



Strengthening Understanding Through Dialogue

A Peacebuilding Approach to the
Korean Peninsula Conflict

2017

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Conflict**

Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies
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Author: Caroline Kearney

Edited: Laurens Visser, Karen Simbulan

Photographs: Marialaura de Angelia (Front Cover), Rudiger Frank (Leverage Points) and Doug Hostetter (Additional Photos). All photographs taken in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from 2010 to 2016.

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GLOSSARY

CPV	Chinese People's Volunteers
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DMZ	The Demilitarized Zone
KPA	Korean People's Army of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defence System
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America

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OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of the Korean Peninsula Conflict. In this paper, the “Korean Peninsula Conflict” refers to the conflict between the governments of the United States (US) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) that began with the split of Korea in 1945 and resulted in the Korean War in 1950. The conflict has become protracted due to the inability of the governments to reach a peace agreement after the signing of a ceasefire agreement in 1953.

This analysis seeks to promote the consideration of a wider range of options available to the US, the ROK, and other international actors that have the capacity to accompany a path to positive, working relationships for the conflicting parties. For progress towards sustainable diplomatic relationships to be successful, conflicting parties and external actors must understand the perspectives and concerns that have guided the decisions of both sides of the Korean Peninsula Conflict from the division of Korea in 1945 to the present.

To formulate this analysis, CPCS utilised a combination of interviews held in 2016 as well as desk research. Most of the existing literature focuses on the perspectives of the US and the ROK. Therefore, this paper also draws on conversations held with representatives of International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and academics who regularly travel to the DPRK or who work directly with DPRK officials abroad. Many of the individuals interviewed currently oversee projects inside the DPRK. As such, these individuals provide recent information and analyses of the situation in the DPRK. The names of these individuals who have provided comments and observations during these interviews will remain anonymous due to the highly sensitive nature of the conflict.



OVERVIEW

A review of events in 2015 and 2016 demonstrate the dynamic tensions between the DPRK, often backed by the PRC, and the ROK and the US. These two years involved military skirmishes along the De-Militarised Zone (DMZ); the toughest US-led economic sanctions on the DPRK government, trade sectors and individuals to date; over 30 DPRK missile launches and two nuclear tests; and the largest-ever US - ROK joint military exercise. From the perspective of the US, sanctions, joint military exercises, and isolation have been a necessary response to discourage further provocative DPRK actions against the ROK and Japan, as well as US bases located in both countries. The US plan has included “pressure, deterrence and diplomacy” towards the DPRK in an attempt to lead them towards the decision to denuclearise and shift to democratic governance.¹ Equally, the DPRK view is that nuclear tests and missile launches are necessary to demonstrate its military strength to protect its sovereignty and national security from the US and the ROK.² Responses by both sides only serve to provoke the other, resulting in a cycle of provocation.

This is a protracted conflict that began with the indecision of the US and the Soviet Union to allow the other to serve as trustee over the whole nation of Korea following Japan’s defeat in the Second World War. The conflict persists because the Korean War ended in a temporary ceasefire in 1953, and a peace agreement could not be reached. Nearly seven decades later, the conflicting parties have failed to reach a permanent settlement.

An additional layer to the conflict is the competition between the US and the PRC over economic and military influence in East Asia. The governments in Beijing and Washington accuse each other of militarizing the Korean peninsula and the surrounding area, while simultaneously competing for economic influence in the region. Meanwhile, DPRK weapon testing heightens the perceived need for American military presence in the region, thereby,

¹ *Remarks by Ambassador Nikki Haley at a Stakeout Following UN Security Council Consultations on DPRK.* United States Mission to the United Nations. (8 March 2017). <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7699>; *The Persistent Threat of North Korea and Developing an Effective U.S. Response: Testimony by Daniel R. Russel, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.* US Department of State. (28 September 2016). <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2016/09/262528.htm>

² *Statement by H.E. Mr. RYONG HO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea at the General Debate of the 71st Session of The United Nations General Assembly New York.* (23 September 2016). General Assembly of the United Nations. https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/71/71_DE_en.pdf

strengthening the bond between the US and its Northeast Asian allies. Due to the disagreements over influence in the region between the US and the PRC, the opportunity for the US to expand its military presence in Northeast Asia may reduce the incentive for Washington to pursue peaceful relations with Pyongyang, as it can better position itself in the region against Beijing.

This conflict has had the greatest impact on the citizens in the DPRK and the ROK. Both governments prohibit their citizens from engaging with each other or traveling to the other side of the DMZ without prior permission.³ Citizens of both Koreas have also been detained for speaking positively of the other government.⁴ These policies repress the rights of Korean citizens in the ROK and the DPRK, and have divided Korean families and barred Koreans from returning to their birthplace on both sides of the DMZ for over six decades.⁵ In addition, all four of the governments party to the conflict – the US, PRC, DPRK, and ROK - have contributed to the on-going arms race in the region.⁶ The continued cycle of provocation and heightening of tensions is placing the parties on the brink of a possible nuclear conflict.

While a common response is to place blame for escalating tensions and stalled negotiations on another party, all parties should closely examine their actions in terms of how it may provoke the other or hinder progress towards returning to negotiations. The parties must reconsider all actions and determine concessions that can be offered to ease tensions and make progress towards transforming the conflict.⁷ The parties must decide to prioritise improving the quality of life for all Koreans on the peninsula, as well as the prevention of nuclear conflict.

³ See the *National Security Law*. Ministry of Government Information, National Law Information Center. <http://www.law.go.kr/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=116750&efYd=20120701#0000>; The ROK government arrests and deports persons and dismantles political parties for speaking positively of the DPRK, visiting the DPRK without prior authorization, or for being in possession of materials depicting the DPRK in a positive light. Choe Sang-Hun. *South Korean Law Casts Wide Net, Snaring Satirists in a Hunt for Spies*. The New York Times. (7 January 2012) <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/08/world/asia/south-korean-law-casts-wide-net-snaring-satirists-in-a-hunt-for-spies.html>; Choe Sang-Hun. *South Korea Arrests Activist after Unauthorized Trip to North*. The New York Times. (6 July 2012). <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/06/world/asia/south-korea-detains-activist-who-visited-north.html>; In the DPRK, citizens must obtain permission from the government to travel to a location other than their registered area of residence. *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015*. Korea Institute for National Unification, p. 205.

⁴ Choe Sang-Hun. *South Korea Deports American Over Warm Words for Trips to North*. The New York Times. (10 January 2015). https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/world/asia/south-korea-to-deport-american-over-warm-words-about-north-korea.html?_r=0; *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2015*. Korea Institute for National Unification, p. 263.

⁵ Choe Sang-Hun. *South and North Korean Families, Separated by War 65 Years Ago, Reunite Briefly*. The New York Times. (20 October 2015).

⁶ See Key Driving Factors: 1, 2 and 4.

⁷ Conflict transformation as defined by John Paul Lederach: "Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships." John Paul Lederach. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Good Books. (2003).

In this analysis the following key driving factors of the conflict are identified: (1) *Punitive military and economic measures by the United States and the Republic of Korea towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*; (2) *Weapons development and testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*; (3) *One-sided narratives subscribed to by parties to the conflict*; (4) *Economic and military competition between the United States and the People's Republic of China for influence in East Asia*.

To address these issues, eight leverage points have been identified that present opportunities to break the provocation cycle, and establish peaceful and productive relationships between conflicting parties.

The leverage points identified are as follows:

1. *Engage with the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and address disputes through dialogue and negotiation.*
2. *Adopt long-term perspectives and realistic expectations for progress and change in the conflict.*
3. *Elevate and listen to alternative narratives to understand the complexities of the conflict and humanize North Koreans.*
4. *Understand and acknowledge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's national priorities and perspectives while engaging with them.*
5. *Approach all parties to the conflict with impartiality by responding to contributions to the cycle of provocation in an equal and balanced way.*
6. *Engage in diplomatic activities with the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to build the confidence required to establish sustainable diplomatic relationships with the country.*
7. *Integrate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea economy into the global economy to influence the government and the people, improve the quality of life for North Korean people, and gain leverage for negotiation.*
8. *Acknowledge the merging of the disputes between the United States and the People's Republic of China with the conflict between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and make a conscious decision to separate them.*



THE CONFLICT IN CONTEXT

Understanding the current conflict requires an understanding of Korean history and the state-level relationships between the conflicting parties from the division of Korea to the present.⁸

Prior to the division in 1945, Korea was one of the oldest and continuously unified states in the world, with one of the most homogenous societies. Remnants of societies likely to be descendants of the Korean people date back to at least 6,000 BCE. The area recognised today as Korea was unified in the year 676.⁹ While a “number of people entered the peninsula in antiquity, gradually all merged into a single ethnicity sharing one language and participating in one political system.”¹⁰

Korea remained largely independent for most of its history in part due to a tradition of seclusion. In the few times that it was invaded by its neighbours, Korea remained unified, and foreign rule of the country was primarily symbolic. Japan invaded in the 16th century, but after it was defeated, Korea isolated itself and barred most foreigners from entering the country. Korea opened up in the 19th century only to be swept up in territorial wars between China and Japan, and again between Japan and Russia. In 1910, Japan won the war against Russia and established colonial rule over Korea.

