logvinov, Moscow's delegate to the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program, said in 2014, "We don't consider the DPRK's nuclear missile program as a threat to the Russian Federation." Instead Logvinov, undoubtedly representing his government's view, stated that there is a threat to the global nonproliferation regime, producing its negative regional political-military implications — i.e. the impulse it gives to Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo to build missile defenses that threaten Russia, and that it restricts Russian-North Korean

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62. Stephen Blank, "Russia and North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Tests," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, February 26, 2016.

economic and political relations.<sup>63</sup> Putin's remarks cited above confirm that this is still the reigning attitude in Moscow.<sup>64</sup>

More recently, Russian analysts publicly expressed the view that these tests are merely an attempt to force the U.S. to negotiate with North Korea, presumably implying that they carry no military threat to anyone, particularly the ROK and Japan.<sup>65</sup> In other words, the DPRK nuclear program is a danger, not because it threatens the ROK and Japan but because North Korea's ensuing moves to defend itself against the alleged American threat threaten Russia and Russian interests. Therefore, the crisis is ultimately Washington's fault. This is hardly a basis for genuine Russo-Japanese security cooperation in Northeast Asia. Indeed, the view that drives Russia's Korean policy that despite Pyongyang's pathological state it is the U.S. that is at fault and its ensuing tolerance for the DPRK's nuclear program hardly constitutes a durable basis for a regional Russo-Japanese partnership.<sup>66</sup>

### **Consequences of the Failure to Achieve Normalization: the Korean Issue and Japan**

This outcome obviously is then reflected in bilateral Russo-Japanese relations. Indeed, throughout the entire five-year process there is no sign that Russia made any real, as opposed to purely cosmetic, concessions to Japan. Japan did all the offering including an 8-point economic program and it talked up the possibility of "a new approach" to Russo-Japanese relations. But it got nothing from what was always clearly a process that

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63. Moscow, *Interfax*, in English, November 22, 2014, *Open Source Center, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia*, (Henceforth, FBIS SOV), November 22, 2014.

64. "St Petersburg International Economic Forum Plenary Meeting," <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54667>, June 2, 2017.

65. Blank, "Russia and North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Tests; Stephen Blank, "Missile Defense in Korea Further Roils Russo-American Relations, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, July 22, 2016, [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org).

66. Blank, "Russia and North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Tests," Blank, "Russia and the Two Koreas in the Context of Moscow's Asian Policy."

was intrinsically difficult to realize and that remains so today.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the failure to overcome the lack of a peace treaty ending World War II and resolve the issues of the Kurile Islands means that Japan cannot outbid China for Russian support, that Russia expects Japan to make essentially unilateral and unreciprocated concessions to Russia in order to win its trust, and that, in any case the ties to China and the resulting consequences thereof will continue as before. Neither can one count on a perception of economic interests as opposed to regional geopolitical assessments to lead to major improvements in Russo-Japanese ties. Certainly it appears that the economic agreements reached at the December 2016 Putin-Abe summit are mainly agreements to agree, not binding commitments; and if they are ever implemented the burden will fall on Japan, not Russia.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, as we noted above, Gazprom is already looking to delay, if not scuttle, talk of a gas pipeline to Japan.<sup>69</sup>

Once again we are dealing with what would be essentially unilateral and unreciprocated concessions in return for unspecified promises. Economics is not likely to sustain a political rapprochement between these two governments. Once again the old chestnut that Russia and Japan's economies are supposedly complementary to each other has been exposed as false. Even if they were complementary, that fact cannot sustain a failure to move Russia away from its atavistic concepts of Realpolitik. In that case, Japan will still have to face China, perhaps increasingly supported by Russia, and no real progress (unless Beijing changes its Korea policy) will occur regarding Korea.

Japan's government has continued to chase after Russia in the belief that a normalization deal, presumably returning at least two of the Kurile Islands, can be had or at least that it was negotiating seriously about that outcome. Indeed, Abe is still pursuing this dream.<sup>70</sup> One motive for

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67. James D.J. Brown, "Will Abe's New Approach To Ties With Russia Pay Off," *The Japan Times*, October 25, 2016, [www.japantimes.co.jp](http://www.japantimes.co.jp).

68. Kiyoshi Takenaka and Katya Golubkova, "Breakthrough in Japan, Russia Islands Row Eludes PM Abe, Putin," *Reuters*, December 18, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-russia-idUSKBN14504I>.

69. Mazneva and Stapczynski.

70. "Shinzo Abe Plans to Visit Russia In Early 2017," *Business News World*, January 8,

Japan's misperceptions is the continued hankering by any figures in the Japanese establishment for an independent role and policy in Asia freed from the constraints of the alliance with the United States that for many both restricts Japan's freedom of action and may in fact be in decline. The activism of the Abe government in Asia highlights Tokyo's ambition to conduct an independent Asian policy in its own right even if there is also the ever-present important factor of the alliance with the United States.<sup>71</sup> Underlying this increasingly overt ambition is a growing, if still muted, apprehension that Japan in a time of crisis may not be able to rely on the alliance with the U.S. if simultaneous crises occur in Asia and other theaters.<sup>72</sup>

According to this line of thought a deal with Russia that returned at least 2+N of the Kurile Islands, normalized bilateral relations, and constituted a formal peace treaty for World War II might entail breaking ranks with Washington on sanctions upon Russia but it would convert Japan, or at least its proponents argue this way, into a kind of East-West mediator while moving Russia some appreciable distance away from alignment with China.<sup>73</sup> Presumably that deal would also unlock the

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2017, <http://www.businessnewsworld.com/news/shinzo-abe-plans-to-visit-russia-in-early-2017.html>; Akihito Iwashita, "Abe's Diplomacy at a Crossroads: The Hidden Side of the Japanese-Russian Summit," [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com), May 25, 2017.

71. Michael Auslin, "Japan's New Realism: Abe Gets Tough," *Foreign Affairs*, XCV, No. 2, March-April, 2016, pp. 125-134; Martin Banks, "Japan Seeks More Prominent Role in 'Global Defense and Security,'" [www.defensenews.com](http://www.defensenews.com), February 17, 2016; and for an earlier view see Akihiro Iwashita, "New Geopolitics and Rediscovery of the U.S.-Japan Alliance: Reshaping "Northeast Asia" Beyond the Border," The Brookings Institution, Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies, 2010.
72. John Grady, "Panel: Japan Concerned How U.S. Will Keep Sea Lanes Open If Simultaneous Crises Occur in Asia, Middle East," [www.news.usm.org](http://www.news.usm.org) February 17, 2016.
73. Kazuhiko Togo, "A View From Japan On Japan-Russia Relations In the Mid-2010s: Collapsing Framework and a Way Ahead," in Gilbert Rozman, Ed; *Japan-Russia Relations: Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance*, Washington, D.C. Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2016, pp. 41-50; Tomohiko Tanaguchi, "A Once In Sixty-Year Opportunity? Shinzo Abe's Approach To Vladimir Putin," *Ibid.*, pp. 51-60.

door to major business deals and investment in Russia. This view apparently drives much of Japan's, or perhaps more precisely Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's, policy despite the obstacles that Russia constantly throws up to realizing this policy.<sup>74</sup>

Japan's excessive pursuit of Russia could also reinforce China's proclivity to stonewall Japan given those two countries' steadily expanding number of anti-Japanese military probes with virtual impunity.<sup>75</sup> That pursuit also encourages China to believe it can pressure Russia, as it has done in the past, to desist from normalization lest that antagonize China that Russia cannot afford to irritate. Certainly the Russian government understands that only Putin and Abe together could have resolved the issues blocking normalization of bilateral relations since as Putin said, China and the U.S. are involved, an oblique way of referring to Chinese pressure to block normalization.<sup>76</sup> If Russia thinks it can intimidate Japan, China will think it can do so too and will also think that it can pressure Russia, who is in any case inclined to favor Beijing over Tokyo. Certainly Xi Jinping's September 3, 2015 speech at the anniversary of the end of World War II reeked of anti-Japanese sentiment.<sup>77</sup> Thus, there is a quality of "magical thinking" to Japan's pursuit of Russia even if it accords with Abe's deep-rooted personal ambitions and world view concerning Japan as a challenger to China for leadership in Asia. Indeed, Abe's quick post-summit statement that he would once again go to Moscow in 2017 suggests as much.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, past experience should suggest to Japan the danger of putting too much faith in agreements with Russia. The Japanese govern-

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74. *Ibidem*.

75. Shannon Tiezzi, "China Tests Japan's Resolve Over East China Sea," [www.the-diplomat.com](http://www.the-diplomat.com), October 21, 2015.

76. "Country Report Russia, November 2016," <http://www.theasanforum.org/country-report-russia-november-2016/>, November 24, 2016.

77. "Full Text of Chinese President's Speech At Commemoration of 70th Anniversary Of War Victory," [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-09/03/c\\_134583870.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-09/03/c_134583870.htm), September 3, 2015.

78. "Shinzo Abe Plans To Visit Russia In Early 2017," *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, January 8, 2017, [http://rbth.com/news/2017/01/08/shinzo-abe-plans-to-visit-russia-in-early-2017\\_676378](http://rbth.com/news/2017/01/08/shinzo-abe-plans-to-visit-russia-in-early-2017_676378).



ment evidently believes that Russia's August 2014 military exercises in the Kuriles were an affront and violation of a 2013 Putin-Abe agreement to seek a peaceful solution to their contending claims.<sup>79</sup> And Russia's subsequent military moves to reinforce the Kuriles, even on the eve of the 2016 summit hardly showed any change in attitude or willingness to take Japan's claims seriously.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Moscow's record of violating all manner of security agreements, including those on Syria, Ukraine, and major arms control treaties, hardly augurs well for its future reliability vis-à-vis Japan on Korean or perhaps any other issues. Moreover, a deal with Russia that involves breaking the unanimity of U.S. allies regarding sanctions contradicts the Japanese government's own assessment of the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, namely that it constitutes a danger to Asia because it creates an example and precedent that China could use against Japan. In 2014, Abe warned the G-7 members that the Russian annexation of Crimea might threaten Asian states like Japan and is thus a threat to the entire international community.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, senior cabinet officer Vice-Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura, warned that Russia's behavior in Crimea resembled that of China in the Senkaku Islands, i.e. unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force.<sup>82</sup> Thus, any deal recognizing Russia's aggression opens a veritable Pandora's Box for Japan vis-à-vis China and Tokyo knows it or at least should know it.

The unfolding consequences of the THAAD decision merely add to an already unfavorable prognosis for Tokyo if it expects that an agree-

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79. Hans Binnendijk, *Strategic Rethink Friends, Foes, and Future Directions: U.S. Partnership in a Turbulent World*, Santa Monica, CA and Washington, D.C.: Rand Corporation, 2015, p. 27.

80. Jeremy Maxie, "Russian Military Moves Risk Japanese Peace Talks and Energy Ties," [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com), March 30, 2016; Franz-Stefan Gady, "Russia To Deploy Missile Systems on Kurile Islands," [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com), March 28, 2016; "Russia Deploys Coastal Missile Systems On Disputed Kurile Islands," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, November 22, 2016, [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org).

81. Tokyo, *Ijji Press*, in English, March 25, 2014, *Open Source Center, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia (Henceforth FBIS SOV)*, March 25, 2014.

82. Hong Kong, *South China Morning Post*, in English, March 25, 2014, *FBIS SOV*, March 25, 2014.

ment with Russia will facilitate some resolution of the Kurile Islands issue, major economic benefits, and substantive progress on reducing regional security threats. Since any economic benefit that might have accrued for either side is ruled out by the sanctions and Russia's structural economic conditions as well as Japan's permanent reliance on non-Russian energy supporters, the political rationale for moving forward with normalization evaporated over the course of 2014-15 bringing us to the current situation. Ukraine, Syria, the fundamental anti-Americanism of Russian policy, and Russia's growing dependence upon China inhibit any serious rapprochement with Japan. This is the case even though China's support for Russia's position on the Kurile Islands is as lukewarm as Moscow's support for its position on the Senkakus.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, the Obama administration did not favorably tolerate Russian efforts to break up the sanctions regime or Japan's gestures towards Russia, much to Moscow's discomfort, though it is hard to see what it expected from Washington under the circumstances.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, even though it is far too early to discern what the Trump administration's attitude on all the issues involved in the overall process of a Russo-Japanese normalization process will be, they could lead to even more insistent Japanese efforts, especially if Trump's policies amount to saying Washington will explore a deal with Russia and therefore not object to Japan doing so as well.

## Conclusion

Once again it appears that diverging international perspectives and

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83. Remarks of Vasily Kashin, "Prospects for Japan-Russia Relations and Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., November 16, 2015; James D.J. Brown, "Towards an Anti-Japanese Territorial Front? Russia and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Dispute," *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, No. 6 (August 2015): 893-915.

84. "Russian Foreign Minister Claims Obama Tried To Stop Japan From Improving Ties With Moscow," *The Japan Times*, January 17, 2017, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/01/17/national/politics-diplomacy/russian-foreign-minister-claims-obama-tried-stop-japan-improving-ties-moscow/#.Wif-LhBsS-o>.

mutual misperceptions by both Moscow and Tokyo will impede efforts to normalize their entangled relationship. But while this will be a blow to Abe's grand design; ultimately it is Russia that will have to suffer the bigger burden of losing another chance to approach Japan and of being alone with China that is itself fostering the growth of an anti-Chinese coalition not only consisting of the U.S. and Japan, but also among Vietnam, Australia, and India. Moscow's delusion that it can simply stonewall Japan and in return be showered with benefits is an even greater delusion than Japan's and the enforced official optimism of so many Russian writers concerning Russia's pivot to Asia reveals just how deep that delusion goes in official Russian circles.<sup>85</sup> Those states' partnerships with Japan, which are already growing and increasingly strategic, will, if they continue, far outweigh the benefits of aligning with Putin's Russia.<sup>86</sup> But Russia, unless it radically changes course, will merely have the honor of increasingly serving China's interests. For a state whose policy in Asia is premised on securing recognition as a great independent power, no more ignominious paradox can be imagined.

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85. Stephen Blank, "Russia's "Pivot to Asia": The Multilateral Dimension," Forthcoming From the National Bureau of Research Asia at [www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org).

86. Gilbert Rozman, "Japan's Approach to Southeast Asia in the Context of Sino-Japanese Relations;" <http://www.theasanforum.org/archives/september-october-2014/>, September-October, 2014; Franz-Stefan Gady, "Japan to Offer Australia Its Top-Secret Submarine Technology," [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com), October 7, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/japan-to-offer-australia-its-top-secret-submarine-technology/>.

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## **The Art of the Deal for North Korea: The Unexplored Parallel between Bush and Trump Foreign Policy\***

**Soohoon Lee**

'Make America Great Again,' has been revived while 'America First' and 'peace through strength,' have been revitalized by the Trump administration. Americans and the rest of the world were shocked by the dramatic transformation in U.S. foreign policy. In the midst of striking changes, this research analyzes the first hundred days of the Trump administration's foreign policy and aims to forecast its prospects for North Korea. In doing so, the George W. Bush administration's foreign policy creeds, 'American exceptionalism' and 'peace through strength,' are revisited and compared with that of Trump's. Beyond the similarities and differences found between the two administrations, the major finding of the analysis is that Trump's profit-oriented nature, through which he operated the Trump Organization for nearly a half century, has indeed influenced the interest-oriented nature in his operating of U.S. foreign policy. The prospects for Trump's policies on North Korea will be examined through a business-sensitive lens.

**Keywords:** Donald Trump, U.S Foreign Policy, North Korea, America First, Peace through Strength

### **Introduction**

"We are so proud of our military. It was another successful event... If you look at what's happened over the eight weeks and compare that to what's happened over the last eight years, you'll see there's a tremen-

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dous difference,”<sup>1</sup> said Donald Trump after the ‘mother of all bombs’ was dropped in Nangarhar province in Afghanistan. This research aims to strategically compare foreign policies during George W. Bush’s first term and Donald Trump’s first hundred days as president. The rationale for comparing the two administrations is largely due to a series of bewildering policies from Trump’s first hundred days that are strongly reminiscent of Bush’s policies in his first term.<sup>2</sup> Although the first hundred days are not sufficient for making a forensic analysis, combining the pledges during the campaign has enlarged the scope of analysis. After all, both administrations share an ‘anything but the predecessor’ way of thinking after inheriting governments operated under Democratic administrations. Trump’s prospective foreign policy decisions are expected to be forecasted through this research.

Throughout the presidential campaign, Trump’s slogan, ‘Make America Great Again,’ won the hearts and minds of Americans who were sick and tired of typical Washington D.C. politics. American voters who lost their jobs, particularly those in the old Rust Belt,<sup>3</sup> anchored their hopes to an outsider who might bring the spotlight back and create a new beginning for them. The old Rust Belt, which has been losing industries and jobs due to the relatively cheap labor in Mexico and China,<sup>4</sup> was originally claimed to be Clinton’s turf. However, by repeatedly pledging to take those ‘stolen jobs’ back to America

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1. “Trump on Dropping ‘MOAB’ in Afghanistan: ‘Don’t Know’ If It Sends Message to N. Korea,” *Fox News Insider (New York)*, April 13, 2017, <<http://insider.foxnews.com/2017/04/13/donald-trump-remarks-mother-all-bombs-dropped-afghanistan>> (date accessed April 20, 2017).
  2. Marek Waśniński, “Donald Trump’s Foreign Policy Stances in the Election Campaign: Unpredictability and Neo-isolationism,” *PISM*, June 16, 2016, <<http://www.pism.pl/publications/bulletin/no-37-887>> (date accessed May 1, 2017).
  3. Ronald Brownstein, “How the Rustbelt Paved Trump’s Road to Victory,” *The Atlantic*, November 10, 2016, <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/trumps-road-to-victory/507203/>> (date accessed April 1, 2017).
  4. Richard C. Longworth, “Disaffected rust belt voters embraced Trump. They had no other hope,” *The Guardian*, November 21, 2016, <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/21/disaffected-rust-belt-voters-embraced-donald-trump-midwestern-obama>> (date accessed April 15, 2017).



during the campaign, Trump was able to win votes from those in the old Rust Belt.

Due to multiple preternominal factors, Trump won the 2017 Presidential Election and left public polls and media outlets stunned. The unexpected outcome of the election has also frustrated other nations' policies regarding the most powerful nation in the world. Many experts predicted that the Trump administration would discontinue the 'pivot to Asia' which originated from, and was actively propelled by, former President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton. In particular, dynamic views exist in both academia and policy circles on North Korea. There is a view that South Korea should take the lead in solving the North Korean problem due to lack of experts in the Trump administration.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, some argue that the Trump administration is, in general, heading for a soft landing.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Trump's unfounded but repeated claims about South Korea freeriding on the U.S. defense system indirectly revealed his forthcoming policies on Asia. His very first official decision in the Oval Office, to scrap the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership),<sup>7</sup> immediately shocked one of America's closest allies in the world, Japan.

Bombing Syria was also an unexpected course of action. Bashar al-Assad attacking children with sarin gas in the Idlib province had a "big impact on me [Trump] – big impact,"<sup>8</sup> said Trump. Assad's barbar-

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5. Bonhak Koo, "South Korean Government Should Act, Trump Administration Lacks Policy on North Korea," *JoongAng Ilbo*, January 31, 2017, <<http://news.joins.com/article/21191341>> (accessed June 9, 2017). [In Korean].
  6. "[The First Month of Trump Administration] How Experts See the First Month of Trump Administration," *Yonhap News*, February 19, 2017, <<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2017/02/17/0200000000AKR20170217173300014.HTML?input=1195m>> (accessed June 9, 2017). [In Korean].
  7. Peter Baker, "Trump Abandons Trans-Pacific Partnership, Obama's Signature Trade Deal," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2017, <[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/tpp-trump-trade-nafta.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/tpp-trump-trade-nafta.html?_r=0)> (date accessed March 15, 2017).
  8. Trump administration, "Syria chemical attack has changed my view of Assad, says Trump," *The Guardian*, April 6, 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/apr/05/syria-chemical-gas-attack-donald-trump-nikki-haley-assad>> (accessed April 19, 2017).

ic attack dramatically changed his view on Syria and resulted in 59 Tomahawk missiles targeting the Shayrat air base. This was also a startling reversal from his stance several years ago. In 2013 he tweeted, "We should stay the hell out of Syria, the 'rebels' are just as bad as the current regime."<sup>9</sup> The drastic shift of his stance on Syria from non-intervention to intervention has not only shown his attention and responsiveness on human rights issues but eventually revealed his hawkish and globalist aspects as well. His brief statement about Syria, which ended with the phrase, "Good night, and God Bless America, and the entire world,"<sup>10</sup> particularly, sounded more like that of a globalist than the non-interventionist that he originally claimed to be.

