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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

# THESIS

**CHINA AND NORTH KOREA:**
**THE LEVERAGE DILEMMA**

by

Stevie L. Jones II

March 2018

Thesis Advisor: Covell Meyskens
Second Reader: Robert Weiner

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Various nations in the international domain speculate that China alone has enough leverage to compel North Korea into giving up its nuclear weapons. However, China claims that its influence over North Korea is limited. Although China remains North Korea's most important ally, their relationship often has been categorized as complex and ambiguous, as both countries are driven by a shared history of succumbing to foreign aggression. Some argue that historical events led the two countries to become estranged rather than to become strong allies. Conversely, others contend that the history between China and North Korea drives both countries to maintain an enduring alliance. Therefore, this thesis answers the question: Does China alone possess enough leverage to have major influence on North Korea's behavior? Through analysis of China and North Korea's alliance formation, the first and second nuclear crises, and the Six Party Talks, this thesis contends that China alone does not have enough leverage to alter North Korea's behavior because diplomatic ties are not as close as some may believe. Therefore, the international community should cooperate with China so that influence may be gained over North Korea's behavior.

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**CHINA AND NORTH KOREA: THE LEVERAGE DILEMMA**

Stevie L. Jones II
Lieutenant, United States Navy
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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# ABSTRACT

Various nations in the international domain speculate that China alone has enough leverage to compel North Korea into giving up its nuclear weapons. However, China claims that its influence over North Korea is limited. Although China remains North Korea's most important ally, their relationship often has been categorized as complex and ambiguous, as both countries are driven by a shared history of succumbing to foreign aggression. Some argue that historical events led the two countries to become estranged rather than to become strong allies. Conversely, others contend that the history between China and North Korea drives both countries to maintain an enduring alliance. Therefore, this thesis answers the question: Does China alone possess enough leverage to have major influence on North Korea's behavior? Through analysis of China and North Korea's alliance formation, the first and second nuclear crises, and the Six Party Talks, this thesis contends that China alone does not have enough leverage to alter North Korea's behavior because diplomatic ties are not as close as some may believe. Therefore, the international community should cooperate with China so that influence may be gained over North Korea's behavior.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| CCP | Chinese Communist Party |
| DPRK | Democratic People's Republic of Korea |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| KEDO | Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization |
| KMT | Kuomintang |
| NK | North Korea |
| NPT | Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons |
| ROK | Republic of Korea |
| SINO | China |
| SOVIET | Soviet Union |
| UN | United Nations |
| WWII | World War II |

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis seeks to answer the question: Does China alone possess enough leverage to have major influence on North Korea's behavior? While China remains North Korea's most important ally, their relationship has often been categorized as complex and ambiguous, driven by a shared history of succumbing to foreign aggression. Some argue that historical events have led the two countries to become estranged rather than strong allies. Conversely, others contend that the history between China and North Korea drives both countries to maintain a strong and enduring alliance. Although the alliance of North Korea and China may be driven by historical factors, one must consider leverage when attempting to evaluate this alliance.

From an outside view, it might seem that China's measurably greater power would enable it to subdue North Korea at will. However, historical evidence of North Korea's defiance shows otherwise. North Korea remains unafraid to act aggressively against other nations; however, China seems to be the most capable country that can pressure the nation to alter its behavior. This research posits that leverage not only plays a critical role within the limitation of power between China and North Korea, but also within the increase of dependency between both China and North Korea.

## B. SIGNIFICANCE

The United States has a vested interest in North Korea for both security and political reasons. Led by an authoritarian regime, North Korea is often labeled as a "hermit kingdom"[1] because its society remains closed off from the rest of the world. Additionally, North Korea's pursuit of developing nuclear weapon capabilities threatens and destabilizes the Pacific theater. Moreover, it has communicated a willingness to use these capabilities against its neighbors to the south (South Korea), to the east (Japan), and against the United States. The United States has maintained alliances with both Japan and South Korea to

[1] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2005), 87.

counter this threat. The region fosters a destabilizing situation because surrounding nations must be on constant alert for a potential conflict with North Korea.

The Korean War came to a halt with the signing of the armistice agreement in 1953; however, the United States has been unsuccessful at achieving solidified diplomatic relations with North Korea since. Many have claimed that North Korea views the United States from a "once an enemy, always the enemy" perspective because of its decision to form an alliance with South Korea and the devastation North Korea experienced by U.S. bombings during the Korean War. Bruce Cumings stated, "The armistice signed on July 27, 1953, stilled the guns, but it brought no formal peace."[2] Taking from his notion, historical barriers pose challenges to United States-North Korea relations and enduring agreements.

For example, the United States' attempted to dissuade North Korea from pursuing nuclear weapons development in the early 1990s. In 1994, the U.S. and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework,[3] and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)[4] agreement in 1995. North Korea also agreed to alter its previous stance and remain a Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) member. North Korea chose to freeze its nuclear operations in exchange for economic assistance from the United States.[5] However, these agreements became severed as the United States discovered North Korea had been noncompliant to non-proliferation obligations. The United States responded by suspending oil deliveries to North Korea in the fall of 2002. North Korea used the embargo as justification for officially ceasing its commitments to the Agreement

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[2] Bruce Cumings, *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: New Press, 2011), 3.

[3] As Pollack notes, the Agreed Framework was "a deal in which North Korea pledged to consistently take steps to implement the January 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. [This] obligated the South and North not to test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons, as well as committing both countries not [to] possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities." Jonathan Pollack. "The United States, North Korea, and the End of the Agreed Framework," *Naval War College Review* LVI, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 13.

[4] Pollack also notes, "Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO): The United States agreed to establish and lead a multinational consortium that would oversee the financing and construction of a pair of thousand-megawatt light-water reactors to replace the North's existing or planned graphite-moderated reactors." Pollack, "The United States, North Korea," 18.

[5] Pollack, "The United States, North Korea," 18–19.

Framework on December 12, 2002.[6] Then, on January 10, 2003, North Korea declared "automatic and immediate" effectuation of its withdrawal from the NPT and its "complete free[dom] from the restrictions of the safeguard agreement with the IAEA."[7]

This exemplary case supports the argument that the United States alone is incapable of fully influencing North Korea to change. Because China is North Korea's strongest ally, the United States must not abandon its reliance on China if any hope of cooperation can be achieved with North Korea. The United States is currently exerting diplomatic pressure on China to restrain North Korea; however, it has also considered unilateral military action as an option to counter North Korea's provocative behavior. This course of action could provoke World War III; therefore, the United States should not exercise unilateral military action against North Korea unless all other options have been exhausted and use of force is necessary. By determining if China has the leverage to influence North Korea's behavior, the United States will be in a better position of shaping its foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula.

China's ability to use leverage to influence North Korea's behavior matters to it because it does not want to be dragged into a war. Rising tension between the United States and North Korea further entraps Chine in the role of a mediator between the two countries. Additionally, China experiences pressure from the international community to curtail North Korea's nuclear capabilities and aggressive actions because they could potentially lead to war. While China may value the deterrence factor that comes with North Korea's aggression towards the international community, it also recognizes that North Korea's continued aggression will serve only as justification for the United States in pursuing military actions.

North Korea's ability to use its defiance as leverage over China's behavior matters to them because the closer the United States and China become, the greater it becomes a threat to the China and North Korean alliance. As North Korea perceives that the United States will always be an enemy, it will also continue to distrust the United States and its

6 Pollack, "The United States, North Korea," 41.

7 Pollack, "The United States, North Korea," 41.

allies. As such, North Korea will continue to preserve its alliance with China to ensure the two of them remain tied to one another so that the United States influence on the Korean peninsula will remain challenged. Therefore, this thesis examines whether China alone has enough leverage to influence North Korea or if this contention has been severely overestimated.

## C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines various arguments regarding alliance formation and relationships between great and small powers and then links those arguments to the dynamics of the China and North Korean alliance. First, I survey the various explanations as to why countries form alliances. Second, I discuss the scholarly assessments about why great and small powers seek alliance with one another. Finally, I review assessments of the China and North Korean relationship. Reviewing the literature related to alliance formation and literature related to the China and North Korean relationship must be conducted for two reasons. The first reason is because China, a great power, and North Korea, a smaller power, have formed an alliance, which still holds today. The second reason is to determine why the alliance is still surviving. For these reasons, reviewing literature covering the ways in which a great power would benefit from an alliance with a small power, and vice versa, will bring further insight regarding the interpretations of the relationship between China and North Korea.

### 1. Why Alliances Form

Why do nations seek alliance with one another in the first place? This section covers four schools of thought explaining why alliances occur. First, countries form alliances to balance against external threats. Second, states' self-interests are the ultimate reason for alliance formation. Third, states form alliances to prevent war. Finally, various countries form alliances because the elites in power are determined to ensure political survival.

#### *a. Alliances Form to Balance against Threats*

Some scholars argue that states form alliances due to a threat rather than solely to seek power. In *Origins of Alliances*, Harvard University Professor Stephen M. Walt claims

that balance of threat theory is a stronger explanation of alliance formation than just seeking to gain power. He argues that states form alliances because they perceive a stronger state as threatening their sovereignty and says that states form alliances with one another to balance against a perceived threat, or states will choose to form an alliance with the threat, which he refers to as "bandwagoning."[8] Walt has determined that states are more likely to balance against a threat rather than bandwagon and that balancing is safer because there is less motive for the states in alliance to turn against one another.[9] The weaker state may view bandwagoning with the more powerful state as an opportunity rather than a potential threat; however, it also has to worry whether its stronger ally will turn against it.[10]

Walt later published "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse" in which he describes various factors that play a role in explaining why alliances are likely to succeed or fail. He suggests that alliances likely endure if there is an asymmetric level of interests within the alliance, if the allies share similar political values, and if there are effective institutions within the alliance.[11] On the other hand, he contends that alliances are likely to fail if the perception of a threat diminishes or changes, if interests between the allies is redefined, if one ally discredits the other's capability to contribute to the alliance, or if one ally no longer requires the capabilities of its ally.[12] Walt concluded that alliances are maintained because of the commitment shared by each ally to continue their alliance.[13]

In *Balance of Power*, T.V. Paul challenges Walt's claim, arguing that states have more options than balancing or bandwagoning. Paul contends that the balance of power theory must also take into consideration that hard-balancing, soft-balancing, and asymmetric-balancing are actions by which states can take when in an alliance so that they

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[8] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 5, 17.

[9] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 5, 29.

[10] Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 29.

[11] Stephen M. Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," *Survival* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 156–179, doi: 10.1080/00396339708442901, 170.

[12] Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," 164.

[13] Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," 170.

can fully capture the behavior of other states.[14] In hard-balancing, states increase their own capabilities and form alliances and counter-alliances to match the capabilities of their opponents.[15] In soft-balancing, states develop limited security understandings between one another to balance against a potential threatening state.[16] In asymmetric-balancing, states sponsor subnational actors to challenge and weaken established states by asymmetric means.[17]

In *Dangerous Alliances*, political scientist Patricia A. Weitsman assesses the implications of alliance formation and cohesion to gain a better understanding of the internal and external dimensions of alliances.[18] In her analysis of Walt's theory on alliance behavior, she has determined that it is not enough to assess alliance behaviors solely by a state facing the threat of an aggressor. Rather, she suggests there is a "curvilinear relationship" between a threat and alliance formation, and she assesses that the threat levels of states bring a greater understanding of the various alliance behaviors, which occur at different threat levels.[19] She dismissed other scholars' claims that alliances are managed by coexisting with capability aggregation.[20] Finally, she concludes that to understand alliance formation and cohesion, one must examine internal and external levels of threat to the alliance.[21]

Victor Cha also contends against scholars who claim that states only have the option of balancing or bandwagoning against a threat. In *Alignment despite Antagonism*, he developed the quasi alliance theory model to add to the existing theories of alliance behavior. His theory derives from Glenn Snyder's concepts of "abandonment" and

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[14] T. V. Paul, "Introduction: The Enduring Axioms of Balance of Power Theory and Their Contemporary Relevance," in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michael Fortmann (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2–3.

[15] Paul, "Introduction," 3.

[16] Paul, "Introduction," 3.

[17] Paul, "Introduction," 3.

[18] Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3.

[19] Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances*, 4–5.

[20] Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances*, 4.

[21] Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances*, 165.

"entrapment."[22] Cha defines a quasi-alliance as "the relationship between two states that remain unallied despite sharing a common ally."[23] Additionally, Cha has made three propositions. First, if a state fears abandonment, it demonstrates greater commitment to the alliance to gain the same response from the ally.[24] Second, if a state fears entrapment, it demonstrates lower commitment to the alliance to deter its ally from pursuing the adversary.[25] Third, the most effective strategy is to maximize one's security through the alliance while minimalizing obligations where possible.[26] Furthermore, Cha supports the claim that while an external threat can facilitate alliance formation, the perception of an ally's is important.[27]

In "The Decision to Ally," political scientist Michael Altfeld argues that alliance formations are based on trade-offs to ensure security. According to Altfeld, a government's functionality is dependent upon maximizing the uses of autonomy, civilian wealth, and national security.[28] Governments use wealth generated by civil society to invest in armament proliferation, risk their autonomy by forming military alliances, or they do both.[29] Armament proliferation and alliance formation become the trade-offs against which a government weighs when seeking increased security.[30] Altfeld concludes that if security levels between potential allies cannot be increased, they will not form an alliance formation in most cases.[31]

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[22] Victor D. Cha, *Alignment despite Antagonism: The US-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 37. See also Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 180–199; Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 461–496.

[23] Cha, *Alignment despite Antagonism*, 36.

[24] Cha, *Alignment despite Antagonism*, 44.

[25] Cha, *Alignment despite Antagonism*, 45.

[26] Cha, *Alignment despite Antagonism*, 45.

[27] Cha, *Alignment despite Antagonism*, 48–49.

[28] Michael F. Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test," *The Western Political Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (December 1984): 524.

[29] Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally," 526.

[30] Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally," 537.

[31] Altfeld, "The Decision to Ally," 538.

### *b. Alliances Form Because of States Self-Interests*

While the first school of thought contends that alliances form due to threat perceptions, the second school contends that alliances form because of the interest of states. In "Alliances and Asymmetry," James D. Morrow used an autonomy-security model framework to argue that states maintain alliances because of asymmetric levels of interests between both states.[32] He believed that when both states can appeal to their interest, they are willing to make trade-offs of their autonomy or security.[33] Morrow's argument regarding interests overshadow Altfeld's work on alliance/armament trade-off theory. He later published "Arms versus Allies" wherein he concluded that internal costs and external benefits factor into a states' decision in forming alliances and increasing their military capabilities.[34]

In the 2010 article "Prior Commitments," political scientists Douglas Gibler and Toby J. Rider argue that the interests between states is the stronger explanation behind alliance formation and sustainment.[35] They contend that scholars who use the autonomy-security trade-off model assume that the interests of states are a product of capability differences in an alliance, thereby obscuring its significance.[36] Gibler and Rider have determined that where allies share complete similar interests, the alliance terminates once the issue that brought the allies together is settled. Conversely, when allies have a compatibility of interests, their alliance endures because of the long-term interests that they seek from each other.

In *Why Nations Cooperate*, Arthur Stein argue against the notion that states form alliances based on the self-interests of states.[37] Stein's position counters that of Gibler and

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[32] James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (November 1991): 930.

[33] Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry," 930.

[34] James D. Morrow, "Arms versus Allies: Trade-Offs in the Search for Security," *International Organization* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 231.

[35] Douglas Gibler and Toby J. Rider, "Prior Commitments: Compatible Interests versus Capabilities in Alliance Behavior," *International Interactions* 30, no. 4 (2004): 314, doi: 10.1080/03050620490883985.

[36] Gibler and Rider, "Prior Commitments," 309, 311.

[37] Arthur A. Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 152.

Rider as he argues self-interests are the underlying cause of why alliances fail. Stein concludes that when individual and joint interests overlap, it creates conflict, and the alliance is no longer valued.[38]

Similarly, Thomas J. Christensen claims that alliance failure stems from conflict between the allies. In *Worse than a Monolith*, he argues that when there is conflict in an alliance, achieving goals comes at a greater cost, conflicts with the enemy are prolonged, and the adversary becomes more capable of gaining the advantage.[39]

### *c. Alliances Form to Prevent War*

The third school of thought contends that nations also form alliances with other nations to prevent war. Alastair Smith found that alliance formations serve as a means of extended deterrence against a potential aggressor. According to Smith, an aggressive nation is more likely to attack another nation without an alliance because of the increased probability of its victory (considering the aggressor possesses greater military strength).[40] However, where there is an alliance, the aggressive state is less likely to attack a targeted nation because of the likelihood that its ally will intervene in the conflict, which may lower the aggressive state's probability of victory.[41] For Smith, extended deterrence via alliance is an effective means to prevent wars in most cases.

In *Pivotal Deterrence*, Timothy Crawford makes the counterargument that refraining from making an alliance also serves as an alternative option in the prevention of war. Crawford argues that, through pivotal deterrence, a third-party state could be just as effective in preventing a war between two nations if the third-party state refrained from committing to either side of the conflict.[42]

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[38] Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate*, 163.

[39] Thomas J. Christensen, *Worse Than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1.

[40] Alastair Smith. "Extended Deterrence and Alliance Formation," *International Interactions* 24, no. 4 (April 1998): 315–343, doi: 10.1080/03050629808434934, 333.