In 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied powers. This signified the end of the Second World War, and abruptly ended Japan’s occupation of Korea. Under the looming global political order that was the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the US agreed to a temporary division of the nation roughly along the 38th parallel, with the Soviets serving as trustees over the northern part and the US overseeing the south. This division was based entirely on the decision of the US and the Soviet Union, who were both unwilling to allow the other

⁸ This section will provide a brief snapshot of historical events. Readers can consult authors such as Michael J. Seth, Yur-Bok Lee, Wayne Patterson, Leon Sigal, Andrei Lankov, Bruce Cumings, Mike Chinoy, Hazel Smith, Stephen Haggard and Marcus Noland for more detailed background.

⁹ Michael J. Seth. *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period Through the Nineteenth Century*, p. 1. (2006).

¹⁰ Michael J. Seth, 1. (2006).

to occupy the entire peninsula. The division was not in any way reflective of pre-existing differences in political ideologies of the Korean people.¹¹

After the division, the northern half of the peninsula was governed by communist rule under a Soviet Union trusteeship, and the southern half was governed under an American-led liberal democracy. Both the US and the Soviet Union had expressed their intention of unifying the nation once a provisional government had been established and the country declared independence. However, this never occurred because of tensions that built up between Koreans on both sides of the 38th parallel and Cold War tensions brewing between the foreign countries influencing the Koreans.

In 1948, the DPRK, in the North, proclaimed independence, followed by the ROK's declaration of independence in the South two years later. Each of the two Korean governments considered themselves the sole authority of the entire Korean peninsula, and refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the other government. The tensions were rooted in remaining frustrations from Japanese colonization and the ideological differences introduced by the Soviet Union and the US.

In June 1950, two armies had built up on both sides of the parallel. A few border incidents between the two sides occurred, and coupled with external pressure and influence from the Soviet Union, PRC and the US, troops crossed the 38th parallel and the Korean civil war began.¹² Three days into the war, the US imposed its first economic sanctions on the DPRK government. One month later, a US-led military force, under the authority of a United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution, joined ROK forces to fight against the KPA (Korean People's Army).¹³ Three months after US-led UN forces

¹¹ James I. Matray. *Captive of the Cold War: The Decision to Divide Korea at the 38th Parallel*. (1981). <http://phr.ucpress.edu/content/50/2/145>.

¹² Don Oberdorfer and Robert Carlin. *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*. Basic Books. (2014); William Stueck. *The Korean War: An International History*. Princeton University Press. (1997); Bruce Cumings. *The Korean War: A History*. Modern Library. (2010).

¹³ United Nations Security Council Resolutions 83 and 84 authorized a US-led military force to intervene in the Korean civil war and provide support to the ROK. Fifteen other nations sent military forces to serve under the US-led force. *United Nations Security Council Resolution 83 and 84: Complaint of aggression upon the Republic of Korea*. United Nations Security Council. (27 June 1950 and 7 July 1950). The Korean People's Army was established in 1948 by the DPRK's Workers Party of Korea. *Korean People's Army – Introduction*. Global Security.org. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/dprk/army.htm>;

intervened, soldiers from the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) arrived to support the KPA.¹⁴

Over the next three years, the war had devastating effects on the entire peninsula. While statistics vary, it is estimated that at least 1.5 million North Korean; 400,000 Chinese; 600,000 South Korean; and 35,000 American military personnel and civilians died during the war.¹⁵ The vast majority of deaths were civilian casualties. The massive US-led bombing and napalm attacks caused the majority of Korean deaths in the North. The US-led bombing campaign left 18 of the 22 major North Korean cities at least half destroyed.¹⁶ Many of the South Korean and American casualties can be attributed to battles fought in the early months of the war. They were not prepared for battle and the KPA, later joined by the CPV, made early gains and caused extensive destruction.¹⁷

The Korean War was also responsible for launching the DPRK's strive for nuclear capability. At the outset of the war in 1950, the US announced and prepared to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK a number of times.¹⁸ Ultimately, the US decided against it. Nevertheless, in 1952, two years after initial threats of nuclear attacks began from the US, the DPRK established the Atomic Energy Research Institute.¹⁹

In July 1953, the military commanders of the KPA, CPV, and the US Army signed the Korean Armistice Agreement agreeing to the terms of a ceasefire and the war technically came to a close.²⁰ One year later, the parties met at

¹⁴The Chinese People's Volunteers were a group of Chinese soldiers selected from the Chinese Northeastern Border Defense Army to provide military support to the DPRK during the Korean War 1950 -1953. Order to Organize the Chinese People's Volunteers. China.org.cn and the People's Liberation Army Daily Newspaper. (8 October 1950). <http://www.china.org.cn/english/China/219032.htm>

¹⁵Korean War Memorial Foundation. *A Brief History of the Korean War*. <http://www.kwmmf.org/history/>

¹⁶Thomas Walkom. *North Korea's unending war rages on*. The Toronto Star. (25 November 2010), https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2010/11/25/walkom_north_koreas_unending_war_rages_on.html; Rosemary Foot. *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks*, pp. 207 – 208. (8 May 1990).

¹⁷William Stueck. *The Korean War: An International History*. Princeton University Press. Page 48 and 168. (1995).

¹⁸Bruce Cumings. *Korea: forgotten nuclear threats*. Le Monde diplomatique. (8 December 2004). <http://mondediplo.com/2004/12/08korea>

¹⁹DPRK Net Encyclopedia: Science Technology Research Institutions. Joongang Ilbo. [http://www.nti.org/learn/facilities/776/](http://nk.joins.com; Nuclear Threat Initiative. Atomic Energy Research Institute. http://www.nti.org/learn/facilities/776/)

²⁰Armistice Agreement. 27 July 1953. United Nations Documents. http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/p/peacemaker.un.org/files/KP%2BKR_530727_AgreementConcerningMilitaryArmistice.pdf

the Geneva Conference to create a formal peace accord, but the meeting ended without an agreement as the parties were too far apart on issues such as elections, the UN's role on the Korean peninsula, and economic and cultural relations between the North and the South.²¹

This created a stalemate and tensions between the two sides continued. As a result, the US secretly placed nuclear weapons in the ROK in 1958, nearly five years after the armistice agreement was signed.²² Placing nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula was a violation of paragraph 13(d) of the armistice agreement. However, prior to placing nuclear weapons in the ROK, the US gathered information on DPRK violations of the same clause and decided to nullify the entire clause. From the US perspective, their actions were not violating the agreement because they pointed to prior alleged violations by the DPRK.

Over the next several decades, the government in Pyongyang experienced either non-existent or poor diplomatic relations with the governments in Seoul and Washington. A rise in tensions occurred between the Korean governments in the late 1960s following military skirmishes along the DMZ, an assassination attempt on the President of the ROK by DPRK forces, and the DPRK capture of an US Navy ship.²³

During the 1970s, there were a few positive yet very brief interactions between the DPRK and ROK governments. The first promising period of inter-Korean relations occurred during ROK President Roh Tae-woo's administration from 1988 to 1992 (See Annex 1 for more detail on US - DPRK - ROK relations from 1988 to 2016). President Roh released a declaration calling for "the promotion of political, economic and cultural exchanges; the promotion of inter-Korean trade; and pledges to aid Pyongyang in improving relations with the U.S. and Japan."²⁴ Inter-Korean relations improved as a result and

²¹ BBC News. *The Korean War Armistice*. (5 March 2015). <http://www.bbc.com/news/10165796>

²² Lee Jae-Bong. *US Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s South Korea & North Korea's Nuclear Development*. (February 2009). <http://apjif.org/-Lee-Jae-Bong/3053/article.html>

²³ Mitchell Lerner. *Mostly Propaganda in Nature: Kim Il Sung, the Juche Ideology, and the Second Korean War*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. (December 2010). https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/NKIDP_WP_3.pdf

²⁴ ROK Ministry of Unification. *Special Presidential Declaration for National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity*. White Paper on South-North Dialogue, pp.461-465. (20 August 2001). <http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/content.do?cmsid=1889&mode=view&page=10&cid=32075>

the DPRK signed three substantial agreements in 1991 and 1992 to take steps towards denuclearisation, and to engage in reconciliation and economic exchanges with the ROK.