The Trump administration's first hundred days presented several changes from his predecessor, including changes in executive orders. They are namely, withdrawal from the TPP, border security (plan for building the wall), and Travel Ban 2.0.<sup>11</sup> They are derived from the 'America First' slogan, which is known to be "isolationist."<sup>12</sup> However, the bombing of Syria implies the Trump administration's latent hawkishness and interventionism in his foreign policy. Against this backdrop, the puzzle of this research claims the following questions. Can this unpredictable Trump administration's foreign policy be framed by comparing and contrasting with the Bush administration's foreign policy? Furthermore, does his business-oriented nature, regardless of any notion in international relations, explain the policy output thus far?

The analysis will begin by comparing the similar propensities found between Bush's American exceptionalism and Trump's 'America First' policy. Apparently, they are both driven from the belief and

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9. "Donald J. Trump," (Tweet, June 15, 2013), *Tweeter*, <<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/346063000056254464?lang=en>>. (date accessed April 1, 2017).

10. "Transcript and Video: Trump Speaks About Strikes in Syria," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2017, <[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/middleeast/transcript-video-trump-airstrikes-syria.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/middleeast/transcript-video-trump-airstrikes-syria.html?_r=0)> (date accessed April 12, 2017).

11. "What executive actions has Trump taken?" *BBC News*, April 12, 2017, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38695593>> (date accessed April 20, 2017).

12. Susan Dunn, "Trump's 'America First' has ugly echoes from U.S. history," *CNN*, April 28, 2016, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/27/opinions/trump-america-first-ugly-echoes-dunn/>> (date accessed May 1, 2017).

confidence in the power and greatness of America. The two administrations' common denominator, 'peace through strength,' will also be assessed in this regard. Second, game changers that sway the foreign policies of these administrations will be identified and analyzed. In this account, the assumption is that the occurrence of game-changing variables that motivate military action, such as the war on terror by Bush's administration, tends to be true for Trump's administration. In other words, when American *raison d'état* is at risk, it would not be odd for America to once again take the role of the world's policeman under the Trump administration. Lastly, Trump's way of designing and conducting foreign policy has been undeniably derived from his way of conducting business for nearly half a century and such traits will be analyzed and employed to forecast Trump's prospective stance on North Korea.

## **Foreign Policy of the Bush Administration**

### ***Creed***

The foreign policy of Bush's first term was based on two pillars, namely, American exceptionalism and 'peace through strength.'<sup>13</sup> These values are historically and philosophically rooted in neoconservatism and became intertwined in the war on terror. The origin of neoconservatism dates back to the 1930s when Trotskyites Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell and Nathan Glazer, turned into anticommunists. Along the Cold War and post-Cold War era, the second generation, namely William Kristol and Robert Kagan, and Straussians, such as Albert Wohlstetter and Paul Wolfowitz, became what are now called neocons. Neocons in the Bush administration planned and initiated the war on terror after the tragedy of 9/11.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Alex Soohoon Lee, "The Neoconservative Approach to North Korea: Its Prospects under the next US Administration," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, vol. 27, no. 4 (2015), p. 435.

14. Alex Soohoon Lee, "Neoconservatism: Its Status and Prospects," *Journal of*

## American Exceptionalism

According to Stephen M. Walt, while the uniqueness of America's history, political system, and civil society may be worthy of universal admiration and may imply America's positive role in the world, "it is mostly a myth."<sup>15</sup> He argues that whenever American leaders claim this unique role of the U.S. in the world, they are simply setting up the U.S. with a larger burden. Then, what is American exceptionalism? Coined by Alexis de Tocqueville,<sup>16</sup> American exceptionalism can be interpreted in two ways. One is based on the external and internal evaluation of America as a nation. Founding a nation based on the equality of people, as Seymour Martin Lipset mentioned, makes the U.S. fundamentally exceptional. In describing American exceptionalism, he adds,

It [US] is the most religious, optimistic, patriotic, rights-oriented, and individualistic. ... It is the leader in upward mobility into professional and other high-status and elite occupations, but the least egalitarian among developed nations with respect to income distribution, at the bottom as a provider of welfare benefits, the lowest in savings, the least taxed, close to the top in terms of commitment to work rather than leisure.<sup>17</sup>

The uniqueness of the U.S. that Lipset promoted is the first interpretation of American exceptionalism. There is no doubt that the U.S. is, in military, economic, and geographical terms, the most powerful nation in the world. Daniel Bell went even further by stating that what makes the U.S. more exceptional is its exemplarity.<sup>18</sup> As stated, American

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*International Politics*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2015), p. 166.

15. Stephen M. Walt, "The Myth of American Exceptionalism," *Foreign Policy*, no. 189, (2011), P. 72.
16. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, Doubleday, 1696), pp.36-37.
17. Michael Lind, "The American Creed: Does It Matter? Should It Change?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2 (1996), p. 135.
18. Daniel Bell, "The 'Hegelian secret': civil society and American exceptionalism," in *Is America Different? A New Look at American Exceptionalism*, ed. Byron E Shafer

exceptionalism is truly defined in its own terms.

Another interpretation of American exceptionalism is the motivation mentioned by Walt. The leitmotif of American leadership on its special role as the world's policeman, maintaining peace in the world, is arguably that of American exceptionalism. Under such a creed, Bush's foreign policy circle, the neocons, initiated the Global War on Terror (GWOT). American exceptionalism, combined with American nationalism, had transformed into American military strength and eventually bypassed the UNSC order. This was seen as a unilateral and dogmatic action that crossed the red line drawn by the international community.

#### *Si vis pacem, para bellum*

Promoting democracy worldwide through strength, 'peace through strength', implies that peace can be achieved through military means if needed. President Reagan fought against communism and eventually reached the end of the Cold War. A year before his world-famous 'Tear down this wall' speech, he addressed the national security mantra in front of the nation. He stated, "We know that peace is the condition under which mankind was meant to flourish. Yet peace does not exist of its own will. It depends on us, on our courage to build it and guard it and pass it on to future generations," and added George Washington's famous quote, "To be prepared for war... is one of the most effective means of preserving peace."<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, in response to the 9/11 terror attack, Bush and the neocons fully retaliated against the enemy in the name of a war on terror. Presuming U.S. military superiority, 'peace through strength' truly took action. By calling Reagan's accomplishment a 'great democratic movement,' Bush proclaimed, "We've reached another turning point—and the resolve we show will shape the next stage of the world demo-

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(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 50-51.

19. Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on National Security," (speech, Washington D.C., February 26, 1986), Reagan2020. US, <[http://reagan2020.us/speeches/address\\_on\\_national\\_security.asp](http://reagan2020.us/speeches/address_on_national_security.asp)>.

cratic movement."<sup>20</sup> Neoconservatism, the cornerstone of Bush's motivation for democratic worldwide movement, associated fighting terrorism with promoting democracy.

### ***Foreign Policy in the Middle East after 9/11***

As illustrated, the Bush administration designed its foreign policy after 9/11 based on the creeds of American exceptionalism and 'peace through strength.' In this section, Bush's foreign policy output during his first term, specifically after 9/11, and how it was carried out will be analyzed. Moreover, after the discussion of the game changer, different types of engagement in wars under 'peace through strength' will be examined.

#### **The Game Changer**

The 9/11 terror attack opened a whole new chapter of world history since the end of the Cold War. A relatively peaceful decade following the Cold War ended after the tragedy on September 11th, 2001. The attack claimed almost 3,000 people's lives where "2,753 people were killed in New York, 184 people were killed at the Pentagon, and 40 people were killed on Flight 93."<sup>21</sup> Not only the U.S. but the whole world was immensely shocked by the coordinated attacks on American soil. It was a point in time when U.S. homeland security helplessly collapsed.

Bush, from his first presidential campaign until the 9/11 incident, was known as a "traditional national-interest conservative"<sup>22</sup> who

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20. George W. Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," (speech, Washington D.C., November 6, 2003), National Endowment for Democracy, <<http://www.ned.org/remarks-by-president-george-w-bush-at-the-20th-anniversary/>>.

21. "FAQ about 9/11," *9/11 Memorial*, <[www.911memorial.org](http://www.911memorial.org)> (date accessed April 1, 2017).

22. Max Boot, "Think Again: Neocons," *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2009. p. 5. <<http://www.cfr.org/united-states/think-again-neocons/p7592>>.

was interested in great power politics. Throughout the campaign, he criticized Bill Clinton's human rights policies and nation building. It was 9/11 that brought enormous changes in the direction and intensity of his foreign policy. In describing the situation, Max Boot argued, "a cabal of neoconservatives has hijacked the Bush administration's foreign policy and transformed the world's sole superpower into a unilateral monster."<sup>23</sup> He added that Bush "realized the United States no longer could afford a 'humble' foreign policy."<sup>24</sup>

This sharp shift in the Bush administration's stance was clearly reflected in the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS). The cause, 9/11 being the game changer, and the effect, the war on terror, were well organized in the 2002 NSS. As the cause was stated, "The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders,"<sup>25</sup> and the effect reads, "The United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world."<sup>26</sup>

### The War on Terror in action

The 9/11 attack was definitely the game changer which not only turned a traditional conservative administration into a proactive neo-conservative one but also led to expansive changes in the Middle East. Following the attack, one of the neocons in the policy circle, Paul Wolfowitz, then the Deputy Secretary of Defense, immediately accused Al Qaeda as a suspect. Then the war on terror, Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, lasted for almost a decade. The outcomes were disastrous.

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23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. U.S. "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002," <<http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2002/>> (date accessed March 1, 2017).

26. Ibid.

Bush's 'mission accomplished' speech<sup>27</sup> actually referred to the beginning of a disaster. Many claimed the war as a "grand strategic failure."<sup>28</sup> As the war dragged on, criticism from both inside and outside of the U.S. continued. Towards the end, new mutant terrorist organizations like ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) were formed and arose as a new threat to the international community. Against this backdrop, the Bush administration's engagement of the WOT left multiple questions.

### Preemptive or Preventive War?

The war on Iraq can be labeled a preventive war. The factor determining whether a war is preventive or preemptive is how immediate the threat is. If the threat is immediate, then one declares a preemptive strike but when the threat is steps way, then one may engage in a preventive war. Neocons, the true adherents of the promotion of democracy and 'peace through strength,' are likely to engage in one of the two options when facing threats. The capability of the U.S. for declaring such a war is totally proven by its economic and military strength. In this regard, "it is hard to eliminate the possibility that neoconservatism will be revived if the security of the U.S. mainland is seriously threatened"<sup>29</sup> and Trump is no exception.

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27. George W. Bush, "Bush makes historic speech aboard warship," *CNN International*, May 2, 2003, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/US/05/01/bush.transcript/>> (date accessed March 1, 2017).

28. G. John Ikenberry, "The End of Neo-Conservative Moment," *Survival*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2004), p. 10.

29. Alex Soohoon Lee, "The Neoconservative Approach to North Korea: Its Prospects under the next US Administration," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, vol. 27, no. 4 (2015), p. 438.



## Foreign Policy of the Trump Administration: The First 100 Days

### *Creed*

Thus far, the Trump administration's foreign policy has not shown its clear-cut direction or is still in the process of setting a direction. At least, the following is officially stated on the White House website:

The Trump Administration is committed to a foreign policy focused on American interests and American national security. 'Peace through strength' will be at the center of that foreign policy. This principle will make possible a stable, more peaceful world with less conflict and more common ground.<sup>30</sup>

The analysis of Trump's foreign policy creed in this section is based on the speeches, debates, and social network services during his campaign and after the inauguration. It is well known that his tweets played a critical role both in his campaign and his presidency thus far. Twitter "has worked very well for him so far, and there is no reason for him to stop until forced to do so by events. Trump has demonstrated he understands the power of public opinion and how to shame opponents..."<sup>31</sup> In this section, Trump's tweets will frequently be used as references.

### 'America First': Neo-isolationist?

After being elected as the Republican nominee, Trump tweeted, "I will work hard and never let you down! America First!"<sup>32</sup> What he meant by 'America First' was that the U.S. will not be "ripped off anymore. We're

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30. "America First," *The White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/america-first-foreign-policy>> (date accessed April 28, 2017).

31. Jonathan Tobin, "The Power of a Trump Tweet," *Commentary*, January 4, 2017, <<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/politics-ideas/power-trump-tweet/>> (date accessed April 20, 2017).

32. Donald J. Trump, (Tweet, July 19, 2016), *Tweeter*, <<https://twitter.com/realdonald-trump/status/755551039244341253?lang=en>> (date accessed April 5, 2017).

going to be friendly with everybody, but we're not going to be taken advantage of by anybody."<sup>33</sup> Many had believed Trump's 'America First' principle is devoid of America's role in the world; instead, his focus is on checking whether or not others are taking advantage of the U.S. He specifically mentioned China taking advantage of the trade deals with the U.S. He even insisted that South Korea and Japan pay for their own defense. 'America First' prioritizes American values first instead of seeking shared values between America and other nations.

The historical notion of 'America First' holds a negative connotation. The 'America First' Committee (AFC), established in 1940, opposed U.S. involvement in World War II. Like Trump's idea of protecting American interests from outside forces, the AFC was also against "any U.S. involvement in World War II and was harshly critical of the Roosevelt administration, which it accused of pressing the U.S. toward war."<sup>34</sup> In particular, when Charles Lindbergh, the AFC's spokesperson, suggested that Jews must oppose the war, he was labeled as "pro-Nazi."<sup>35</sup> However, the 'America First' catchphrase, thus far, seemed solely focused on finding and preserving American *raison d'état*. Does this imply that Trump would be against any type of intervention? At least, the recent actions regarding Syria would suggest that this is not the case.

## Peace Through Strength

"America will be great again through a strong military and econo-

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33. Election 2016, "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016, <[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-transcript.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-transcript.html?_r=1)> (date accessed April 2, 2017).

34. Krishnadev Calamur, "A Short History of 'America First,'" *The Atlantic*, January 21, 2017 <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/trump-america-first/514037/>> (date accessed March 2, 2017).

35. Scott Campbell, "Where did Donald Trump's 'America First' slogan come from? Sinister history of President's buzz phrase is revealed," *Mirror*, January 30, 2017, <<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/donald-trumps-america-first-slogan-9718899>> (accessed March 3, 2017).

my,”<sup>36</sup> said Trump. What he meant by military and economy implies the strength of America. Considering the aging nuclear arsenal, Trump “has vowed to rapidly build up the nuclear arsenal as part of policies he has called ‘peace through strength’”<sup>37</sup> which parallels Reagan’s statement in the 1980s that a strong military is important for preserving world peace.

The term ‘peace through strength’ could be interpreted in multiple folds, from the U.S. bombing Syria to the U.S. democratizing Iraq. Put simply, through the means of ‘peace through strength,’ the U.S. exercises its power to spread democratic values. The 2017 defense budget explains that a “10% boost to the military comes at the expense of deep cuts to non-defense spending at the State Department...”<sup>38</sup> How Trump ought to utilize such a budget for ‘peace through strength’ is clear and it is certain that his ‘America First’ creed is also gradually tilting toward an interventionist approach.

### ***Foreign Policy: The First Hundred Days***

Evaluating Trump’s foreign policy may not be timely, yet discussing its prospects, based on its operation thus far, is necessary at this point. In this section, Trump’s hitherto policies of foreign and national security are discussed. Some may contain legitimate implications to the future of his foreign policy while others are lacking. Withdrawing from the TPP immediately after the inauguration shocked the world and especially Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who visited President Trump prior to the event. Moreover, Trump’s initial conversation with

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36. Peter Navarro, “The Trump Doctrine: ‘peace through strength,’” *The National Interest*, March 31, 2016, <<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-trump-doctrine-peace-through-strength-15631>> (date accessed March 3, 2017).

37. Bill Gertz, “Trump administration: “America First” and “peace through strength” national security policies,” *The Washington Times*, February 14, 2017, <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/14/trump-administration-america-first-and-peace-throu/>> (accessed March 1, 2017).

38. Zachary Cohen, “Trump proposes \$54 billion defense spending hike,” *CNN*, March 16, 2017, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/16/politics/donald-trump-defense-budget-blueprint/>> (date accessed March 31, 2017).

President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan also shocked China at the time, (although he later compensated by reaffirming the 'one China' policy to President Xi Jin Ping during their first summit meeting in Florida). Above all, Trump's policy carried out on Syrian forces was highly unexpected and puzzled the world, especially Northeast Asia.

### The Opening Gambits: Upending the TPP and Shaking the 'One China' Policy

Trump's very first pen stroke abandoned the bipartisan trade deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Obama initiated. According to him, the TPP would have benefited others while hurting the U.S. economy since companies in the U.S. would have relocated to other nations due to the TPP. Instead, if the U.S. signs a trade policy with individual nations in a bilateral environment, according to Trump, "a lot of companies come back to our country."<sup>39</sup> Quite the contrary, Shinzo Abe had felt that the TPP without the U.S. "has no meaning."<sup>40</sup> The TPP is fundamentally an important issue for Japan since, without the U.S. in the TPP, China will step in to expand the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) using every means possible and this would signal a drawback for Japan.

Between the election and inauguration, in an interview with Fox, Trump said, "I fully understand the 'One China' policy, but I don't know why we have to be bound by a 'One China' policy unless we make a deal with China having to do with other things, including trade."<sup>41</sup> No other former presidents of the U.S. have ever made such

39. Peter Baker, "Trump Abandons Trans-Pacific Partnership, Obama's Signature Trade Deal," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2017, <[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/tpp-trump-trade-nafta.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/tpp-trump-trade-nafta.html?_r=0)> (date accessed March 31, 2017).

40. Robin Harding, "Trade deal 'has no meaning' without US, says Abe: TPP," *Financial Times*, November 23, 2016, <<https://www.ft.com/content/59972c38-b058-11e6-a37c-f4a01f1b0fa1>> (accessed March 29, 2017).

41. Caren Bohan and David Brunnstrom, "Trump says U.S. not necessarily bound by 'one China' policy," *Reuters*, December 12, 2016, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-china-idUSKBN1400TY>> (date accessed March 20, 2017).

comment nor have talked to the Taiwanese president promptly after being elected. This immediately shocked Beijing. Wang Yi, the foreign minister of China, commented that “no matter whether the Tsai Ing-wen authority, any other person in the world, or any other force, if they try and damage the ‘One China’ principle and harm China’s core interests, in the end they are lifting a rock only to drop it on their feet.”<sup>42</sup> This fierce tone reflects China’s negative stance on Trump. Upending the TPP and shaking the ‘One China’ policy are closely related to the U.S. economy. The ex-real estate mogul seemed to be utilizing his business tactics while others were trying to find a way through the shadow of uncertainty Trump has been leaving.

### Syria: The Game Changer?

The recent bombing of Syria has relentlessly demonstrated America’s muscle. Comparing Trump’s ideas regarding Syria before and after his election is shocking in its contrast. Before being elected, he condemned Obama for his policy on Syria. Trump tweeted, “What will we get for bombing Syria besides more debt and a possible long term conflict?”<sup>43</sup> This clearly illustrated his attention and preference for the national economy over other nations or any type of humanitarian intervention. Another tweet contradicts his recent military order on Syria. In 2013, he tweeted, “we should stay the hell out of Syria, the ‘rebels’ are just as bad as the current regime.”<sup>44</sup> But when Assad attacked rebellion forces with sarin gas, he decided to execute the order. “Tonight I ordered a targeted military strike on the airfield in Syria from where the chemical

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42. Tom Phillips, “China ‘seriously concerned’ after Trump questions Taiwan policy,” *The Guardian*, December 12, 2016, <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/12/donald-trump-questions-us-commitment-to-one-china-policy>>(date accessed March 28, 2017).