[41] Alastair Smith, "Extended Deterrence," 334.

[42] Timothy W. Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 10.

In *Warring Friends*, Jeremy Pressman counters Crawford's pivotal deterrence argument. Pressman argues that nations also form alliances with other nations to prevent their ally from attacking another nation.[43] Where Crawford's pivotal deterrence model emphasized refraining from establishing alliances as a measure of deterrence; Pressman's alliance restraint model involves a mixture of alliance and deterrence simultaneously.[44] He further argues that alliance restraint "could be a powerful tool for tampering down violence and confrontation" to maintain international stability.[45]

### *d. Alliances Form to Ensure Political Survival*

Anessa L. Kimball offers a last school of thought, which contends that alliances are formed when a nation's government is determined to ensure their political survival. In her 2010 article "Political Survival, Policy Distribution, and Alliance Formation," she advocates against alliance formation arguments based on security and threats.[46] Kimball combines the distribution dilemma theory and political survival theory to show that a state seeks alliances when it government is concerned with resource management and political survival.[47] In the distribution dilemma, national security and social policy are resources that represent the "guns and butter," which government uses to satisfy the needs of its constituency.[48] In the political survival theory, a government must properly use resources to meet the demands of the constituency. The government can then secure votes when re-elections occur.[49]

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[43] Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 4.

[44] Pressman, *Warring Friends*, 4–5.

[45] Pressman, *Warring Friends*, 135.

[46] Anessa Kimball, "Political Survival, Policy Distribution, and Alliance Formation," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 4 (July 2010): 407.

[47] Kimball, "Political Survival," 407.

[48] Kimball, "Political Survival," 408. See also Robert Powell, *In the Shadow of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), Chapter 2, for a more detailed explanation on the guns and butter trade-off.

[49] Kimball, "Political Survival," 408. For more information, also see Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

### 2. Great Power–Small Power Alliances

With various reasons behind alliance formation, it is important to explore what a small power can hope to gain by allying with a great power and vice versa. In a great-small power alliance, both sides maximize the benefits that their counterparts provide. Furthermore, both use their own leverage to gain advantage in the alliance. By doing so, they gain the opportunity in maximizing those desired benefits. This section reviews two schools of thought. First, scholars have demonstrated how small powers are able to leverage their advantage over great powers, and second, scholars counter by showing that greater powers maintain advantage by their leverage when allied with a smaller power.

#### *a. Small Powers Leverage Great Powers*

Some scholars claim that small powers can use their leverage over great powers. In his 1971 article "The Big Influence of Small Allies," political scientist Robert O. Keohane used the United States' established alliances with weaker powers as an example of how small powers have gained leverage over great powers.[50] He claimed the United States becomes captive to smaller power demands because foreign policy continues to have priority over domestic policy.[51] Thus, smaller power allies can maintain leverage over the United States in their bargaining because they have ensured commitment of the greater power.[52]

Scholar Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov also concurs with Keohane's argument that small states have gained the advantage over the United States within the great power-small power alliance. In *Alliance Theory: U.S.-Small Allies Relationships*, Bar-Siman-Tov makes three proposals that could bring balance within the relationship between the United States and its small allies. First, he argues that the United States needs to place its national interests as the priority when conducting relationships with its allies.[53] Second, the United States

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[50] Robert O. Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies," *Foreign Policy*, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 161.

[51] Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies," 182.

[52] Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies," 162–163, 181.

[53] Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, "Alliance Strategy: U.S.—Small Allies Relationships," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 3, no. 2 (1980): 210, doi: 10.1080/01402398008437046.

needs to prioritize the strategic importance of its allies with respect to its national interests.[54] Finally, the United States needs to implement a situational concept of commitment.[55] He acknowledges that the United States would face difficulty in achieving these proposals due to the contradictions within its national interests.[56]

In "Davids and Goliaths," Sheldon W. Simon suggests that regional actors have the capability to "constrain or manipulate greater power policies."[57] He claims great powers seek to use third world states to further enhance their own power and to balance against other hostile great powers.[58] While greater powers compete against one another for global dominance, smaller powers become beneficiaries because greater powers are willing to form an alliance with them so as to achieve dominance. Thus, Simon concludes that small states gain greater leverage as their greater power counterparts provide them with military and economic assistance.[59]

In a 1966 article in *International Organization*, author Robert L. Rothstein argues that since time has progressed into a period wherein political power matters more than military power, small power states prefer nonalignment since they are more capable of survival.[60] Previously, small powers had sought to form alliances with one great power when they faced the military threat of another greater power.[61] However, Rothstein suggests that now that political struggles between great powers dictate their conflict, small powers use this to their advantage. Finally, he also notes that the small power gains

54 Bar-Siman-Tov, "Alliance Strategy," 210.

55 Bar-Siman-Tov, "Alliance Strategy,"210.

56 Bar-Siman-Tov, "Alliance Strategy," 214.

57 Sheldon W. Simon, "Davids and Goliaths: Small Power-Great Power Security Relations in Southeast Asia," *Asian Survey* 23, no. 3 (1983): 314.

58 Simon, "Davids and Goliaths," 302.

59 Simon, "Davids and Goliaths," 305.

60 Robert L. Rothstein, "Alignment, Nonalignment, and Small Powers: 1945–1965," *International Organization* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 397–418, 417.

61 Rothstein, "Alignment, Nonalignment, and Small Powers," 405.

advantage over their greater power ally because the greater power is determined to ensure their small power ally is not defeated.[62]

### *b. Great Powers Leverage Small Powers*

While there is evidence that small powers can gain advantage over a greater power, one can argue the opposite. In their 2017 article "China and Lilliputians," authors Hoo Tiang Boon and Charles Ardy argue that China uses economic leverage to impose their will upon smaller states that are economically undeveloped.[63] To further its self-determination for global expansion, China uses its influence to lure smaller power state into establishing economic ties.[64] For China, these small power states represent not only resource security, but they also play a role in the political arena, as they tend to side with China's global policy objectives.[65] For the smaller states, China is a pathway to achieving economic prosperity.[66]

In the 2016 article "Alliance Theory and Alliance Shelter," political scientists Alyson J. K. Bailes, Bradley A. Thayer, and Baldur Thorhallsson have developed the "alliance shelter theory" wherein a great-small power alliance, a small power retains effective control in certain areas of an alliance while giving the greater power advantage to control other areas.[67] They argue this occurs because small states fear their vulnerability and seek alliance with greater powers as a shelter to ensure their survival.

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62 Rothstein, "Alignment, Nonalignment, and Small Powers," 416.

63 Hoo Tiang Boon and Charles Ardy, "China and Lilliputians: Small States in a Big Power's Evolving Foreign Policy," *Asian Security* 13, no. 2 (March 2017): 117, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2017.1286159.

64 Boon and Ardy, "China and Lilliputians," 117.

65 Boon and Ardy, "China and Lilliputians," 117.

66 Boon and Ardy, "China and Lilliputians," 117.

67 Alyson J. K. Bailes, Bradley A. Thayer, and Baldur Thorhallsson, "Alliance Theory and Alliance 'Shelter': The Complexities of Small State Alliance Behavior," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 1, no. 1 (August 2016): 9–26, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23802014.2016.1189806, 10.

### 3. China and North Korea's Alliance Behavior

The previous sections discussed why alliances form and how leverage can exist within a great-small power alliance. This section covers China and North Korea's alliance. Some argue that the two nations share strong relationship ties with one another because of the alliance itself. Others claim that China and North Korea are more enemies than friends, and the alliance only makes them tolerant of one another. When considering how leverage plays a role, two schools of thought emerge. In the first, scholars claim that North Korea's has greater leverage, and this limits China's power over North Korea, and in the second, scholars claim that China has greater leverage, which enables it to control North Korea's behavior.

#### *a. North Korea Has Greater Leverage*

While some scholars argue that China has greater leverage over North Korea, other scholars counter with the claim that there are factors that give North Korea leverage over China. One school of thought is that China's dependence on North Korea's internal stability gives North Korea leverage. Another school of thought is that North Korea's resiliency and its ability to maintain distant ties with China gives it leverage.

Jooyoung Song claims that China has a geopolitical and strategic interest in maintaining an alliance with North Korea and ensuring their stability. In "Understanding China's Response to North Korea's Provocations," Song developed the "dual threats model" to provide analysis of China's response to North Korea's provocations against other nations.[68] He used U.S. military response to provocations and the stability of North Korea as variables in various case studies to show that China weighs these factors when determining if their response is necessary.[69] He has determined that because China fears instability of North Korea, it prevents China from exerting too much pressure onto North Korea.[70]

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68 Jooyoung Song, "Understanding China's Response to North Korea's Provocations," *Asian Survey* 51, no. 6 (November/December 2011): 1134–1155, 1135.

69 Song, "Understanding China's Response," 1135.

70 Song, "Understanding China's Response," 1154.

Jae Ho Chung and Dr. Myung-hae Choi make their accounts of China and North Korean relations in "Uncertain Allies or Uncomfortable Neighbors." Historically, the two countries have faced common enemies in war (Japan and the United States), and this makes geostrategic consideration a high priority.[71] The authors note that while the two have attempted steps toward building a stronger alliance, there are examples of road blocks to this progression, such as North Korea's continued suspicion of China's intentions, North Korea's pursuit of nuclear capabilities negatively impacting China's strategic interests, and North Korea's record of provocative actions.[72] They suggest China's influence over North Korea is limited, noting that North Korea knows how to use its vulnerability to its advantage in influencing greater powers.[73] The authors predict that China's alliance with North Korea will eventually become more of a liability than benefit for China.[74] Their conclusions correlate with Song's stance that while China has the power in this relationship, this power has clear limitations.

In his 2012 book *The Impossible State*, Victor Cha refers to the China and North Korean alliance as a "mutual-hostage" relationship.[75] He argues that China is willing to sacrifice its international reputation at the expense of ensuring that North Korea does not collapse, and this gives North Korea the advantage over China. On the other hand, North Korea, is captive to economic pressures placed upon it by China because North Korea relies heavily on China for economic support.[76] Thus, Andrei Lankov's claim that China and North Korea are not strongly tied correlates with Victor Cha's claim.

Kenneth Pomeranz argues there is a misconception of China's ability to unilaterally compel North Korea to abandon nuclear ambitions and cease provocations. He identifies

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[71] Jae Ho Chung and Myung-hae Choi, "Uncertain Allies or Uncomfortable Neighbors? Making Sense of China-North Korea Relations, 1949–2010," *The Pacific Review* 26, no. 3 (March 2013): 243–264, doi: 10.1080/09512748.2012.759262.

[72] Chung and Choi, "Uncertain Allies," 258.

[73] Chung and Choi, "Uncertain Allies," 258–259.

[74] Chung and Choi, "Uncertain Allies," 259.

[75] Victor D. Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2012), 344.

[76] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 344.

China's internal domestic politics and North Korea's fragility as obstacles for China. Regarding domestic issues, he believes that China perceives internal corruption as a greater threat to security over North Korea issues.[77] North Korea knows China depends on its stability, and uses this dependency to be defiant because it knows that China will not cut it off diplomatically or economically.[78]

James Kynge, principal of China Confidential and Renminbi Compass, believes that although China has established deep economic relations with the United States, its alliance with North Korea is derived from a common struggle against western powers.[79] He argues that while China exerts economic pressures on North Korea to de-escalate tension, it will not go to the extreme of creating a crisis for the Kim regime. Moreover, China is willing to tolerate North Korea's hermit behavior and pursuit of nuclear capabilities. However, China cannot tolerate a regime collapse that could open the door for U.S. expansion along its borders.[80]

#### *b. China Has Greater Leverage*

As various scholars argue that North Korea has leverage over China, other scholars contend that China has leverage over North Korea because it depends on China's economic support. For example, Eleanor Albert contends, "China is North Korea's most important ally, biggest trading partner, and main source of food and energy," as it accounts for approximately 90 percent of North Korea's trade.[81] Furthermore, while other countries have ceased to provide food aid to North Korea since 2009, China continues to do so.[82]

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77 Kenneth Pomeranz, "On China and North Korea: The Strength of Weakness and the Limits of Power," WAMC, accessed April 29, 2017, http://wamc.org/post/china-and-north-korea-strength-weakness-and-limits-power.

78 Pomeranz, "On China and North Korea."

79 James Kynge, "A Reckless North Korea Remains China's Useful Ally," *Financial Times*, April 18, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/88525dda-1a12-11e7-a266-12672483791a.

80 Kynge, "A Reckless North Korea."

81 Eleanor Albert, "The China-North Korea Relationship," Council on Foreign Relations, last updated September 27, 2017, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship.

82 Ibid.

Similarly, Nicholas Eberstadt, senior advisor to the National Bureau of Asian Research, argues, "China is currently North Korea's only economic backer of any importance."[83] Eberstadt holds North Korea's record of bad state policies, government practice, and degradation of the institutions as part of the reason that the hermit kingdom has experienced economic woes and will continue to depend on China's assistance.[84]

Dick Manto and Mark Manyin position correlates to that of both Albert and Eberstadt. They argue that China gains influence over North Korea by providing support to their economy. Additionally, they claim that China uses their economic support as leverage to punish North Korea's bad behavior, and reward North Korea's good behavior.[85]

Sino-North Korean analyst Sabine van Ameijden has conversely claimed that North Korea is not a burden but a crucial ally for China.[86] She contends that North Korea's nuclear capabilities reinforce China's deterrence strategy. North Korea's test of nuclear weapons deters against U.S. expansion and against countries in island disputes with China. She notes that for China, North Korea is its faithful German shepherd that will bark when China orders it to.[87]

In *The Real North Korea*, Andrei Lankov claims that China views North Korea's provocative actions as harmful to stability and its long-term strategic goals.[88] For North Korea, it prefers to "keep Beijing at arm's length" to avoid loss of influence over its society.[89] Lankov contends that there is misconception that China's economic influence

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83 Nicholas Eberstadt, *North Korea's "Epic Economic Fail" in International Perspective* (Seoul: Asian Institute for Public Policy Studies, 2015), 26.

84 Eberstadt, *North Korea's "Epic Economic Fail."* 35–36.

85 Dick K. Nanto and Mark E. Manyin, "China-North Korea Relations," *Russia, China, and Eurasia* 27, no. 3 (2011): 416.

86 Sabine van Ameijden, "Beijing's German Shepherd? Why China Will Not Abandon North Korea," Sino-NK, March 16, 2013, http://sinonk.com/2013/03/16/herdershondnorth-korea-beijings-german-shepherd/.

87 van Ameijden, "Beijing's German Shepherd?"

88 Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 214.

89 Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 218.

over North Korea does not give it political leverage.[90] A South Korean diplomat once told him, "China doesn't have leverage when it comes to dealing with North Korea. What it has is not a lever, but rather a hammer. China can knock North Korea unconscious if it wishes, but it cannot really manipulate its behavior."[91]

## D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this thesis is to understand what leverage China has over North Korea within their alliance. Part of answering this question involves understanding why China and North Korea value the alliance. In turn, I propose three hypotheses regarding the use of leverage within the China and North Korean alliance. I acknowledge that while I portray these three propositions separately, this study may reveal all three propositions exist simultaneously. The first hypothesis speculates that China is reluctant to use its leverages over North Korea. However, the second hypothesis speculates that China is indeed willing to use its leverage under certain conditions, while the third hypothesis speculates that North Korea will become more defiant of China under certain conditions. Because China may choose to use its leverage over North Korea, the concluding chapter of this study analyzes whether its leverage alone is enough to force North Korea to alter its behavior.

### 1. Hypothesis 1: Maintaining Stability and Limiting Outside Influence Matters More than Using Leverage

My first hypothesis is that China is reluctant to use leverage over North Korea because China values stability. Their alliance enables them both to maintain power over their societies, and both countries share a common interest of limiting outside influences (i.e., the United States) from threatening their respective power. North Korea perceives its ability to deter adversaries with its nuclear arsenal and provocative actions as a legitimization of power. China values the effective deterrence that comes with North Korea's aggression because it prevents the expansion of outside influence over its people.

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[90] Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 218.

[91] Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 218–219.

The governing systems for both countries are historically based on the ideals of communism and authoritarianism. For North Korea, the regime follows a cult of personality for the supreme leader that uses authoritative measures to keep the society dependent on its power. For example, the government controls food distribution, heavily uses propaganda, restricts flow of information from the outside world, and is willing to publicly punish anyone willing to oppose its authority.

For China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is a single-party system that also will implement measures to keep its society dependent on its rule. China is also known to use nationalistic propaganda and to restrict information flow, use violent measures to control population rates, and severely punish those found to criticize or challenge the ruling party. The coercive measures taken by China and North Korea support the notion that an increase of outside influence will only threaten the control both governments have over their societies. This hypothesis conforms to existing literature that suggests that balancing against perceived threats will drive state alliances.

### 2. Hypothesis 2: China Will Leverage If North Korea's Actions Cause Destabilization

The second hypothesis suggests that China is likely to use its leverage to influence North Korea whenever its actions cause destabilization and threatens China's diplomatic relations with other nations. While China seeks to become a superpower in the Pacific theater, achieving this objective also depends on maintaining leverage over North Korea. China's strategic objectives will be compromised if it is dragged into an unwanted war caused by North Korea's aggression. Therefore, China is likely to use leverage over North Korea if its behavior increases likelihood of sparking an armed conflict in the region. Either the strength of China's leverage will force North Korea to concede, or it will continue to remain defiant.