US – DPRK relations also improved during this time. In 1991, the US withdrew its nuclear weapons from the ROK.²⁵ In April 1992, US President George H. W. Bush cancelled an upcoming US – ROK joint military exercise and, in return, DPRK Supreme Leader Kim Il Sung suspended an annual anti-US rally. Following this, diplomats from both the US and DPRK met on several occasions in an attempt to address their disagreements surrounding nuclear issues.

As US President Bill Clinton took office, diplomatic relations with the DPRK took a step back. The Clinton Administration was particularly cautious about the DPRK and relations between the two countries began to decline. In 1994, war nearly broke out between the two countries, and former US President Jimmy Carter visited Pyongyang to salvage relations.²⁶ This trip led to one of the greatest milestones in US – DPRK relations with the signing of the 1994 Agreed Framework which halted the DPRK's nuclear programme for nine years in exchange for the US, Japan, and the ROK providing the DPRK with technology and resources for safe nuclear energy.

In 2001, US President George W. Bush took office and US – DPRK relations again worsened due to indecision within the US administration regarding what stance to take towards the DPRK. President George W. Bush and his administration officials made several aggressive remarks towards the DPRK and, in December 2002, the DPRK restarted its nuclear programme.²⁷ US – DPRK relations have remained turbulent ever since.

On the Korean peninsula, in 1998, DPRK – ROK diplomatic relations improved under ROK President Kim Dae Jung's Sunshine Policy. The policy's

²⁵ Lee Jae-Bong, *US Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s: South Korea & North Korea's Nuclear Development*. (February 2009). <http://apjif.org/-Lee-Jae-Bong/3053/article.html>

²⁶ Leon V. Sigal, *The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Understanding The Failure of the 'Crime-and-Punishment' Strategy*. (1 May 1997). Arms Control Association. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997_05/sigal

²⁷ See Mike Chinoy, *Meltown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (2008), for a detailed breakdown of US – DPRK relations under the George W. Bush Administration.

approach was to support openness and dialogue with the DPRK. While DPRK – ROK relations continued to experience challenges during this period, the approach proved successful in that it led to the first Inter-Korean Summit since the Korean War began.²⁸ The Sunshine approach also led to the creation of the Kaesong Joint Industrial Complex opening in 2004, an increase in inter-Korean trade volume, and the signing of 40 agreements on political and economic cooperation. ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun, who took office in 2003, expanded the policy.

Also in 2003, the first round of Six Party Talks began.²⁹ They were held again in 2005 and 2007, yielding an agreement for the DPRK to abandon their nuclear programme. However, the US and the DPRK failed to agree on a verification protocol required to implement the 2005 agreement before both President Roh and President Bush left office.

US President Barack Obama, who took office in January 2009, initially expressed interest in engaging with the DPRK leadership. However, in April 2009, the DPRK fired a long-range rocket. Although the DPRK stated that the rocket was launched into space for peaceful purposes, both the US and the ROK perceived it as a provocative move. The UN Security Council released a statement condemning the rocket launch and the DPRK responded by announcing its withdrawal from the Six Party Talks.

President Obama's policy toward the DPRK was defined as strategic patience.³⁰ This policy assumed that the US could wait for the DPRK to reach the decision to denuclearise. The administration stated that it would not hold talks with the DPRK unless it first took steps towards denuclearisation. The DPRK asked for talks on numerous occasions to discuss various commitments, such as a peace treaty, US aid, the cancellation of US - ROK joint military

²⁸ Pearl Jinju Kwon. *The Re-evaluation of the Sunshine Policy: Failure or Success?* The Public Sphere. (2014). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IPA/images/Documents/PublicSphere/2014/7-Kwon-Sunshine.pdf>

²⁹ The Six Party Talks were launched in 2003 with the aim to dismantle DPRK's nuclear programme through negotiations. The talks were attended by the PRC, US, DPRK, ROK, Japan, and Russia.

³⁰ Scott A. Snyder. *U.S. Policy Toward North Korea*. Council on Foreign Relations. (January 2013). <http://www.cfr.org/north-korea/us-policy-toward-north-korea/p29962>.

exercises, or cessation of US nuclear threats towards the DPRK.³¹The Obama administration refused to restart talks unless the DPRK acted first by taking steps towards denuclearisation. The DPRK was willing to discuss a freeze but not dismantling its nuclear weapons programme. Thereafter, the two countries were at a stalemate. In January 2017, President Obama left office amidst heightened tensions between the two countries. As of May 2017, the administration of US President Donald J. Trump continues to formulate its policy towards the DPRK.

ROK President Park Geun-hye, who took office in 2013, adopted a policy of *trustpolitik*.³²This policy set out to restrict the DPRK's missile and nuclear programmes while simultaneously building trust between the two countries. This approach was largely unsuccessful and, in March 2017, President Park was impeached for corruption. In May 2017, a presidential election will occur and the victor will decide the ROK's new policy towards the DPRK.

³¹ *Statement of H.E. Mr. Ri Su Yong, Minister for Foreign Affairs DPRK*. General Assembly of the United Nations, General Debate of the 70th Session. (1 October 2015). <https://debate.un.org/en/70/democratic-peoples-republic-korea>; Steven Lee Myers and Choe Sang-Hun. *North Koreans Agree to Freeze Nuclear Work; U.S. to Give Aid*. The New York Times. (29 February 2012); <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/01/world/asia/us-says-north-korea-agrees-to-curb-nuclear-work.html>; *North Korea says peace treaty, halt to exercises, would end nuclear tests*. Reuters. (16 January 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-usa-idUSKCN0UT201>; *Conclusion of a U.S.- North Korea peace agreement the most pressing issue*. NK News. DPRK Institute For American Studies. (4 July 2016). <https://www.nknews.org/2016/07/conclusion-of-a-u-s-north-korea-peace-agreement-the-most-pressing-issue>; *DPRK Government Denounces U.S., S. Korea's Sophism about "Denuclearization of North"*. KCNA. (6 July 2016). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2016/201607/news06/20160706-41ee.html>; Robert Carlin. *North Korea Said it is Willing to Talk about Denuclearization...But No One Noticed*. 38 North. (12 July 2016). <http://38north.org/2016/07/rcarlin071216/>.

³² Yun Byung-se. *Park Geun-hye's Trustpolitik: A New Framework for South Korea's Foreign Policy*. Global Asia. (September 2013). <https://www.globalasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/462.pdf>



STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS: KEY CONFLICT ACTORS & INTERESTS

This section provides information on the governments that are able to make defining decisions to transform the conflict, as well as a brief examination of their relations with one another. The key conflict actors are the DPRK, ROK, US, and PRC. Without the involvement of these four parties, the conflict would not exist or would be significantly different. And, without their actions, progress cannot be made in transforming the conflict toward sustainable diplomatic relations.

The DPRK, ROK, US, and PRC are key actors due to their historic and current involvement in the conflict. They are the four parties that were engaged in the Korean War between 1950 and 1953, and it was the militaries of three of these four parties that signed the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953.³³ Today, their roles are just as essential. The US and the ROK on one side of the conflict, and the DPRK on the other, consistently engage in actions the other side perceives as provocative, compelling them to respond in kind. The PRC has been one of the DPRK's closest allies and has provided the DPRK government with vital support during the imposition of international economic sanctions. The US has pointed to the PRC's lack of compliance with these economic sanctions as the reason that the DPRK has been able to develop its nuclear and missile programmes. The PRC, meanwhile, has pointed to historical threats from the US toward the DPRK, economic sanctions, and joint military exercises as the "cause and crux" of the DPRK's weapons programmes.³⁴ These countries have perpetuated the conflict but they also have the leverage to transform the conflict from a cycle of constant provocation into a relationships characterised by cooperation.

³³The military of the Republic of Korea refused to sign the Armistice Agreement of 1953. *Armistice Agreement for the Restoration of the South Korean State (1953)*, Our Document Initiative. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=85>; BBC News. *The Korean War Armistice*. (5 March 2015). <http://www.bbc.com/news/10165796>

³⁴*Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference*. (12 September 2016). Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1396892.shtml

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Since 1948, the DPRK has been ruled by the Kim family. Their rule has been maintained through a cult of personality, restricted international travel, and state-controlled media. Kim Il Sung became the first Head of State and Premier of the Cabinet of the DPRK in 1948, instated by the Worker's Party of Korea.³⁵ After his death in 1994, he was succeeded by his son Kim Jong Il, and now his grandson, Kim Jong Un. The political, economic, and social systems by which the Kim family continues to govern today were created by Kim Il Sung.