43. Donald J. Trump, (Tweet, Aug 30, 2013), Tweeter, <<https://twitter.com/realdonald-trump/status/373146637184401408?lang=en>> (date accessed March 20, 2017).

44. Donald J. Trump, (Tweet, Jun 16, 2013), Tweeter, <<https://twitter.com/realdonald-trump/status/373146637184401408?lang=en>> (date accessed March 26, 2017).

attack was launched.”<sup>45</sup> Trump’s policy has shifted from one end to the other. In this respect, Syria was the game changer which re-conceptualized the ‘America First’ creed. Although the U.S. military action in Syria was not critically condemned by the international community since using sarin gas on children is fundamentally against the international norm, Trump revealed the U.S.’s possible use of its military without prior notice to the world.

## Exploring the Parallels

Given the explanations of each administration thus far, the parallels between the two are easily found. While their foreign policy output may be different, their credos seem similar, and are growing more similar. Based on the abovementioned analyses, the similarities found are: ‘peace through strength,’ engaging in interventionist policies, and transforming from nationalist to a globalist.

### ***‘Peace through strength’: Preemptive or Preventive?***

‘Peace through strength’ has been headlining the Republican Party platform every four years since 1980. Every Republican president had pursued ‘peace through strength’ in one way or another. Reagan had engaged in a series of nuclear races with the Soviet Union. George H. W. Bush had gone through the first Gulf war where he pushed, with a strong military, Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. Later, his son, George W. Bush, toppled the Hussein regime with a full-scale invasion. Trump, according to his aide during the campaign, had “emphasized the need to improve and modernize [the U.S.] deterrent capability as a vital way to pursue ‘peace through strength’”<sup>46</sup> for containing rogue

45. “Transcript and Video: Trump Speaks about Strikes in Syria,” *The New York Times*, April 6, 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/middleeast/transcript-video-trump-airstrikes-syria.html>> (accessed April 10, 2017).

46. Kingston Reif, “Trump Nuclear Tweet Sparks Controversy,” *Arms Control Today*, January 11, 2017, <[https://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2017\\_01/News/Trump-](https://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2017_01/News/Trump-)

nuclear states.

Beyond interventionist strategy, the Trump administration announced plans for modernizing and using its military forces. His assistants, Alexander Gray and Peter Navarro, wrote during the campaign, "Trump will steadfastly pursue a strategy of 'peace through strength,' an axiom of Ronald Reagan that was abandoned under the Obama administration."<sup>47</sup> Trump did in fact engage in a military exercise in Syria. In his first hundred days as president of the U.S., Trump has definitely shown off U.S. strength and muscle. How Bush responded to 9/11 in his first year may be prescriptive to Trump. As for Afghanistan, Bush's goal was to retaliate, where his mission was to find and punish Al Qaeda and bin Laden.

For the war on Iraq, Bush came up with several rationales. One motive was to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and another was to topple the current regime. However, the questions still remain: What did the U.S. get from this war? Was this a necessary preventive or preemptive action? Trump's recent policies reflect Bush's approach and indicate the next steps in his foreign policy. 'Peace through strength' is an approach that requires a strong military and strong leadership. It has been adopted by several leaders of America. After the relatively stable bipolarity of the Cold War, America had more opportunities to seek and more roles to play in the unipolar order. Trump's era is also experiencing a rapid phase of globalization. With 'peace through strength' motive and spirit, Trump's America is likely to engage in both preemptive and preventive actions.

### ***Intervention vs Non-intervention***

George W. Bush started as a traditional national-interest conservative

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Nuclear-Tweet-Sparks-Controversy> (date accessed April 1, 2017).

47. Alexander Gray and Peter Navarro, "Donald Trump's 'peace through strength' Vision for the Asia-Pacific," *Foreign Policy*, November 7, 2016, <[http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/07/donald-trumps-peace-through-strength-vision-for-the-asia-pacific/?utm\\_content=bufferd5350&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/07/donald-trumps-peace-through-strength-vision-for-the-asia-pacific/?utm_content=bufferd5350&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)> (date accessed April 1, 2017).

but later adopted neoconservative principles after the 9/11 attacks. The attacks on American soil, especially the heart of the nation, New York and Washington DC, left few options for Bush but to find Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and retaliate on behalf of the 3,000 American lives. President Bush made a call and the war on Afghanistan began. The same action may have been taken by Democratic administrations like Clinton's and Obama's. President Bush went even further by declaring Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as, the 'Axis of Evil.' Breaching the UN Charter by invading Iraq not only incurred resentment from the international community but, more importantly, cost several thousand lives of U.S. soldiers. Democratization in the midst of the unforeseen conflict between Sunnis and Shiites dragged on and eventually resulted in more deaths.

The recent bombing of Syria appears to repeat Bush's path. While Trump previously condemned any interventionist approaches on Syria, he did not hesitate to use military force and ordered strikes in Syria within his first hundred days. The point is not how Trump ordered the bombings but how he changed his national security stance toward Syria. This also resembles Bush's change in his stance toward neoconservatism after 9/11. Trump seems to be open to intervention if needed. Overall, 'America First' may secure its foundation of prioritizing America but his first hundred days in office proved that intervention seems more likely than generally expected.

### ***From Nationalist to Globalist***

Another parallel found between the Bush and Trump administrations, thus far, is that they started out as nationalist but turned out to be globalist. Globalism, including interventionism, follows the trend of globalization, which often turns out to be anti-Westphalian. Nationalism focuses on protecting and preserving national values and assets. Bush eventually transformed into a globalist when he adopted the neoconservative credo. In his first presidential debate in 2000, he argued, "If we don't do something quickly...if we don't stop extending our troops all around the world in nation-building missions, then we're going to



have a serious problem coming down the road.”<sup>48</sup> This was upended two years later. The 2002 National Security Strategy states, “Throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror... The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead in this great mission.”<sup>49</sup> The neoconservative creed ‘peace through strength’ and democratization turned nationalist Bush into a globalist.

Trump’s pledges and plans during the campaign such as immigration, foreign policy, and trade displayed his nationalist tendencies. However, his young presidency has naturally illustrated his prospects as a globalist. ‘Make America Great Again,’ though first used by Reagan in his 1980 presidential campaign,<sup>50</sup> has been Trump’s slogan in his presidential campaign after buying every right to it by signing “an application with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, in which he asked for exclusive rights to use “Make America Great Again” ... He enclosed a \$325 registration fee.”<sup>51</sup>

The bombs dropped on Syria jeopardized the whole situation. Obviously, this shocked Russia and President Vladimir Putin. He commented, “This [attack on Syria] resembles very much the situation of 2003 and the war in Iraq.”<sup>52</sup> Even others, besides Russia, were shocked by Trump’s stance shift since “he won the Republican nomination last

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48. Rebecca Leung, “Bush Sought ‘Way’ To Invade Iraq?: O’Neill Tells ‘60 Minutes’ Iraq Was ‘Topic A’ 8 Months Before 9-11,” *CBS News*, January 9, 2004, <<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bush-sought-way-to-invade-iraq/>> (date accessed April 5, 2017).

49. U.S. “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002,” <<http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2002/>> (date accessed March 1, 2017).

50. Emma Margolin, “Make America Great Again—Who Said It First?” *NBC News*, September 9, 2016, <<http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/make-america-great-again-who-said-it-first-n645716>> (date accessed March 20, 2017).

51. Kevin Tumulty, “How Donald Trump came up with ‘Make America Great Again,’” *The Washington Post*, January 18, 2017, <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-donald-trump-came-up-with-make-america-great-again/2017/01/17/fb6acf5e-dbf7-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.04eb120947b8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-donald-trump-came-up-with-make-america-great-again/2017/01/17/fb6acf5e-dbf7-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c_story.html?utm_term=.04eb120947b8)> (date accessed March 20, 2017).

52. Mark Hensch, “Putin compares Syria strike to US invasion of Iraq,” *The Hill*, April 11, 2017, <<http://thehill.com/policy/international/russia/328254-putin-syria-strikes-like-second-iraq-war>> (date accessed April 12, 2017).

year by campaigning against both George W. Bush's war in Iraq and Barack Obama's war in Libya."<sup>53</sup> Moreover, as cited earlier, his closing remarks regarding bombing Syria, "God bless America and the entire world," may be the first globalist comment he had made. Also his recent tweet about France, "Another terrorist attack in Paris. The people of France will not take much more of this. Will have a big effect on presidential election,"<sup>54</sup> shows his close attention to global matters.

Trump seems to follow Bush's globalist path. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had been motivated by the 9/11 attack where Bush was highly reactive and responsive to the cause of the attack. Nonetheless, Syria was not a threat that should be responded to in preemptive or preventive manners. While Trump's approach to Syria is neither preemptive nor preventive, at least it unmasked the globalist nature of Trump.

Although a clear trend has yet to be found, based on this comparative case analysis, Trump's foreign policy in his honeymoon period, despite the low popularity rating, can be summarized as follows. Trump believes in peace through strength and will intervene in other nations but a cost and benefit analysis will likely come first. His potential for becoming globalist and expanding the American sphere of influence will also largely depend on the figures of the balance sheet. In sum, Trump's foreign policy will be constructed in an entrepreneurial manner; in other words, his art of the deal.

## Trump on North Korea: The Art of the Deal

The parallels found indicate that Trump's foreign policy is moving in the direction of a globalist, rather than an isolationist approach, and his

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53. Eli Lake, "Trump Said No to Troops in Syria. His Aides Aren't So Sure," *Bloomberg*, April 14, 2017, <<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-04-13/trump-said-no-to-troops-in-syria-his-aides-aren-t-so-sure>> (date accessed April 18, 2017).

54. Donald J. Trump, (Tweet, Apr 21, 2017), Tweeter, <<https://twitter.com/realdonald-trump/status/855368516920332289?lang=en>> (date accessed April 30, 2017) Trump tweeted about France on 7:32 PM - 21 Apr 2017.

business background gradually seems to play an influencing role in making foreign policy. 'You're fired!' in the late TV show *The Apprentice* has created Trump's straightforward, decisive, and definitive entrepreneurial image. Against this backdrop, Trump's approach toward North Korea is expected to be more decisive and more profit oriented than any former president in U.S. history.

### ***Review: Bush on North Korea: 'Axis of Evil'***

In the 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush stated, "North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens... States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world."<sup>55</sup> Along with Iran and Iraq, North Korea was categorized as the target and enemy by the Bush administration. Bush witnessed North Korea's nuclear and missile tests during his term in 2006. In the beginning of his term, Bush terminated the supply of fuel and oil, freezing the nuclear program in North Korea. In response, North Korea kicked out the UN inspectors and continued developing nuclear weapons, finally conducted the "first nuclear test in 2006."<sup>56</sup>

Although this test was considered a failure, "American officials pushed for tough sanctions, calling for a block on all imports of military equipment to North Korea."<sup>57</sup> The former secretary of defense,

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55. The United States Capitol, "The President's State of the Union Address," Washington, D.C., January 29, 2002, <<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>> (date accessed March 20, 2017).

56. Glenn Kessler, "The facile claim that Obama's Iran negotiator was 'the architect of the North Korean nuclear deal'," *The Washington Post*, April 24, 2017, <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/04/24/the-facile-claim-that-the-iran-negotiator-was-the-architect-of-the-north-korean-nuclear-deal/?utm\\_term=.acf243b935a6](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/04/24/the-facile-claim-that-the-iran-negotiator-was-the-architect-of-the-north-korean-nuclear-deal/?utm_term=.acf243b935a6)> (date accessed April 28, 2017).

57. Amanda Erickson, "A timeline of North Korea's five nuclear tests and how the U.S. has responded," *The Washington Post*, April 14, 2017, <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/14/a-timeline-of-north-koreas-five-nuclear-tests-and-how-the-u-s-has-responded/?utm\\_term=.c8af22ba3dcf](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/14/a-timeline-of-north-koreas-five-nuclear-tests-and-how-the-u-s-has-responded/?utm_term=.c8af22ba3dcf)> (date accessed April 28, 2017).

William Perry, in his Washington Post article, wrote, “Our government’s inattention has allowed North Korea to establish a new and dangerous threat to the Asia-Pacific region,”<sup>58</sup> condemning the Bush administration. He also criticized Bush for not setting a proper boundary for nuclear tests. Regardless of the ‘Axis of Evil’ label and follow-up sanctions, North Korea continued their tests in 2013 and 2016. Bush may have had enough guts and power to freeze the nuclear programs but, lacking vision, ultimately failed in dismantling North Korea’s nuclear program. One lesson found here is that American exceptionalism and ‘peace through strength’ would only remain as motives unless put into action.

### ***Ex-business mogul’s approach to North Korea***

Considering his business career, leading the Trump Organization for nearly a half-century, Trump is accustomed to a competitive bargaining environment where the maximization of profit has always been the priority. His foreign policy operation can be understood and speculated on in this regard. Moreover, this is the point where the parallels between Trump and Bush diverge. However, the situation concerning North Korea did not get better over the last decade and, “under Donald Trump’s administration, the ‘axis of evil’ is back, though in somewhat altered form.”<sup>59</sup> His views and engagement on North Korea are analyzed in this section.

### **North Korea for Trump?**

“I wouldn’t go there [North Korea]... If he [Kim Jong un] came here, I’d accept him, but I wouldn’t give him a state dinner... We should be

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58. William J. Perry, “In Search of a North Korea Policy,” *The Washington Post*, October 11, 2006, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101001285.html>>, (date accessed April 29, 2017).

59. Aaron David Miller, “The ‘axis of evil’ is back,” *CNN*, April 26, 2017. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/26/opinions/axis-of-evil-is-back-miller-sokolsky/>> (date accessed April 28, 2017).

eating a hamburger on a conference table,"<sup>60</sup> said Trump. After these remarks in Atlanta during the campaign, various observations and translations were plastered all over the media. Two points are easily deduced from his speech. First, he is willing to talk to Kim even if the chance of talking him out of continuing his nuclear weapons operation is low. Second, the part that he would treat Kim to hamburgers instead of a big state dinner contains the message of hierarchy. Some of the media's wishful thinking that Trump is making an effort to comfort Kim in a casual manner is naïve, rather he is looking down on Kim. He considers hamburgers with Kim as nothing more than opening a dialogue which results from a 'better than nothing' way of thinking. In other words, there is hardly any reason for Trump to engage North Korea in a proactive or cautious manner during his campaign.

How seriously is the U.S. exposed to a North Korean nuclear attack? Americans have gone through the tragedy of 9/11 where homeland security became one of the top national security agendas. In this regard, questions like, 'Is North Korea threatening the U.S.?' and if so, 'How imminent is the threat?' seem necessary to be investigated. Former assistant secretary of defense, Philip E. Coyle, said, North Korea's ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) are known to be incapable of reaching California and they "can't even reach Hawaii."<sup>61</sup> He added that North Korea's ICBMs are not a current threat, but rather a looming threat. Although Kim continues his nuclear development program and may become a serious threat in the future, Trump's concerns over North Korea are not immediate at this point.

The entry of CVN-70, known as the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier, in the East Sea was a warning to North Korea. However, the 230,000 Americans residing in South Korea and the unidentified weapons of

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60. Nick Gass, "Trump: I'll meet with Kim Jong Un in the U.S.," *Politico*, June 15, 2016, <<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/donald-trump-north-korea-nukes-224385>> (date accessed April 26).

61. Anna Fifield, "Will North Korea fire a missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland? Probably," April 5, 2017, <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world-views/wp/2017/04/05/will-north-korea-fire-a-missile-capable-of-hitting-the-u-s-mainland-probably/?utm\\_term=.26aa3dd32793](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world-views/wp/2017/04/05/will-north-korea-fire-a-missile-capable-of-hitting-the-u-s-mainland-probably/?utm_term=.26aa3dd32793)> (date accessed April 27, 2017).

North Korea would likely hold Trump's military action down. One thing for sure is that, for Trump, whether preemptive or preventive, what was done in Syria will not likely to be repeated on North Korea.

## Alliance

Then, suppose Trump does not consider North Korea an imminent threat and military action is not an option, does he not take North Korea seriously? His comments regarding North Korea during the campaign seemed reckless, yet his tone became more serious and definite after his inauguration. In the face of 15 United Nations Security Council representatives visiting the Oval Office, he openly criticized the work of the UN on Syria and North Korea. As for North Korea, he said, "The status quo in North Korea is also unacceptable, and the Council must be prepared to impose additional and stronger sanctions on North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile programs."<sup>62</sup> Calling North Korea a big world problem, Trump surely has intentions of solving the denuclearization issue.

Since the U.S. is not within the range of North Korea's missile threats, the U.S. may stay out of the North Korean issue. However, the traditional hub-and-spoke alliance of Korea and Japan would matter for Trump. A group of U.S. politicians visited Korea and Japan in April to discuss the future of the U.S. and the alliance's relationship. Republican Kathleen Rice noted that no other nations in the world are as close to the threat as Korea and Japan are.<sup>63</sup> While her interview with the media was meant to criticize Trump's recent inattentive and igno-

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62. "President Trump Meeting with U.N. Security Council Ambassadors," *C-SPAN*, April 24, 2017, <<https://www.google.co.kr/url?sa=t&rc=tj&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&ved=0ahUKewjls7q9iMnTAhVIU7wKHaLNC6UQFgg3MAY&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.c-span.org%2Fvideo%2F%3F427447-1%2Fpresident-trump-meets-un-security-council-ambassadors&usq=AFQjCNFZqBTvxxXMkIQ3pI8hHhAZ1gG82A&sig2=V8sx1ZnqHJDr dumbzfcRXQ>> (date accessed April 30, 2017).

63. Jim Acosta and Ryan Browne, "Official: White House, Pentagon miscommunicated on aircraft carrier's location," *CNN*, April 29, 2017, <<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/18/politics/carl-vinson-korea-trump/>> (date accessed April 30, 2017).

rant manner,<sup>64</sup> Rice firmly reemphasized the importance of these allies. Although Trump's 'burden sharing' comments have been repeated, it may not transcend the significance of the alliance's common goal: denuclearization of North Korea.

### Utilizing China in the North Korean Issue

Engaging North Korea and restricting its nuclear weapon development has been carried out in various ways. Multiple UN resolutions have been passed, sanctions imposed, and multilateral dialogues held, like the Six Party Talks, bringing North Korea to the bargaining table. Various forms of aid have been provided by not only states but also non-state actors. Even bilateral talks, specifically the two previous summit meetings, took place. Regardless of such efforts, North Korea is still developing nuclear weapons. Alternative ways of dealing with them seem necessary at this point.

One of the methods can be utilizing China. Two mysterious gestures from Trump to China seem either careless or strategic. First, after his inauguration, Trump's initial conversation with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen appeared to shake the 'One China' policy. He became the first U.S. president to have faced such an issue but soon agreed to honor 'One China' by holding the summit meeting with President Xi. Second, the reason for informing President Xi of the Syria strikes over a "beautiful piece of chocolate cake"<sup>65</sup> at the Mar-a-Lago summit is also mystifying. This stick and carrot, or tug-of-war type of diplomacy, not only puzzled China and relevant nations, Korea and Japan, but also highlighted the fact that Trump was a businessman and a negotiator.

Furthermore, the considerations, or variables, that Trump created complicate the equation. Korea and the U.S.'s agreement to deploy

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64. Trump made unclear comments about the direction of CVN-70.

65. Scott Snyder, "Can China Meet President Trump's Expectations On North Korea?" *Forbes*, May 2, 2017, <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/scottasnryder/2017/05/02/can-china-meet-president-trumps-expectations-on-north-korea/#679f566e7181>> (date accessed May 4, 2017).

THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense Missile) has complicated the situation for China. While China is highly sensitive about the THAAD stationed on the Korean peninsula, Trump took this issue even further and more seriously by mentioning the cost of deployment. This has certainly jeopardized Korea. After the summit meeting with Xi, Trump's ignorant comment that Korea was part of China in the past left Koreans stunned. As this incorrect information was assumed to have come from Xi, the heated atmosphere between Korea and China grew even worse and left President Xi as a target of criticism. In the end, hatred between the two nations, Korea and China, has intensified after Trump's inauguration.

Overall, the Trump administration's foreign policy regarding North Korea seems to be solidifying with a creed of globalism while intervention is not an option on the table. Instead, Trump wants to utilize China for containing North Korea, without getting his hands dirty. After the Mar-a-Lago summit, Trump tweeted, "I explained to the President of China that a trade deal with the U.S. will be far better for them if they solve the North Korean problem!"<sup>66</sup> The maximization of profit is the one and the only goal in business and it is well reflected by Trump's foreign policy on North Korea. In this regard, Trump's entrepreneurial way of conducting foreign policy is certainly quite different from his predecessors.

## Conclusion: The Art of War

One of the lessons learned in *The Art of War*, by Sun Tzu, is that "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of hundred battles."<sup>67</sup> This is what Korea needs to ruminate on concerning the Trump administration. This research was motivated by academic curiosity that has repeatedly been triggered whenever

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66. Ibid.

67. Erik Jackson, "Sun Tzu's 31 Best Pieces of Leadership Advice," *Forbes*, May 23, 2014, <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericjackson/2014/05/23/sun-tzus-33-best-pieces-of-leadership-advice/#7586b10a5e5e>> (date accessed May 5, 2017).



Trump announces or tweets unexpected comments. They were reminiscent of the Bush administration after the 9/11 attack. In this regard, the two administrations were compared and some similar traits were found.

The expectations for Trump's North Korea policies become clearer when another lens, the so-called business-sensitive lens,<sup>68</sup> was put on for analysis. Through this lens, Trump's level of engagement on North Korea and utilizing China for handling North Korea can be investigated. Having stated this, how Korea should deal with this distinguished businessman, who led a corporation relatively successfully for nearly fifty years, should be discussed. As mentioned, knowing Trump well is critical for Korea-U.S. bilateral relations at this time. Acknowledging and accepting Trump as a cold-minded businessman mostly striving for the U.S.'s own national interests should be the starting point for examining Korea-U.S. relations.

In this light, South Korea must fulfill two tasks. First, Korea must lead the Korea-U.S. alliance to be value-based rather than interest-based.<sup>69</sup> The Korean government should patiently explain to Trump, an interest-oriented business mogul, about the shared history and values between the two nations. Democracy is the foundation on which the two nations firmly stand. Korea is a nation that adopted democracy from the U.S. and has operated it in a very similar manner. Countless values are shared between the two nations and Trump may not be aware of them. Informing the White House of the precious values shared between the two nations will be the first step toward strengthening this value-based alliance.

Moreover, South Korea must play the orchestrating role in regard to North Korean issues. Although Trump's lack of understanding regarding Northeast Asia and the Korean peninsula have resulted in

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68. Like a gender-sensitive lens used in the study of gender, a business-sensitive lens allows people to focus on business (in this case, Trump's business tactics and strategies).

69. In this article, a value-based alliance considers the history shared between the two nations, South Korea and the U.S.; whereas, an interest-based alliance illustrates Trump's business-oriented way of conducting foreign policy.

careless statements about China and Korea, Korea needs to strike a balance in the region. Korea should constantly engage its neighboring countries as well as the U.S. to avoid being left out. In particular, President Trump should never be left to decide on policy regarding North Korea without consulting South Korea first.<sup>70</sup> Overall, active communication between the Blue House and the White House is not only inevitable but extremely essential at this time.

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70. Trump's unpredictable and abrupt decisions and actions have jeopardized international orders such as the TPP and Paris Agreement. To prevent this, the South Korean government will have to keep a close eye on Washington politics.

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## **Making Engagement Effective: The Politics of North Korean Human Rights in a Humanitarian Context**

**Dong-ho Han**

This article deals with the issue of North Korean human rights in a humanitarian context. Humanitarianism can be defined as the activities and/or policies by which the purpose of rescuing the vulnerable in a society could be achieved. It is argued that by both reinforcing a humanitarian discourse and establishing a humanitarian principle, South Korea's engagement toward the DPRK as a primary and smart strategy could be more effective, thereby realizing a "true" sense of improvement in North Koreans' human rights. In conclusion, this article summarizes the main findings of the research and suggests a few policy implications for policymakers.

**Keywords:** North Korean Human Rights, Humanitarianism, South Korean Human Rights Policy toward the North, Engagement, Humanitarian Assistance

### **Introduction**

The issue of North Korean human rights is of critical importance to solve the current inter-Korean stalemate. In 2014, the international community witnessed the evolution of North Korean human rights issues and various actors in the international arena came to pay attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The international community and, among others, the South Korean government, is very concerned about the North Korean situation, specifically focusing on the impact of human rights issues in the DPRK on the overall security landscape in the Northeast Asian

region. This human rights problem become the core of the so-called North Korean problem along with its nuclear issues, and accordingly, the Republic of Korea (ROK) proclaimed that the goal of its North Korea policy lies in suggesting solutions for these two issue areas.

In this article, it is argued that addressing the North Korean human rights issue is critical in solving the current stalemate on the Korean Peninsula in general and with inter-Korean relations in particular. More specifically, the South Korean government can increase its level of assistance towards the North since it is expected to align with the principle of humanitarianism. In other words, South Korea could take advantage of various opportunities for dialogues with the North by dealing with the issue of North Korean human rights in a humanitarian context. In order to improve the already deteriorating human rights in North Korea, the South Korean government should take the lead in concert with various efforts by the international community in the field of North Korean human rights.

In the following sections, the evolution of North Korean human rights issues will be explained, as well as South Korea's domestic discussions on these issues and the importance of the humanitarian principle in South Korea's strategic thinking toward the North, respectively.

### **The Evolution of North Korean Human Rights Issues and Various Efforts by the International Community**

Since the 1990s, a number of North Korean escapees began to leave the DPRK and revealed the true nature of the North Korean human rights situation. Since then, the international community began to pay attention to the human rights situation in the DPRK. Various efforts by the international community have been poured into North Korean society, especially since the 1990s. In the 1990s, international efforts focused on North Korea's recurring problems, such as chronic food shortages, natural disasters, harsh social control, etc. where the DPRK desperately

needed international assistance.<sup>1</sup> Thus, a variety of NGOs, states, and individuals have been involved with discussions on the promotion and protection of human rights norms and practices in North Korea.<sup>2</sup>

A qualitative change in the discourse on North Korean human rights began in the 2000s. In 2012 both the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) and the General Assembly (GA), for the first time, passed resolutions on North Korean human rights issues without a vote.<sup>3</sup> Again, in 2013 the HRC passed its resolution regarding the situation of human rights in the DPRK without a vote.<sup>4</sup> The most notable point in this resolution was the decision to establish the Commission of Inquiry on the human rights situation in the DPRK (hereinafter, COI-DPRK) for the purpose of investigating North Korea's human rights violations and thus clarifying whether crimes against humanity had been perpetrated in the DPRK. After finishing its year-long investigation, the COI-DPRK concluded that crimes against humanity occurring in the DPRK had been perpetrated by "high authorities of the DPRK" "intentionally."<sup>5</sup>

That same year, the GA passed its North Korean human rights resolution with a stronger voice than ever before, including contents such as "referring to the North Korean human rights situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC)," "high authorities of the DPRK

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1. For a succinct explanation of North Korea in the 1990s, see Hazel Smith, *North Korea: Markets and Military Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 186-208.
  2. For an analysis of various actors that affect the improvement of human rights situations in a certain country in general, see Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activist beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); for an explanation of general human rights conditions and environments of North Korea, see Roberta Cohen, "Human Rights in North Korea: Addressing the Challenges," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2013), pp. 29-62.
  3. Lee Geum-soon and Dong-ho Han, *Current Trends of Discussion on North Korean Human Rights in International Society* (Seoul: KINU, 2012).
  4. UN Doc., "Report of Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," (February 7, 2014).
  5. *Ibid.*

should be held accountable," etc.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the UN Security Council (SC), based on the various recommendations from the UN COI report and resolutions from the HRC and the GA, decided to select the issue of North Korean human rights as its official agenda.<sup>7</sup>

It is particularly important to note that the GA passed a stronger resolution than ever before, which dealt with North Korean human rights abuses in view of international criminal law. In this context, it seems clear that North Korean human rights issues are not only in the domain of political criticism but also in the area of legal judgment based on multilateral consensus. Now the international community is concerned about various issues such as accountability, responsibility, and criminality that North Korean human rights issues seemingly pose. Specifically, the GA resolution recommends that the SC refer the North Korean human rights case to the ICC and a number of member states agreed to pass this resolution. Although it is not likely for the SC to influence the North Korean situation due to veto powers by Russia and China, the international community has thus far strengthened its pressure on the North's human rights situation.

Given the international community's efforts to improve the North Korean human rights situation, it is no exaggeration to say that the North Korean human rights issues have become the concern of the entire international community. Specifically, it should be noted that the North Korean human rights issue has evolved from the target of international monitoring to that of international criminal justice. Since the release of the COI report in February 2014, concerned governments, international organizations, and various NGOs have tried to follow a number of recommendations, which the COI-DPRK suggested in its report.<sup>8</sup> Specifically in South Korea there are various efforts to

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6. UN General Assembly, North Korean Human Rights Resolution (December 2014).

7. UN Security Council's agenda is regarded as one of the most important world affairs in view of the international community. This agenda is supposed to be discussed on the international arena for the following 4-5 years.

8. This is not to say that before the release of the COI report there have been no meaningful efforts at all to improve North Korean human rights on the parts of

get involved in the discussions on North Korean human rights from both progressives and conservatives in the field of Korean politics.

## South Korea's Domestic Discussions on North Korean Human Rights

Despite the international community's concerted efforts for improving North Korean human rights, South Korea also lacks a consensus regarding the basic concepts of human rights and approaches to improve them when addressing North Korean human rights. Perhaps due to this lack of consensus, discussions on North Korean human rights in South Korean society are becoming more frequent and increasingly animated.

Generally speaking, there are two ways to improve human rights conditions in a certain country and/or area. The first approach is advocacy. According to this approach, the role of external influence is essential for improving internal human rights conditions. Thus, various international human rights movements such as naming and shaming, criticism, sanctions, etc. should be used as tactics to change the nature of political dictatorships which would seemingly be the main cause for the deteriorating conditions of human rights. Advocacy and pressure based on international solidarity could play a key role in fundamentally changing the overall human rights records in a target country.<sup>9</sup>

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governments, NGOs, and civil society. It should be noted, however, that after the release of the COI report, various efforts by concerned actors have been more enhanced at the international level. Regarding the COI recommendations and various efforts by South Korea to follow these recommendations, see Han, Dongho, "North Korean Human Rights and Role of South Korea," *Vantage Point* (April 2015), pp. 27-30.

9. For an analysis of the power and influence of human rights norms and practices on the political world, see Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, ed., *The Persistent Power of Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); for an explanation of states' policy influence on human rights changes in other countries, see C. William Walldore,

The second approach is assistance. According to this perspective, pressure and/or advocacy in itself has a clear limit for improving human rights conditions. Rather, the international community should focus on general conditions as an underlying cause for dire human rights situations and support the development process in a society. By providing assistance based on the idea of humanitarianism, the international community could contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in a target country.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, these two approaches should be intermingled. The pursuit of both civil and political rights, on one hand, and economic, social, and cultural rights, on the other, is an essential part of the promotion and protection of human rights in a given situation.<sup>11</sup> In South Korea, with regard to the issue of North Korean human rights, different approaches to ameliorate the general North Korean situation have become more contentious, rather than harmonious. In other words, different opinions and approaches to analyze the problem of North Korean human rights have been so politicized that no one could easily suggest a kind of negotiated outcomes based on a consensus. In the South Korean situation, the problem is that various human rights discourses are based on the phenomenon of politicization among different political parties, rather than constructive discussions on how to promote North Korean human rights using different approaches. As a result, what is left are conflict and tension between the ruling and opposition parties, which have prevented suggesting any practical solutions for improving human rights in the DPRK.

Despite the increasing gap between different schools of thought, South Korea's domestic discussions on North Korean human rights

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Jr., *Just Politics: Human Rights and the Foreign Policy of Great Powers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Alison Brysk, *Global Good Samaritans: Human Rights as Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

10. For an excellent analysis of the close relationship between humanitarianism and international aid, see Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein, *Sacred Aid: Faith and Humanitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

11. Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights: In theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 27-33.

have been based on various motivations. The launching of the COI-DPRK, increasing international pressure on North Korean human rights, discussions on North Korean Human Rights Act, and the establishment of the North Korean Human Rights Office in Seoul, all contributed to the rise of vivid discussions on North Korean human rights in South Korean society. Specifically, the establishment of the COI-DPRK and the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Act played a key role in discussing North Korean human rights issues in South Korea. In the following section, the impact of the international community's efforts to improve North Korean human rights in South Korea's domestic context will be explained.

### ***Conservatives vs. Progressives in the Area of North Korean Human Rights***

Generally speaking, there are progressives and conservatives regarding the North Korean human rights issues in South Korean society. In order to solve the so-called North Korean human rights problem, progressives suggest that politicians in both South and North Korea should agree to a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, thereby officially finishing the Korean War and the subsequent division on the peninsula. Underlying this argument, there is a perception that the nature of the North Korean human rights problem stems from not only the dictatorial nature of the northern regime but also the international structure such as the divided political and social culture between the two Koreas.<sup>12</sup>

The conservatives, however, believe that a main reason for deteriorating human rights conditions is that the North is facing the failing system of its own regime. To conservatives in Korean politics, attributing the cause of the North's dire human rights situation to the division structure itself could not be an excuse for the North Korean regime's responsibility to its citizens. Therefore, according to conservatives, the

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12. Regarding this line of reasoning, see Suh Bo-hyuk, "The Division of the Korean Peninsula and Human Rights: Reframing Discussion on the North Korean Human Rights Issue," *Vantage Point* (July 2015), pp. 31-42.

North Korean regime and leadership, first and foremost, should be criticized and the international community could provide a solution for that.

In other words, the conservatives in South Korea regard human rights in North Korea as a synonym of civil and political rights such as the problem of the North's political prison camp system and violations of freedoms concerning movement and expression. The progressives in South Korea argue that economic and social problems such as the North's food crisis and health and nutrition problems of its vulnerable people should be a priority of North Korean human rights issues.

This ideological difference from both sides engenders different approaches to solve the North Korean human rights question. Their differing definitions of North Korean human rights make it difficult for both sides to agree with a sound approach to improve the North's dire human rights situation. Thus, differing ideas of human rights conditions in North Korea lead to disagreements on strategies to solve this difficult problem.

More specifically, the conservatives emphasize the approach of advocacy as a strategy to improve the North's dire human rights conditions. In this sense, various NGOs and civil organizations are supposed to play a more active role in empowering the North Korean people and educating international audiences about the abuses of North Korean human. On the other hand, the progressives oppose unconditional criticism toward the North regime for its human rights record. Rather, the North Korean leadership needs to cooperate with the international community and get involved in the process of technical cooperation and human rights dialogue so that social, economic, and legal conditions can be prepared for the improvement of human rights conditions in North Korean society as a whole.

### ***The Impact of the International Movement to Improve the North's Human Rights Conditions on Domestic Discussions in South Korea***

The international community's efforts to improve North Korean human rights have influenced South Korea's domestic environment



concerning the discussion of DPRK's human rights issues in various ways. Specifically, the establishment of the COI-DPRK and subsequently the UN North Korean Human Rights Office in Seoul have stimulated the rapid rise of the North Korean human rights issue as an important and, at the same time, controversial one in South Korean intellectual society.

First, as the international community decided to set up the COI-DPRK in March 2013, in South Korean society various NGOs and civil society tried to cooperate with each other in order to support the efforts of the international community so that the North Korean human rights situation would be improved. Given the fact that North Korea denies the very existence of the COI-DPRK, let alone its activities, it became almost impossible for the COI-DPRK to visit the DPRK.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the role of South Korea was becoming crucial. This is especially true since information about North Korean human rights is relatively more accessible in South Korea than any other part of the world and a number of North Korean escapees have settled down in South Korea.<sup>14</sup> In August 2013, the COI-DPRK visited South Korea and relevant governmental agencies such as the Ministry of Unification, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc. and tried to cooperate with each other in order to support the visit and activities of the COI-DPRK. In this sense, the very visit of the COI-DPRK to South Korea provided a good opportunity for various governmental agencies to explore ways of responding effectively to the international community's efforts to enhance the North Korean human rights situation and to identify South Korea's role in the global movement of improving North Korean human rights.

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13. For more information on the activities and public hearings led by COI-DPRK, see Dong-ho Han, "Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea: Evaluation and the Tasks Ahead," KINU Online Series CO 13-21, 10-10-2013.

14. Since Kim Jong-un took office in 2011, the number of North Korean escapees coming into South Korea has sharply decreased. For instance, the number of North Korean escapees coming into South Korea in 2011 reached up to 2,701, while the number dropped to 1,502 in 2012. Republic of Korea Ministry of Unification (MOU), *Unification White Paper 2015* (Seoul: MOU, 2015), p. 160.

Before and after the visit of the COI-DPRK, the South Korean government, civil society, and a number of NGOs provided various forms of assistance such as information gathering, information sharing, North Korean escapee interviews, etc. From this process there arose various issues such as the importance of objectively investigating human rights violations in the DPRK, the necessity of a control tower to monitor and implement South Korea's human rights policy toward the North in a systematic way, ways to guarantee the validity and credibility of various testimonies from North Korean escapees, and ways to support the international community's efforts to improve North Korean human rights more systematically. Civil society also supported these international efforts in terms of North Korean democratization, the improvement of North Korean human rights, and humanitarian assistance in an indirect way. Specifically, the two issues of advocacy and assistance are often discussed among various NGOs in South Korea.<sup>15</sup> Generally speaking, the former (advocacy) is related to the possible punishment of DPRK's top leadership for its human rights violations while the latter (engagement) tends to focus on how to support and improve the rights of the vulnerable groups such as the disabled, the elderly, women, and children within the DPRK.

Second, on June 23, 2015 the United Nations Human Rights Office in Seoul was established in the ROK. The establishment of the North Korean Human Rights Office in Seoul itself could be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity for the Seoul government. On one hand, in terms of inter-Korean relations the OHCHR local office in Seoul would be a barrier to ameliorate the current stalemate. In fact, the North has consistently criticized the South's government for its decision to have the North Korean Human Rights Office in its soil. On the other hand, the Seoul government could have an upper hand for taking the lead in international cooperation for the cause of improving North Korean human rights through various channels with OHCHR personnel residing in Seoul and communicating with the OHCHR in Geneva. Therefore, in the view of the South Korean government, now

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15. As strategies to approach the North Korean human rights issue, advocacy and assistance are two pillars of South Korea's human rights policy toward the North.

is the time to think strategically and make a plan to develop further strategic thinking regarding North Korean human rights.

It should be noted that the UN Office in Seoul was established as part of the extension of the COI-DPRK which, first and foremost, tried to investigate whether crimes against humanity were perpetrated by the DPRK regime. In this respect, the primary task of the office would be strengthening the results of the COI report and supporting its recommendations. In other words, the UN Office cannot help but devote its time and resources to pressuring the North regime by further proving conclusions, which the COI-DPRK had in its report. At the same time, of course, the UN Office in Seoul is expected to nurture various efforts by civil organizations to communicate with the North as an endeavor to provide technical assistance based on the spirit of equal partnership with North Korean officials and civil servants. In sum, the establishment of the UN Office would have a dual impact on South Korea's efforts in the area of North Korean human rights. On one hand, this UN office could provide various legal grounds for pressuring the North regime based on its own investigation and collection of information.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, it could provide various channels for technical cooperation either between the two Korean governments or between a number of civil organizations in South Korea and their North Korean counterparts.