### 3. Hypothesis 3: North Korea Will Become More Defiant If China Allows Outside Threats to Disrupt their Alliance

The third hypothesis contends that North Korea is likely to become more defiant of China whenever it perceives that China is allowing outside threats to disrupt their alliance.

While North Korea pursues increased capabilities for self-defense, it also depends on China's willingness to come to its defense. For North Korea, an increase of outside influence may cause China to devalue the alliance, encouraging it to betray North Korea. Because North Korea understands that China depends on its survival, it is likely to be defiant of China's demands whenever it perceives a threat to the alliance. For example, North Korea perceives that the United States is attempting to turn China against it by pressuring China to strain its economic relations with North Korea with increased sanctions to press for a non-nuclear North Korea. Either China will be pressured by North Korea's defiance or China will pursue strengthening its relations with the international community.

## E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis includes an in-depth analysis of the China and North Korean alliance. First, this research presents a historical background narrative of key events that influenced China and North Korea's alliance formation. Next, analysis covers North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and the first nuclear crisis. Following this, is an analysis of the second nuclear crisis and Six Party Talks. Finally, I analyze how China's leverage has shaped its relationship with North Korea. To complete this research, I have used scholarly sources such as recorded documentaries, academic books, journal articles, Internet blogs, news articles, economic charts and diagrams, and other scholarly material deemed relevant to this study.

## F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is composed of five chapters. Chapter I, the introduction for the thesis, thus far has encompassed the background as to why alliances are formed, why great and small powers ally with one another, and how leverage impacts alliance behavior. Additionally, it has included the introduction of the thesis question, significance of the thesis question, literature review, possible explanations and hypothesis, and the research design implementation.

Chapter II begins by covering the historical background behind the China and North Korean alliance with historical details leading up to the Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid

and Cooperation Friendship Treaty.[92] This chapter analyzes key events after the split that led up to the Korean War, and the factors that influenced China's decision to come to North Korea's defense. The end of the chapter discusses diplomatic relations between China and North Korea since the official establishment of their alliance in 1961[93] and how political leverage has affected relations between the two countries. Chapter III analyzes China's influence over North Korea during the first and second nuclear crises. Then, Chapter IV includes an in-depth analysis of China's influence over North Korea during the Six Party Talks. Finally, Chapter V, the final chapter, concludes by summarizing my findings regarding the importance of leverage within the China and North Korean alliance, and determines whether China's use of leverage alone is enough to achieve the desired outcomes it seeks from its relationship with North Korea.

Drawing from the hypotheses stated earlier, there are two possible implications. On one hand, China refrains from using leverage because maintaining stability and preventing outside influence matters more. On the other hand, the research may reveal that China is likely to use leverage or North Korea is driven to defiance whenever one ally perceives that the other is allowing self-interests to threaten the alliance and their respective states security. By understanding the importance of leverage within the alliance, these implications may further guide U.S. foreign policy toward China and North Korea.

92 "Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance Between the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Marxists Internet Archive, accessed May 26, 2017, https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/china_dprk.htm.

93 Dick K. Nanto and Mark E. Manyin, *China-North Korea Relations* (CRS Report No. R41043) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41043.pdf, 5.

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# II. BLOOD OR WATER?

## A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a case study contending that while China and North Korea both act to reinforce their power and autonomy over their respective societies, relations between them may not be as close as we might think. North Korea's alliance with China serves their long-term strategic goals of ensuring its doors remain closed to the outside world, but they are willing to demonstrate defiant behavior against their greater power ally whenever their autonomy is being challenged. While China may at times become infuriated by North Korea, they remain tolerant of their defiant behavior because China fears the potential costs associated with abandoning them altogether. Thus, if an analogy could be procured to conceptualize the Sino-Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) relationship, I would go so far as to say that China is not looking to have North Korea over for dinner, and North Korea is not seeking an invite, but they stick together because neither wants their menu options dictated by foreign powers.

This chapter covers the Korean War and the driving factors that led to the Sino-DPRK alliance. First, I discuss North Korea's attempt to unify the Korean peninsula by force and China's decision to enter the Korean War in defense of North Korea. Second, I discuss how negative perceptions of the Soviet Union contribute to China and North Korea allying with one another. Finally, I evaluate how the history between China and North Korea has contributed to the sustainment of their alliance thus far, and conclude that, because both China and North Korea are committed to ensuring that they can independently pursue their own strategic agendas, this has made sustaining the Sino-DPRK alliance more valuable to each than ending it.

## B. NORTH KOREA: UNITY UNDER ITS TERMS

Scholars often describe Korea as a closed society. For example, in *Korea's Place in the Sun*, Bruce Cumings describes Korea as the "hermit kingdom"[94] and quotes historian

94 Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 87.

Key-Hiuk Kim, who termed North Korean character as "exclusionism."[95] Both terms indicate Korea's desire of maintaining control over its own destiny, and it has been successful in keeping its doors closed to the outer world.

For both Koreas, achieving national reunification symbolized recapturing self-determination, and this has been worth fighting for. After Japan defeated China in 1905, Korea became hostage to Japanese colonialism, and its colonial powers effectively stripped Korea of its power of self-determination. After Japan's defeat in World War II, both North and South Koreans wanted to receive reclamation of their self-determination. Instead, after World War II ended, the United States and Russia, both non-Korean, split Korea into two.[96] The Soviet Union placed Kim Il Sung as the head of what became North Korea. Kim Il Sung was a founder of the Korean Communist movement and guerilla fighter who had fought against Japan in World War II, and this made him useful for the Soviet Union.[97] The United States placed Syngman Rhee in charge in what became South Korea.[98] Syngman Rhee was a political figure who had spent many years in America lobbying for Korean independence and alliance guarantees from other nations, and his diplomatic connections made him useful for the United States.[99] Both Syngman Rhee and Kim Il Sung fully understood that reunifying both Koreas meant that one of them would have to give up their position of power. This emboldened Kim to make the first move.

However, North Korea could not go outside to play with other nations without getting permission from its parent, the Soviet Union. While Kim Il Sung wanted to reunify the Korean peninsula under his terms, he also understood that without support from the Soviet Union, launching an attack upon the South would be pointless. After all, it was Stalin who had given Kim his power over North Korea and aided him in bolstering "a

95 Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 89.

96 Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 5–7.

97 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 66.

98 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 66; John Simkin, "Syngman Rhee," Spartacus Educational, last updated August 2014, http://spartacus-educational.com/COLDsyngman.htm.

99 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 8; Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 195; Simkin, "Syngman Rhee."

political base and a national image."[100] Stalin's goal in North Korea was to prop up what appeared to be an independent and self-sufficient nation in the international community. However, Stalin was successful in this as the international community remained unaware that he was using his power to manage North Korea behind the scenes.[101] One of the main reasons Stalin sought this arrangement was so that if a conflict were to stem from North Korean aggression, the Soviet Union would not be deemed directly responsible or implicated.

Diplomatic engagement proved itself ineffective as border fighting between the North and the South took place along the 38th parallel in 1949.[102] A hostile takeover of South Korea began to look more promising for Kim Il Sung since he already had guerillas in the South carrying out random attacks and spreading propaganda supporting reunification under DPRK power.[103] Kim Il Sung saw this advantage as a reason to press Stalin even harder for the green light to conduct an offensive.[104] Stalin likely perceived that a successful attack and takeover of South Korea would further strengthen the Communist bloc, which in turn would cause the United States to lose more influence in the Pacific region; yet, he also wanted to avoid direct military engagement with the United States so soon after World War II.[105]

Stalin withheld his approval to Kim Il Sung for military action until the conditions were more favorable for a North Korean offensive.[106] Two critical factors influenced Stalin's shift toward supporting a North Korean invasion of the South. First, the United States seemed to be backing away from it security commitments with South Korea, which meant if a full-scale war did emerge, there was a good chance that the United States would

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100 Wayne S. Kiyosaki, *North Korea's Foreign Relations: The Politics of Accommodation, 1945–1975* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), 33.

101 Kiyosaki, *North Korea's Foreign Relations*, 34–35.

102 Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 247.

103 For more detail, see "Communist Capabilities in South Korea: CIA Historical Program Release in Full," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed September 18, 2017, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000258389.pdf.

104 Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 11.

105 Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 12.

106 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 9.

not get involved, meaning the Soviet Union would less likely encounter a direct military conflict against their powerful rival.[107] Second, and more critically, the Soviet Union normalized relations with China and officially established the Sino-Soviet alliance on February 14, 1950.[108] This alliance gave the Soviet Union leeway in allowing North Korea to conduct the invasion it was begging to carry out while employing China to come to its defense if the United States decided to intervene. The Soviet Union could afford to gamble at this point because its risk had been decreased by the China factor, North Korea's military standing compared to the South, and signs of U.S. noninterference. The Soviet's calculus served Kim's ambition with regard to launching an attack to takeover South Korea. The only barrier at this point was the Soviet Union's allowance for invading the South on the condition that China agreed to defend North Korea. From this reason, Stalin coerced Kim Il Sung into actively seeking out Mao, and Kim understood that Stalin's approval was predicated on Mao's agreement. This in turn, placed North Korea in a situation where it needed both Russia and China's agreement to invade the South.

## C. CHINA: A WAR FAR FROM FORGOTTEN

Mao foresaw potential benefits in establishing an alliance with the Soviet Union. First, because the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) defeated the Kuomintang (KMT) in the Chinese Civil War, Mao now could further consolidate his power internally and lead his people down the path of revolution.[109] However, after years of fighting brought a major setback to the mainland, the country needed time to rebuild, and Mao was convinced that

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107 Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 48. According to Lowe, The United States actively pushed the Korea issue onto the U.N. so that it could "gradually disengage from Korea." See also American Presidency Project, "Statement by the President on the Decision to Withdraw U.S. Forces from Korea, 1947–1949," accessed October 15, 2017, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14318; William Stueck and Boram Yi, "'An Alliance Forged in Blood': The American Occupation of Korea, the Korean War, and the US–South Korean Alliance," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 2 (2010): 203, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402391003590200.

108 Robert C. North, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance," *The China Quarterly* no.1 (March 1960): 51–60. See pages 54–56 in which North charges that the alliance yielded favorable power balance for the Soviet Union, while also bolstering Mao's position of power in Asia.

109 Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (New York: Random House, 1938), 273. Also see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 47.

China's economy would recover much more quickly with Soviet aid.[110] Second, the United States' nonrecognition of the CCP and continued support of the KMT represented an obstruction preventing Mao from reuniting Taiwan with mainland China.[111] Finally, the historical theme of China's warring against "foreign imperialist aggression"[112] and desire to push imperialist powers out of the Pacific region made siding with the communist bloc more favorable.[113] With the Soviet Union on his side, Mao could "restore China's central position in the international community,"[114] while the United States would be deterred from blocking his path.[115]

Even so, Mao was not enthused by Kim and Stalin's plan to overtake the South by force.[116] To put his reluctance into perspective, two factors should be considered: 1) the Japanese had already wreaked havoc within China's borders during its occupation, and 2) infighting between the CCP and KMT resurged shortly after WWII and continued for another three years until the KMT retreated to Taiwan. Additionally, Mao perceived the United States as the CCP's immediate threat since its position sided with the KMT, and he feared the United States would intervene during the Chinese Civil War.[117] While Mao may have wanted nothing more than the disappearance of U.S. influence in Asia, China was overdue for a break from war, since it had just experienced a long conflict Japan during the World War II era and the civil war with the KMT. At this point, entering any struggle that

110 Michael B. Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 46.

111 Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 148–149.

112 Michael D. Swaine, "China: The Influence of History," *The Diplomat*, January 14, 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/china-the-influence-of-history/. For more information on Chinese history, also see John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993), 2–28. Garver argues that Chinese "anti-imperialism" sentiment is derived from China's historical experience of "National Humiliation."

113 For more detail, see Garver, *Foreign Relations*, 2–28; Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 48.

114 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 47.

115 Michael B. Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs*, 61.

116 Zhihua Shen, "China and the Dispatch of the Soviet Air Force: The Formation of the Chinese–Soviet–Korean Alliance in the Early Stage of the Korean War," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 2 (April 2010): 212–213.

117 Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 15–17.

would lead to a direct conflict with the United States was not in Mao's best interest because he wanted to focus on the reconstruction of China. More importantly, the KMT could regain power over China if he was defeated by the United States.[118]

The truth of the matter was that establishing the Sino-Soviet pact also indebted Beijing to Moscow. Mao was convinced that Kim was going to carry out his plan regardless if he consented to defending him.[119] Nevertheless, he pressed Kim to hold off from launching an attack against South Korea. However, Stalin ended up supporting Kim's thirst for reunification of the peninsula, and, once Kim came back with Stalin's approval, Mao had no choice but to commit his forces to defend North Korea because he could not risk the perception of that he was betraying the communist bloc. While Mao actively pressed Stalin to back him in the recovery of Taiwan, he was forced to put its own revolutionary agenda on the backburner to prove his loyalty to Stalin.[120] One must recognize the bigger picture at play in the situation. Mao's decision to defend North Korea was not about satisfying Kim's lust for reunifying the Korean peninsula, it was about gaining more ground toward getting the Soviet Union's help in retrieving Taiwan to make China whole again.

Mao could use the Korean War to further consolidate the CCP's power over its population as the party was seen as saving North Korea from imperialist aggression.[121] Additionally, like Stalin and Kim, Mao also bought into the notion that the United States was backing away from defending South Korea and Taiwan.[122] However, this belief was abandoned when North Korea launched their invasion against the South, only to be knocked back across the 38th parallel by U.S. ground forces, who, despite warnings from China not to cross north of the 38th parallel, disregarded the warning because they were

118 Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 40–41.

119 Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 88.

120 Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 75.

121 Xiaobing Li, *A History of the Modern Chinese Army* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 112.

122 Chen Jian, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and China's Entry into the Korean War" (working paper No. 1, Cold War International History Project Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1991), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ACFAE7.pdf, 23.

determined to further their offensive to overtake the peninsula.[123] The invasion confirmed Mao's worst fears as the United States continued North, and two factors made it inevitable for Mao to order his forces into battle. First, Mao feared U.S. progression would deepen into Chinese territory, and he wanted to avoid bringing the fight directly to his borders.[124] Second, the invasion not only caused the United States to come to South Korea's defense but also triggered the United States' decision to send its carriers in the Taiwan Straits as a blockade, sending an alarming signal to Mao that the United States also would not give up Taiwan without a fight.[125]

The Korean War lasted for three years until an armistice was finally signed by the North and South on July 27, 1953.[126] While some refer to this three-year long battle as the "Forgotten War,"[127] China can never forget how North Korea's thirst for blood interfered with its strategic objectives and caused many deaths for its citizens. What also cannot be denied is that the Forgotten War glorified the competition between communism and capitalism. Additionally, because both China and North Korea were on the same side, one less barrier stood in the way for formalizing a possible alliance. The next barrier that broke between China and North Korea was their combined interest of loosening ties with the Soviet Union to gain more autonomy.

## D. CHINA AND NORTH KOREA: BREAKING AWAY FROM THE SOVIET'S STRONGHOLD

After the Korean War, the strong communist front held upward by the three united powers began to weaken. According to Ilpyong J. Kim, the connection between China, North Korea, and the Soviet Union was one of "triangular relations."[128] In reflecting on the period between 1945 and 1953, his interpretation holds credible considering that the Soviet Union stood at the top of the triangle while China and North Korea were at the lower

123 Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 77, 87–89.

124 Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War*, 89–93.

125 Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 161.

126 Carter Malkasian, *The Korean War* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2009), 5–6.

127 James Hollis, *Korea: I Remember the Forgotten War* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2008), 32.

128 Ilpyong J. Kim, *Communist Politics in North Korea* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 93.

triangular points. However, after the Korean War ended, this solid triangle formed by solid lines had shifted its entire form and morphed into three horizontal nodes connected by a singular line. The two stationary end nodes on this line represented China and the Soviet Union, while the mobile middle node maneuvering between the stationary end nodes represented North Korea. This transformation resulted in two emerging alliances within the communist camp. As a result, instead of a unified front among the allies, diverging interests fostered, and decreased the overall strength of the communist front, as China and North Korea both viewed the Soviet Union as a revisionist power.

For Mao, the ending of the Korean War allowed him to refocus on China's development, build upon the domestic support he gained from winning the Chinese Civil War, and channel it toward fulfilling his own revolutionary objectives.[129] Mao not only wanted China to be recognized as an "equal power"[130] to the Soviet Union, he also saw himself as the true leader of communism who should be leading the ongoing revolution after Stalin died.[131] Both the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution agendas were a way to break away from the Soviet Union's control. Moreover, if Mao could successfully demonstrate China's power and self-sustainability internally and externally, his position as the new head of the communist camp would be further justified both within his society as well as within the international domain.[132]

In a similar fashion, the end of the Korean War allowed Kim Il Sung to further build up his domestic power. The society in North Korea already believed that Kim liberated North Koreans from the Japanese aggressors during WWII, and, by tampering with history once more, his power over society elevated tremendously as his people now believed that

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129 He Di, "The Evolution of the People's Republic of China's Policy toward the Offshore Islands," in *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953–1960*, ed. Warren Cohen and Akira Iriye (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 222–245.