The DPRK self-describes as an independent socialist state, following the ideology of *Juche*, which values the principles of independence, self-reliance, and self-defence.³⁶ International observers characterise the government as a totalitarian, police state.³⁷

Since the Korean War, the DPRK has experienced fluctuant relationships with the US and the ROK. The DPRK government's utmost concern has always been the maintenance of its national sovereignty, security, and ideology. It views the policies and military postures of the US and the ROK as the most significant threats to their primary interests. Kim Jong Un's secondary priority is developing the economy. These priorities, including the perceived threats from the US, are outlined in Kim Jong Un's March 2013 address introducing the DPRK's renewed Byongjin policy and in other official government statements.³⁸

The PRC has been one of the DPRK's closest political and economic allies since the Korean War; however, relations have deteriorated in the last few decades,

³⁵Harris M. Lentz III. *Heads of States and Governments Since 1945*, p. 480. Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers. (1994).

³⁶*Political System*. Democratic People's Republic of Korea Official Webpage. <http://www.korea-dpr.com/political.html>

³⁷Bruce Cumings. *North Korea: Another Country*. The New Press. (2003).

³⁸*Report on Plenary Session of WPK Central Committee*. KCNA. (31 March 2013). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201303/news31/2013033124ee.html>; *Full text of a report by Kim Jong Un at the 31 March 2013 plenary meeting of the Workers Party of Korea Central Committee*. National Committee on North Korea. (1 April 2013). http://www.ncnk.org/resources/news-items/kim-jong-uns-speeches-and-public-statements-1/KJU_CentralCommittee_KWP.pdf; Cheon Seong-Whun. *The Kim Jong-un Regime's "Byongjin" (Parallel Development) Policy of Economy and Nuclear Weapons and the 'April 1st Nuclearization Law'*. Online Series. CO 13-11. Korean Institute for National Reunification. (23 April 2013). [http://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/ DATA01/co13-11\(E\).pdf](http://www.kinu.or.kr/upload/neoboard/ DATA01/co13-11(E).pdf); *North-South Relations Have Been Put at State of War: Special Statement of DPRK*. KCNA. (30 March 2013).

and particularly in the last few years.³⁹ Nevertheless, the PRC supports the DPRK's freedom to choose its style of governance and economic system and has continued trade with the country, despite international economic sanctions. The PRC receives 86% of DPRK exports and is responsible for 88% of its imports. They routinely step in as political support to the DPRK in peace talks and negotiations on the conflict with the US and the ROK.⁴⁰ However, as previously mentioned, relations between the DPRK and PRC are not straightforward.⁴¹ The PRC government is highly concerned about the DPRK's missile launches and nuclear tests. Meanwhile, the DPRK maintains a certain distance to ensure the PRC government understands it cannot infringe upon its sovereignty, and can continue with its military strategy.⁴²

Republic of Korea

Following the Korean War, the ROK depended on the US for economic, political, and military support. In 1987, the country shifted from authoritarian rule to democracy, opened up its economy, and no longer relied on foreign aid for survival. However, political and military support from the US remains of utmost importance as the DPRK has heavily invested in and developed its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programmes since the Korean War. The ROK has decided not to pursue a nuclear weapons programme and instead rely on the US military's nuclear capability, as well as American troops stationed in the ROK to assist in its defence in the event of a nuclear attack.

The ROK has also maintained a primarily positive, working relationship with the PRC, despite their conflict with the DPRK. The PRC has stated that additional US military presence in Northeast Asia in support of the ROK could deeply damage relations. While relations have been affected by recent

³⁹Eleanor Albertand Beina Xu. *China – North Korea Relationship*. Council on Foreign Relations. (8 February 2016). <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-north-korea-relationship/p11097>; Balazs Szalontai. *How, and why, China and North Korea have drifted apart*. NK News. (19 April 2017).

⁴⁰North Korea. The Observatory of Economic Complexity. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/prk/>

⁴¹Eleanor Albert and Beina Xu. *The China – North Korea Relationship*. Council on Foreign Relations. (8 February 2016). <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-north-korea-relationship/p11097>

⁴²Jae Ho Chung and Myung-hae Choi. *Uncertain allies or uncomfortable neighbors? Making sense of China–North Korea Relations, 1949–2010*. The Pacific Review, Vol. 26, 3. (2013); Jamil Anderlini. *North Korea makes public its paranoia over China*. The Financial Times. (18 May 2016).

decisions to send additional American military equipment to the ROK, the overall relationship remains stable.⁴³

The ROK's current interests in this conflict are focused on preventing a war on the peninsula, denuclearising the DPRK, maintaining close political and military ties with the US, and a sustainable economic and political relationship with the PRC.⁴⁴

United States

The US and the ROK have been a united front against the DPRK since the division of Korea and the American military government that ruled the southern half of the peninsula following the end of the Second World War. The military government dissolved following elections in 1948 and the military withdrew in 1949. However, a year later when the civil war broke out, the US military, under UN command, returned to the peninsula to aid the ROK. Since then, the US has remained their political, military, and economic ally.

A strong alliance with the ROK continues to be important to the US due to the location of the ROK. Building US military presence in and around the Korean peninsula provides the US capability to monitor and defend against potential military action by the DPRK or the PRC.

The US' primary interests in this conflict include a continued alliance with the ROK, denuclearisation of the DPRK, a major shift in DPRK policies, and the maintenance of its economic and military power in Northeast Asia amidst a rising PRC.

⁴³ *S. Korea appeals China's retaliatory measures to WTO*. Yonhap News Agency. (20 March 2017). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/business/2017/03/20/0501000000AEN20170320007200320.html>

⁴⁴ Jayshree Bajoria and Beina Xu. *The Six Party Talks on North Korea's Nuclear Program*. Council on Foreign Relations. (30 September 2013). <http://www.cfr.org/proliferation/six-party-talks-north-korea-s-nuclear-program/p13593>

People's Republic of China

The DPRK is important to the PRC due to its geopolitical location for two primary reasons. First, US allies (Japan, ROK, Philippines and Taiwan) surround the PRC's eastern border and at a time of rising PRC – US competition in the region, a cooperative relationship with the DPRK is advantageous for the PRC government.⁴⁵

Second, and most importantly, the PRC's primary interest is preserving domestic stability, thus it needs stability along its shared border with the DPRK.⁴⁶ The PRC's need for stability on the border equates to maintenance of the status quo on the Korean peninsula. An escalation into conflict in the immediate term could result in chaos along the PRC – DPRK border due to a likely influx of refugees into its Northeast region. Additionally, a DPRK nuclear or missile mishap could harm Chinese citizens. In the long-term, the PRC does not see a unified Korea under the auspices of the American government serving its best interests, thus their interest includes the desire for a continued alliance with the DPRK and a divided Korea.

⁴⁵ Under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte, who assumed office in June 2016, there are indications that the Philippines will pursue a foreign policy that is less dependent on the US and instead prioritise relations with China.

⁴⁶ Eleanor Albert and Beina Xu. *The China – North Korea Relationship*. Council on Foreign Relations. (8 February 2016).

<http://www.cfr.org/china/china-north-korea-relationship/p11097>

KEY DRIVING FACTORS OF CONFLICT

This section identifies the key driving factors of the conflict. This paper does not set out to conduct a comprehensive review of the conflict or identify every point of contention that needs to be transformed. Rather, it focuses on the key factors identified as presently driving the conflict, that without, the conflict would not exist or would be completely different.⁴⁷ The driving factors identified in this analysis are as follows, and are not listed in order of importance:

1. **Punitive military and economic measures by the United States and the Republic of Korea towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**
2. **Weapons development and testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**
3. **One-sided narratives subscribed to by parties to the conflict**
4. **Economic and military competition between the United States and the People's Republic of China for influence in East Asia**

⁴⁷ For a discussion on the importance of identifying key driving factors of conflict, see *Reflecting on Peace Practice: Participant Training Manual 2013*. CDA Collaborative. (2013). <http://cdacollaborative.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Reflecting-on-Peace-Practice-1-Participant-Training-Manual.pdf>http://cdacollaborative.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/RPP_Training_Manuals-RPP-II-ToCA-2009.pdf

1. Punitive military and economic measures by the United States and the Republic of Korea towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Korean Peninsula Conflict has become a cycle of provocation between the US and the ROK, and the DPRK. Both sides accuse the other of acting as a provocateur, while it is the actions of both that fuel the conflict. This section reviews the punitive measures imposed by the US and the ROK on the DPRK which the DPRK consistently cites as the most provocative and threatening. The DPRK points to these actions as providing rationale for its contributions to the conflict.