### ***The North Korean Human Rights Act and Its Impact on South Korea's Policy toward North Korean Human Rights***

What are the implications of this global movement for South Korea's North Korean human rights policy? What kind of solutions could be suggested amid the vivid discussions between progressives and conservatives in the field of North Korean human rights?

In South Korea there have been numerous discussions regarding the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Act. In the last decade

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16. For an excellent explanation of technical cooperation as one of the OHCHR strategies, see UN Doc., "Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building Options for Integrating Human Rights into National Policies, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights," (24 July 2014).

there have been various efforts to pass the North Korean Human Rights Act in South Korea's national assembly. As a result, South Korea now has the North Korean Human Rights Act. The North Korean Human Rights Act could be an institutional mechanism to guarantee the consistency and effectiveness of South Korea's policy toward the North. The passage of this act in and of itself does not necessarily mean, however, that tensions and problems surrounding all the different opinions regarding North Korean human rights issues have been perfectly solved in South Korea. Rather, quite the opposite is true.

As mentioned above, in South Korean society there is a confrontation between conservatives and progressives with regard to the North Korean issues in general and North Korean human rights issues in particular. The conservatives tend to emphasize the civil and political rights of the North Korean people while the progressives tend to focus on social, economic, and cultural rights. Thus it is natural that the conservatives' group asks for advocacy activities to stop ongoing violations of North Korean human rights whereas the progressives' group calls for assistance for the North Korean people.

These different positions naturally led to different suggestions for South Korea's North Korean human rights bill. In the discussion on North Korean human rights bill, the conservative party intended to include the establishment of various organizations such as the Report Center of North Korean Human Rights and the National Endowment for Human Rights in North Korea. The progressive party tried to include clauses such as the Center for Humanitarian Assistance and support for infant and maternal health and nutrition, etc.

The main problem in this division would be the lack of consensus regarding the improvement of North Korean human rights. There are still various definitions of the meaning of human rights in North Korea. Some argue that the core of North Korean human rights is civil and political rights. Others argue that economic, social, and cultural rights are more urgent than the other rights. Still others suggest that without solving the Korean question seemingly coming from the division structure of the Korean Peninsula, no meaningful efforts could be possible for enhancing North Korean human rights. In order to fill the

gap between conservatives and progressives, a minimum consensus in terms of the core principles of humanitarianism would be needed since it seems reasonable for South Korean policy-makers to base policy guidelines on universal values such as humanitarianism. It is believed that the South Korean government could implement a more consistent and effective policy toward North Korean human rights thanks to the power of human rights as universal values.<sup>17</sup>

### **Inserting Humanitarianism into South Korea's North Korean Human Rights Policy**

In this section I argue that the emphasis on the principle of humanitarianism is very important in South Korea's North Korean human rights policy. Accepting humanitarianism as a guiding principle of South Korean human rights policy toward North Korea could be regarded as a sound and intelligent strategy both domestically and internationally.

#### ***Humanitarianism as a Guiding Principle of the Human Rights Policy of South Korea***

South Korea proclaimed that peace and cooperation in inter-Korean relations would be the key concepts for improving security conditions in the Northeast Asian region. The reality, however, is that the North harshly refuses any attempts to begin a talks on the part of the South. One way to solve this stalemate on the Korean Peninsula is to stick to important principles and to emphasize these in the process of inter-Korean dialogue.

In this perspective, the South Korean policy on North Korean human rights is expected to be based on an important principle – the principle of humanitarianism. Humanitarianism by definition refers to “the independent, neutral, and impartial provision of relief to victims of armed

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17. For a succinct explanation for the relationship between human rights values and foreign policy in a comparative perspective, see David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 197-239.

conflicts and natural disasters.”<sup>18</sup> Of course, this definition is primarily related to activities of non-state actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and/or Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), etc. However, the roles and support of nation-states are crucial to the work of humanitarian organizations. In South Korea, there are a number of civil organizations working in humanitarian assistance for the North.<sup>19</sup> The South Korean government is able to interact with these organizations and influence their activities to help those in need in the DPRK.

The South Korean government is trying to include the idea of humanitarianism as an important factor in its human rights policy. In other words, the South Korean government could insert the spirit of humanitarianism in its foreign policy goals in general and its North Korea policy in particular. If South Korea seriously considers the agenda for inter-Korean integration as well as inter-Korean cooperation, then the idea of humanitarianism could be one good indicator to assess South Korea’s North Korean human rights policy while making South Korea more focused on the quality of life of North Koreans. This emphasis on the human dimension of the inter-Korean relationship equation could enable South Korea to take the lead in its relationship with the North and to spread its national image of ‘Global Good Samaritans.’<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the South Korean government could proclaim that it is sticking to the principle of humanitarianism regarding inter-Korean relations

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18. Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism Contested: Where Angels Fear to Tread* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 9. For more on humanitarianism, see David Kennedy, *The Dark Side of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Michael Barnett, *The Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); *The Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

19. For an analysis of various roles and functions of a number of non-state actors in the domain of the inter-Korean relationship, see Jihwan Hwang, “The Paradox of South Korea’s Unification Diplomacy: Moving beyond a State-Centric Approach,” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2014), pp. 49-72.

20. Here, this term was borrowed from Alison Brysk’s book – *Global Good Samaritans: Human Rights as Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

so that it can actively respond to the North's humanitarian crisis.<sup>21</sup>

In regard to the principle of humanitarianism, the South Korean government could emphasize independence, neutrality, and impartiality as guidelines for its North Korean human rights policy.<sup>22</sup> These guidelines are all the more important given that in the history of inter-Korean relations, political dynamics has always impacted either the process or the result of humanitarian assistance.

### ***South Korea's North Korean Human Rights Policy***<sup>23</sup>

It should be noted that the South Korean government's human rights policy toward the DPRK is closely related to consolidating the foundation for peaceful reunification. This is because concerns about human rights in North Koreans could be directly linked with the living conditions of the North Korean people, which, in turn, could possibly facilitate the unification process of the two Koreas by improving the policy environment surrounding the issue of Korean unification.

A close look at the history of inter-Korean relations, however, shows that South Korea's human rights policy toward the North

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21. Since the 1990s, many North Korea watchers have described the deteriorating North Korean situation as a crisis. For example, in 2006, Stephen Haggard and Marcus Noland described the issue of North Korean escapees as a crisis in view of the relationship between human rights and the international response, see *The North Korean Refugee Crisis: Human Rights and International Response*, edited by Stephen Haggard and Marcus Noland (D.C.: U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea).

22. For a detailed analysis of each principle, see David P. Forsythe, *The Humanitarians: the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 162-192. Forsythe suggests that humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have rigid principles such as humanity, neutrality, and independence. Based on these founding principles, humanitarian works could be defined as relatively independent of humanitarian relief in any political and/or social circumstances. Based on this definition, if states and/or non-state actors could stick to humanitarian principles in a certain period of time, then they would be regarded as "humanitarian actors."

23. Here, this term was borrowed from Alison Brysk's book – *Global Good Samaritans: Human Rights as Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

lacked consistency and effectiveness. Even some North Korea watchers pointed out that there has been no solid North Korean human rights policy at all on the part of South Korea.

True, South Korea's human rights policy toward the North has largely depended on changes in the inter-Korean relationship and in most cases political factors determine human rights policy in South Korean strategic thinking toward its northern counterpart. To alter this situation, South Korean policymakers, first of all, should consider general principles of human rights policy such as consistency and effectiveness.<sup>24</sup> While consistency and effectiveness are principles related to the implementation stage of the policy process, the principle of humanitarianism could be inserted into the stage of policy planning. Therefore, the ideal form of South Korea's North Korean human rights policy could be summarized as follows: a consistent and effective human rights policy toward North Koreans based on the spirit of humanitarianism through solid legal and institutional mechanisms such as the North Korean Human Rights Act.

For the success of South Korea's North Korean human rights policy, it seems necessary to overcome the domestic ideological division regarding the issue of North Korean human rights and to suggest proactively constructive principles and practical solutions in this area. Moreover, South Korea's human rights policy needs to be related to a discourse on the gradual integration between the two Korean societies, which could lead to the recovery of homogeneity among the Korean people.

### ***Tasks Ahead***

In terms of humanitarian politics, it is of the utmost importance to note that regardless of the ups and downs in inter-Korean relations and the changing political situations on the Korean Peninsula, the Seoul government would continue humanitarian assistance toward the North regime. The reality, however, is not so easy to keep this policy option

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24. Peter Baehr and Monique Castermans-Holleman, *The Role of Human Rights in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 45-68,



on the part of the South Korean government. Currently, North Korea refuses all sorts of suggestions regarding South Korea's provision of humanitarian assistance to the North. Therefore, the South Korean government should develop a smart and effective strategy to overcome this difficult situation in inter-Korean relations.

One way to solve this problem is to focus on the vulnerable people in the North. The elderly, infants, the disabled, and women could be a target for the South's humanitarian assistance. If the Seoul government tries to focus more on this vulnerable group moving forward, then there could be two advantages from this policy stance.

First, it is more likely for the North to accept the South proposal regarding support for its vulnerable groups. In the second round of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for the DPRK in 2014, for instance, North Korea accepted 117 out of 268 recommendations from the international community and a large number of these recommendations were related to improving standards of living for women, children, and disabled people in the DPRK. Therefore, an emphasis on these groups of people would make it more likely for the North and the South to have a discussion on how to support these people in conjunction with human rights dialogue as suggested in the North Korean Human Rights Act.

South Korea's strategy to focus on the North's vulnerable groups and/or people based on the spirit of humanitarianism would work well given that the North officially stated that it "continues to hold its position to reject the politicization, selectivity, and double standards in the international field of human rights and remains committed to promoting sincere dialogue and cooperation based on the principle of impartiality and objectivity" in a national report submitted to the HRC in 2014.<sup>25</sup> This is all the more true, given that in this national report the North also emphasized its efforts to ameliorate general conditions for the rights of special groups such as children, women, older persons,

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25. UN Doc., "National Report submitted in accordance with paragraph five of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, Democratic People's Republic of Korea," (30 January 2014), p. 15.

and persons with disabilities.<sup>26</sup>

Second, it is easier for the South Korean government to win domestic public support for this humanitarian assistance. Throughout the history of South Korea's North Korea policy, the conservative government, based on political support from the conservative camp, has been concerned about the effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance policy as a whole. That is why the South Korean government, regardless of its ideological orientation, tried to discern whether humanitarian assistance from the South would actually reach those in need in the DPRK. That is also why the international community is concerned with the inner workings of the monitoring system in the process of humanitarian aid toward the North. Despite several barriers that the issue of humanitarian assistance seemingly poses, the South Korean government should find various ways to reach out those in need in the DPRK. To effectively deal with those obstacles, an emphasis on the vulnerable groups in the DPRK should be continued.

At the same time, the South government could persuade its citizens of the merits of a close relationship between humanitarian assistance and integration of the two Korean societies. Since the division of the Korean Peninsula in 1945, more than seventy years have already passed. From that time, the two Koreas have experienced increasing heterogeneity in terms of the decline of ethnic nationalism and the rise of civic nationalism.<sup>27</sup> To fill the gap, it seems necessary for the South Korean government to pursue the recovery of national homogeneity, rather than heterogeneity as a top policy priority.<sup>28</sup>

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26. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

27. For a distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism and their implications for political integration and separation, see Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 15-43.

28. I believe that recovering national homogeneity should be of utmost importance in South Korea's strategic thinking if South Korea is serious about preparing for Korean reunification in association with integrating the two Korean societies.

## **Conclusion**

The South Korean government is now exploring ways to support various efforts by the international community to improve North Korean human rights. True, the role of the South Korean government is crucial and indispensable in upgrading the dire situation of North Korean human rights. The core task is that the South Korean government should be able to suggest more practical solutions for the question of North Korean human rights.

One strategy would be an emphasis on support for North Korean women and children on a humanitarian basis. The South Korean government should continue to help and support those in need in the DPRK, regardless of changing political situations on the Korean Peninsula. The consistency and effectiveness of human rights policies could lead to a more successful outcome such as achieving national homogeneity in the process of the integration of the two Korean societies.

Given the current inter-Korean stalemate and South Korea's internal disagreement on the issue of North Korean human rights, building a consensus on this important issue and implementing a policy in a systematic and strategic way is crucial for peace on the Korean Peninsula. In this sense, South Korea's future generations will remember their government's efforts to improve human rights conditions for the North as an essential part of consolidating the foundation for peaceful reunification as well as achieving a peaceful Korean peninsula for the next generations.

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- Walldorf, C. William, Jr. *Just Politics: Human Rights and the Foreign Policy of Great Powers*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. House is not only inevitable but extremely essential at this time.



## **Solving the Korean Conundrum: Russia's Interaction with Major Actors in the Trump-Moon Era\***

**Georgy Toloraya and Vassily Gabets**

Russia seeing peace, stability and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as priorities, will try to play the role of peacemaker and more or less neutral observer in a situation which has shifted due to the new leadership in Seoul and Washington. The authors argue that Russia should pay special attention the role of Moon Jae In. If he can implement a new policy, this could be a game-changer and Seoul could become the principal partner for Russia in solving the Korean conundrum. If the Trump administration would turn from pressure to diplomacy, possibilities for US-Russia cooperation could increase. Russia would mostly support Chinese positions but keep its own line. Understanding such tactics in this strategic triangle is the key to understanding Moscow's efforts regarding the Korean problem, including multilateral aspects. At the same time, Russia cannot ignore North Korea being one of the few neighboring countries maintaining good relations with Pyongyang.

The authors suggest the options for a start of a diplomatic process between the two Koreas and between North Korea and the U.S., as well as in multilateral format and analyze the role Russia might play.

**Keywords:** Korean Issue, Russia and Korea, Trump's Korean Policy, North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Program, New ROK Government Foreign Policy

### **Factors for Russia's Strategy in Korean Affairs**

The Korean Peninsular situation gained new dynamism since the start of 2017, determined mostly by two new factors: U.S. President Trump's new robust attitude towards the North Korean nuclear prob-

lem, which he made clear he may try to solve by force, and his anti-North Korean actions, on the one hand, and the start of a new Northern policy by the Moon Jae In's administration, on the other. Both leaders have suggested new conceptual approaches towards this long-standing issue. While the new U.S. administration noted that "strategic patience is over," Moon Jae In, although critical about the North Korean nuclear and missile programs, wants to improve relations with the North and restore dialogue and cooperation. This is an obvious rift between the allies' ideological approaches — engagement versus pressure and it was recognized at an early stage by both sides.<sup>1</sup>

Other interested parties also have to adapt their policies to the new reality, especially given the increased volatility and unpredictability of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, as well as the increased possibility of a conflict, either by pushing the situation to the extreme or just a miscalculation. At the same time, the probability of a dialogue — and maybe a speedy one — as an *alternative strategy* to solve the Korean problem- in fact is rising. Paradoxically, pressure and engagement are not independent of one another. However, the trigger for twists and turns between the two might be beyond control of the interested parties, other than North Korean and the USA, who can use them arbitrarily.

This is a new challenge to Russian policymakers. The experts' opinions on the possible course of action do not vary much: Russia should follow an independent line aimed at a negotiated solution by political and diplomatic means. The theme of regional security in North-East Asia, including the nuclear problem of North Korea and its implications for Russia have been explored in the works of many Russian authors, including Ilya Dyachkov, ("Nuclear Issue in 2016: Challenges and Prospects,"<sup>2</sup> Alexander Zhebin ("Russia and Korean Unifi-

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1. "Trump to New South Korean Leader: Conditions Must Be Right for Talks with North-NBC," *New York Times*, May 12, 2017, URL. <<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/05/12/world/asia/12reuters-southkorea-usa-trump.html?smid=fb-share>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

2. Dyachkov, Ilya "Nuclear Issue in 2016: Challenges and Prospects" 2016 *International Academic Seminar on Korean Unification*. – Seoul, 2016. – pp. 19-27.



cation,"<sup>3</sup> Konstantin Asmolov, Alexander Vorontsov ("Russia Approach towards the Peace Preservation Problem on Korean Peninsula,"<sup>4</sup> collective monograph "The Uneasy Neighborhood: Korean Peninsula Problems and Challenges for Russia,"<sup>5</sup> the collective monograph "Asian Neighbors of Russia: Cooperation in a Regional Context,"<sup>6</sup> etc. Also there have been a number of works by U.S. and Korean authors, including Kim Jaebum ("The North Korean Factor in East Asian Regional Security,"<sup>7</sup> Joo, Seung-Ho ("Russia's Policy on Nuclear Proliferation and National Unification on the Korean Peninsula,"<sup>8</sup> Kim, Sung-Han ("The Day After: ROK-U.S. Cooperation for Korean Unification,"<sup>9</sup> Ko Jae Nam (The rising role of Russia in settling a peace on the Korean Peninsula),<sup>10</sup> etc.

Despite the fact that the role of Russia and other regional actors in the denuclearization and unification of Korea is relatively well explored, there are new factors, mentioned above, which require the reevaluation of the prospects for the denuclearization and unification of the Korean Peninsula as well as a reassessment of Russia's role in

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3. Zhebin, Alexander, «Russia and Korean Unification» *Asian Perspective* Vol. 19, No. 2, Special Issue on Security and Cooperation in Northeast Asia (Fall-Winter 1995), pp. 175-190.
  4. Vorontsov, Alexander «Russia Approach towards the Peace Preservation Problem on Korean Peninsula» // *Proceedings of the International Conference «The Korean War and Search for Ways of Peace Maintenance on Korean Peninsula in XXI Century.»* Seoul, 2000. pp. 1-24.
  5. "The Uneasy Neighborhood: Korean Peninsula Problems and Challenges for Russia," edited by G. Toloraya (Moscow: MGIMO, 2015), 344 p.
  6. *Asian Neighbors of Russia: Cooperation in a Regional Context* (Moscow, Dashkov&Co editors, 2016), 199 p.
  7. Jaebum Kim The North Korean Factor in East Asian Regional Security, *Journal of Global Policy and Governance*, November 2013, Volume 2, Issue 2, pp. 181-191
  8. Seung-Ho Joo Russia's Policy on Nuclear Proliferation and National Unification on the Korean Peninsula, *Pacific Focus* Volume 29, Issue 2 August 2014, pp. 167-187.
  9. Kim Sung-han The Day After: ROK-U.S. Cooperation for Korean Unification, *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 38, 2015 - Issue 3.
  10. Ko Jae Nam The rising role of Russia in settling a peace on the Korean Peninsula, *East Asian review* Vol:11 Iss:2 Pg:41-62, 1999.

this process.

Russia, given its increased attention to Asia and the Pacific in the framework of its “Turn to the East” and “Eurasia Grand Partnership” policies, would like to control the developments near its eastern border more directly, but has only a limited capacity to do so. The ability to do so will greatly depend on Russia’s relations with major players - the USA, China, and the ROK.

Moscow’s relations with the USA are far from being certain, including the Asia and the Pacific angle. President Trump’s policy on the Korean issue is yet to be determined. So far, the U.S. policy can be characterized as repetition of the past, rather than looking for innovative approaches. Generally speaking, competition with the U.S. in the Pacific is more probable than cooperation. However, any chances for improved U.S.-Russia interaction on the Korean issue should not be lost and a priori discarded as “unrealistic.”

At the same time, the “Turn to the East” policy, so far mostly concentrated on China, needs a new impulse.<sup>11</sup> Thus, both interaction with China and direct discussions with North and South Korea are of growing importance. The new ROK government might become a more important partner for Russia than the previous ones were in the last decade, as the views and approaches of Moon Jae In’s administration are more acceptable to Russia than the negativism of conservative governments. Despite the new situation, Russia will still remain a stakeholder in Korean unification and security issues — generally considered to hold fourth place after the United States, China, and Japan (curiously, that was the order in which heads of states congratulated Moon on election by telephone). The increase in tensions in Korea automatically raises the rating of the Korean issue in Russian foreign policy.