130 Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 63. See also Mark Kramer, "The USSR Foreign Ministry's Appraisal of Sino-Soviet Relations on the Eve of the Split, September 1959," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 6–7 (Winter 1995–1996): 178, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin6-7_p4.pdf.

131 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 68.

132 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 79, 84.

he had also forced the Americans to retreat during the Korean War.[133] Thus, in the war's aftermath, Kim became praised as the "Great Leader,"[134] and he was also symbolized as the "protector" and the "mother" of North Korea.[135] To further consolidate his power, Kim instituted Organizational Life meetings to continuously re-indoctrinate the society on his achievements and the importance of remaining loyal to him.[136] Additionally, he also ensured every neighborhood belonged to an *inminban*, a local resident who worked with local authorities to punish any members of society suspected of challenging or criticizing Kim's power.[137]

After the Korean War, Kim instituted the *juche* ideology,[138] which reinforced the theme of "national spirit and political sovereignty."[139] Kim played up the credibility of *juche* to his society, and downplayed the reality that North Korea heavily depended on the economic strength of both China and the Soviet Union.[140] Externally, the ideology also served Kim's goal of demonstrating to the international community that North Korea was a self-sufficient nation that did not need to rely on its big brothers to survive. Essentially, Kim wanted North Korea to maintain its "doing things our way"[141] approach without having to worry about foreign interference by China and the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is

133 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 66.

134 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 72.

135 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 75.

136 Cha, *Impossible State*, 42.

137 Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 40–42.

138 Jae-Jung Suh, "Making Sense of North Korea: Juche as an Institution," in *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development*, ed. Jae-Jung Suh (Lantham: MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 2. *Juche* can be defined as "self-reliance" or "master of one's own fate."

139 Han S. Park, "Juche as a Constraint," in *The Foreign Relations of North Korea: New Perspectives*, ed. Jae Kyu Park, Byung Chul Koh, and Tae-Hwan Kwak (Changwon, Korea: Kyungnam University Press, 1987), 75.

140 Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 112. Also, see Cha, *The Impossible State*, 23–25; Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, 100; Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 8.

141 Gwang-Oon Kim, "The Making of the Juche State in Postcolonial North Korea," in *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development*, ed. Jae-Jung Suh (Lantham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 70.

hard to deny that Kim viewed Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization"[142] policy approach and his criticism of North Korea as an "isolationist"[143] and "closed society"[144] as a threat to his own power, and this made forming an alliance with China favorable.

## E. CONCLUSION: POWER BEFORE FRIENDSHIP

This chapter has traced the basis of China and North Korea's alliance to the Korean War. Also, it has shown that before tackling the issue of how closely tied China and North Korea are in terms of relations, one must first understand what drove the two nations to become allies and why they have thus far remained allies. I charge that three factors have allowed the alliance between China and North Korea to sustain thus far: 1) the shared experience of each other's territory historically invaded by foreign aggressors; 2) the shared experience of having to be a junior power to the Soviet Union; and 3) their desire to maintain the preservation of self-determination. This is not to say that both countries are highly keen of one another or seek to walk hand-in-hand. Rather, China understands North Korea wants to fulfill its own agendas without being bothered, just as much as China itself does. Therefore, while both countries have established an alliance to ensure their power and autonomy is maintained, their relations remain loosely tied to safeguard noninterference on both ends.

After the Korean War, competition between communism and capitalism ensued during the Cold War; however, hostility also emerged between members of the communist camp. As I have shown, the fundamental reason for conflict in the communist camp underlying these factors was that both Mao and Kim wanted to prevent the Soviet Union from sabotaging their positions of power. Both leaders recognized they were in the best position to solidify their ruling authority over their respective societies, and both leaders

142 Kim, "The Making of the Juche State," 78; Chin-Wee Chung, "North Korea's Relations with China," in *The Foreign Relations of North Korea: New Perspectives*, ed. Jae Kyu Park, Byung Chul Koh, and Tae-Hwan Kwak (Seoul, Korea: Kyungnam University Press, 1987), 169.

143 Kim, "The Making of the Juche State," 70.

144 Kim, "The Making of the Juche State," 70.

came to share perceptions that the Soviet Union as a "revisionist power"[145] and "traitor"[146] to the communist ideology. Therefore, because the Soviet Union threatened both leaders' legitimacy, balancing against the Soviet Union was in both Mao and Kim's best interests. Additionally, both Mao and Kim perceived that if they had remained closely tied to the Soviet Union, they not only risked forfeiting their opportunity to be able to further solidify their power internally, but they also risked being unable to pursue their own desired individual agendas. Thus, understanding the historical underpinnings that underlie the China and North Korean relationship from this perspective provides context for the question as to whether their relationship is currently comparable to the "lips and teeth"[147] analogy. I address this in the second chapter.

145 Kim, *The Making of the Juche State*, 70; Sergey Radchenko, "The Sino-Soviet Split," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, Vol. 2, Crises and Détente (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 352–354;

146 Radchenko, "The Sino-Soviet Split," 350. See also Kim, *The Making of the Juche State*, 70; Wang Dong, "The Quarreling Brothers: New Chinese Archives and a Reappraisal of the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959–1962" (Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 49, Woodrow Wilson Center, 2006), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP49DW_rev.pdf, 65.

147 According to Zhihua and Xia, while both China and North Korea have claimed their alliance relationship is "forged in blood" and close as "lips to teeth," these claims should be taken at face value. For more detail, see Shen Zhihua and Yafeng Xia, "Refuting Two Historical Myths: A New Interpretation of China-North Korean Relations," in *China and North Korea: Strategic and Policy Perspectives from a Changing China*, ed. Carla P. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

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# III. NUCLEAR PURSUIT AND NUCLEAR DEFIANCE

## A. INTRODUCTION

Scholars continue to debate whether the Sino-DPRK alliance is bounded by strong diplomatic relations comparable to the "lips and teeth"[148] analogy or if the bonds are severely overestimated. While China and North Korea remain allied with one another, North Korea's historical record of defying China continues to resonate. There are two implications to consider when further assessing their alliance. First, the foundation of their diplomatic relationship is based more on preserving their own self-interests than on preserving strong sibling ties. Second, when either ally pushes its own self-interests above the alliance foundation, their relationship becomes further strained.

North Korea perceives three benefits of possessing nuclear weapons: 1) an effective deterrence against outsider aggression, 2) reinforcement of the juche ideology,[149] and 3) the ability to counter the United States' support of South Korea.[150] North Korea's continued mistrust of the international community, combined with the regime's desire to hold onto power, emboldens it to continue pursuing nuclear weapons no matter the cost. However, China desires a denuclearized Korean peninsula so that its own strategic goals are not compromised by North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Consequently, China is forced to decrease tensions and ensure stability whenever its smaller power ally takes provocative actions against the international community. For North Korea, going against China's wishes for its denuclearization is a risk worth taking because its nuclear weapons ownership, thus far, has guaranteed its security against outside threats. As a result, China's influence has not been enough to force its denuclearization. Therefore, I argue that although

148 Ted Galen Carpenter, "Teeth and Lips: A Resurgence in China-North Korea Ties," December 19, 2011, http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/%E2%80%9Cteeth-lips%E2%80%9D-resurgence-china-north-korea-ties-6269. See also Gregory J. Moore, "How North Korea Threatens China's Interests: Understanding Chinese 'Duplicity' on the North Korean Nuclear Issue," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 8, no. 1 (January 2008): 1–29, https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcm023.

149 Jae-Jung Suh, *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development* (Lantham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 2. Juche is commonly translated as "self-reliance" or "being a master of one's own fate."

150 Jonathan D. Pollack, *No Exit: North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and International Security*, Adelphi series (London: Routledge, 2011), 55, 76.

China remains North Korea's sole and greater power ally, China must also depend on the international community because its political leverage alone is not enough to alter North Korea's defiant behavior.

The first nuclear crisis arose after the United States in 1992 discovered North Korea's covert pursuit of nuclear weapons. While China chose to have a limited role during the first nuclear crisis, President Jimmy Carter's intervention led to a resolution between the United States and North Korea. After both the United States and North Korea agreed to and signed the Agreed Framework on October 21, 1994,[151] there was hope that conducive relations would foster between them. However, when the international community discovered North Korea was violation of this agreement, and it withdrew from the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)[152] on January 10, 2003.[153] Subsequently, this caused a second nuclear crisis to arise. Various factors during the second crisis drove China to play an active role in getting North Korea to the table for negotiations. However, despite China's active participation during the second nuclear crisis, existing strains within the Sino-DPRK alliance continued to fuel North Korea's defiant behavior. Ultimately, it rejected abandoning its nuclear weapons program as a result.

In this chapter, I examine the following questions. First, what were the reasons behind China's limited influence over North Korea during the first nuclear crisis? Second, what were the reasons behind China's increased influence over North Korea during the second nuclear crisis? Third, has the perception that China alone possesses enough political leverage to force North Korea to cease pursuing nuclear weapons been severely overestimated? Additionally, I examine two factors that shaped China's limited role during the first crisis: 1) China's decision to move toward integration with the international community, and 2) North Korea essentially being forced to develop a nuclear weapon on its own, which has reinforced North Korea's nuclear ambitions. For the second crisis, I

151 "The U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework at a Glance," Arms Control Association, last updated August 2017, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/agreedframework.

152 "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)," United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, accessed July 26, 2017, https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/.

153 "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)," United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

examine two factors that allowed China to play an active role: 1) China had become more powerful economically through its peaceful rise and did not want conflict disrupting its progression, and 2) while China still lacked political influence over North Korea, it recognized the recent famine made North Korea more economically vulnerable. Therefore, as North Korea's primary trading partner, it could increase the economic pressure North Korea was already experiencing from current international sanctions. This resulted in the coercion of North Korea to the negotiation table for Six Party Talks,[154] which I address in the third chapter.

I now turn to discussing North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons development and China's limited role during the rise of the first nuclear crisis. After this, I discuss China's active role after the rise of the second nuclear crisis. Finally, I evaluate China's political leverage over North Korea's nuclear program.

## B. THE NUCLEAR CHASE

External actors are partly responsible for North Korea's temptation to use nuclear power.[155] The temptation to develop nuclear weapons did exist within the northern peninsula before the DPRK gained ruling power. During WWII, the Japanese covertly moved its nuclear program to the northern Korean peninsula because of rich mineral resources and because they feared the U.S. heavy conventional bombing occurring on its homeland would destroy its technological advancements.[156] The United States ended WWII by introducing the world to nuclear destructive power through its bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which forced Japan's surrender.[157] Korea was thus divided with communism controlling the North while democracy flourished the South. The split provided the Soviet Union opportunity to conduct mining operations for mineral resources

154 Xiaodon Liang, "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance," Arms Control Association, last updated July 18, 2017, https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6partytalks.

155 Pollack, *No Exit*, 44–45.

156 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 251.

157 National Security Archive, "The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 525, accessed July 26, 2017, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb525-The-Atomic-Bomb-and-the-End-of-World-War-II/.

in the north to support its own nuclear objectives in 1946.[158] It would go on to have a successful nuclear weapons test three years later, punching its ticket into the Cold War.[159]

On June 25, 1950, Kim Il Sung initiated his military invasion as he tried to overtake the South and liberate it from the control of the United States.[160] However, the United States' intervention forced his ground forces back north across the 38th parallel, and bloodshed continued between North Korea and South Korea for three years until an armistice in 1953.[161] While Kim Il Sung remained fearsome of possible nuclear attacks during the Korean War, the Soviet's nuclear arsenal proved effective in deterring the United States from employing its nuclear arsenal.[162] The North Korean elite held a grudge against the United States since it had blocked the unification of the peninsula and prevented "the Korean race from realizing its full potential."[163]

Following the Korean War, tensions continued to rise between the two countries. During the infamous Pueblo incident in 1968, North Korea captured and retained control of a U.S. Navy intelligence ship, claiming the vessel had violated its territorial waters.[164] By 1972, the United States had expanded its nuclear arsenal to over 700 nuclear warheads.[165] Another clash was the Axe incident in 1976, when North Korean forces killed

158 Balazs Szalontai and Sergey Radchenko, *North Korea's Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives* (Washington, DC: Cold War International History Project, 2006), 31–33.

159 "29 August 1949 - First Soviet Nuclear Test," CTBTO, accessed August 8, 2017, https://www.ctbto.org/specials/testing-times/29-august-1949-first-soviet-nuclear-test.

160 Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, 10.

161 Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, 50.

162 Pollack, *No Exit*, 45. Also see Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," *International Security* 13, no. 3 (Winter 1988/1989): 53; David E. Lilienthal, *Journals: The Atomic Energy Years 1945–1950* (New York: Harper and Row,1964), 391.

163 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 40.

164 Charles S. Kennedy, "The USS Pueblo Incident—Assassins in Seoul, A Spy Ship Captured," Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, accessed August 6, 2017, http://adst.org/2013/01/the-uss-pueblo-incident-assassins-in-seoul-a-spy-ship-captured/.

165 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 257. See also Lee Jae-Bong, "U.S. Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s South Korea and North Korea's Nuclear Development: Toward Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," *The Asia Pacific Journal* 8, no. 3 (February 2009): 1–3.

two U.S. soldiers for trimming trees near the Korean Demilitarized Zone.[166] The North Koreans initially claimed that its actions were purely defensive against the aggressive United States.[167] The United States retaliated by showing force and chopping down the disputed tree, instead of just doing trims.[168] To the United States, North Korea was just another minion of the Soviet Union attempting to spread the communist ideology. Two significant points must be recognized with regard to these incidents. First, the United States and North Korea share a history of violent mutual hostility. Second, while another full-scale war has not erupted, deep resentment still resonates between the two countries, and provocations from either side could easily lead to the outbreak of war.

North Korea solicited the Soviet Union for assistance in jumpstarting its nuclear program. The Soviet Union agreed to offer support in peaceful use of nuclear technology but not weapons development.[169] North Korea began sending scientists and technicians to the Soviet Union for nuclear training in 1956.[170] Both countries signed a nuclear cooperation agreement in 1959,[171] and the Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center was completed by 1964.[172] North Korea continued its requests for weapons; however, the Soviet Union refused to budge primarily because it wanted to keep the "military know-how"[173] to itself. In retrospect, Kim should have anticipated rejection considering how the Soviets handled China's request for nuclear assistance; it neglected to uphold it nuclear

166 ADST, "The Bizarre North Korean Axe Murders," *The World Post* (blog), *Huffington Post*, accessed October 15, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/adst/the-bizarre-north-korean_b_7963594.html.

167 ADST, "The Bizarre North Korean."

168 "Axe-wielding Murder at Panmunjom," UN Korean War Allies Association, accessed August 6, 2017, https://ia801209.us.archive.org/1/items/panmujamin/panmujamin.pdf.

169 James Clay Moltz and Alexandre Y. Mansourov, *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy and New Perspectives from Russia* (London: Routledge, 2000), 15–37.

170 Richard Stone, "North Korea's Nuclear Shell Game," *Science* 303, no. 5657 (January 2004): 452–454, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.303.5657.452. In 1956, the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research established, with North Korea being one of its founders.

171 "North Korea: Nuclear," Nuclear Threat Initiative, last updated December 2017, http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/north-korea/nuclear/.

172 "Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center," Nuclear Threat Initiative, last updated May 29, 2012, http://www.nti.org/learn/facilities/777/.

173 Walter C. Clements Jr., "North Korea's Quest for Nuclear Weapons: New Historical Evidence," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (January–April 2010): 128.

obligations to China after both countries agreed to the 1957 New Defense Technical Accord.[174] The Soviets chose to abandon the agreement's terms, informing China of their intent to sign arms control agreements with the United States in 1958.[175] The Soviet Union justified its actions by asserting that its nuclear umbrella provided enough coverage for the region.[176] The justification undoubtedly brought further damage to the already deteriorating relationship between China and Soviet Union.

Because the Soviet Union continued to refuse to assist him to realize his nuclear ambitions, Kim turned to China since it had successfully tested a nuclear weapon.[177] The Soviet Union and China were competing for influence in North Korea, and Kim believed he could gain a yes on nuclear weapons assistance out of China since he had been receiving aid from both countries.[178] Hoping that Mao could be convinced, Kim sent a letter to Mao proclaiming that "as brother countries who shared fighting and dying on the battlefield, China and North Korea should also share the atomic secret."[179] However, the Chinese consensus was that they did not want to support the proposal financially, arguing that investing in a nuclear weapons program would be too expensive for a small country like North Korea.[180] China regarded North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions as something it wanted versus something it needed. Therefore, Mao also chose to decline Kim's request. In 1974, Mao stuck to his position after he received another request from Kim after gaining

174 Christopher Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 208.

175 "Letter from Nikita Khrushchev to Zhou Enlai on the Prohibition of Nuclear Testing," April 4, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 109–00830-01, 1–4, trans. Neil Silver, http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114343.

176 Austin Jersild, "Sharing the Bomb among Friends: The Dilemmas of Sino-Soviet Strategic Cooperation," Wilson Center, October 8, 2013, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/sharing-the-bomb-among-friends-the-dilemmas-sino-soviet-strategic-cooperation#_ftn24.

177 "16 October 1964—First Chinese Nuclear Test," CTBTO, accessed November 5, 2017, https://www.ctbto.org/specials/testing-times/16-october-1964-first-chinese-nuclear-test. China's successful nuclear test prompted Kim Il Sung to ask for help in developing his own nuclear weapon.