The DPRK has explicitly stated that the advancement of its missile and nuclear weapons programmes (See also Key Driving Factor 2) is a necessary self-defence measure in response to US “hostile policy.”⁴⁸ The policies most regularly cited include nuclear threats from US government officials, US – ROK joint military exercises, the US arms race and personnel maintenance in Northeast Asia, and US-led economic sanctions.

Nuclear Threats

DPRK government officials have consistently stated that a nuclear deterrent will be a necessity as long as the US, a nuclear capable country, threatens the country.⁴⁹ Since the Korean War, US government officials have either

⁴⁸ *Full Text: N. Korea's Statement on Its Nuclear Program*. Washington Post. (10 February 2005). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A13987-2005Feb10.html>; *Statement by H.E. Mr. Ri Yong Ho, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the United Nations General Assembly*. United Nations Official Website. (23 September 2016). <https://gadebate.un.org/en/71/democratic-peoples-republic-korea>; Leon Sigal. *North Korea's Perspectives on the Global Elimination of Nuclear Weapons*. The Henry L. Stimson Center, (May 2009) <http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/north-korea-s-perspective-on-the-global-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/>; *Report on Plenary Session of WPK Central Committee*. KCNA. (31 March 2013). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201303/news31/2013033124ee.html>; *Full text of a report by Kim Jong Un at the 31 March 2013 plenary meeting of the Workers Party of Korea Central Committee*. National Committee on North Korea. (1 April 2013). http://www.ncnk.org/resources/news-items/kim-jong-uns-speeches-and-public-statements-1/KJU_CentralCommittee_KWP.pdf

⁴⁹ *Report on Plenary Session of WPK Central Committee*. KCNA. (31 March 2013). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201303/news31/2013033124ee.html>; *Full text of a report by Kim Jong Un at the 31 March 2013 plenary meeting of the Workers Party of Korea Central Committee*. National Committee on North Korea. (1 April 2013). http://www.ncnk.org/resources/news-items/kim-jong-uns-speeches-and-public-statements-1/KJU_CentralCommittee_KWP.pdf; Leon Sigal. *North Korea's Perspectives on the Global Elimination of Nuclear Weapons*. The Henry L. Stimson Center, (May 2009) <http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/north-korea-s-perspective-on-the-global-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/>

implied the threat of the use of nuclear weapons against the DPRK or directly threatened the country at least 15 times.⁵⁰

The first US nuclear threats occurred during the Korean War in 1950 as US President Harry Truman warned the DPRK that it could use any weapon in its arsenal against them. The context of President Truman's statement was in reference to the US' use of atomic bombs against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki five years earlier, thus demonstrating a capability and willingness to deploy such weapons. To date, the US is still the only country to use nuclear weapons in a state of war.⁵¹

During the Korean War, the US threatened to use and prepared to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK and PRC militaries on multiple occasions. For example, on April 5, 1951, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered an atomic response against PRC bases if large numbers of new troops entered the fighting or if bombers were launched from PRC bases against US personnel or property.⁵² In December 1952, two years after the US began threatening the use of nuclear weapons, the DPRK established the Atomic Energy Research Institute to begin its pursuit for nuclear capability.⁵³

In 1958, four years after the signing of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement, the US secretly placed nuclear weapons on a US military base in the ROK in violation of the agreement. In Article 13(d) of the agreement, all parties committed to cease the introduction of any new weapons into Korea except to replace existing weapons. These nuclear weapons remained in the ROK until the US removed them in 1991.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See Annex 2

⁵¹ *Nuclear Weapons*. United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (2017). <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/>

⁵² See Annex 2

⁵³ *Atomic Energy Research Institute*. Nuclear Threat Initiative. (30 September 2011). <http://www.nti.org/learn/facilities/776/>; DPRK Net – Encyclopedia: *Science Technology Research Institutions*. Joogang Ilbo. <http://nk.joins.com>

⁵⁴ *Armistice Agreement*. United Nations Peacemaker. (27 July 1953). http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/KP%2BKR_530727_AgreementConcerningMilitaryArmistice.pdf; Jae-Bong, Lee. *US Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s: South Korea & North Korea's Nuclear Development: Toward Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula*. The Asia-Pacific Journal, 7 (8-3) 11 (2009 February) <http://apjjf.org/-Lee-Jae-Bong/3053/article.html>

The US discussed the possibility of using nuclear weapons on numerous occasions into the 1970s. In 1975, the US Secretary of Defense stated that the US would carefully consider using nuclear weapons against the DPRK if the circumstances required it. One year later, following an incident between the US and the DPRK along the DMZ, the US administration sent multiple aircraft capable of carrying nuclear weapons to the ROK as an intimidation tactic.

In the early 1990s, during the final years of US President George H. W. Bush's administration, US – DPRK relations began to improve. However, the transition of US President Bill Clinton into office in 1993 had consequences on the relationship between the US and the DPRK. The Clinton administration chose to handle the DPRK in a cautious manner, which led to rising tensions between the two countries. In July of 1993, President Clinton vowed to destroy the country if the DPRK used nuclear weapons in any capacity.⁵⁵ The US and the DPRK teetered on the brink of violent conflict in June of 1994. The IAEA Safeguards Agreement with the DPRK broke down and the US sent multiple nuclear capable aircraft carriers to the ROK in anticipation of war. Former US President Jimmy Carter intervened by traveling to the DPRK and engaging in dialogue with the leadership. This trip led the Clinton Administration to broker the 1994 Agreed Framework a few months later, which led to the suspension of the DPRK's nuclear programme for nine years.

In January 2001, seven years after the DPRK suspended its nuclear programme, US President George W. Bush took office and relations with the DPRK were unsettled again. The 2002 US Nuclear Posture Review identified the DPRK as a possible target for attack and, in the January 2002 State of the Union address, US President George W. Bush named the DPRK, Iraq and Iran as, "the axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world." One year later, the US invaded Iraq and overthrew its leader, Saddam Hussein.

DPRK officials have pointed to the US' naming of Iraq and the DPRK as the axis of evil, and the subsequent invasion of Iraq, as rationale for its fear of

⁵⁵ See Annex 2

invasion and the need to strengthen its nuclear deterrent.⁵⁶ It is worthwhile to keep this connection in mind when developing a strategy to respond to the DPRK's missile launches and nuclear tests.

In January 2005, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice named the DPRK as an "outpost of tyranny" during her confirmation hearing.⁵⁷ On February 10, 2005, the DPRK Foreign Ministry announced itself a nuclear state and cited recent US nuclear threats and Secretary of State Rice's tyranny comment as justification, stating:

The U.S. disclosed its attempt to topple the political system in the DPRK at any cost, threatening it with a nuclear stick. This compels us to take a measure to bolster its nuclear weapons arsenal in order to protect the ideology, system, freedom and democracy chosen by its people.⁵⁸

Overall, the Bush administration suffered from infighting regarding policies towards the DPRK, which resulted in conflicting messages being sent to the DPRK government, causing confusion within the government as well as escalated tensions with the US.⁵⁹ One camp within the Bush administration believed that engagement with the DPRK government was the way forward, while another insisted on taking a hard line approach. During the nuclear freeze that began in 1994, the DPRK was not yet nuclear capable. Some observers have argued that if the Bush Administration had been able to choose a consistent strategy and maintain stable relations with the DPRK, it is possible that the freeze would still be in place and the DPRK would not have become nuclear capable.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ KCNA Commentary Lauds Successful H-bomb Test in DPRK. Korean Central News Agency. (8 January 2016) www.kcna.co.jp/item/2016/201601/news08/20160108-21ee.html; Glyn Ford. *Nuclear weapons trouble is brewing*. The Tribune Magazine. (14 February 2017). <http://www.tribunemagazine.org/2017/02/nuclear-weapons-trouble-is-brewing/>

⁵⁷ *Confirmation Hearing of Condoleezza Rice*. Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate. (18 January 2005). <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-109shrg22847/pdf/CHRG-109shrg22847.pdf>

⁵⁸ *N. Korea's statement in full*. BBC News. (10 February 2005). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4252515.stm>

⁵⁹ Bruce Cumings. *Bush's Bomb*. The Nation. (1 May 2003). <https://www.thenation.com/article/bushs-bomb/>; Mike Chinoy. *Meltdown: The Inside Story of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis*. 2008. St. Martin's Press.