The importance of the Korean issue in Russia’s politics thus has the potential to grow as it can be characterized as a combination of global and regional security and economic interests. The first includes non-proliferation and prevention of a possible large-scale conflict at its

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11. Lukin, Alexander. *Turn to Asia*, Moscow, “Ves Mir” publishers, 2014, pp. 509-510.

borders that could change the whole of geopolitical balance in Asia; the second is related to possible benefits from a reduction of tensions in Korea and expanding economic cooperation in East Asia.

The multilateral diplomatic dimension is also of importance, as the Korean issue is the most acute for Russia in Asia and the Pacific and one of the few where Russia is involved in multilateral diplomatic processes with participation of other global power centers. It might be true that Russia's influence in Korean affairs is limited, however it can still be used to help bring about qualitative changes in the Korean game. Stratfor experts recently observed, "Though Russia alone cannot solve the North Korean problem, it could move the dial just enough to either play spoiler or ally to any efforts by the West to solve it."<sup>12</sup>

The fact, that the "Grand Eurasian Partnership" was declared a strategic choice for Russia in its advance to Asia<sup>13</sup> makes the Northeast Asian region a clue for a much wider long-term strategy. Speaking at the OBOR summit in Beijing in May 2017, President Putin named "summing-up of potentials of the Eurasian Economic Union, SCO, and ASEAN"<sup>14</sup> as the basis for the Eurasian grand partnership. Russian involvement in the Chinese "OBOR" (B&R) initiative,<sup>15</sup> which some observers consider no less than a "China-led anti-Western coalition"<sup>16</sup> means that attention to East Asia in Russian policy should grow. North Korea, with its weak transportation infrastructure and political risks, is

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12. "Russia Seizes an Opportunity in North Korea" *Stratfor*, May 5, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-seizes-opportunity-north-korea> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

13. Russia and China to initiate comprehensive Eurasian economic partnership *Expert Online*, June 30, 2016, URL. <[http://expert.ru/2016/06/30/rf-i-knr-initsiuruyut-vseob\\_emlyuschee-evrazijskoe-ekonomicheskoe-partnerstvo](http://expert.ru/2016/06/30/rf-i-knr-initsiuruyut-vseob_emlyuschee-evrazijskoe-ekonomicheskoe-partnerstvo)>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

14. "International forum: One belt, one road," Kremlin.ru, May 14, 2017, URL. <<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54491>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

15. "One Belt One Road Summit 2017 Beijing," Expo-Asia, URL. <<https://expo-asia.ru/exhibitions/beltroadsummit2017bj>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

16. Nanukov, Sergei «Everyone wants to be a friend of China,» *Expert Online*, May 17, 2017, URL. <<http://expert.ru/2017/04/21/novaya-antizapadnaya-koalitsiya-kitaya/>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

also a sort of a “locked door” into Asia for Russia, which is limiting Russia’s ability to communicate with other Asian countries, notably South Korea. Recently the reasons for Russia to pay more attention to the Korean situation, despite its preoccupation with Middle East, Ukraine, and other “hot spots” have risen.

First, the threat to the non-proliferation regime has increased as North Korea has increased the tempo of bolstering its nuclear potential. The existing nuclear strategic balance is the cornerstone of Russia’s strategic positions in the world and its possible rupture as a result of North Korean actions and eventual appearance of new nuclear states would undermine the basis for Russia’s global power and security. Therefore, Russia is seriously interested in curbing the North Korean nuclear program.

The second is militarization of the neighboring region. The appearance of new U.S. “strategic assets” (especially missile defense systems like THAAD, eventually capable to undermine Russia’s missile deterrent in the East) and troops is a military concern for Russia. It could lead to the militarization of North Eastern China, the re-militarization of Japan, and eventual arms race embracing all the regional countries. Russia will have to spend a great deal of money and effort beefing up the defense potential of its scarcely-populated Far East.

A new additional factor of concern could be a possible acquisition by North Korea of the capability to deliver “a second strike” (the ability to strike the enemy, notably the U.S., even after much of the country’s potential would be devastated by the enemy’s “kinetic action”). This would enable North Korea, critics say, to deter U.S. involvement into a possible conflict in Korea, even if it was started by North Korea itself, thus paving the way for possible North Korean aggression to take over the South. Another possibility is using this new capability as a blackmail tool against the South and the U.S. to extol a “fee for security.” This might signify a completely new strategic situation as Russia’s policy in the Korean Peninsula is based on the presumption that North Korea’s WMD efforts are aimed at deterring their enemies to sustain the state and thus North Korea has no reason to unleash a war. Should North Korea gain the capability to attack the South without

being deterred by the USA that could mean a whole new equation and change in regional strategy. Russia certainly does not want the Pyongyang regime to become capable of aggressive behavior, let alone unleash a conflict as, unlike in its Soviet past, Russia has no leverage to control Pyongyang.

To understand Russia's motivation it is useful to mention some well-known, yet relevant permanent strategic goals of Russia with respect to the Korean Peninsula. Then it will become clear how and in what direction Moscow can cooperate with global and regional stakeholders taking into consideration the novations of the Trump-Moon era. Moscow needs stability in Korea to create conditions for Russia's own deeper integration into the regional and international division of labor and Asian economic development.

- Russia wishes the Korean Peninsula to be free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD), although not all means — especially military options — are considered permissible to achieve that goal.
- Russia would not formally recognize the DPRK as a nuclear state. However, it cannot ignore the nuclear weapons potential of its neighboring country.
- The goal is that North Korea should obey the NPT rules and return to the IAEA. Verification and guarantees of denuclearization should be based on international law and, in that case, Russia would support the development of a peaceful nuclear program of the DPRK.
- Missile development and space research would be permissible in accordance with the established international regimes and only under the condition that the DPRK does not use missile technology to upset the power balance and cause an arms race and increase in tensions.
- The final solution to the Korean issue should be found within by multiparty diplomatic processes and the idea of a “package solution,” first suggested by Moscow in 2003,<sup>17</sup> is strikingly similar to the agreements reached by the six-party talks in 2005-2007, and should become the basis for it.
- The security of the DPRK is a precondition for achieving the goals of non-proliferation, demilitarization and stability. However, blackmail tactics employed by Pyongyang are becoming increasingly dangerous.

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17. Press-statement of Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesman, N46 of 12.01.2003.

- The international process, comprising major powers here, should not be seen as a “zero-sum game,” but unfortunately with the growth of Russia-U.S. contradictions and China-U.S. frictions leads to a regional Cold War era-like division on Korean affairs (3+3) is taking root. “A concert of powers” in North East Asia seems more remote than ever.
- Russia supports North-South reconciliation and cooperation without outside interference and aimed at the distant goal of eventual Korean reunification in a form agreed upon by both the North and South.
- A unified Korea dependent on a foreign country, be it the USA or China, would be detrimental to Russian interests and Russia would strive to prevent such a development. An “absorption” of the North by a pro-American South Korea could be harmful to both the Korean nation and regional security, and Russia would probably join China in opposing such a scenario. Neither is a China-dominated North Korea desirable, as such a regime would be probably be unstable and such a development would cause “containment” efforts aimed at China by the USA, Japan, and possibly other players and increase military tensions in the area.
- That means that Russia should consider the preservation of statehood of North Korea as an option, desirable in comparison with the collapse of the state and turmoil in its neighborhood. However, this does not mean approval of the policies (both external and internal) of the regime.

### **Russia’s Relations with North Korea: Intensive Political Dialogue and Stagnation in the Economy**

To play a constructive role in the Korean issue, Russia has to maintain both good relations with the DPRK and cooperation with other major players. Russian leverage on Korean affairs dwindled after the break-up of the Soviet Union - when the pro-South in Russia politicians were most influential. Russia learned the lesson the hard way that its influence and ability to defend its interests regarding the Korean issue are correlated with the degree of its influence on North Korea; otherwise Russia would be excluded from discussions on the Korean problem. Therefore, the North Korean factor was given attention since the 2000s.

Stratfor experts noted, "When Putin came to power in 2000, he saw the strategic value of maintaining good relations with North Korea — as well as ways Russia could manipulate its position in the region to pressure the country."<sup>18</sup>

Following this logic, Russia chose to develop relations with Kim Jong Un from the very start of his rule, even as the regime strived to stabilize itself. The North Koreans were the ones who took the initiative in rapprochement with Russia – a decision, influenced by the cooling down of North Korea-China relations. As Chinese leader Xi Jinping started to have a Southern tilt, Pyongyang became openly defiant towards Beijing, criticizing a "certain country" [implying China] and after China joined the pressure on North Korea in 2017, becoming openly hostile to Chinese interference, thus having to diversify their foreign contacts in an attempt to find a possible alternative to close ties with Beijing. Although Pyongyang's attempts to win Moscow's favor by showing support on problems sensitive to Moscow, like Ukrainian and Syrian issues, did bring about some awkward feelings in Russia, it, nevertheless, tried to exploit the situation in order to restore its influence in North Korea, especially in the economic sphere.<sup>19</sup>

The rapprochement between Moscow and Pyongyang led to a flurry of bilateral visits in 2014–2015, mostly devoted to economic projects. Several high-profile political visits to Russia took place: Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong, "Second in command" Secretary Choe Ryong Hae, Vice Prime-Minister Ro Du Chol, and Minister of Defense Hyon

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18. "Russia Seizes an Opportunity in North Korea," URL. <<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-seizes-opportunity-north-korea>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

19. "After Japan and the West levied sanctions on Russia for its involvement in the Ukraine conflict and its annexation of Crimea, Russia's view of North Korea shifted. Russia began quietly laying the groundwork that would strengthen its ties to North Korea, thus increasing its global political leverage should it need it. Russia can never replace China's influence over North Korea, but it could interfere with measures employed by China, the United States, or their allies to try to pressure Pyongyang," write the experts of Stratfor "Russia Seizes an Opportunity in North Korea," <<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-seizes-opportunity-north-korea>> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

Yong Chol (his purge is hardly related to his meetings in Russia, as they were rather symbolic), Choe Thae Bok, Chairman of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, etc. Russian Vice-Premier Yury Trutnev and Minister of Far East Development Alexander Galushka also visited Pyongyang.

In April 2015, the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Commission took place in Pyongyang. A "Year of Friendship" saw many cultural and social events from April to October 2015. They included visits of sister cities delegations, numerous sport exchanges, film festivals, exchanges in the educational sphere, delegations of scientists (including that of social scientists from the DPRK, which is noteworthy), and an increase in tourism. Special "Weeks of Friendship" took place and more than a dozen treaties and agreements were signed.

Although the expected visit of Kim Jong-un to Russia for the World War II Victory Day in May 2015, did not materialize, which upset Russian Asia-related policymakers, the trend to work out the broad long-term basis of economic cooperation continued. Negotiations on different economic projects for government and business were of a scale unprecedented for the last three decades. Bilateral economic cooperation negotiations between Russia and North Korea have seemingly reached the same level as after the remarkable Kim Il-sung visit to the USSR in 1984.

A new cooperation concept was emerging with a very pragmatic basis: anything the North Koreans want they should pay for, and in advance. North Korea's most valuable resources are minerals and raw materials, and these have been at the center of most deals (like coal, non-ferrous metals, gold, rare earth as well as iron, etc.). Both countries have agreed to appoint "project commissioners" who would work to reduce red tape and streamline business interactions, acting as "unique points of contact" for strategic projects. For the first time, a Russia-North Korea business council was created to find solutions to the problems of visa issuance and develop better communications. Many bilateral agreements and framework memoranda of understanding were agreed upon, ranging from automobile transportation to sanitary control of agricultural products, from debt repayment and agreements



on settling accounts in rubles to new rules regarding North Korean workers. Sectoral meetings include several dozen tracks of government-to-government, business-to-government, and business-to-business negotiations.

The North Korean side suggested many barter operations given the lack of financial resources at its disposal, with interest by some Russian companies (like coal in exchange for pig iron, etc.). Many of the projects are based on the modernization of plants and facilities, created in cooperation with the former Soviet Union. The North Koreans were especially interested in getting a supply of energy from the Russian Far East and are ready to pay in copper from Onsan deposits. Russian companies expressed interest in revitalizing North Korea's hydro and coal-fired power plants and agreed to set up a special working group to study the issue of electricity supply to the Korean Peninsula, including an analysis of possible route supplies of fuel and energy balances of the participating countries and the cost of electricity. In addition, wind generators may be supplied to North Korea. Russian companies are interested in acquiring magnesite and developing mineral deposits while Russian geologists agreed to conduct a survey of mineral resources in the DPRK, based on materials that were accumulated during decades of Russia-DPRK cooperation. North Korea demonstrated interest in exporting agricultural and fishery products and Russian investment in the Wonsan-Kumgansan tourist zone.<sup>20</sup> Then came 2016. The consecutive nuclear tests in January and September and numerous missile tests caused irritation and concern in Russia and the language of official statements became increasingly rigid, from citing "grave violations of international law and UNSC resolutions" in January 2016<sup>21</sup> to "explicit disregard for the norms of international law"

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20. "Kim Jong Un's visit to Moscow is off, Russian official says," *CNN.com*, April 30, 2015, URL. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/30/world/russia-kim-jong-un-visit>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

21. "Russian foreign ministry commented on reports of hydrogen bomb test in DPRK," *Polit.ru*, January 6, 2016, URL. <<http://polit.ru/news/2016/01/06/zakharova/>> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

and “serious threat to peace and security” in September 2016.<sup>22</sup>

Russia joined the UNSC sanctions against North Korea, having agreed (although with reservations) to Resolutions 2270 and 2321 and 2356. However, Russia is not very satisfied with the motivations of the sanctions — for example, concerning missile launches, Russia states that both North Korea and South Korea have the right to fire missiles when conducting military drills.<sup>23</sup> Generally, sanctions (to which Russia reluctantly joined taking into consideration the will of the international community) are viewed not as the end in itself (and should not damage North Korea’s population and development interests), but rather as one of the tools intended to address the nuclear problem with negotiations being the only way to find an ultimate solution.

Nevertheless, sanctions totally undermined most of the agreements reached on economic projects, although Russia insisted that the prohibitions are subject to application only if there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that the money will be spent on the nuclear program.<sup>24</sup> Also, Russia’s disagreement with national-level unilateral

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22. Press-statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation of September 9, 2016, URL. <[http://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2427373](http://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2427373)>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

23. “Russia Prepares New North Korea Sanctions,” the Moscow Times, February, 21, 2017, URL. <<https://themoscowtimes.com/news/russia-prepares-new-north-korea-sanctions-57219>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

24. On 27, December 2016 President Putin signed the executive order pursuant to UNSC Resolution 2270, which is speedy by Russian government standards). For Russia, the prohibition of the import of gold, iron, and titanium ore, and limitations on financial transactions were harmful — along with closing of subsidiary organizations, branches and representative offices of North Korean banks, joint ventures with the participation of North Korean banks, (however many of them are “fictional entities”) and the prohibition of equity participation in the ownership or correspondent relations with North Korean banks that meant a virtual standstill in cooperation. However, the transit of Russian coal via the North Korean port of Rajin was affected (as a last-minute exception in a deal with the UNSC). Also the number of North Koreans working in Russia did not decrease. The ban imposed on the imports of North Korean raw materials to Russia cannot be considered a significant measure now, as the quantities are insignificant. Pursuant to UNSC Resolution 2321 a new Presidential executive order was prepared, which limits the scientific and technological cooperation (excluding the

and secondary sanctions did not matter much as the U.S. government started to sanction Russian companies for cooperation with North Korea, even if it was not related to WMD programs.<sup>25</sup>

Official statistics put Russia-DPRK trade below \$100 million per year. Since in October 2014 the two countries agreed on settling the accounts in rubles, without the involvement of U.S. banks or U.S. dollars, business transactions with settlement in rubles were on the rise. However, the above figures do not include shipments via third countries, which are sometimes quite significant. Russia officials estimated at the peak of cooperation that Russian exports to North Korea through China alone amount to US \$900 mln a year.<sup>26</sup> The authors estimate current turnover (mostly Russia exports) to drop to less than \$500 mln due to restrictions. Russia mostly supplies oil and fuels, chemicals, and raw materials and the possibility of purchasing something from North Korea has shrunk due to sanctions and especially the ban on financial transactions. Although some Russian financial institutions are permitted to carry on some of operations the trade mostly turned to cash basis or barter.

One of the few active projects now is the Khasan-Rajin transit railway serviced by a Russia-North Korean joint venture “Rasonconfrance.” It mostly transports coal from Russia for delivery by ship thorough Rajin port terminal to Asia; in 2017 the cargoes were on the rise exceeding 1 mln tons in the first half of the year while the volume was

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medical area) unless approved by the UNSC, bans imports of copper, nickel, silver, and zinc (although coal and iron ore deliveries are possible from the entities, as they are not involved with the nuclear program), requires the deportation of financial representatives DPRK in Russia. “Russian MOFA prepared a draft on sanctions against Pyongyang,” *RBK.ru*, February 21, 2017, URL. <<http://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/58abcf129a7947f07e13d64a>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

25. “Politicians and public are indignant at any attempts to sanction any Russian entities on the ground they interact with North Korea unless it will be proved by Russian side that they had violated the rules. DPRK is ready to produce agricultural products in the Far East” *Sakha News*, October, 7, 2014, URL. <<http://www.1sn.ru/117962.html>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).
26. <https://slon.ru/posts/57983>.

about 1.5mln tons for the whole of the previous year.<sup>27</sup>

Traditionally, Russia has also accepted North Korean workers to work at lumber production facilities and in construction, mostly in the Far East. Although criticisms often heard that this is “slave labor” and “workers have to give all their salary to the government,” in fact, it is a highly desirable option for North Korea and it is known that some of the workers bribe officials to get to work in Russia. In 2017, Russia also endured a lot of criticism for opening a ferry line (serviced by the infamous Moranbon ferry) between Rajin and Vladivostok although in fact the project was initiated by the Chinese for carrying Chinese tourists from North-East China to Vladivostok.<sup>28</sup> However, this link makes it easier for North Korean workers to get to Russia and also Russian tourists are planned to visit North Korea.

## **Role of Korea in Russia’s Strategic Partnership with China**

After the end of the Cold War, the roles of the two principle allies of DPRK — the former USSR and China — suddenly changed. Newly democratic Russia had neither the resources nor the desire to support the North Korean regime. Beijing, unlike Moscow, had more reasons to be concerned with the situation on the Korean Peninsula, since its geographical proximity and the length of the China-North Korea border (more than 1420 km<sup>29</sup>) made North Korea crucial for China’s security. According to the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, the DPRK is a military ally of China. It is unlikely that the Chinese leadership believes North Korean forces would pro-

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27. RZD logistics “Coal transportation through Rajin Port,” <[http://www.rzdlog.ru/services/additional/port\\_forwarding\\_rajin/](http://www.rzdlog.ru/services/additional/port_forwarding_rajin/)>(accessed on June 10, 2017).

28. “Proposed North Korean ferry to Vladivostok may transport goods and workers” [https://www.rbth.com/business/2017/04/19/proposed-north-korean-ferry-to-vladivostok-may-transport-goods-and-workers\\_746353](https://www.rbth.com/business/2017/04/19/proposed-north-korean-ferry-to-vladivostok-may-transport-goods-and-workers_746353) (accessed June 9, 2017).

29. Onishi, Norimitsu. Tension, Desperation: The China-North Korean Border *New York Times*, last modified October 22, 2006, URL. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/22/weekinreview/22marsh.html> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

vide meaningful assistance to China in case of war, in fact, their ability to conduct full-scale operations outside the Korean Peninsula is in question. However, the very existence of North Korea gives Chinese borders a certain protection from attack: to attack the North-Eastern provinces of China, any invader would first have to take control over North Korean territory, which is not an easy task, taking into consideration the terrain and the resistance potential of the North Korean army.