178 Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 1–21.

179 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 252.

180 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 252–253.

awareness of South Korea's intent to pursue its own nuclear program.[181] For both China and the Soviet Union, rendering economic aid to North Korea did not stem from a desire to develop a close bond with it. As relations between these greater powers spiraled, they continued their economic aid to keep the rogue state from taking a side. Both China and the Soviet Union wanted to avoid a balancing scenario, and both understood that North Korea proclaiming ownership of a nuclear weapon would only complicate the equation.[182]

Kim Il Sung's skepticism of both China and the Soviet Union only deepened as they repeatedly declined his nuclear weapons requests and further drove his decision to take matters into his own hands. In turn, Kim Il Sung effectively used his diplomatic ties to play China and the Soviet Union against one another for economic aid as their relations weakened so that advancements in developing his nuclear weapons could be covertly funded. As Victor Cha put it, Kim did not want North Korea to be a "shrimp among whales,"[183] surrounded by a nuclear China, a nuclear Soviet Union, and the United States with nuclear warheads, then deployed in South Korea.[184] I now turn to discussing the rise of the first nuclear crisis.

## C. THE NORTH'S EXPOSURE

The United States feared a nuclear weapons capable North Korea, and this fear drove them to pressure the Soviet Union in turn to pressure North Korea to sign the NPT.[185] It wanted to prevent North Korea from developing a nuclear weapon in any capacity. As for North Korea, it would accept any assistance for its nuclear advancements, so the Soviets would not have any challenge in gaining North Korea as a signatory because it gained

181 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 253. See also William Burr, "The United States and South Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program, 1974–1976," Wilson Center, March 14, 2017, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-united-states-and-south-koreas-nuclear-weapons-program-1974-1976.

182 For more detail on balancing versus bandwagoning, see Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Chapter 1.

183 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 35. Cha argues North Korea was "a small country constantly put upon by surrounding greater powers in the region."

184 Bruce Cummings, "American Airpower and Nuclear Strategy in Northeast Asia since 1945," in *War and State Terrorism: The United States, Japan, and the Asia-Pacific in the Long Twentieth Century*, ed. Mark Selden and Alvin Y. So (Lantham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 77–86.

185 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 254.

North Korea technology. In 1985, North Korea agreed to become a member of the NPT in exchange for four light-water nuclear reactors from the Soviet Union; however, ensuring that North Korea would remain compliant to the treaty has been an entirely different story.[186]

Some may insist that North Korea intended to comply with the treaty it signed in 1985. However, its refusal to sign the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)[187] safeguards agreement along with this treaty proves that North Korea never intended to uphold its end of the bargain.[188] It signed the treaty only to achieve material gains for its own nuclear objectives. When the time came for North Korea's signature in 1987, the IAEA mistakenly sent it the wrong inspection agreement, which gave it another 18 months before it was required to sign.[189] However, even as this new deadline passed, North Korea still had not put its signature on the dotted line because withholding its signatory for IAEA inspections gave it an additional opportunity to bargain. North Korea proceeded to argue that it would not come to any agreement with the IAEA because the United States still had nuclear warheads in the South.[190] Since it could not make American forces disappear from the southern peninsula, perhaps it could get rid of the nuclear warheads instead, which would give them an edge over the United States. In 1991, the United States announced that all nuclear weapons had been removed from South Korea.[191]

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186 Pollack, *No Exit*, 94; Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics of the North Korean Nuclear Program," *The Nonproliferation Review* 2, no. 3 (Spring–Summer 1995): 25–38.

187 The International Atomic Energy Agency is "the world's centre for cooperation in the nuclear field and seeks to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies." For more information, see "Overview," International Atomic Energy Agency, accessed April 29, 2017, https://www.iaea.org/about/overview.

188 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 250. Also see "North Korea: Nuclear," Nuclear Threat Initiative.

189 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 254–255.

190 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 256–257. Also see "Record of Conversation between F. G. Kunadze and Son Seong-Pil," October 2, 1991, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, State Archive of the Russian Federation fond 10026, opis 4, delo 2803, listy 1–3, trans. Sergey Radchenko, http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119251.

191 Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Decides to Withdraw A-Weapons from S. Korea; North Korea to Be Pressed to Halt Program," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 1991, https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-1090693.html.

Strategically, North Korea had got rid of the immediate nuclear threat; however, now it had put itself at risk of being exposed after it finally signed the agreement with the IAEA in 1992.[192] The IAEA inspectors found several key discrepancies to confirm U.S. suspicions after arriving in North Korea May 1992.[193] Of note was a key discrepancy between North Korea's initial report of reprocessing and the IAEA's findings. North Korea had claimed it conducted reprocessing in 1990 due to damaged fuel rods; however, the IAEA was able to prove otherwise and that North Korea conducted reprocessing activities on three different occasions between the years 1989 and 1991.[194] The major clash between North Korea and the IAEA came when the IAEA found the disguised plutonium reprocessing facilities that correlated with U.S. satellite images.[195] When prompting North Korea to allow it to inspect these facilities, North Korea denied the IAEA access, which led the IAEA to prompt the United Nations (UN) to force North Korea into allowing the inspection.[196] North Korea responded by announcing its intention of withdrawing from the NPT, calling the IAEA "puppets" of U.S. aggression striving to infringe on its sovereign rights.[197]

There was dilemma over what action was the best course for the international community to handle North Korea's exposure of nuclear activities. One side of the U.S. Congress argued that the North Koreans should be punished, while the other side pressed for the negotiation approach.[198] The Clinton administration contemplated the option of

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192 International Atomic Energy Agency, *Agreement of 30 January 1992 between the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (IAEA INFCIRC/403) (Vienna: International Atomic Energy Agency, 1992), https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/infcirc403.pdf.

193 Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics," 92.

194 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 251. See also David Fischer, *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency* (Vienna: International Atomic Energy Agency, 1997), https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/dprk.pdf.

195 Fischer, *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency*.

196 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 279. See also Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics," 27.

197 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 252; Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 279–280. Also see "N Korea Withdraws from Nuclear Pact," *BBC News*, January 13, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2644593.stm.

198 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 282.

conducting preemptive strikes on known reprocessing facilities in the DPRK.[199] However, many believed pursuing military action would undoubtedly trigger a war, resulting in a costly death toll.[200] Others recommended pressing the UN for sanctions against North Korea and a buildup forces in South Korea to prepare for possible war with the North; however, North Korea saw these actions as provocative.[201] With rising tensions surrounding the nuclear crisis, only two possible outcomes would ensue—accepting some sort of a nuclear deal or committing to an outbreak of bloody war. The international community called on China to use its influence over North Korea; however, I argue that the international community overestimated China's influence over North Korea.

## D. CHINA AND THE FIRST NUCLEAR CRISIS

China played a limited role when the first nuclear crisis erupted for three reasons. First, China could not afford the international community to view it as a threat while it sought economic integration. China's previous strategy entailed spreading its own revolution throughout Asia while the Soviet Union effectively deterred the United States.[202] However, the Soviet Union's collapse allowed the United States to become the dominant power in Asia, and China alone could not challenge its influence.[203] Additionally, smaller power nations, such as South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, were experiencing prosperity from economic integration, and China wanted to

199 Jihwan Hwang, "Realism and U.S. Foreign Policy toward North Korea: The Clinton and Bush Administrations in Comparative Perspective," *World Affairs* 167, no. 1 (June 2004): 21.

200 Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 166.

201 Becker, *Rogue Regime*, 166–167. See also "North Korea: Nuclear," Nuclear Threat Initiative; Michael R. Gordon, "White House Asks Global Sanctions on North Koreans," *The New York Times*, June 3, 1994, http://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/03/world/white-house-asks-global-sanctions-on-north-koreans.html?pagewanted=all, 3.

202 Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, Chapters 2 and 3.

203 Zhu Feng, "China's Rise Will Be Peaceful," in *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 37.

reap those same benefits.[204] Therefore, China realized that rising once again would require its integration and cooperation with other nations within the international community.[205]

However, because China's outlook toward the world has changed, its interests clashed with North Korea's interests during the first nuclear crisis. Previously, like North Korea, Chinese foreign policy was geared toward isolation from the outside world; however, China's change in strategy diverged from North Korea's desire of ensuring isolation. Even with the Soviet Union's collapse, North Korea's aims of keeping its doors closed, increasing its military power, and reunifying the Korean peninsula under its terms remained unchanged.[206] Arguably, North Korea perceived China's "openness" approach as following the similar path of a revisionist power, which China, ironically, claimed it had previously witnessed within the Soviet Union under Khrushchev.[207] In North Korea's view, China was allowing the alliance to be sacrificed so as to fulfill its interest of achieving economic gains.

Second, the Sino-DPRK alliance became further damaged when China willingly chose to have normalized relations with South Korea in the early 1990s.[208] As Kim noted, China's aim was "maintaining a "special relationship" with Pyongyang, while promoting and expanding "normal relations" with Seoul.[209] North Korea felt betrayal once before when the Soviet Union had also established relations with South Korea and later stopped

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[204] These four nations are often referred to as the "Four Asian Tigers." For more detail on their economic rise, see Dwight H. Perkins, *East Asian Development: Foundations and Strategies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), Chapter 3.

[205] Qimao Chen, "New Approaches in China's Foreign Policy: The Post-Cold War Era," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 3 (March 1993): 237–251.

[206] Cha, *The Impossible State*, 37–43, 91–92. Per Cha, the North Korean regime used juche ideology to drive the objective of unification and defeat of foreign aggression. Additionally, Kim Jong-Il's "military first" policy was enforced.

[207] Yahuda, *China's Role in World Affairs*, 51.

[208] Scott Snyder, *China's Rise and the Two Koreas* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 1. See also Victor D. Cha, "Engaging China: The View from Korea," in *Engaging China: The Management of an Emerging Power*, ed. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, 32–56 (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[209] Samuel Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 63.

giving North Korea economic support.[210] North Korea was again reliving betrayal, except now it came from China. In its view, not only had China refused to help it develop nukes, now China was compromising its alliance to appease the puppets in the South.

Third, maintaining the communist camp placed greater importance on ensuring North Korea's survival. China could not afford to pay the costs of a destabilized North Korea, nor could it afford to have relations completely severed. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, China was left burdened with providing economic and food assistance to North Korea.[211] Therefore, for China to join the UN sanction bandwagon would essentially be China welcoming North Korean damages it would be unable to pay.[212] Additionally, China knew any actions taken against North Korea on its own behalf would further drive North Korea's defiance. Thus, China chose to keep pushing for bilateral negotiations between the United States and North Korea, in part, to avoid siding with either nation and to keep the dialogue going between both nations to avoid a war.[213]

In 1994, former President Jimmy Carter's intervention and diplomacy in the first nuclear crisis became the break through toward achieving a resolution between the United States and North Korea. Three factors gave Carter leeway in pursuing engagement with North Korea. First, Carter already had positive relations with China dating back to his presidential term, and China foresaw any outcome that did not result in armed conflict as a saving grace.[214] Second, continuous invitations from Kim Il Sung convinced him that North Korea wanted to avoid a war, motivating him to take advantage of the opportunity

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210 Pollack, *No Exit*, 99–100.

211 David Shambaugh, "China and the Korean Peninsula: Playing for the Long Term," *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (January 2003): 45–46.

212 Gilbert Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought towards Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 79–80.

213 Rozman, *Chinese Strategic Thought*, 79–80.

214 "Interviews: Jimmy Carter," *PBS*, March 21, 2003, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kim/interviews/carter.html.

for peaceful negotiations before it was too late.[215] Third, rising pressure to end the crisis drove President Clinton's decision in giving him the green light, and Carter achieved his goal in relaying the message of the North's willingness to negotiate with the United States.[216]

In sum, North Korea allowed tensions to escalate to the brink of war because the opportunity to gain bargaining power was a risk worth taking. The United States could not back down from diplomatic engagement with North Korea because if the international community perceived its unwillingness to negotiate, then North Korea's claim of U.S. aggression would be justified. As stated earlier, North Korea wanted to gain an edge over the United States, and it achieved this with the withdrawal of nukes from the South. Now its continued pursuit of nuclear weapons brought it to a position of bargaining with greater powers. Meanwhile, China's self-interests caused divergence within Sino-DPRK relations and led to China having limited influence over their smaller power ally during the first nuclear crisis. I now turn to discussing the Agreed Framework's collapse and the rise of the second nuclear crisis.

## E. THE NORTH'S SECOND EXPOSURE

Both sides came to terms on October 21, 1994. The agreement called for North Korea to freeze its nuclear weapons pursuits and recommit to the 1992 joint declaration it signed with the South for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.[217] In exchange for its adherence, North Korea would gain light water reactors to replace its graphite reactors, an annual supply of oil to compensate for the conversion to the alternate source of energy, the

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215 According to former President Jimmy Carter, "In 1994, at the height of tensions between the U.S. and North Korea, he traveled to Pyongyang for a private meeting with then leader Kim Il Sung to broker a peace deal. He tells *Frontline* that he believes the two nations were on the verge of war in 1994, and says that the U.S. should agree to direct negotiations to resolve the current conflict." "Interviews: Jimmy Carter," *PBS*.

216 "Interviews: Jimmy Carter," *PBS*.

217 "Under the Joint Declaration, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) agree not to test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy, or use nuclear weapons; to use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes; and not to possess facilities for nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment." For official text, see "Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed November 5, 2017, http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/aptkoreanuc.pdf.

establishment of economic and political normalization, and assurance that the United States would not threaten them with nuclear weapons.[218] The deal appeared clear cut and achievable on paper; however, its implementation and duration was the true test of assurance between the United States and North Korea.

The United States was now on the hook to deliver replacement reactors, and a quarrel over where the reactors originated from ensued. North Korea expected American-made reactors, but the United States countered with South Korea's willingness to supply them and Japan's ability to assist with costs.[219] For North Korea, dealing with the United States was already perceived as a risk, and it did not want the perception of engaging with more historical enemies.[220] On the other hand, the United States' priority lay in getting reactors to the North without taking a major hit on its pocket book, opening the door to the establishment of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) in 1995.[221] Through KEDO, the United States would cover the costs for fuel supplies while South Korea and Japan doubled down on the reactor costs.[222] After much debate, the dispute over reactor origins eventually settled in Kuala Lumpur later that year.[223] North Korea had not gotten exactly what they wanted, and they did not like being forced to rely on Japan and South Korea.

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218 Arms Control Association Fact Sheet, "The Agreed Framework at a Glance," accessed August 15, 2017, https://www.armscontrol.org/system/files/agreedframework.pdf. For official text, see, US-DPRK Agreed Framework/Six-Party Talks," Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed November 5, 2017, http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/aptagframe.pdf.

219 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 365.

220 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 365.

221 "The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, accessed August 16, 2017, http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/korean-peninsula-energy-development-organization-kedo/.

222 Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Galluci, *Going Critical: The First North Korea Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 331–332. See also Zachary S. Davis, *Leading or Following?: The Role of KEDO and the Agreed Framework in Korea Policy* (Berkeley, CA: Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability, 2011), http://nautilus.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Davis_RoleofKEDO.pdf, 62.

223 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 368.

More issues followed with North Korea's various threats to abandon the agreement because of dissatisfaction with construction delays and late arrival of fuel shipments.[224] While North Korea may have gained some ground in challenging KEDO's delays caused by financial and contract mismanagement, North Korea certainly lost ground with the 1996 submarine incident along its firing of a ballistic missile off Japan's coastal waters in 1998.[225] Despite these issues, the agreement finally collapsed because North Korea again was caught playing its nuclear game. In 2002, the United States acquired evidence that North Korea traded ballistic missile technology with Pakistan in exchange for technology to further its nuclear weapons progression.[226] When confronted, North Korea denied having a nuclear program while simultaneously arguing its entitlement to nuclear weapons for self-defense purposes.[227] This triggered the United States to stop fuel shipments after determining that the North violated the Agreed Framework, and North Korea retaliated by kicking out IAEA inspectors and withdrawing from the NPT in January 2003.[228] North Korea would undergo a massive reprocessing campaign, officially announcing to the world that it owned nuclear weapons in 2005.[229]

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224 According to NTI, North Korea threatened to resume nuclear reprocessing 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2001. "The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, last updated October 26, 2011, http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/korean-peninsula-energy-development-organization-kedo/.

225 For the submarine incident see Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 387–393; Sebastien Roblin, "In 1996, a Dead North Korean Spy Submarine (Armed with Commandos) Nearly Started a War," *The National Interest* (blog), March 30, 2017, http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/1996-dead-north-korean-spy-submarine-armed-commandos-nearly-19750. See also Sheryl Wundunn, "North Korea Fires Missile over Japanese Territory," *The New York Times*, September 1, 1998, http://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/01/world/north-korea-fires-missile-over-japanese-territory.html?mcubz=3.

226 Sharon Squassoni, *Weapons of Mass Destruction: Trade between North Korea and Pakistan* (CRS Report No. RL31900) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2004), https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL31900.pdf, 4–8.

227 Becker, *Rogue Regime*, 189. For official DPRK statements see Peter Hayes and Scott Bruce, "Supporting Online Material: North Korean Nuclear Statements (2002–2010)," Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability, May 17, 2011, http://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/supporting-online-material-north-korean-nuclear-statements-2002-2010/#the-kelly-delegation-mission.