⁶⁰ Bruce Cumings. *Bush's Bomb*. The Nation. (1 May 2003). <https://www.thenation.com/article/bushs-bomb/>

In 2016, the US implied the use of nuclear weapons on three separate occasions. In April, US President Obama made the statement, “we could, obviously, destroy North Korea with our arsenals. But aside from the humanitarian costs of that, they are right next door to our vital ally, Republic of Korea.”⁶¹ On January 10 and September 13 and 21, 2016, the US flew nuclear capable aircraft over the ROK in response to Pyongyang’s nuclear tests earlier in those months.⁶²

On September 11, 2016, the DPRK Foreign Ministry released the following statement, “the United States compelled the DPRK to develop nuclear warheads, and the nuclear threat it has constantly posed to the DPRK for decades is the engine that has pushed the DPRK to this point.”⁶³ One day later, the spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry for Foreign Affairs also cited the US as the “cause and crux of the nuclear issue.” The spokesperson stated, “[i]t is the US who should reflect upon how the situation has become what it is today, and search for an effective solution. It is better for the doer to undo what he has done. The US should shoulder its due responsibilities.”⁶⁴

The Global Times, the PRC’s national English language newspaper under the People’s Daily, China’s largest newspaper group, went further to state, “without the reckless military threat from the US and South Korea and the US’ brutal overthrow of regimes in some small countries, Pyongyang may not have developed such a firm intent to develop nuclear weapons as now.”⁶⁵

⁶¹ See annex 2

⁶² *US bomber flies over South Korea amid standoff over North Korea nuclear tests*. The Guardian. (10 January 2016). <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/10/us-bomber-flies-over-south-korea-amid-standoff-over-north-korea-nuclear-tests>; James Pearson and Ju-min Park. *U.S. bombers fly over South Korea in show of force after nuclear test*. Reuters. (13 September 2016).

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN11J059>

⁶³ *China urges U.S. to take responsibility on Korean Peninsula nuclear issue*. Xinhuanet. (12 September 2016). http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-09/12/c_135682551.htm

⁶⁴ *Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. (12 September 2016).

http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1396892.shtml

⁶⁵ “[t]he US’ brutal overthrow of regimes in some small countries” likely refers to the US overthrow of heads of state in Iraq and Libya.” *Carter wrong to blame China for North Korean nuke issue*. The Global Times. (11 September 2016).

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1005942.shtml>

This statement is consistent with concerns the DPRK has expressed over the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.⁶⁶

The US maintains that their military actions are a necessary defence measure to deter the DPRK from further provocative actions or using a nuclear weapon. In September 2016, Daniel Russel, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, testified before the Senate to explain that US policy is grounded in deterrence, pressure, and diplomacy.⁶⁷ He stated that the US government will “maintain a strong defensive military posture to deter an attack” unless the DPRK agrees to denuclearise.

US – ROK Annual Joint Military Exercises

Since 1976, the US has conducted joint military exercises with the ROK with the aim of countering threats from the DPRK.⁶⁸ The DPRK has consistently identified the joint military exercises as one of the most hostile actions the US engages in and one of the primary reasons for advancing its weapons programmes.⁶⁹ On a number of occasions since the exercises began, the DPRK has requested an end to joint military exercises in exchange for talks to improve relations.⁷⁰ Furthermore, over the past few years, and at least twice in 2016, the DPRK has requested an end to joint military exercises in

⁶⁶ In 2003, Gaddafi agreed to dismantle Libya’s nuclear weapons programme and allow inspectors from the US, UK and international organisations to verify his commitment. However, in 2011, the US intervened in the Libyan civil war and has been accredited with backing the overthrow of Gaddafi. See David Chance. *North Korea cites “tragedy” of countries that give up nuclear programs*. Reuters. (21 February 2013).

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-north-idUSBRE91K06720130221>; *Chronology of Libya’s Disarmament and Relations with the United States*. Arms Control Association. (September 2016).

<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/LibyaChronology>; *The Legacy of Obama’s ‘Worst Mistake.’ The Atlantic*. (15 April 2016).

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/obamas-worst-mistake-libya/478461/>

⁶⁷ *The Persistent Threat of North Korea and Developing an Effective U.S. Response: Testimony by Daniel R. Russel, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*. US Department of State. (28 September 2016).

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2016/09/262528.htm>

⁶⁸ Jeongwon Yoon. *Alliance Activities: Meetings, Exercises, and the CFC’s Roles*. Recalibrating the U.S. - Republic of Korea Alliance, p. 99. (2003 May).

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/100616/Recalibrating_US_Republic_full.pdf

⁶⁹ *Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK*. (22 November 2016).

http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2016-11-22-000; Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson. *Korean-American Relations: 1866-1997*. p. 127-129. (December 1998).

<http://www.sunypress.edu/p-2890-korean-american-relations.aspx>

⁷⁰ *Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK*. (22 November 2016).

http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2016-11-22-000

exchange for a halt to nuclear tests.⁷¹ This request was ignored by the Obama administration as it maintained that it would not engage in formal dialogue with the DPRK unless steps were made towards denuclearisation.

In 2016, the US and ROK militaries conducted at least four joint military exercises, including Ulchi Freedom Guardian, Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, Teak Knife, and the Red Flag Exercise. The Ulchi Freedom Guardian and Key Resolve – Foal Eagle exercises demand the most attention from the DPRK and international media due to the size of the operations.

The annual joint military exercises held in April and May of each year, Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, are considered by the DPRK as the most threatening exercises. The 2016 Key Resolve and Foal Eagle exercises were held in the ROK for nearly two months and were the largest in size to date. They involved over 300,000 military personnel, multiple nuclear-capable submarines, and hundreds of nuclear-capable aircraft. In the exercises, personnel participate in a simulation of war with the DPRK in land, air, and naval operations. In 2016, the exercises reportedly included new, joint ROK – US military plans.⁷² US and ROK media report that these plans, implemented into the 2016 exercises, included the simulation of “decapitation” raids aimed at the DPRK top leadership and “pre-emptive military operations to detect, disrupt, destroy and defend against North Korea’s nuclear and missile arsenal.”⁷³

⁷¹ Sam Kim. *North Korea Offers Nuclear-Test Halt If U.S. Stops Drills*. Bloomberg News. (15 January 2016). <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-15/north-korea-offers-to-stop-nuclear-tests-if-u-s-suspends-drills-ijfth7t>; Eric Talmadge. *N. Korea to halt nuke tests if US stops drills*. Associated Press. (24 April 2016) <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/e1c5534f2fc34d87bf343f4d2499ee20/ap-exclusive-n-korea-halt-nuke-tests-if-us-stops-drills>; Jack Kim. *North Korea offers to suspend nuclear tests if U.S. suspends military drills*. Reuters. (10 January 2015).

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-drills-idUSKBN0KJ09F20150110>; Jethro Mullen and Madison Park. *Tensions set to rise on Korean peninsula as annual war games near*. (2 March 2015). <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/24/asia/koreas-military-exercises/>

⁷² S. Korea, *U.S. begin largest-ever military drills on striking N.K. leadership*. Yonhap News Agency. (7 March 2016).

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2016/03/07/0200000000AEN20160307002800315.html>

⁷³ *CFC Announces Start of Key Resolve and Foal Eagle 2016*. United States Forces Korea. (6 March 2016).

<http://www.usfk.mil/Media/Press-Releases/Article/686836/cfc-announces-start-of-key-resolve-and-foal-eagle-2016/>; *Defense officials should be more consistent, transparent*. The Korea Times.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2015/10/202_188216.html; Anna Fifield. *In drills, U.S., South Korea practice striking North’s nuclear plants, leaders*. The Washington Post. (7 March 2016). <http://wpo.st/vjEfl>

The DPRK military did not respond well to the simulation of invasion and particularly to reports of simulations to target DPRK leaders. It was described as the “height of hostile acts” and followed by a threat to launch an “all-out offensive” against the US and the ROK if they continued with the exercises.⁷⁴ On April 23, 2016, three days before the end of the military exercises, the DPRK launched a ballistic missile from a submarine. A former DPRK ambassador described the DPRK’s tests as “fair self-defensive measures” in response to US “nuclear threat[s] and blackmail.”⁷⁵

In March and April 2017, the US and ROK militaries again held the annual Key Resolve – Foal Eagle drills rehearsing similar tasks and manoeuvres to 2016. In 2017, a US military official noted that “a bigger number of and more diverse U.S. special operation forces” would take part in these exercises.⁷⁶ The DPRK responded again with angry rhetoric.⁷⁷

Ulchi Freedom Guardian, a computer-aided joint military exercise held in August 2016 lasted 12 days and included over 80,000 soldiers. Media in the ROK reported that the exercises included “a wartime countermeasures scenario that involves launching a pre-emptive strike on a DPRK nuclear or missile base during a crisis.”⁷⁸ Three days into the exercise, the DPRK responded by test-firing a submarine-launched ballistic missile in waters off their east coast. Also, three days following the exercise, they fired three intermediate-range ballistic missiles into the sea.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ *Talk of Kim Jong Un “beheading mission” fans Korea tension.* CBS News. (8 March 2016).