The opinion that North Korea is crucial for China's defense capabilities is based not only on theoretical considerations but also on historical experience. During the *Imjin* War Japan viewed an invasion of Korea as the first stage of a military campaign against China, and the latter provided assistance to the Korean Choseon dynasty in order to defeat the aggressors before they could attack Chinese territory.<sup>30</sup> On the contrary, at the beginning of the 20th century, Japan managed to occupy the territory of Korea and successfully used it to invade Manchuria. Grave concerns that a defeat of the DPRK would leave Chinese borders vulnerable to a U.S. invasion were one of the main reasons why China, after some hesitation, decided to send its troops to North Korea during the war of 1950-1953.<sup>31</sup>

These considerations are still relevant to China in a situation where South Korea is a U.S. military ally, and American troops and weapons are deployed on its territory. Even now, the U.S.-South Korean alliance and its negative implications for China's security cause deep concerns in China. The U.S. Air Force units, deployed on the Kunsan and Osan air bases have a range which enable them to threaten the territory of China. Even more worrisome for China are the US-based THAAD missile complexes recently deployed in South Korea which, according to the Chinese, can also be used to monitor Chinese territory, including nuclear missile launch sites.<sup>32</sup> If the Kore-

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30. Denisov, Valery "Inter-Korean Settlement and Russia's Interests." Moscow, *International Affairs*, 2002, No.1, p. 59.

31. Torkunov, A.V., Denisov, V.I. Lee, Vl. F. "Korean Peninsula: Metamorphosis of the Post-War History," (Moscow, Olma Media Grupp 2008. p. 544.

32. Kirianov, Oleg "Military and political aspects of possible U.S. THAAD systems deployment in the Republic of Korea," URL <<https://istina.msu.ru/media/con->

an Peninsula were to be unified under Seoul's guidance, North Korea would become a part of a bigger Republic of Korea (this seems to be the only realistic scenario at the moment), American military bases could appear in the territory of the former DPRK<sup>33</sup>, which would be even more dangerous for China than the current military presence of the USA in South Korea. It can be argued that the USA military is stationed in Korea solely for defense purposes and pose no threat to China. However, as the situation with THAAD shows, such reassurances do not work. The Chinese leadership prefers to maintain the current balance of power on the Korean Peninsula, and does not want to rely on the good will of other powers in providing their country's security.

This does not mean that China will always be opposed to the unification of Korea but until Beijing can be sure that unification will not damage its security interests preserving the current regime in Pyongyang will be viewed as a lesser evil. China may even demand the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and the neutral status for the united Korea - something no mainstream politician in Seoul can offer at the moment.

There is one more reason why China cannot completely stop its support for North Korea. A collapse of the current regime in Pyongyang (whether it will be the result of a military defeat or economic crisis) may be followed by flows of refugees to the North-Eastern provinces of China. The border between China and North Korea is almost unprotected, which means it will be no serious obstacle for refugees, and as the North-Eastern provinces are relatively poor by Chinese standards, hundreds of thousands or even millions of North Korean refugees may be a serious blow to their economies.

The abovementioned factors make preserving North Korea as an independent state the best option for China, at least until all their concerns are properly addressed by South Korea and the USA. But that

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ferences/conferencepresentation/70a/9da/21772139/Kiriyarov-THAAD-final-VersionVladivostok.pdf>(date accessed June 10, 2017)., p.13.

33. China Wedded to Status Quo on Korean Peninsula" *Chosun Ilbo*, January 4, 2012. URL[http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/01/04/2012010401771.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/01/04/2012010401771.html) (date accessed June 10, 2017).

does not mean China is willing to support Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs. In fact, China is one of the most consistent opponents of the North Korean nuclear program.

First, Pyongyang nuclear weapons, under certain circumstances, can be a direct threat to China. The possibility of changing the regime to a more loyal and predictable one must have crossed the minds of Chinese policy makers and the paranoid North Korean leaders might feel or suspect it. The mysterious murder in February 2017 of Kim Jong Nam — a possible (more theoretically, than in reality) pretender, attributed to the North Koreans, may well be explained in these terms, although we believe this was more the North Korean special services' own initiative rather than a direct order from the political leaders. Therefore, China must be increasingly perceived in Pyongyang as an existential threat rather than an ally. Some suggest that its nuclear and missile program, developed by North Korea with such vigor, is meant as a hedge not so much against the United States and South Korea, but China."<sup>34</sup>

The other problem for Beijing is violations of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The DPRK is the only country that has ever withdrawn from the NPT, referring to the clause of the treaty authorizing the withdrawal from it in case of a threat to the supreme interests of the country.<sup>35</sup> In spite of the fact that these actions, strictly speaking, do not flagrantly violate international law,<sup>36</sup> the world community, including China, took these actions with particular concern. The case of the DPRK created a dangerous precedent, which is potentially even

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34. "Russia Seizes an Opportunity in North Korea," URL. <<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-seizes-opportunity-north-korea>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

35. Diachkov, Ilia "Evolution of North Korea nuclear program in the context of nuclear non-proliferation in the North-East Asia," (Moscow, 2015), URL. [http://www.rauk.ru/index.php?option=com\\_jdownloads&Itemid=4&task=view.download&catid=898&cid=4663&lang=en](http://www.rauk.ru/index.php?option=com_jdownloads&Itemid=4&task=view.download&catid=898&cid=4663&lang=en),(date accessed June 10, 2017). (date accessed June 10, 2017), p. 142 .

36. The Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT), URL. <[http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl\\_conv/conventions/npt.shtml](http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/npt.shtml)>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

more dangerous than, for example, actions of Pakistan and India, which were not originally members of the NPT.

The greatest concern of China is the possible reaction of other countries, including two “nuclear threshold states” — the Republic of Korea and Japan. Both countries will have the technical capability to create nuclear weapons within a short time span and although both South Korea and Japan are officially committed to the NPT, the provocative behavior of the DPRK could potentially strengthen the positions of those politicians in Seoul and Tokyo who advocate for the creation of national nuclear forces. China currently has a relatively small nuclear arsenal and is maintaining it at a minimum level sufficient for nuclear deterrence,<sup>37</sup> thus further proliferation of nuclear weapons would shift the balance of power within the region, which is very dangerous from China’s perspective.

The other potentially dangerous consequence of the North Korean nuclear program is the increase in U.S. military activity in the region, including the deployment of new types of weapons, such as the above-mentioned THAAD missile defense systems, large-scale military exercises involving thousands of people,<sup>38</sup> aircraft carriers, and strategic bombers.<sup>39</sup> The permanent stationing of the Carl Vinson aircraft carrier in the waters off the Korean Peninsula may already signify the change in the military balance (for example, it can swiftly be deployed to the South China Sea), which could be detrimental to China.

Thus, China’s policy towards the DPRK can be described as balancing between two different goals. On the one hand, China is interested in preserving the status quo and keeping the state of North Korea in

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37. Liping Xia “China’s Nuclear Doctrine: Debates and evolution” *Carnegie Endowment for international peace*, June 30, 2016 URL. <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/china-s-nuclear-doctrine-debates-and-evolution-pub-63967>> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

38. Kiryanov, Oleg “The USA and South Korea started Foal Eagle exercise” *RG.ru*, March 1, 2017, URL. <<https://rg.ru/2017/03/01/ssha-i-iuzhnaia-koreia-nachalnikrupnomasshtabnye-ucheniia-foal-eagle.html>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

39. Kiryanov, Oleg “The USA and South Korea ships started joint exercise” *RG.ru.*, March 13, 2017, URL. <<https://rg.ru/2017/03/13/korabli-vms-ssha-i-iuzhnoj-korei-vyshli-na-sovmestnye-ucheniia.html>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).



existence, especially to prevent U.S. military intervention. On the other hand, the North Korean regime's internal policies and provocative external behavior cause more and more irritation in China. But China cannot afford to lose the important buffer and see the whole of Korea becoming a sphere of U.S. influence. That would be seen as a major setback in the geopolitical competition, around the same magnitude as the U.S. losing control over Cuba in the early 1960s, which through the Cuban missile crisis almost led to a third World War.

The duality of the current Chinese position is well understood in Russia. Moscow can agree with the main priorities of China: keeping peace while promoting denuclearization. However, Russia is reluctant to join Chinese pressure on Pyongyang – not only because it lacks the relevant leverage, but also out of concern of spoiling relations with Pyongyang, which would damage Moscow's role as a neutral player and peacekeeper. This difference between Russia and China in their attitude towards North Korea became more obvious around 2014 as deterioration of the relations between North Korea and China became pronounced in the wake of execution of the Chang Son-Thaek, who was considered to be one of the closest to China among the North Korean leaders. North Korea then started to display the desire to get closer to Russia, obviously irritating the Chinese. In 2017, this tendency manifested itself in a direct criticism of China by the North Korean press, leaving Russia as the least criticized amongst the major powers involved in Korean affairs.<sup>40</sup> After Russia increased its economic pres-

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40. The criticism could be seen as the answer to the mounting hard feelings in Beijing towards the North Korean leadership, including "severe measures" in sanction policy, while the Chinese press stated, "Pyongyang faces a strategic choice between confrontation to the end at the risk of survival and coming back to the negotiation table by abandoning its nuclear program." A May 4, 2017 editorial of KCNA said such "absurd and reckless remarks" from China's state media were making a bad situation worse and added, "China should no longer try to test the limits of the DPRK's patience... China had better ponder over the grave consequences to be entailed by its reckless act of chopping down the pillar of the DPRK-China relations." "Actions and statements, shattering the pillars of Korea-China relations, should be stopped" / *Rodong Sinmun*, May 4, 2017, URL. <[http://web-uridongpo.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/rodong\\_ch](http://web-uridongpo.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/rodong_ch)

ence in North Korea, China was obviously worried and even sent its first Deputy Foreign Minister to Russia solely, for the first time in modern history, to discuss Korean issues. Later, permanent deputy-minister level strategic dialogue was initiated.

However, the differences between the positions of the two powers were marginal until the middle of 2016. This allowed Moscow to delegate the mission of discussing the North Korean problem with USA to China, and Moscow usually undersigned the agreement Beijing reached with Washington.

The situation after the fifth nuclear test showed that the differences in the two powers' interest and approaches were underestimated. Initially the positions of the two powers looked very close. Reacting to the fifth nuclear test, in February 2016 Russia voiced "strong protest" and warned about an "increase in tensions" and danger of a "block policy" and an "increase in military confrontation."<sup>41</sup> The Chinese reaction was similar; however, it additionally demanded "strong actions [that] should have a definite direction with the objective of effectively curbing the DPRK's efforts to advance its nuclear and missile program."

This nuance happened to be more important than it might seem. The adoption of UNSC Resolution 2270 in response to the North Korean nuclear and missile tests of January-February was a watershed for China, who agreed to unprecedentedly hard sanctions. Not expecting major changes in Chinese policy, Russia as usual delegated the negotiations on the content of the Resolution to China and was amazed by unexpected Chinese agreement to launch harsher sanctions including limitations on raw materials exports and transportation through North Korean territory. Moreover, such sanctions directly affected Russia's own interests, since Russia's main economic interests in the DPRK were precisely in the rare earth and non-ferrous metals, as well as iron,

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170504.html> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

41. "Russian Foreign ministry has prepared an executive order to adapt stricter sanctions against DPRK, *Riafan.ru*, February 20, 2017, URL. <<https://riafan.ru/624662-mid-rf-podgotovil-ukaz-ob-uzhestochenii-sankcii-protiv-kndr>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

targeted by the new resolution. Moscow was given only 24 hours to approve the draft, which was not enough to thoroughly analyze the consequences, suggest its amendments, and approve a balanced decision.<sup>42</sup>

There is also a difference in Chinese and Russian perceptions of the negotiation process on the North Korean nuclear program. The two parties hold regular channels of communications on the Korean situation and try to coordinate their policy responses. However, the Chinese position that the “focus of the Peninsula nuclear issue is on the U.S. and the DPRK” is taken warily by Russia which stresses the multi-lateral format.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, Russia publicly supports Chinese suggestions on “double suspension” and “parallel progress,”<sup>44</sup> naming them “a possible starting point for getting out of the impasse and restart of diplomatic process.”<sup>45</sup>

The differences between Beijing and Moscow are not limited to the issue of sanctions against Pyongyang. The late 2016–early 2017 events showed some dichotomy in the two countries’ approaches to other issues, such as THAAD deployment. Russia’s “grave concern” was explained publicly by the danger that this U.S. action “leads to an increase in the potential of Asia-Pacific segment of [US] global missile defense, which results in undermining the existing strategic balances...” paying most attention to the Russia-U.S. strategic balance

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42. Toloraya, Georgy “UNSCR 2270: A Conundrum for Russia,” March 5, 2016, *NK Info*, URL. <<http://38north.org/2016/03/gtoloraya030516/>>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

43. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on February 15, 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, URL. <[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/t1340636.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1340636.shtml)>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

44. “China’s man on North Korea crisis cools heels in Beijing,” April 18, 2017, *Reuters*, URL. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-china-wu-id USKBzN17K0GS>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

45. Press-statement of Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Gatilov G.M. on the situation on the Korean Peninsula at the open session of the UN Security Council. April 28, 2017 URL. <[http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/kp/-/asset\\_publisher/VJy7Ig5QaAII/content/id/2740121](http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/kp/-/asset_publisher/VJy7Ig5QaAII/content/id/2740121)>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

issue.<sup>46</sup> China showed more concern about the direct consequences of the deployment, stating that it “damage[s] China’s strategic security interests” as “monitoring range of its X-band radar, goes far beyond the defense need of the Korean Peninsula and will reach deep into the Asian hinterland.”<sup>47</sup>

Considering these differences, it is safe to say that the priorities of China and Russia became more nuanced, although not contradicting each other. This is not an obstacle to effective cooperation between the two partners, but in order to protect its national interest, Russia may have to play a more active role in solving security issues around the Korean Peninsula. The triangular relations with the new South Korean government are also of growing importance so that the partners should not be played against one another.

## **Russia-U.S. Convergence and Divergence of Interests over North Korea**

North Korean nuclear and missile programs remain at the center of Russia-U.S. dialogue on the Korean Peninsula on all levels from heads of states down to daily diplomatic contacts and Track 2 discussions.<sup>48</sup> It is also one of the few of international policy problems where the U.S. and Russia cooperate.<sup>49</sup>

The current challenges to Russia in its dealings with the USA on Korean policy are serious. The situation around North Korea started to change after Donald Trump became the president of the USA and his

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46. Statement of Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation on the UN Security Council open meeting on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. April 28, 2017 URL. <[http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/kp/-/asset\\_publisher/VJy7lg5QaAII/content/id/2740121](http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/kp/-/asset_publisher/VJy7lg5QaAII/content/id/2740121)> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

47. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference.

48. Telephone call with the president of the USA Donald Trump,” URL./<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54441>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

49. “Valdai discussion club session,” *Kremlin.ru*, October 24, 2014, URL. [www.kremlin.ru/news/46860](http://www.kremlin.ru/news/46860)(date accessed June 10, 2017).

administration officially declared the end of “strategic patience” toward North Korea.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps, Trump’s personal thinking as well as his desire to project the image of a stronger and more competent leader than his predecessor, contributed to this decision. However, there was a more pragmatic reason to abandon the “strategic patience” policy — it did not only prove to be ineffective, but also had negative implications on the situation in Korea. Pyongyang, on the one hand, could not hope that dialogue with the current American administration would help to address its security concerns. On the other hand, it successfully used the time-out in the negotiation process to make a leap forward in its nuclear and missile programs. Willing to find a way out of this stalemate, Trump declared a new strategy toward North Korea, which, in fact, looks not so different from the one of the previous administration, except for excessive use of threats, which led to an unprecedented escalation of tensions between North Korea and the USA.

On the one hand, Moscow and Washington refer to the issue differently: Russia prefers the term “Nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula” implying South Korean territory should also be included in any deal. On the other hand, Russia and the USA share a desire to denuclearize North Korea. Both generally agree that this should be achieved on a multilateral basis, although they might understand “multilateralism” differently (the USA as the acquisition of support of all the regional actors for their vision of denuclearization, while Russia as a compromise-based solution, taking into account the legitimate interests of all the parties including the DPRK).

However, the contradictions are numerous.

- The USA is eager to use “all options” to curtail the missile and nuclear program. Russia insists that only political-diplomatic tools are permissible.
- The USA believes that sanctions and isolation may force North Korean leaders to succumb to pressure and agree to denuclearization. Russia

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50. “Tillerson Says Strategic Patience Has Failed With Iran, North Korea,” *Voice of America*, April 19, 2017, URL. <https://www.voanews.com/a/trump-orders-review-of-iran-nuclear-deal/3816362.html>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

is skeptical about a view that sanctions alone can change North Korea's behavior and is against seeing them as an end in itself. However, recently Russia, under U.S. pressure, started to recognize the possibility to use sanctions but only under the condition that they are combined with dialogue and engagement.

- The USA proceeded from the probability of the collapse of the North Korean regime and occupation of North Korea by the South. Russia, admitting the possibility of an emergency or a calamity of some kind, evaluated the regime as stable and warned that the strategy should not be based on the "regime change" concept or on the presumption it is possible to ignore the current regime.
- The USA in general demands CVID (complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization) as a prerequisite for dialogue or a compromise. Russia believes the discussion on North Korean security modalities should be simultaneous with negotiations on the nuclear issue. Also, the nuclear freeze and moratorium on both sides, declined by the USA for years, is seen by Russia as a starting point for serious discussions. Russia in general supports the idea of a direct peace treaty between Washington and Pyongyang combined with multilateral guarantees.
- The U.S. "political class" is in general skeptical of formally recognizing the DPRK, seeing it a "rogue regime" causing many concerns apart from the nuclear problem such as other WMDs, human rights, etc. Russia thinks that recognizing a state existing for 70+ years and a UN member is a normal step toward the creation of a system of collective security in North-East Asia.

One of the first contacts of the Kremlin with the new U.S. administration on foreign policy issues was with the special representative on North Korea policy, Joseph Yun, visiting Moscow in April 2017. However, it left a sore feeling as he stressed the need for increases in sanctions and stated that the installation of the American missile defense system in Asia was a key step in halting North Korea's security provocations.<sup>51</sup> The Russian hosts were lukewarm to such approaches seeing political and diplomatic means as the only method to ease the Korean

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51. The USA vows to protect its allies from North Korean threat," *Voice of America*, April 5, 2017, URL: <http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/ron-kb-north-korea-talk/3797711.html>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

situation. It is also noteworthy that the White House tried to solicit Russia's support on pressuring North Korea in the wake of a new ballistic missile test in May 2017, by stating the missile fell closer to Russia than to Japan (which was later denied by the Russia Ministry of Defense)<sup>52</sup> and thus, Russia "was not pleased," implying Russia should take measures.<sup>53</sup> The sanction measures against Russian companies and individuals dealing with North Korea provoked strong protests from Russia's side.

Despite these examples of dichotomy seemingly separating the two countries, the uncertainties of the Trump era do present both grave challenges and opportunities.

For example, the "Trump-Kim" standoff in the spring of 2017 caught Russian policymakers off guard. Despite being used to "spring recurrence" of hostilities in Korea, this saber rattling was largely unexpected. According to Russian analysis there is little logic in what was happening in April 2017 and that is why:

- In the initial period of the Trump administration North Korea exercised a relative restraint, if compared to the similar periods of previous years.
- Trump's choice of the notoriously insolvable Korean problem as a testing stone for his foreign policy was largely inexplicable, and may only have been for PR purposes.
- If the whole exercise was meant just to preempt another North Korean nuclear and/or missile test and to "warn" Kim Jong Un, that's a costly way of doing business in many senses of the word. It might make Pyongyang and Beijing more receptive, but putting the world on a brink of nuclear catastrophe is not a sign of responsible policy.<sup>54</sup>

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52. Russia reacts to the fall of North Korean missile near its borders," *Segodnya*, May 14, 2017, URL. <http://www.segodnya.ua/world/v-rf-otreagirovali-na-padenie-rakety-kndr-vblizi-svoih-granic-1020650.html> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

53. "The USA believes that Russia is disappointed by the latest North Korea missile launch" *versia.ru*, May 14, 2017, URL. <https://versia.ru/ssha-uvereniy-cto-rossiyu-razocharoval-ocherednoj-pusk-severokorejskoj-rakety>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

54. One U.S. observer noted: "In the business world familiar to Trump, brinkmanship, psychological warfare, and unpredictability are tactics used to elicit cooper-

- Trump's actions might be read as an attempt to strengthen the future negotiation positions to derive maximum concessions from the opposing party in future bargaining,<sup>55</sup> but this is close to adventurism.
- Another possible goal is to "show China" its "real" place in world politics and confirm the U.S.'s leadership. In that case, such bluff tactics find no understanding with Russian policymakers.