228 George Bunn and John B. Rhinelander, "NPT Withdrawal: Time for the Security Council to Step In," Arms Control Association, May 1, 2005, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005_05/Bunn_Rhinelander#notes1.

229 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 256; Anthony Faiola, "N. Korea Declares Itself a Nuclear Power," *The Washington Post*, February 10, 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A12836-2005Feb10.html.

While there is enough reason to believe that both sides shared responsibility in contributing to the failure, these factors do not dismiss the fact that North Korea never intended to stop its nuclear progression. While Carter's intervention resulted in an aversion of armed conflict and a pathway to the Agreed Framework in 1994, it also came with a double-edged sword. This move furthered emboldened North Korea because it recognized its nuclear weapons program became an advantage in obtaining concessions from the international community.[230]

From North Korea's perspective, however, taking this deal meant either 1) committing to denuclearization and risk being compromised by the United States, its historical enemy, or, 2) taking advantage of the material gains while continuing covert nuclear operations. North Korea chose the second option because there was too much risk involved for the regime to give up its nuclear weapons progression. As such, if the United States did not hold up its end of the deal, then it would only justify North Korea's covert nuclear activities. Becoming nuclear weapons capable would guarantee North Korea's security and provide deterrence sought against potential adversaries. Therefore, international actors could have made unlimited assurances of nonaggression; however, their assurances, especially considering past betrayals, did not hold the same security value that nuclear weapons ownership possessed. Because of this, North Korea perceived it still maintained the upper hand with regard to bargaining power.

## F. CHINA AND THE SECOND NUCLEAR CRISIS

China's willingness to play a greater role during the second nuclear crisis was shaped by two factors. First, China's willingness to intervene stemmed from its experience of being dragged into a war once before, which showed it how its security could easily become severely threatened by a warmongering North Korea. The September 11th attacks added more fuel to the fire, and the United States and its allies focused more attention on the Pacific theater. The attacks ignited U.S. war efforts against nations perceived as

230 Mitchell Lerner, "The Part of Jimmy Carter's Legacy Everyone Wants to Forget," George Washington University, History News Network, October 18, 2015, http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/160858.

terrorist threats, and President Bush labeled North Korea as an axis of evil nation. During his 2002 State of the Union address in reference to North Korea, he proclaimed, "states like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world."[231] North Korea lashed back out in retaliation, declaring the address as rhetoric meant to issue a threat of war upon it.[232] For China, the Agreed Framework had helped it avoid potential catastrophe during the first nuclear crisis. However, with its collapse, China again was reliving the nightmare of possibly going to war in this second nuclear crisis because of a potential United States launch against its ally. Therefore, China had to act when the second nuclear crisis emerged because inaction would have led to an outbreak of war, which would have placed China back under a threat of U.S. influence.

Second, China's willingness to intervene reflected its deeper interests of gaining a larger economic and political role in the Pacific region, which also, shaped its foreign policy toward the Korean peninsula. On the one hand, China maintains to increase economic relations with South Korea to compete against the United States diplomatically. On the other hand, it maintains diplomatic and economic ties with North Korea to ensure its survival and prevent the spread of U.S. influence in the region.[233] In turn, China had to prevent instability within North Korea because it cannot afford North Korea's instability interfering with its own long-term strategic goals. Thus, China had to respond as a mediator for North Korea but also an enforcer upon North Korea.[234]

China's position at the outbreak of the second nuclear crisis had vastly improved as its approach to reform and integration placed them in a more powerful economic and

231 Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, 284. Also see "Bush State of the Union Address," *CNN*, January 29, 2002, http://edition.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt/.

232 Charles Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak*, 285. See also Korean Central News Agency, "Spokesman for DPRK Foreign Ministry Slams Bush's Accusations," *Free Republic*, January 31, 2002, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/619971/posts.

233 Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy since the Cold War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 193–204.

234 Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 124.

diplomatic position, thus, giving them the ability to play a greater role.[235] On the other hand, North Korea experienced the following unforeseeable calamities, which accounted for its economic turmoil during the 1990s: 1) fall of the Soviet Union, 2) the 1995 and 1996 floods, and 3) the 1997 drought.[236] It had also become heavily dependent on China for economic backing in the process.[237]

When North Korea's nuclear violations were exposed for the second time, the international community stopped its aid and restarted sanctions against North Korea. This gave China the opportunity to now bandwagon with the international community in adding just enough economic pressure to coerce North Korea into negotiations without causing a total collapse.[238] Thus, with economic turmoil occurring internally and economic pressure weighing down on it externally, North Korea had no more nuclear cards left for bargaining power and thus came to the negotiating table in 2003.[239] The next challenge for the international community would come in keeping North Korea as an active participant during the Six Party Talks until a resolution could be achieved to solve the second nuclear crisis.

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235 David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), Chapter 5. Lampton annotates how China rose in power through involvement within multilateral institutions, taking advantage of bilateral negotiations, and increasing economic deepening within open markets.

See also Wayne M. Morrison, *China's Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States* (CRS Report No. RL33534) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2017), https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf, 5–6.

236 Bruce Cumings, "Why Did So Many Influential Americans Think North Korea Would Collapse?" in *The Survival of North Korea: Essays on Strategy, Economics and International Relations*, ed. Suk Hi Kim, Bernhard Seliger, and Terence Roehrig (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2011), 54.

237 For detail on North Korea's increase of economic dependency on China, see Nanto Manyin, *China-North Korea Relations*, 13–18.

238 Julian Ryall, "North Korean Food Crisis: Timeline," *The Telegraph*, September 13, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/8759131/North-Korean-food-crisis-timeline.html.

239 Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power*, 172; Jonathan Watts, "China Cuts Oil Supply to North Korea," *The Guardian*, April 1, 2003, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/apr/01/northkorea.china.

## G. CONCLUSION: CHINA'S POLITICAL LEVERAGE VERSUS NORTH KOREA'S DEFIANCE

This chapter has shown that China and North Korea's competing interest widened the diplomatic divide between them and were significant in shaping China and North Korea's behaviors during both the first and second nuclear crises. Thus, I argue that China and North Korea are not like "lips and teeth." Rather, they are two states whose interests converge of some issues but diverge on others. Because of their divergent interests, I posit that China's political leverage to force a denuclearized North Korea is severely overestimated. China's demand for a nuclear free North Korea is seen by Pyongyang as call for North Korea to neglect its security, which further drives North Korea toward nuclear weapons and its goal of being recognized as a nuclear power by the outside world. My analysis of the two nuclear crises demonstrates that while China has sought to integrate with the international order and advance its international stature and economic ties, North Korea tended put its security concerns first.

North Korea's defiant behavior toward China regarding its nuclear weapons program has thus been shaped by two factors. The first factor for North Korea stems from its resentment of being treated as an outsider by its own communist brother China. North Korea's interests in nuclear weapons went against the Soviet Union and China, and North Korea became more convinced that its communist brethren were downplaying its security concerns. The second factor for North Korea stems from China's lack of defending it against the international community during the first nuclear crisis and China's active bandwagoning with the international community against it during the second nuclear crisis. From North Korea's perspective, therefore, China brought greater damage to its relations when it transgressed from supporting its denuclearization to actively demanding its denuclearization.

China had already prematurely diminished its ability to influence politically North Korea before the first nuclear crisis even arose. China's decision to become integrated with outsiders brought even greater limitations upon its influence over North Korea during the first nuclear crisis. By integrating with the international community, China rose in power and committed to altering its image from a "threatening" China to a "cooperative" China.

As China become more involved in the world economy, it become a much bigger economic player.

North Korea's economy, on the other hand, steeply declined with its transit into the 1990s because of three factors: 1) Soviet Union's collapse, 2) the floods, and 3) droughts—all of which contributed to its vulnerability against the international community. As China became North Korea's economic lifeline, it gained significant opportunity to play an active role toward it nuclear junior power ally during the second nuclear crisis. At this point, China could not risk damage to its international creditability as its was trying to portray the "good China" image to fulfill its own strategic objectives. North Korea went from a position of bargaining during the first nuclear crisis timeframe to a position of begging for assistance during the second nuclear crisis. However, North Korea's commitment to ensuring its own security and maintaining its hold on power substantially outweighed China's increased ability to have an active role over North Korea during the second nuclear crisis. Therefore, the international community must not assume that China alone can have influence on North Korea's defiant behavior. I now turn to the next chapter, which assesses China's ability to have influence over North Korea's nuclear ambitions during the Six Party Talks.

# IV. NUKES, NEGOTIATIONS, AND THE PRICE OF BARGAINING

## A. INTRODUCTION

The North Korean nuclear threat continues to loom over the Pacific region, as the rogue nation continues to increase its nuclear weapons capabilities while issuing provocative threats against the international community. Currently, no actions by the international community have been sufficient to compel North Korea to abandon its nuclear pursuits. The last glimmer of hope to peacefully resolve the crisis came during the Six Party Talks as the participating nations, including North Korea, took a multilateral approach to resolve the crisis.[240] In hosting the talks in Beijing, China chose to be the mediator between the participating nations so that a solution concerning North Korea's nuclear program could be achieved.[241] The talking rounds began in 2003, and throughout the talking rounds, the United States led the charge in calling for North Korea to conduct a "complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement"[242] of its nuclear programs. These efforts lasted for the next six years until North Korea withdrew from the negotiating table in 2009. Currently, there is no resolution, and North Korea has 1) remained outside of the NPT, 2) neglected to return to the negotiating table, and 3) conducted multiple nuclear tests while issuing threats against the international community.

Despite North Korea's provocative behavior, China has thus far remained its sole greater power ally. The previous chapter showed that China and North Korea's diplomatic ties are not as close as "lips and teeth"[243] as some scholars may believe. Further building on this position, this chapter argues two points. The first is that China and North Korea remain diplomatically distant from one another instead of being closely tied, and second is

240 Liang, "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance." The six nations involved were China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, and the United States.

241 Liang, "The Six-Party Talks at a Glance."

242 Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 353.

243 For example, see Cheng Xiaohe, "The Evolution of the Lips and Teeth Relationship: China-North Korea Relations in the 1960s," in *China and North Korea: Strategic and Policy Perspectives from a Changing China*, ed. Carla P. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 119–137.

China and the United States overlooked that the value of reassurance to North Korea during the Six Party Talks period.[244] This neglect was critical in North Korea's decision to remain defiant. During the talks, China attempted to gain cooperation between the United States and North Korea. However, while publicly advocating for a multilateral resolution between the six nations, the United States pursued gaining a unilateral advantage against North Korea. North Korea perceived the United States' continued hostility and forceful diplomacy as a threat, and in response, it abandoned the talks in 2009 to demonstrate its willingness to stand up to a stronger power. Thus, China alone could not sway North Korea away from its nuclear arsenal, and China's potential for gaining influence to sway North Korea was further blocked by the United States' hardline position during the Six Party Talks. Consequently, because China could not get the United States to cease its hostile behavior toward North Korea, diplomatic ties between China and North Korea became further distant, and China lost further leverage over North Korea's behavior.

## B. CHINA AND NORTH KOREA'S INTERESTS IN THE SIX PARTY TALKS

China foresaw a "strategic opportunity"[245] in hosting the talks in Beijing and accepting the mediator role between the six nations since it wanted more integration with the international community.[246] By choosing to host the Six Party Talks, China gained both internal and external respect for its diplomatic efforts in advocating for desired peace among nations.[247] As previously discussed in the last chapter, China chose integration with the international community so that it could reclaim its status as a dominant power in the Pacific region. Thus, China believed that if it achieved a resolution to the second nuclear crisis through its mediation efforts, then it could gain a larger economic and political role

244 Brad Glosserman and David Santoro, "America's Real Challenge in Asia: The Reassurance Dilemma," *The National Interes*t, April 16, 2015, http://nationalinterest.org/feature/americas-real-challenge-asia-the-reassurance-dillema-12642.

245 Tae-Hwan Kwak, "The Six Party Nuclear Talks: An Evaluation and Policy Recommendations," *Pacific Focus: Inha Journal of International Studies* 19, no. 2 (September 2004): 17.

246 Chen, "New Approaches in China's Foreign Policy," 237–241.

247 Geun Lee, "The Clash of Soft Powers between China and Japan: Synergy and Dilemmas at the Six Party Talks," *Asian Perspective* 34, no. 2 (2010): 124.

in the Pacific theater.[248] China also wanted to prevent a regime collapse from occurring within North Korea.[249] If China allowed a North Korea collapse, then outside actors (e.g., the United States) would gain the strategic advantage of being at its borders. Believing China could best persuade North Korea into dismantling since it was the North's sole ally, the United States approaching China gave China another reason to host and mediate.[250] Like the United States, China also viewed multilateralism as the best avenue for resolving the international dispute.[251] Moreover, China recognized that being a mediator did not mean it had to be the crisis problem solver, which meant China would be further alleviated of having sole responsibility over North Korea's behavior. However, shared skepticism between the international community and North Korea challenged China's ability to be an effective mediator

North Korea believes it had the right to wield nuclear power for peaceful purposes.[252] However, expressed objections from the international community (mainly the United States) gave North Korea a perception that the outside world downplayed its own legitimate security concerns. Evelyn Goh convincingly argues that security assurance must not be downplayed between nations; and, throughout the Six Party Talks, North Korea was pushing for a "package deal," which contained security assurances, diplomatic relations, and economic assistance in exchange for dismantling its nuclear weapons program.[253] However, the international community claimed North Korea's nuclear weapon pursuits made North Korea look more threatening to the outside world, destabilized the region, and

248 Lee, "The Clash of Soft Powers," 130.

249 Shale Horowitz and Min Ye, "China's Grand Strategy, the Korean Nuclear Crisis, and the Six-Party Talks," *Pacific Focus* XXI, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 46.

250 Charles L. Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 84.

251 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 159–161; Ramon Pacheco Pardo, "China and Northeast Asia's Regional Security Architecture: The Six-Party Talks as a Case of Chinese Regime-Building?" *East Asia* 29, no. 4 (August 2012): 338.

252 Kim Kye, "Negotiator Says North Korea Wants Right to Peaceful Nuclear Activities," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, last updated July 1, 2010. See also Ian Jeffries, *North Korea: A Guide to Economic and Political Developments* (London: Routledge, 2017), 264.

253 Evelyn Goh, *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy, and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84.

countered North Korea's claim of "peaceful use."[254] These opinions caused the international community to have less regard for North Korea's security concerns, which has also fueled North Korea's resentment.

Thus, China has sought benefits from being the host and mediator during the talks rested on two contingencies: 1) that the other nations would indeed soften their diplomatic approaches toward North Korea, and 2) that North Korea would gain confidence that the participating nations sincerely wanted to cooperate with it to peacefully resolve the crisis. China had to ensure the other four nations—Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the United States—would not be hostile when engaging North Korea. Additionally, China also had to get the other participating nations to readdress the issues within the Agreed Framework's implementation since North Korea claimed the international community was not upholding its energy and resource assurances.[255]

## C. ROUND ONE: REFUSALS TO BUDGE

As the other four nations came to the table in round one of the Six Party Talks to encourage cooperation, North Korea and the United States were each committed to competitive views. China opened the talking round by stressing: 1) achieving a denuclearized peninsula, 2) addressing North Korea's security concerns, and 3) the need for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.[256] While emphasizing North Korea's immediate and irreversible dismantling of its nuclear weapons, Japan also supported addressing North Korea's energy concerns and pursuing normalizing Japanese-North Korea relations.[257] Similarly, South Korea called for a peaceful comprehensive settlement of the nuclear problem, continued humanitarian aid to North Korea, and for the United States to reassure North Korea that it would not threaten North Korea's security.[258] Russia's position

254 Evelyn Goh, *The Struggle for Order*, 264.

255 For an in-depth discussion of the underlying issues within executing the 1994 Agreed Framework, see Curtis H. Martin, "Lessons of the Agreed Framework for Using Engagement as a Nonproliferation Tool," *The Nonproliferation Review* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 35–50.

256 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 340.

257 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 341.

258 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 341.

advocated resolution through negotiations and consideration for each participant's interests within the region.[259] Thus, the nations attempted to set the stage for conducive relations and cooperative dialogue. Their efforts to foster such an environment failed during the first round, however, because North Korea and the United States insisted on countering each other's stated positions. North Korea called for the United States to discontinue its hostile approach toward it before anything else could take place. Similarly, the United States called on immediate disarmament and irreversible verification of its arsenal before anything else could take place, hence fundamentally stalling the talks.[260]

This round then became nothing more than an opportunity for the United States and North Korea to demonstrate how strongly each supported its respective position, rather than reassuring each other. While North Korea demanded that the United States discontinue its hostile approach before negotiations, the United States, in a similar fashion, called on immediate disarmament and irreversible verification of North Korea's arsenal before negotiations.[261] North Korea believed it was essential to stand up to the United States and for the other participating nations to recognize North Korea and the United States as equals.[262] On the other hand, the United States, believed North Korea could not be allowed to go down the nuclear path illegitimately without repercussions. Thus, the United States' refused to conduct any bilateral talks with North Korea to pressure it into a multilateral approach.[263]

Neither the United States nor North Korea could enter negotiations in which the other four participating nations were overtly in support of one side or the other. North Korea doubted the guarantees offered to it because of U.S. unwillingness to back away from its hardline position. At one point during this round, North Korea's representative proclaimed, "The United States has not changed at all. We find it impossible to negotiate

259 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 341.