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/north-korea-south-korea-talk-of-beheading-strike-option-fans-tension/>

⁷⁵ Don Melvin, Jim Sciutto and Will Ripley. *North Korea launches missile from submarine.* CNN News. (25 April 2016). <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/23/asia/north-korea-launches-missile-from-submarine/>

⁷⁶ *U.S. Navy SEALs to take part in joint drills in S. Korea.* Yonhap News Agency. (13 March 2017). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2017/03/13/0200000000AEN20170313009400315.html>

⁷⁷ *North Korea warns of ‘merciless’ response amid drills.* Al Jazeera. (2 March 2017).

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/north-korea-warns-merciless-response-drills-170302040305053.html>

Park Byong-su. *South Korea and US begin Ulchi-Freedom Guardian joint exercises.* 78 The Hankyoreh. (23 August 2016). http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/758034.html

⁷⁹ Kim Soo-yeon. *N. Korea test-fires submarine-launched missile: Seoul.* Yonhap News Agency. (24 August 2016). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2016/08/24/0401000000AEN20160824000355315.html>

The exercises pose a number of challenges to the situation on the Korean peninsula. First, the US and ROK militaries are practicing for a future invasion of the DPRK. The DPRK finds this simulation to be a direct threat and claims that in response, it is compelled to strengthen its nuclear deterrence to prepare for such an invasion. The US and the ROK then perceive the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme as a threat to the ROK and its other regional allies and, in return, increases the size and scope of their joint military exercises. The decisions by both sides create a competition between the two militaries, which is fuelling the conflict.

Second, the US and the ROK militaries' practice of a strike, whether preemptive or preventive, on the DPRK's nuclear facilities raise serious security concerns.⁸⁰ If there are radioactive inventories at the targeted location, they could be released into the environment and the strike itself could become a nuclear attack on the DPRK, causing death to people within range of the radioactive material.⁸¹ Additionally, it implies that the US and ROK militaries would launch the first strike based on an assumption or calculation that the DPRK is preparing for attack. This causes concern as US – ROK forces could misinterpret a DPRK military action as definite preparation for war and erroneously launch a nuclear strike on their facilities, beginning a war based on miscalculation, which otherwise may not have occurred.

US Arms Race and Personnel Maintenance on the Korean Peninsula

The US has maintained a troop presence since the conclusion of the Korean War in 1953. The US Forces Korea includes 28,500 American troops positioned throughout the ROK and is justified by security concerns that emerge from the Korean Peninsula Conflict, as well as elsewhere in the East Asia region.⁸² Nevertheless, the US Forces Korea is a point of contention for the DPRK.⁸³

⁸⁰ Karl P. Mueller, Jasen J. Castillo, Forrest E. Morgan, Negeen Pegahi and Brian Rosen. *Striking First: Preemptive and Preventive Attack in U.S. National Security Policy*, pp. 6-8. Rand Corporation. (2006). http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG403.pdf

⁸¹ Bennett Ramberg. *Attacks on Nuclear Reactors: The Implications of Israel's Strike on Osiraq*. Political Science Quarterly, vol. 97, no. 4, pp. 653–669. (1982). www.jstor.org/stable/2149782

⁸² Mark E. Manyin, Emma Chanlett-Avery, Mary Beth D. Nikitin, Brock R. Williams and Jonathan R. Corrado. *U.S.-South Korea Relations*. Congressional Research Service. (20 October 2016). <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41481.pdf>

⁸³ *DPRK Foreign Ministry Demands Pullout of U.S. Forces from S. Korea. KCNA*. (7 September 2016). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2016/201609/news07/20160907-27ee.html>

The DPRK has requested or demanded the removal of US troops from the Korean peninsula several times since the Korean War. In 2016, for example, the DPRK made this request in response to a joint condemnation by US President Obama and ROK President Park regarding the DPRK's missile firing the day before.⁸⁴

The most recent point of contention regarding US military on the peninsula has come with the US – ROK agreement to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) onto South Korean soil. THAAD is a missile defence system designed to track missile data and intercept and destroy short and medium-range missiles once the missiles have turned downward towards earth.⁸⁵

In early 2016, talks to deploy THAAD officially began with the stated aim of countering the DPRK military's growing missile and nuclear capabilities. While the US claims the system is purely defensive, the DPRK and PRC immediately warned the US and the ROK against deployment. Pyongyang's concern is straightforward. It views the anti-missile shield as an invasive move and as a further contribution to the arms race in Northeast Asia.⁸⁶

The PRC's concern with THAAD is due to its surveillance capability to gather data within a certain radius. The distance could include parts of the PRC, allowing it to track data from PRC missiles and transfer it to the US military. At the onset of talks, the PRC's Ambassador to the ROK stated that its deployment could destroy PRC – ROK ties "in an instant."⁸⁷

The ROK initially resisted the proposal based on the determination that it would not be worth souring relations with the PRC. However, following the DPRK's third missile launch in 2016, the US was able to convince the

⁸⁴ Gabriel Jonsson. *The Peace-keeping Role of the American troops in South Korea*. International Journal of Korean Unification Studies, 20.1, pp. 155-182. (2011); *DPRK Foreign Ministry Demands Pullout of U.S. Forces from S. Korea*. KCNA. (7 September 2016). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2016/201609/news07/20160907-27ee.html>

⁸⁵ *Terminal High Altitude Area Defense*. Lockheed Martin. (2017).

<http://www.lockheedmartin.com/us/products/thaad.html>

⁸⁶ *DPRK condemns THAAD deployment*. China.org.cn. (30 July 2016). http://www.china.org.cn/world/2016-07/30/content_38992513.htm

⁸⁷ *Chinese Envoy Warns THAAD Deployment Would 'Destroy' Ties*. The Chosun Ilbo. (24 February 2016). http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2016/02/24/2016022401747.html

ROK to agree to the deployment.⁸⁸ In August of the same year, the PRC's Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on South Korean counterpart Yun Byung-se to withdraw the THAAD agreement, further stating that THAAD not only threatens Chinese interests, but also serves to provoke the DPRK.⁸⁹ Portions of THAAD have already been delivered to the ROK and it is scheduled to be fully in place by the end of 2017.

US-Led Economic Sanctions

The US government first imposed economic restrictions on the DPRK government in 1950, three days into the Korean War, by placing a total embargo on DPRK exports to the US.⁹⁰ The US government did not ease sanctions until 1999. The US has since continually imposed or tightened economic sanctions on the DPRK government and individuals, contributing to the isolation of the country. The DPRK has routinely responded to US-led economic sanctions by noting their provocative nature.⁹¹

In 1992, the US Congress began imposing economic sanctions on DPRK entities for missile proliferation and nuclear activities.⁹² Since 1992, the American government has imposed or tightened sanctions on the DPRK government, corporations or individuals at least 17 times, with at least four of these instances occurring in 2016.

In November and December 2015, the US Treasury Department sanctioned the DPRK Ambassador to Myanmar and other DPRK individuals and companies with links to the DPRK's mining industry for allegedly

⁸⁸ *U.S. to Deploy THAAD Missile Battery to South Korea*. U.S. Department of Defense. (8 July 2016). <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/831630/us-to-deploy-thaad-missile-battery-to-south-korea>

⁸⁹ Gil Yun-hyung, Kim Oi-hyun and Lee Je-hun. *China may ask South Korea to choose: THAAD, or bilateral relations*. The Hankyoreh. (25 August 2016). http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/758411.html

⁹⁰ Suk Hi Kim and Semoon Chang. *Economic Sanctions against a Nuclear North Korea: An Analysis of United States and United Nations Actions Since 1950*, p. 36 – 37. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers. (2 August 2007).