Russia was critical of the U.S.'s practical actions against North Korea such as sending an aircraft carrier group, etc. and published several critical official statements.<sup>56</sup> While the possibility of a new Korean War was widely discussed publicly, with most of observers being critical of U.S. measures.<sup>57</sup>

Russian political circles and the public were also enraged by the reports that the U.S. Congress suggested the "control" of foreign ports, including some Russian Far Eastern ports, to check how the sanctions against DPRK were being implemented. Politicians called it "equal to a

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ation. Keeping one's cards close is typical behavior of business tycoons. Trump, who thrives on the element of surprise, is no exception. In international politics, however, threatening words can box an administration in. If its warnings are merely rhetorical and not credible, they could embolden Pyongyang. On the other hand, credible warnings managed improperly could potentially lead to an undesired, disastrous scenario." Kim, Duyeon "What the South Korean Election Means for Trump: How Washington Can Work With the Next Administration," *Foreignaffairs.com*, May 8, 2017 URL <https://www./articles/2017-05-08/what-south-korean-election-means-trump> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

55. They say the U.S. made four promises to the regime: It will not pursue regime change in North Korea; it will not remove Kim Jong Un; it will not invade North Korea; and it will not rush Korean reunification. However, these were in fact the promises made during the Clinton years. "U.S. could leave Kim in place if Pyongyang scraps nukes," *Nikkei Asian Review*, May 9, 2017, URL. <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/US-offers-to-leave-Kim-in-place-if-Pyongyang-scraps-nukes>(date accessed June 10, 2017).
56. "Carl Vinson's raid increases the possibility of a <occational> start of the war with Korea," *Marketsignal.ru* April 10, 2017 URL. <http://marketsignal.ru/2017/04/10/rejd-karla-vinsona-povyshaet-risk-sluchajnogo-nachala-vojny-s-koreej/> (date accessed June 10, 2017).
57. "Expert on Pence's statement: The USA determination to use force against DPRK is a bluff" *RIA.ru*, May 17, 2017, URL. [https://ria.ru/radio\\_brief/20170417/1492388521.html](https://ria.ru/radio_brief/20170417/1492388521.html)(date accessed June 10, 2017).



declaration of war"<sup>58</sup> and there is now little chance Russia will be cooperative on "secondary sanctions" advocated by the United States.

The demands to drastically reduce the number of North Korean workers in the Far East were also received in a lukewarm manner. Russia believes that the foreign exchange earned by these individuals is an important asset to improve the lives of their families and a chance to get educated in foreign setting, rather than a channel for financing the North Korean nuclear and missile program. The Russian press was irritated by hostile comments about Russia-North Korea ties, such as the opening of a ferry travel route between Vladivostok and Rajin, as this is one of the few ways to allow passengers and goods to be transported.<sup>59</sup> In fact, the project was said to be initiated by the Chinese to transport Chinese tourists to Russia. As a result, popular support for not reacting to the U.S. and Japanese pressure on the issue of ties with North Korea has increased.

However, Russia is still expressing its readiness to assist any diplomatic efforts between the U.S. and North Korea to find a compromise and could cooperate with Washington to that end. It is reassuring that the secret channels of contact and negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang have functioned even before the start of Trump administration — as reported by *the Wall Street Journal* "for more than a year, American diplomats have held secret talks in Pyongyang and European cities with North Korea's top nuclear negotiator, Choi Sun Hee, hoping to free U.S. prisoners and even establish a diplomatic channel to constrain North Korea's nuclear and missile ambitions."<sup>60</sup>

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58. "It is equal to declaration of war: Moscow accessed the USA plans to take control over Far East ports," *RIA.ru*, May 5, 2017, URL. <https://ria.ru/world/20170505/1493736236.html> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

59. "The launch of direct communication between Vladivostok and Rason can be a case for war," *Zrpress.ru* May 6, 2017, URL. [http://www.zrpress.ru/incidents/dalnij-vostok\\_06.05.2017\\_83409\\_nachalo-raboty-paromnoj-linii-vladivostok--rason-mozhet-stat-povodom-dlja-vojny.html](http://www.zrpress.ru/incidents/dalnij-vostok_06.05.2017_83409_nachalo-raboty-paromnoj-linii-vladivostok--rason-mozhet-stat-povodom-dlja-vojny.html) (date accessed June 10, 2017).

60. "Top North Korean Nuclear Negotiator Secretly Met With U.S. Diplomats" — *The Wall Street Journal*, June 18, 2017 <https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/top-north-korean-nuclear-negotiator-secretly-met-with-u-s-diplomats-1497783603?responsive=y&tesla=y>, (date accessed June 19, 2017).

## Russia-ROK Security Cooperation in the Moon Era

Russia does support Korean unification in the form of the peaceful emergence of a friendly neutral state which could be an important “balancer” of Russia’s North-East Asian politics, dominated now by China and Japan. However, no other scenario but occupation of the North by the South is imaginable at the moment. Today the new geopolitical situation — including the standoff between the U.S. and Russia, as well as the rivalry between the U.S. and China, gives little hope for the possibility that the North Korean state can be brought down peacefully in a “soft landing” scenario and its territory taken by one of the competing “camps” in a serene manner. It would also result in a sudden shift in the balance of power in the Far East, revisioning the results of the Second World War, upon which the global system has been based for over 70 years, and a possible change for the worse regarding the security surroundings of China. This would be detrimental to Russia’s interests. A unified Korea, even with the unlikely event of a U.S. troop withdrawal, would still remain an ally of the United States and one with much more power (for example, territorial claims to China and even Russia cannot be excluded).

The above considerations do not mean that Russia supports a “perpetuation” of the division of the peninsula and hostilities between the two Korea and would not like to see a change in North Korea. On the contrary, it is working on reducing tensions and promoting peaceful dialogue, cooperation, and eventual reconciliation between the two Koreas. Russia is trying especially hard to promote the “Trilateral” projects.<sup>61</sup> In the distant future that process might lead to economic integration and the creation of a unified state, passing

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61. Potential three-party projects attracting South Korean investment into North Korea via Russia are the most promising venture. They can bring much-needed financing, provide markets for Russia and North Korea in the South, and vice versa. Such projects are also important geopolitically and geoeconomically for promoting regional peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia. They are seen both as a source of mutual prosperity and as a tool to help the North Korean economy modernize, as well as a way to build mutual trust and improve the political atmosphere.

through a number of stages. Russia hopes such a state would be neutral and not hostile to Russia. At the moment, Russia deems it desirable to preserve both countries' statehoods while promoting change in North Korea. To start this process, Russia believes North Korea should have security guarantees for the existing regime, however bizarre and unpleasant it is.

The advent of the new liberal administration in Seoul can help turn the page from the unfortunate era of serious Russia-ROK disagreements and lack of cooperation on the North Korean issue. The main reason for this was Park's strategy towards the North Korean nuclear problem, which was, in fact, similar to Obama's "strategic patience" policy and made the start of denuclearization a pre-condition for any dialogue with Pyongyang. President Park probably had some reasons to take a harder stance towards North Korea. The "Sunshine Policy" of her predecessors Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun, despite some achievements, such as promoting economic cooperation between the North and the South, still failed to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. However, continuous pressure on Pyongyang was also not able to persuade Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear program, since North Korean leadership sees it as the only way to ensure its own survival and is ready to endure economic losses in order to preserve it.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, putting forward this condition made it impossible for Seoul to continue any meaningful dialogue with North Korea, including a multilateral format, thus making Russia-ROK cooperation on the North Korean issue, including trilateral economic projects, just a formality. Whether dictated by the underestimation of Pyongyang's endurance, based on wishful thinking, disappointment in the "Sunshine Policy" or both, President Park's strategy of pressure on North Korea failed to achieve any tangible results, but led to further tensions and growing isolation between the North and the South.

Paradoxically, analyzing the current developments we can con-

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62. Zhebin, Alexander "Some Aspects of Korea's Nuclear Crisis," in *Russia and Korea in the Changing World Order*, edited by V. Tkachenko (Moscow, 2003), p. 48.

clude that, despite the potential danger, the situation around the Korean problem has moved out of a stalemate and acquired some dynamic, differences from the “strategic patience” era, and thus, can even lay a basis for future dialogue. Whether this opportunity for dialogue will be used depends on the stakeholders, including South Korea. Russia is watching President’s Moon advances closely. At the moment, the position of the new Korean leader gives some grounds for optimism. Moon Jae In admits that “strategic patience” was a “failure”<sup>63</sup> however, unlike Trump, he does not limit his options in inter-Korean relations to only pressure on Pyongyang. During his election campaign, Moon has publically expressed his commitment to dialogue with the North, re-establishing economic relations and even mentioned the possibility of an inter-Korean summit.<sup>64</sup> He also said that the ultimate purpose of sanctions “must be to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table,”<sup>65</sup> which fully corresponds with the position of Moscow, which sees sanctions as one of the possible tools to stimulate dialogue but does not believe they are enough to solve the North Korean nuclear problem.

During the TV debates, Moon also mentioned that multilateral diplomacy is the key to denuclearization as well as a means to achieve peace and economic cooperation,<sup>66</sup> which also seems pretty close to the Russian approach. It is worth mentioning that Russia is also interested

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63. Noland, Marcus and Boydston, Kent, “President Moon Jae-in and Sunshine Policy 3.0” *PIIE*, May 9, 2017, URL. <https://piie.com/blogs/north-korea-witness-transformation/president-moon-jae-and-sunshine-policy-30>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

64. Kim, Ga-Young “Experts forecast Moon’s North Korea policy,” *Daily NK*, May 16, 2017, URL. <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?num=14516&catald=nk00400> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

65. Choe Sang-Hun, “South Korea Elects Moon Jae-in, Who Backs Talks With North, as President” *New York Times*, May 9, 2017, URL. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/09/world/asia/south-korea-election-president-moon-jae-in.html> (date accessed June 10, 2017).

66. Boykoff, Pamela and Griffiths, James, “South Korea’s new president wants to reverse its North Korea policy,” *CNN*, May 10, 2017, URL. <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/09/asia/south-korea-president-moon-north-korea/>(date accessed June 10, 2017).

in re-starting economic cooperation between the North and the South, since, until the current crises in the inter-Korean relations, Russia had been an active participant and beneficiary of the tri-lateral economic projects on the Korean Peninsula.

The summary of Moon's conceptual approaches emphasizes the need to:

- Re-establish inter-Korean relations
- Put a priority on economic integration (one market) and seeking step-by-step unification
- Establish a new Korean Peninsula economic belt when the North Korean nuclear issue is resolved
- Sign a Basic Inter-Korean Agreement for new inter-Korean relations
- Pursue the improvement of human rights in the North and the settlement of issues involving inter-Korean separated families and South Korean POWs and abductees
- Bolster inter-Korean media, social, cultural, and sports exchanges
- Launch an inter-Korean joint border management committee and strengthen the support of North Korean defectors

The need for diplomatic solutions is also stressed as the stated methods to reach denuclearization include:

- Make use of a variety of bilateral and multilateral talks, including six-party talks
- Prevent accidental inter-Korean military clashes and ease military tensions

President Moon's envoy to Russia, Sung Yong Gil, after talks with President Putin in May admitted in an interview with the Russian press that Russia was unsatisfied with the former South Korean government's "NATO policy" — "No Actions, Talk Only" but now the situation is to change as the present government will consider the Russian factor more. Seoul will concentrate on practical problems, including a possible gas pipeline, an "energy ring" in North-East Asia, the Khasan-Rajin project, cooperation in the Siberia and Maritime areas, agriculture, shipbuilding,

the Arctic maritime way, etc. He also supported the idea of a temporary freeze on North Korean nuclear and missile programs in exchange for a freeze or relocation of U.S.-South Korea military exercises, shared by Russia. Mr. Sung also suggested the creation of a special government structure promoting Russia- ROK relations.<sup>67</sup>

This approach corresponds with Russia's understanding of what future developments on the Korean Peninsula should look like. It is noteworthy that such an approach, "Moon Jae In's doctrine," states the need to "Develop strategic economic cooperation via Seoul-Pyongyang-Moscow cooperation in parallel with the progress in the settlement of the North Korea nuclear issue."<sup>68</sup>

Of course, it would be too optimistic to expect cooperation between the North and the South to achieve the level of the "Sunshine Policy" during the current presidential cycle. In addition to the legacy of the Park era, there are also limitations, created by international sanctions against the DPRK. Strict commitment to the sanctions may limit South Korea's options, while lifting them could be viewed negatively by the USA and would affect China's willingness to put pressure on its ally,<sup>69</sup> and Russia understands this. Still, even limited recovering of economic ties would play a positive role in building trust between the ROK and the DPRK. It would be naïve to expect that Russia would act, or even be forced to act, in support of a U.S.-led line to pressure North Korea into concessions and weaken the regime. Nor would it support any military blackmail or threats to use force by any of the parties. Russia would act based on its clear understanding of the need to preserve stability and predictability at its borders, therefore it cannot risk breaking this stability by cornering the regime.

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67. Kirianov, Oleg Russia has a chance for solving the North Korean problem Rg.ru URL. <https://rg.ru/2017/06/09/iuzhnaia-koreia-rossia-eto-shans-dlia-resheniia-severokorejskoj-problemy.html> (date accessed June 13, 2017).

68. Analysis of Washington-based experts.

69. Noland, Marcus and Boydston, Kent, "President Moon Jae-in and Sunshine Policy 3.0" *PIIE*, May 9, 2017, URL <https://piie.com/blogs/north-korea-witness-transformation/president-moon-jae-and-sunshine-policy-30>(date accessed June 10, 2017)."

Therefore, the line for dialogue and political means of solving the contradictions will remain the basis for Russian policy. To be successful, the support of the U.S. and South Korea should be enlisted. The constructive role of the new ROK government could be a game-changer. If the North and the South are ready for a meaningful dialogue, Moscow can make its contribution to the process. Russia hopes that the new president's position will be more constructive and realistic. The North Korean nuclear program should not be tolerated; however, it would be unrealistic to demand denuclearization as a pre-condition for cooperation. On the contrary, building mutual trust and a de-escalation of tensions are absolutely necessary for establishing conditions for a dialogue. Pressuring Pyongyang without addressing its security concerns would be harmful, strengthening Kim Jong Un's belief that a nuclear deterrent is mandatory for the survival of his regime.

Should Russia and South Korea find a common understanding on this point it would be easier to discuss such a concept with the principal actors - the DPRK and USA. Using its political contacts with Washington and Pyongyang, Russia may try to prove this point and help restart direct U.S.-DPRK dialogue. South Korea should not oppose such a line. Some signs, such as the idea of sending a special Russian presidential envoy to Pyongyang, floated by President Moon's envoy, Sung Young Gil, during the talks with Putin suggest that Seoul understands the importance of Russia's possible brokerage. Mr. Sung also suggested that Russia can play a more active role in solving the nuclear issue given Kim Jong Un's strained relations with the Chinese leader. President Putin can then act as broker for improving Pyongyang's relations with Seoul, Beijing, and Washington.<sup>70</sup> The Russia-U.S. contacts, including summit ones, can also do much to explain the options and chances to the U.S. government.

If such initial diplomatic progress is going to be successful, Russia will probably stick to the line that the only acceptable option is finding the final solution to the Korean issue within the multiparty diplomatic

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70. Kirianov, Oleg Russia has a chance for solving the North Korean problem Rg.ru URL. <https://rg.ru/2017/06/09/iuzhnaia-koreia-rossiia-eto-shans-dlia-resheniia-severokorejskoj-problemy.html> (date accessed June 13, 2017).

process. Russia would prefer a balanced solution, which would take into account the lawful interests of all actors. The tendency of a regional Cold War era-like division on Korean affairs (3+3) should be arrested. Rather “a concert of powers” is attractive. It could be formed on the basis of the multi-party mechanism of talks, which has already proved its usefulness, although proven to be unsuccessful due to limiting the agenda only to the nuclear issue without properly addressing North Korean concerns. It is worth mentioning that the new roadmap on denuclearization and peace process on the Korean Peninsula, suggested by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov on June 27, emphasizes the necessity of creating a long-lasting multilateral peace mechanism in the region. Russia believes that the necessary conditions for North Korean denuclearization and stability on the Korean Peninsula will be created only when all the countries of North East Asia “feel equally safe.”<sup>71</sup>

In practice, a diplomatic process should start with direct U.S.-North Korea talks on these new modalities. In parallel, North-South dialogue on restoring cooperation and healing the wounds of the previous decade, dismantling the pitiful heritage of conservative era should be initiated by the new South Korean government. However, in order not to be rejected, such an initiative should not mention the nuclear issue. This is the agenda for multiparty discussions, as the ROK is not in a position to provide any security guarantees for the DPRK.

Also, a general discussion on the possible mechanism of the talks and principles of peace and cooperation in North-East Asia can be conducted in the relevant working group of the former Six-party talks (headed by Russia). It could be reestablished as an organizing bureau or secretariat of the future multiparty talks.

If such preliminary steps prove successful, the formal process may be jumpstarted by a symbolic meeting of the foreign ministers of the six countries plus plenipotentiary representatives of the UN and IAEA on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September, possibly in

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71. Russia Drafts, Ready to Discuss With Partners North Korea Roadmap Sputniknews.com URL <https://sputniknews.com/politics/201706271054999083-north-korea-roadmap-draft/> (date accessed June 27, 2017).



the presence of the national leaders, fantastic as it sounds. The first issue on the agenda of the talks should be the voluntary freeze of the North Korean nuclear program for the duration of the talks in exchange for easing sanctions.

Of course, such suggestions are highly speculative.<sup>72</sup> However, the political and diplomatic solutions advocated by Russia are not impossible. The single condition is that the adversaries should face reality and rely on hard facts. The U.S. and South Korea should come to terms with the existence of North Korea and pursue a policy of coexistence rather than undermining the “dreadful” regime. South Korea should abandon its dreams of unification by absorption and learn to live with a difficult neighbor, providing the attitude of a mature and developed country. North Korea should admit that there will never be peace and prosperity in North Korea unless it abandons its nuclear weapons program (provided a new security regime will be set first). Then other regional players (China, Russia, and Japan) could play the constructive role in bridging the gaps, based on the simple fact that a war in Korea would benefit no one.

Of course, neither political negotiations nor economic cooperation will achieve the denuclearization of North Korea immediately. In fact, the process will require careful planning and a harmonizing of the interests of all the players. However, there is no viable alternative to this process, and it is up to South Korea whether the current situation will lead to a new stalemate or to a constructive dialogue. If Seoul chooses the latter, Moscow is going to be a valuable partner.

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72. See in more detail: 한반도에평화복원하기: 러시아의시각에서-게오르기톨로라이(루스키미르재단소장) [http://www.keaf.org/book/EAF\\_Policy\\_Debate\\_Restoring\\_Peace\\_on\\_the\\_Korean\\_Peninsula:\\_A\\_Russian\\_Perspective\\_kr?ckattemp=1](http://www.keaf.org/book/EAF_Policy_Debate_Restoring_Peace_on_the_Korean_Peninsula:_A_Russian_Perspective_kr?ckattemp=1) (accessed on June 13, 2017).

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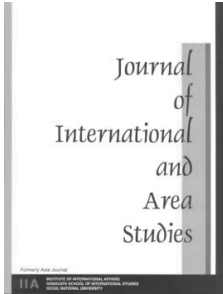
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