260 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 340–341.

261 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 340–341.

262 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 344.

263 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 344.

with the United States."[264] North Korea perceived the United States' unwillingness to back away from its hardlining proved security guarantees toward North Korea were, in fact, not guaranteed at all. This essentially defined the round as a "back and forth" between the two nations, while the other participants stood on the sidelines witnessing the two vocally lash out at each other.

Therefore, China was unable to close the first round with a joint statement to the public on behalf of all the countries. Instead, the first round of talks ended on August 29, 2003 with a summary of events that noted all countries pledged to "pursue peaceful and diplomatic solutions."[265] However, this summary really implied two points of emphasis: 1) no progress had been made, and 2) it became more uncertain if progress could be made. China recognized that the next round of talks would have the same outcome as the first round, unless both North Korea and the United States made some effort to back away from their extreme stances. The United States' hard stance caused North Korea to be uninterested in future talks. Thus, to keep North Korea committed to the second round, China offered it food, oil, and assistance with construction projects in exchange for its participation.[266] China's willingness to accommodate North Korea gave it an incentive to participate in another round of negotiations. Thus, China maintained having influence over North Korea despite the United States' hostility during this round.

## D. ROUND TWO: NORTH KOREA MAKES THE FIRST MOVE

It was paramount for China to conduct the second round of talks sooner rather than later and to have a joint statement issued publicly at the end of the second round to show the world that the peaceful approaches on behalf of the participants were progressing toward resolving the crisis.[267] Another summary simply would not hold the same value as a joint statement, which would represent solidarity among the participants. However, the second round of Six Party Talks can be summarized as China held North Korea with its

264 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 342.

265 Kwak, *The Six Party Nuclear Talks*, 20.

266 Kwak, *The Six Party Nuclear Talks*, 23; Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 347.

267 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 346–347.

left hand and the United States with its right hand. While North Korea stuck its tongue out at the United States and reluctantly offered its hand, the United States, at the same time, stuck their tongue out back at North Korea while keeping its other hand behind its back. Essentially, both the United States and North Korea refused to find a resolution to the crisis.

Without reason to let its suspicions go, the United States foresaw the second round as North Korean attempts to take advantage of the participating nations. The Bush administration believed the Clinton administration's way of dealing bilaterally with North Korea had been a "failure."[268] This had led the Bush administration to also believe that North Korea saw bilateral talks as an opportunity to try and "blackmail"[269] the United States again into providing it with food and economic aid in exchange for "good behavior." Furthermore, the Bush administration charged that taking away the opportunity for bilateral negotiations would force North Korea to be "transparent"[270] in a multilateral setting, and, thus, the United States insisted on maintaining a multilateral approach to resolving the nuclear issue. Additionally, Libya's decision in 2003 to abandon its nuclear weapons program could aid U.S. efforts during the second round and gain support from the other participating nations to pressure North Korea into following Libya's example.[271]

Before the second round took place, North Korea still did not trust the United States and thus wanted to ensure that it would already have more ground over the United States during negotiations. To that end, it brought in U.S. nuclear experts to its facilities to: 1) allow the inspectors to witness its nuclear progressions and 2) communicate back to

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268 Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, 57.

269 David E. Sanger, "US and 2 Allies Agree on a Plan for North Korea," *New York Times*, December 8, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/08/world/us-and-2-allies-agree-on-a-plan-for-north-korea.html.

270 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 350. See also *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The North Korean Nuclear Calculus: Beyond the Six Party Talks: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations* 108th Cong. (2004) (testimony of James A. Kelly), https://www.ncnk.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/publications/Transcript_SFRC_Hearing_March_2_2004.pdf.

271 "Libyan WMD: Tripoli's Statement in Full," *BBC News*, last updated December 20, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3336139.stm.

Washington that North Korea was willing to freeze its nuclear programs.[272] When the round began, North Korea made the first move by offering to progressively freeze its nuclear programs while it "simultaneously"[273] would receive economic and food aid.[274] North Korea also insisted on only freezing its weapons programs, while still maintaining civilian use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.[275]

However, the United States refused to accept North Korea's offer to freeze its nuclear program, charging that North Korea's claim for peaceful use did not correspond with the end goal of a "Korean Peninsula without nuclear weapons."[276] A few months before the talks, President Bush had already stated publicly, "The goal of the United States is not for a freeze of the nuclear program…The goal is to dismantle a nuclear weapons program in a verifiable and irreversible way."[277] Bush wanted a plan that called on North Korea to first take "coordinated steps" in dismantling by verifiable means before any type of concessions would be given.[278] Thus, the United States upheld its position that "complete, verifiable, irreversible, and dismantlement"[279] would be the only way to gain any of its economic aid.

Although China believed it was paramount to have a joint statement issued to show the world that there was solidarity among the participants and peaceful approaches were

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272 *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Visit to the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center in North Korea: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 108th Cong. (2004) (testimony of Siegfried S. Hecker), https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/HeckerTestimony040121.pdf. For later accounts of Hecker's observations, see Siegfried S. Hecker, "What I Found in North Korea," *Foreign Affairs*, December 9, 2010, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67023/siegfried-s-hecker/what-i-found-in-north-korea; Siegfried S. Hecker, "Where Is North Korea's Nuclear Program Heading?" *Physics and Society* 40, no.2 (April 2011): 5–9.

273 Jarret Murphy, "N. Korea Agrees to 6-Party Talks," *CBS News*, October 10, 2003, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/n-korea-agrees-to-6-party-talks-21-10-2003/.

274 Joseph Khan, "North Korea Agrees to Nuclear Talks, China Says," *New York Times*, October 31, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/31/world/north-korea-agrees-to-nuclear-talks-china-says.html.

275 "North Korea Insists on Peaceful Nuclear Program," *New York Times*, September 13, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/13/world/asia/north-korea-insists-on-peaceful-nuclear-program.html.

276 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 351.

277 "Bush Rejects North Korean Demands," Nuclear Threat Initiative, December 10, 2003, http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/bush-rejects-north-korean-demands/.

278 Sanger, "US and 2 Allies Agree."

279 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 353.

progressing toward resolving the crisis,[280] these prevailing factors prevented China from producing a joint statement on behalf of all the participating nations. Once again, China had to settle for a chair's summary. The following statements within the summary are worth noting: "Through the talks, although differences remained, the Parties enhanced their understanding of each other's positions … The Parties expressed their willingness to coexist peacefully. They agreed to take coordinated steps to address the nuclear issue and address the related concerns."[281] These statements demonstrate that ending the second nuclear crisis peacefully was the only issue agreed upon by the participating nations, and the parties could not come to consensus about anything else during the second round of talks.

Because the first and second rounds of talks were anything but progressive, two points stand out: 1) the United States and North Korea had to be swayed from their absolutes if actual negotiations were to take place in the third round, and 2) China would have to maintain its mediating role between its ally (North Korea) and its primary competitor (United States) if a realistic resolution could be achieved. As such, China called on the United States to have more "flexibility" toward North Korea;[282] China hoped for a position that would facilitate more cooperation from North Korea. However, even though both countries offered something, the United States still insisted that North Korea give up its nuclear weapons first, and neither country acted to reassure the other. The outcome of this round placed a further strain on China's leverage over North Korea as North Korea began to perceive that the United States was refusing to abandon its hostile diplomacy during negotiations.

280 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 346–347.

281 Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 352–353; *Xinhua*, "Full Text of Chairman's Statement of 6-party Talks," *China Daily*, February 29, 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-02/29/content_310346.htm.

282 Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, 105.

## E. ROUND THREE: GETTING NOWHERE FAST

The third round of talks began with the United States introducing its own proposal of how North Korea should dismantle its nuclear programs.[283] Within this proposal, the United States called for North Korea to take the following steps. First, North Korea would provide sign pledging its commitment to denuclearize.[284] In return for North Korea's commitment, the other participating nations (not including the United States) would proceed in providing fuel assistance.[285] Next, North Korea would be given a three-month window to begin dismantling its uranium and plutonium nuclear facilities.[286] Finally, after outside inspectors verified the process as in progress, "interim provisions"[287] regarding "multilateral security assurances,"[288] "long-term energy assistance,"[289] and the "lifting of economic sanctions"[290] would then be "considered."[291]

North Korea refuted the U.S. proposal, however, and instead proposing that in exchange for freezing its nuclear weapons programs, it would receive oil and energy aid from the participating nations, with contributions from United States.[292] North Korea also

283 Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim, *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 250–252.

284 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 346–347; Paul Kerr, "U.S. Unveils Offer at North Korea Talks," Arms Control Association, July 8, 2004, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_07-08/NKtalks#sidebar.

285 Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, 106; Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 357. See also *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Dealing with North Korea's Nuclear Programs: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 108th Cong. (2004) (testimony of James A. Kelly), https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/KellyTestimony040715.pdf; "US Proposing Aid in North Korea Talks," *China Daily*, June 4, 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-06/24/content_342131.htm.

286 Kwak, "The Six Party Nuclear Talks," 43; *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*.

287 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 357; *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*.

288 *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*.

289 *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*.

290 *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*.

291 *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*.

292 Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, 106. North Korea foresaw the United States avoidance to provide it aid as a symbol of insincerity. See also Paul Kerr, "North Korea Criticizes U.S. Nuclear Proposal, Blasts Bush," Arms Control Association, September 1, 2004, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_09/NK_Talks; Joseph Khan, "U.S. Cites Scant Progress in Nuclear Talks with North Korea," *New York Times*, June 26, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/26/world/us-cites-scant-progress-in-nuclear-talks-with-north-korea.html.

wanted to be removed from the United States list as a "sponsor of terrorism"[293] and demanded that sanctions against them be lifted.[294] Additionally, North Korea wanted its nuclear weapons freeze to be verified through a "six-party multilateral framework"[295] instead of through IAEA inspection;[296] and, North Korea wanted to retain their right to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes.[297] Although North Korea communicated that the United States had offered it a "constructive proposal,"[298] it perceived the United States' rejection of its "reward for freeze"[299] and continued pursuit of "complete verifiable irreversible denuclearization"[300] as "hostile policy."[301] As a result, North Korea came to see the United States' proposal as a "sham."[302] Because the United States disregarded China's urge to remain flexible, North Korea saw this round as further example of the international community disregarding its security. Thus, at the end of round three, China again would have to settle for the chairman's statement, indicating, "There is still a [existing] lack of mutual trust among the parties."[303]

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293 Kerr, "North Korea Criticizes U.S. Nuclear Proposal."

294 Kerr, "North Korea Criticizes U.S. Nuclear Proposal."

295 Kwak, The Six Party Nuclear Talks, 44.

296 Leszek Buszynski, *Negotiating with North Korea: The Six Party Talks and the Nuclear Issu*e (London: Routledge, 2013), 91. See also Acronym Institute, "North Korea: H. E. Mr. Choe Su Hon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, September 27" in *UN General Assembly General Debate, September 21–September 30, 2004: Excerpts on Disarmament, Non-Proliferation & International Security*, United Nations General Assembly, 59th Session, last updated October 1, 2004, http://www.acronym.org.uk/old/archive/docs/0409/doc22.htm#dprk.

297 Kwak, "The Six Party Nuclear Talks," 44. Kwak notes China and Russia supported North Korea's peaceful use on the contingency that they return to the NPT and cooperated with the IAEA. Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, 95. Also see *Xinhua*, "DPRK Defends Right to Peaceful Use of Nuclear Power," *China Daily*, August 5, 2005, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-08/05/content_466623.htm.

298 Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Meets with N. Korea over Nuclear Program," *Washington Post*, June 25, 2004, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2004/06/25/us-meets-with-n-korea-over-nuclear-program/e74dae73-6d0b-445c-92ca-a9b3a3774fd5/?utm_term=.b3d8ba8e4f65.

299 Buszynski, *Negotiating with North Korea*, 91.

300 Buszynski, *Negotiating with North Korea*, 91.

301 Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy*, 106; Kessler, "U.S. Meets with N. Korea."

302 Patrick McEachern, *Inside the Red Box: North Korea's Post-Totalitarian Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 177.

303 Kwak, "The Six Party Nuclear Talks," 47.

## F. CONTINUED CLASHES AND FAILED DIPLOMACY

After the third round, continued antagonism between the United States and North Korea largely obstructed China's diplomatic efforts. After securing victory in the second election, President Bush made his feelings clear during his inaugural address when he declared,

> The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world … It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.[304]

Shortly after this, Condoleezza Rice, newly appointed as secretary of state, included North Korea within her "outpost of tyranny"[305] list. Furthermore, President Bush reiterated his declaration during the 2005 State of the Union address that America had "the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[306]

These statements sent two clear messages to North Korea. The first was that the United States truly recognized North Korea as an enemy state. This classification made North Korea's call for a nonaggression treaty[307] implausible, and, more importantly, reinforced its notion that peace between the two nations could not be achieved. The second message received by North Korea was that the United States wanted to transform it into a democracy. North Korea perceived that because it was not democratic like the United States, it could not be trusted until it changed its way of life and adopted American principles. From North Korea's perspective, the United States sought to generate opposition among other democratic-leaning nations against North Korea, and President Bush's making North Korea part of the "tyrant" club was an effective way of ensuring this opposition. However, North Korea believed these verbal attacks were a matter of defense

304 "President Bush's Second Inaugural Address," *National Public Radio*, January 20, 2005, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4460172.

305 *Part I: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Secretary of State Nomination: Opening Statement by Dr. Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 109th Cong. (2005), https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/RiceTestimony0501181.pdf.

306 "State of the Union Address," White House, last updated February 2, 2005, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050202-11.html.

307 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 340–341.

and, to bolster its defense, it must declare to the world that it was a nuclear weapons power.[308]

China grew increasingly fearful that tensions between the United States and North Korea were rising to an uncontrollable level; the glimmers of hope for achieving a resolution to North Korea's nuclear weapons program were growing increasingly dim. China and the other participating nations attempted to keep the talks alive and to gain cooperation between the United States and North Korea so that both could move toward common ground. Although it was extremely angered by North Korea, China objected to any suggestions that it cease aiding North Korea, and it still urged the nations to keep negotiating.[309] Despite North Korea's declaration of nuclear weapons ownership, Japan still wanted to keep negotiations open, to gain normalized relations with North Korea, and to commit to provide economic and energy aid.[310] Similarly, South Korea called for the United States to stop its hostile approaches toward the North.[311] Additionally, it offered to develop industries in the North and is committed to energy and food aid to the North.[312] Russia still defended North Korea's call for peaceful nuclear power if it returned to the NPT and committed IAEA standards.[313]

The United States' rejection of North Korea's call for peaceful nuclear use and its charge that North Korea was using counterfeit dollars to fund terrorist groups again blocked

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308 Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo, *The United States and the Korean Peninsula in the 21st Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 9; "North Korea Suspends Participation in Six-party Talks, Claims to Have Manufactured Nukes, February 10, 2005," Acronym Institute, accessed November 19, 2017, http://www.acronym.org.uk/old/archive/docs/0502/doc14.htm.

309 Joseph Khan, "Chinese Rule Out Sanctions on North Korea," *New York Times*, May 5, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/11/world/asia/chinese-rule-out-sanctions-on-north-korea.html.

310 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 373; Yoshinori Kaseda, "Japan and the Second North Korean Nuclear Crisis," in *North Korea's Second Nuclear Crisis and Northeast Asian Security*, ed. Seung-Ho Joo and Tae-Hwan Kwak, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 119–120.

311 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 373.

312 Buszynski, *Negotiating with North Korea*, 94.

313 Alexander Alexeyev, "Russian Delegation: North Korean Nuclear Programs May Have Double Use," *ITAR-TASS*, last updated September 16, 2005, https://archive.org/stream/questforunifiedk00bech/questforunifiedk00bech_djvu.txt; "The Fourth Round of Six-Party Talks Opens," Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco, accessed November 5, 2017, http://www.chinaconsulatesf.org/eng/xw/t205156.htm.

these ongoing efforts at the negotiating table.[314] North Korean Banco Delta Asia accounts were frozen, and North Korea feared the United States was attempting to "stop the heart"[315] of its nation by means of unilateral economic strangulation. Thus, despite the urgings by China and the other nations to cooperate and despite warnings of international sanctions, North Korea chose to test a nuclear weapon in 2006[316] and to withdraw from the Six Party Talks later in 2009.[317] In the end, divergence prevailed over convergence during the Six Party Talks, China's ability to mediate effectively became even more diplomatically limited, and North Korea went further down the path of committing to its nuclear power, rather than risking its vulnerability through negotiations.

## G. CONCLUSION: THE PRICE OF BARGAINING IS REASSURANCE

This chapter first shows that the value of reassurance is a key factor underlying any multilateral effort between nations. The first is that while both the United States and North Korea expect each other's side to accept its bargaining propositions, neither side was willing to concede in giving a major ground toward the opposition's bargaining proposal. For the United States, the driving factor in its hostile policy toward North Korea during the Six Party Talks was its own lack of confidence that North Korea would not attempt another blackmail. The costs of miscalculation were too high, and thus, the United States would not accept any other option except for complete dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program. For North Korea, the United States' continued hostility combined with its avoidance of committing to guaranteeing North Korea's security and energy needs caused its lowered reassurance. Second, because of the perception of both United States and North Korea that there would be more political loss than political gain in agreeing with the other, multilateralism failed because neither the United States nor North Korea would believe that

314 "Bush Vows Crack-down on North Korea on Fake Dollars," *The Star Online*, January 26, 2006, https://www.thestar.com.my/news/world/2006/01/27/bush-vows-crackdown-on-north-korea-on-fake-dollars/.

315 Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question*, 412.

316 "North Korea Claims First Nuclear Test," *The Guardian*, October 9, 2006, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/oct/09/northkorea.

317 "North Korea Withdraws from Six-Party Nuclear Talks," *VOA News*, November 2, 2009, https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2009-05-07-voa48-68687547/355843.html.

the opposite party would stick by its commitments. Both sides did show a willingness to modify propositions to show favor toward one another. However, both sides would only retreat temporarily from hardlining, to return to their original hard-lining position. This distrust severely damaged the value of reassurance, which crippled the ability to bargain, and thus subsided any positive force generated by joint efforts to achieve a multilateral resolution.

This chapter also reveals that China's inability to reassure North Korea resulted in it having limited influence over North Korea during the Six Party talks. Furthermore, this explains why North Korea chose to remain defiant against the international community's demand for their denuclearization. North Korea perceived that China did not have the influence to alter the United States behavior toward it, and thus, North Korea became convinced that China would not be able to protect it from the United States. Over the course of dialogue, North Korea perceived the United States was using the multilateral framework as a means of forming a unilateral front against it. This perception of a hostile United States drove North Korea to cling tighter to their nuclear weapons program and withdraw from the Six Party Talks. Hence, while China was angry that North Korea chose to stick defiantly to its nuclear obsessions, it was still compelled to protect North Korea from severe punishment by outside actors. Both the United States' inflexibility and North Korea's growing security paranoia, China's efforts to keep the multilateral approach afloat. Thus, both issues caused China to lose leverage over North Korea and severely impeded its ability to persuade North Korea to remain a participant in the Six Party Talks.

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# V. UNDERSTANDING THE CHINA AND NORTH KOREA LEVERAGE DILEMMA

## A. INTRODUCTION

A greater power nation may possess more leverage than its smaller power nation ally. However, the greater power ally may not automatically retain more leverage over its smaller power ally simply because it is the greater power. In fact, the smaller power ally could have more leverage over its greater power ally simply because sustaining the alliance is just as important to the greater power ally as it is to the smaller power ally. While it may seem that China would have more power over North Korea, China's belief that North Korea's survivability is crucial to its own self-interests allows North Korea to be defiant against China when it desires.

From the beginning, this thesis has sought to answer if China alone possesses enough leverage to have major influence over North Korea's behavior. My initial assumption was that China, as the greater power ally, did have enough leverage to coerce North Korea into meeting its demands as desired. However, analysis in the second, third, and fourth chapters within this thesis reveal that this is not the case. The first chapter finds that the China and North Korean alliance is based more upon self-interests, rather than being an asymmetrical alliance that give China more power over North Korea. The second chapter indicates that North Korea chose to pursue developing nuclear weapons despite opposition from China. Additionally, North Korea had become a nuclear weapons capable nation without the help of China; therefore, China's ability to have leverage over it was further limited. The third chapter indicates that China was unable to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons because China failed to reassure North Korea it could safeguard North Korea's security from the United States' hostility. Let me now flesh out each of these three main points in more detail.

### 1. The China and North Korea Alliance Arises

The first chapter shows that China and North Korea did not have deep motivations to form political and cultural ties and that their relationship was largely driven by the Soviet

Union's desire to have a strong Communist stronghold. Although Kim Il Sung was determined to take over South Korea to reunify the peninsula, he was effectively powerless to complete this objective without Soviet backing. Similarly, Mao needed Soviet support to eventually reclaim Taiwan, but he was compelled to demonstrate loyalty to the Communist stronghold. Thus, Mao put his own plans on hold to support Kim's plan to take over South Korea since Stalin gave Kim approval. As we know, however, the Korea War ended with an armistice and left both China and North Korea as subordinate allies to the greater power Soviet Union. With the Korean War over, it now was time to make Taiwan a priority for both the Soviet Union and North Korea to support.

Revisionist Khrushchev, who was now the ringleader over the Soviet Union, blocked Mao's plan to recapture Taiwan. Khrushchev foresaw a world in which capitalism and communism could coexist, which effectively downplayed the threat of the United States. To China and North Korea, Khrushchev's coexistence beliefs and his public criticisms of the Soviet Union's previous leader (Stalin), made Khrushchev look like a traitor to communist principles. Thus, Mao believed he ought to be the leader of the Communist regime and continue to spread the revolution throughout the Pacific theater and then eventually throughout the world. As for North Korea, while Kim Il Sung distrusted both the Soviet Union and China, Khrushchev's criticism of his leadership over North Korea pushed Kim closer to Mao. On the other hand, Kim recognized there was opportunity for material and economic gains for North Korea if he successfully manipulated both his greater power allies against one another. Thus, China and North Korea came together as allies for two reasons: 1) their own self-interests, and 2) their shared threat perceptions of the United States and the Soviet Union.

### 2. North Korea's Nuclear Achievement and China's Worst Fear

The second chapter demonstrates that China alone was unable to force North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions during the outbreaks of the first and second nuclear crisis in 1993 and in 2003, respectively. Throughout the Cold War, China refused to help North Korea in developing nuclear weapons, perhaps believing that withholding aid to North Korea would deter it from acting unilaterally to develop nuclear weapons on its own.

Following the Korean War, the United States and North Korea persisted in provoking each other. At one point, the United States even positioned nuclear weapons in South Korea to counter any potential attack by the North. From the beginning of his reign, Kim Il Sung refused allow North Korea be the "shrimp among whales"[318]—the non-nuclear weapons nation regionally surrounded by China, the Soviet Union, and the United States defending South Korea, which all were nuclear weapons capable nations. Thus, as China and the Soviet Union continued to compete for more influence over North Korea, Kim Il Sung saw their competition as an opportunity to continue his manipulation of both greater power allies so that nuclear weapons aid could be gained from both. However, as both China and the Soviet Union refused to budge with regard to giving North Korea nuclear weapons assistance, Kim Il Sung determined that developing nuclear weapons was an objective that had to be accomplished by his own hand and thus developing nuclear weapons became the strategic objective that North Korea itself needed to accomplish.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, North Korea perceived China's decision to pursue integration with the international community as a betrayal of the remaining communist stronghold, and this perception ultimately drove a further wedge between China and North Korean relations. China previously had refused to help North Korea with its nuclear weapons, and now, North Korea perceived that China again was turning its backs on North Korea so as to appease the outside world. On the one hand, China sought cooperation with the international community so that it could rise again as a dominant power in Asia. However, China's decision to pursue integration also caused it to be a part of any rising conflicts between the international community and North Korea, its smaller power ally. On the other hand, China already knew its own diplomatic influence over North Korea's provocative behavior was limited. Furthermore, China especially knew it alone could neither force nor convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons pursuits. Thus, China's worst fear had come to reality when the United States exposed North Korea's covert nuclear pursuits, and the world realized that North Korea had become an illegitimate nuclear power in the face of greater powers.

318 Cha, *The Impossible State*, 35.

In 1993, China was placed in an even greater bind as it faced the dilemma of preventing total war between the United States, which was pressing to launch an attack on known North Korea nuclear sites and North Korea, which was refusing to give up the nuclear deterrent it had finally achieved. Fortunately, the United States and North Korea found a way of peacefully resolving their disputes by establishing the Agreed Framework, which was intended to provide economic and energy assistance to North Korea in exchange for abandoning its nuclear weapons abandonment. However, this resolution did not last. North Korea perceived that the international community was not fulfilling its end of the agreement because of its continuous delays in providing fuel aid and its delays in commencing construction of North Korea's civil nuclear reactors. Thus, continuing to mistrust the outside world, North Korea chose to stick to covertly furthering its nuclear weapons programs. However, the United States again exposed North Korea's covert nuclear weapons pursuits, and when the United States withdrew from the Agreed Framework, North Korea then withdrew from the NPT, creating the second nuclear crisis arose in 2003. Faced with another possible outbreak of war, China chose to have an active role in the second nuclear crisis because it could not afford an unstable North Korea interfering with its own strategic objectives. China had reaped enough economic benefits from its previous decision to integrate with the international community, while North Korea had suffered economically from 1) the Soviet Union's collapse, 2) the 1995 and 1996 floods, and 3) the 1997 drought. Since North Korea had also become heavily dependent on China for economic support, China gained enough leverage to force North Korea to participate in negotiations during the Six Party Talks so that the second nuclear crisis could be resolved.

### 3. Multinational Efforts and North Korea's Defiance

The third chapter also shows that China was unable to influence North Korea to remain a participant in the Six Party Talks. Although China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, and the United States pursued this multinational effort, it was unsuccessful in ending the second nuclear crisis. First, China's inability to reassure North Korea that its security interests was safeguarded made China unable to influence North Korea's decision to abandon the Six Party Talks. China recognized that it was the one in the best position to

mediate between the nations so that it could collectively find a resolution to the second nuclear crisis before the Six Party Talks took place. However, once the talking rounds began to unfold, it became apparent to North Korea that the United States would not abandon its hostility toward North Korea, and it also became apparent that China did not have enough leverage to coerce the United States into altering its behavior. Thus, North Korea chose to be safe rather than sorry in withdrawing from the negotiating table, and China could not do anything about it.

Second, the United States' neglect to reassure North Korea caused China to also have limited influence over North Korea's decision to abandon the Six Party Talks. During the first round, both the United States and North Korea only wanted to demonstrate their toughness against one another by not budging on their stances on complete and irreversible dismantlement. In the second round, North Korea brought forth a proposal demonstrating its willingness to freeze its nuclear weapons programs as long as it would be allowed peaceful civil nuclear use. However, the United States remained hardlined in its original stance. In the third round, the United States introduced a proposal to gain cooperation from North Korea. However, this proposal similarly demanded complete and irreversible dismantlement before the United States would provide North Korea any economic or security guarantees. As such, North Korea perceived that the United States continued to live up to its title as its "arch-enemy."

North Korea also perceived that the United States labeling it as a "tyrant" and "sponsor of terrorism" made clear that the two nations were de facto enemies of one another. It is hard to deny that North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons presented a major problem to the United States' foreign policy after the September 11 attacks. If the United States allowed North to illegitimately be recognized as a nuclear power among nations after labeling it tyrants and sponsors of terrorism, then the United States advocacy for a "Global War on Terror"[319] would potentially face severe criticism domestically and internationally; thus, the United States could not back away from this premise. On the other hand, North Korea could not help but perceive that the United States wanted to bring it

319 "The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days," U.S. Department of State, accessed November 28, 2017, https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm.

down in defeat. Additionally, it could not afford miscalculation, to give up its nuclear weapons, and risk the United States toppling the North Korean government. Moreover, North Korea foresaw that the United States was using the multinational framework to foster competition, instead of using the multinational framework to foster cooperation, and thus, it contributed to North Korea remaining a defiant nation against China and against the international community. I now turn to discussing the significance of the China and North Korea leverage dilemma as it affects the international relations between the two countries and other nations.

## B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHINA AND NORTH KOREA LEVERAGE DILEMMA

While an alliance endures between China and North Korea today, it is significant to inquire whether the United States' pursuit of unilateral action against North Korea is the best means of ensuring long-term stability in the Pacific region. I believe that if armed conflict is to be avoided between the United States and China, then the United States should avoid acting unilaterally because as the first and second nuclear crises have proven, it has done more harm than good to the international community. The first nuclear crisis proved the United States is capable of having bilateral negotiations with North Korea. The second nuclear crisis proved the United States' pursuit of unilateralism backfired in its aim of denuclearizing North Korea. Furthermore, as Graham Allison argues, the United States and China should make every effort to work closely to avoid the "Thucydides trap,"[320] rather than to allow itself to become "Destined for War."[321] As such, in my view, the North Korea threat is the trap that must be avoided by both the United States and China. The old way of pursuing the "containment"[322] of nations becomes an increasing challenge in a growing multipolar threat environment, and like John Quincy Adams once famously proclaimed,

320 Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2017), viii–x.

321 Allison, *Destined for War*, xvi–xvii.

322 John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 59–65.

the United States "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy."[323] The United States may not need to be always solely responsible for the multipolar threat environment, especially when one considers other nations that are more than willing and are also able to fulfill this area of responsibility. As Robert Kagan claimed, "The United States has certainly not shaped the international environment by itself" … "It is nations, made up of people, that shape the world, not gods or angels."[324] Robert McNamara, former United States Secretary of Defense, offered a very important lesson when he said to "empathize with your enemy."[325] Thus, an argument can be made that if the United States wants to gain any ability of shaping North Korea behavior by any measure, it must first recognize that it needs help from other nations, primarily China, to have impact on North Korea's defiance. Secondly, the United States must not expect that it can influence North Korea's behavior by its own hand if China, North Korea's sole ally, is unable to shape North Korea's behavior on its own. Therefore, the United States should work to have a cooperative diplomatic relationship with China to gain more leverage as an outside actor of the China and North Korean alliance.

Based on the historical lessons of the Six Party Talks, one could argue that if North Korea would concede in giving up its nuclear weapons, then the United States would recede, and long-term stability could finally be achieved. However, it is also equally important to recognize that if the United States continues to pose a threat to North Korea, it will in turn continue to further cling to its nuclear ambitions, and the Six Party Talks reflect this logic. Additionally, if nations are calling for the United States to have a less hostile approach toward the smaller power, then the United States should at least consider this suggestion.

323 "She Goes Not Abroad in Search of Monsters to Destroy': John Quincy Adams on U.S. Isolationism," World Press, January 22, 2014, https://jrbenjamin.com/2014/01/22/she-goes-not-abroad-in-search-of-monsters-to-destroy-john-quincy-adams-on-u-s-isolationism/.

324 Robert Kagan, *The World America Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 7, 15.

325 Nick Grothaus, "The Fog of War—Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara," Hand of Reason, accessed November 27, 2017, http://handofreason.com/2011/media/the-fog-of-war-eleven-lessons-from-the-life-of-robert-s-mcnamara.

Today, in 2017, unless the United States and North Korea can both resolve the reassurance dilemmas they have with regard to one another, the ability for either side to bargain and negotiate with the other will not work. Additionally, no matter how many participating nations are involved to bring resolution to the North Korea nuclear problem, multilateralism between nations will not work unless the participating nations work together in cooperation to the reassurance dilemmas between the United States and North Korea. The United States and North Korea are left with two possible conclusions. Either more competition will breed between these two rivals, or reassurance will eventually foster cooperation between them. The United States and North Korea will ultimately have to make a decision, and, hopefully, the latter option is chosen by the United States and North Korea because the rest of the world depends on a peaceful resolution, rather than a resolution by armed conflict. Multilateralism is still an option available today for the United States; however, the United States also needs to understand how multilateralism efforts weakened during the previous Six Party Talks so that future efforts will not face the same challenges. The question remains as to whether political leaders in the United States will take heed of this lesson instead of fighting fire with fire. Additionally, the international community should also reconsider the driving factors that contributed to North Korea abandoning dialogue and committing to defiance since new insights may help determine the best course of action in gaining cooperation from North Korea.

## C. CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CHINA AND NORTH KOREA LEVERAGE DILEMMA

1. If establishing the conditions for long-term stability in Asia is a true goal of the United States, it must consider the following policy recommendations, which move toward cooperation with China to further deal with North Korea:
2. Unless war has been declared, avoid taking unilateral actions.
3. Since they are the North's sole ally, allow China to have more of a leading role in dealing with North Korea.
4. Instead of advocating for North Korea's isolation, make efforts to foster multilateral cooperation between the international community and North Korea.

While, today North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions and the leverage dilemma within the China and North Korean alliance have further complicated the United States' ability to ensure long-term stability in the Pacific theater, the problem is solvable. As MacMillan claims, "There will be no peace for Asia or for the world unless those two great Pacific powers, the United States and China, the one supreme today and the other perhaps tomorrow, find ways to work with each other."[326] If we think back historically to President Nixon's visit to China, he made it "a week that changed the world"[327] because he understood that "good relations between [the United States and China] … [would bring] stability and peace to Asia and, indeed, to the world."[328] Similarly, the Cuban Missile Crisis was a historic moment by which the United States and the Soviet Union came inches away from nuclear war, and fortunately, both nations avoided nuclear catastrophe both understood the need to cooperate with one another. Equally, Michael Dobbs convincingly argues the two nations nuclear war because "two men, one in Washington, one in Moscow, [struggled] with the specter of nuclear destruction they themselves [had] unleashed."[329] Fred Charles Iklé once stated, "History is a cruel tutor. It hammers a lesson into our minds so sternly that no one dares to mention the many exceptions that must be allowed. Yet as soon as we have learned that lesson—and ignored its exceptions—history punishes us for not following another rule that posits the very opposite."[330] From this notion, I believe that history has taught us that cooperation is possible even in the most challenging environments in which international relations take place, and we need to heed history's teachings before we again are punished for not following another rule posited.

326 Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2007), xxii.

327 MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, xxi.

328 MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, xxi.

329 Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), xvi.

330 Fred Charles Iklé, *Every War Must End* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), vii.

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