⁹¹ *Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK*. (22 November 2016). http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2016-11-22-000

⁹² *Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy*. Arms Control Association. (October 2016). <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>

contributing to the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme.⁹³ In response, a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman warned the US of consequences as a result of the decision. The spokesman insisted on “the conclusion of the peace treaty with the US in order to put an end to the “hostile policy” which he described as “the root cause of all problems.”⁹⁴

In January 2016, the DPRK asked the US to engage in talks to end the Korean War.⁹⁵ However, after the two parties could not reach an agreement on terms to begin the talks, the DPRK conducted a nuclear test days later. In February and March 2016, US Congress and the UN Security Council imposed “the strongest sanctions” yet on the DPRK.⁹⁶ The official purpose was to sanction entities found to have contributed to the DPRK's nuclear programme, arms trade, human rights violations, and other illicit activities. The DPRK responded by launching multiple ballistic missiles in March.⁹⁷

On July 6, 2016, the US Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Kim Jong Un and ten other top DPRK officials, as well as five entities over alleged human rights abuses.⁹⁸ Earlier that day, the DPRK announced that it was willing to discuss the possibility of “denuclearization of the entire peninsula”

⁹³ *Treasury Sanctions Supporters Of North Korea's Weapons Of Mass Destruction And Illicit Finance Networks*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. (13 November 2015).

<https://www.treasury.gov/presscenter/pressreleases/Pages/jl0269.aspx>; *Treasury Targets North Korea's Global Weapons Proliferation Network*. (8 December 2015).

<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0295.aspx>

⁹⁴ *Statement by a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. United Nations Security Council. (16 December 2015).

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2015_1007.pdf

⁹⁵ Megan Cassella and Doina Chiacu. *U.S. rejected North Korea peace talks offer before last nuclear test: State Department*. Reuters. (22 February 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN0VUI0XE>

⁹⁶ *Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, and Ambassador Oh Joon, at the Security Council Stakeout Following the Adoption of Resolution 2270 on DPRK Sanctions*. United States Mission to the United Nations. (2 March 2016). <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7164>; H.R. 757 - *North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016*. United States Congress.

<https://www.congress.gov/bills/114th-congress/house-bill/757>; *Security Council Imposes Fresh Sanctions on Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2270 (2016)*. United Nations Security Council. (2 March 2016). <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12267.doc.htm>

⁹⁷ Jack Kim and Ju-min Park. *Defiant North Korea fires ballistic missile into sea, Japan protests*. Reuters. (19 March 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN0WJ30V>

⁹⁸ *Treasury Sanctions North Korean Senior Officials and Entities Associated with Human Rights Abuses*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. (6 July 2016).

<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0506.aspx>

with the US.⁹⁹ However, the US government, as well as the majority of Western mainstream media outlets, overlooked or dismissed the offer. The DPRK launched ballistic missiles twice over the next two weeks.¹⁰⁰

The US government calculates that these sanctions will strain the DPRK government's financial resources to the extent that it will not be able to fund its nuclear and missile programmes.¹⁰¹ In reality, and as can be seen after 66 years of sanctions, this strategy has proven ineffective in persuading the DPRK to alter its policies. Examples of failed US sanctions can also be seen in Cuba, Iraq, Iran and Myanmar, where economic sanctions further entrenched the countries in their policies and provoked hostile responses instead of stimulating change.¹⁰² As Robert Pape argues, "[e]ven in the weakest and most fractured states, external pressure is more likely to enhance the nationalist legitimacy of rulers than to undermine it."¹⁰³

The Obama administration stated that the target of economic sanctions is the DPRK political leadership and elites.¹⁰⁴ However, political and economic elites generally have the economic means to soften the blow of even the most crippling economic sanctions. The cases of the DPRK, Iraq, Iran, and Sudan demonstrate how ordinary people suffer the most from large-scale economic

⁹⁹ *DPRK Government Denounces U.S., S. Korea's Sophism about "Denuclearization of North."* KCNA. (6 July 2016). <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2016/201607/news06/2016070641ee.html>; Robert Carlin. *North Korea Said it is Willing to Talk about Denuclearization... But No One Noticed.* 38 North. (12 July 2016). <http://38north.org/2016/07/rcarlin071216/>

¹⁰⁰ *North Korea 'fires three ballistic missiles into sea.'* BBC News. (19 July 2016). <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36831308>

¹⁰¹ Louis Charbonneau and Michelle Nichols. *U.N. imposes harsh new sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear program.* Reuters. (3 March 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-un-idUSKCN0W41Z2>

¹⁰² *As United States, Israel Abstain from Vote for First Time, General Assembly Adopts Annual Resolution Calling for Lifting of United States Embargo on Cuba.* United Nations. (26 October 2016). <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/ga11846.doc.htm>; Leon T. Hadar. *U.S. Sanctions against Burma: A Failure on All Fronts.* Cato Institute. (26 March 1998). <http://www.cato.org/publications/trade-policy-analysis/us-sanctions-against-burma-failure-all-fronts>; Peter Boone, Haris Gazdar and Athar Hussain. *Sanctions Against Iraq Costs of Failure.* (November 1997). <http://www.cesr.org/downloads/Sanctions%20Against%20Iraq%20Costs%20of%20Failure%201997.pdf>; Steve H. Hanke. *On the Failure of the Iranian Sanctions.* (February 2013). <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/failure-iranian-sanctions>

¹⁰³ Robert A. Pape. *Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work.* International Security, 22 (2) p. 107. (1997).

¹⁰⁴ The current US presidential administration under President Donald J. Trump, has yet to define such specifics about DPRK policy, however, it has thus far taken a similar approach. Lee Je-hun. *[Analysis] How effective will the "strongest sanctions" on North Korea really be?* The Hankyoreh. (27 February 2016). http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/732403.html

sanctions.¹⁰⁵ The US and UN-led sanctions target the DPRK's largest exports, mineral and metal. These are essential sources of income and the sanctions will cripple the earning power of not only those directly involved in the mining and metal industries but also the industries that support them.¹⁰⁶

US-led economic sanctions have either discouraged or barred international investment into the DPRK. The long-term effects of sanctions on the DPRK are apparent from their economic underdevelopment. Sixty-six years of US economic sanctions have meant slow economic growth, particularly over the past ten to 15 years, with its GDP ranking at 115th in the world, comparable to countries such as Afghanistan and Cambodia. Further, approximately 28% of the population nationwide is malnourished.¹⁰⁷

So far, the most recent round of sanctions appears to have little impact on overall DPRK trade. This is in part due to the fact that the US and their allies have placed economic sanctions on the DPRK since the 1980s, but also because the majority of DPRK trade is conducted with the PRC. Even though PRC President Xi Jinping vowed "full and complete implementation" of 2016 UN sanctions, trade volume between the DPRK and PRC increased by nine percent between June 2015 and June 2016.¹⁰⁸ This is consistent

¹⁰⁵ Barbara Crossette. *Iraq Sanctions Kill Children*. U.N. Reports. New York Times. (1 December 1995). <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/12/01/world/iraq-sanctions-kill-children-un-reports.html>; Beheshteh Farsheshani. *In Iran, Sanctions Hurt the Wrong People*. New York Times. (22 January 2014). <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/11/19/sanctions-successes-and-failures/in-iran-sanctions-hurt-the-wrong-people>; Amy Maxmen. Sudan Sanctions Deprive 'Whole Nation' of Health Care. Foreign Policy. (14 January 2016). <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/14/sudan-sanctions-deprive-whole-nation-of-health-care/>

¹⁰⁶ Andrei Lankov. *Average North Koreans will be hit hardest by sanctions*. Al Jazeera. (15 April 2016). <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/04/average-north-koreans-hit-hardest-sanctions-160413060120033.html>; *DPR Korea 2015 Humanitarian needs and priorities*. United Nations. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20150401%20DPR_Korea_NP_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰⁷ The 2012 UNICEF-led National Nutrition Survey on the DPRK findings is the most recent nationwide study conducted on nutrition levels in the country. The findings state, "Global Chronic Malnutrition (GCM) or Stunting prevalence is 27.9% at national level and is considered as a medium public health significance according to WHO standards. . . The situation is not critical and does not suggest emergency operations. However, attentions need to be paid to such factors as essential medicines, WASH situation and food security which affect the vulnerable children." *Democratic People's Republic of Korea Preliminary Report of the National Nutrition Survey 2012*. UNICEF. (October 2012). http://www.unicef.org/eapro/DPRK_2012_DPRK_National_Nutrition_Survey_Preliminary_report2012.pdf; *Joint Malnutrition dataset from UNICEF, World Bank and WHO*. UNICEF. (December 2016). <http://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>

¹⁰⁸ Kim Oi-hyun. *China issues official list of North Korea embargo products*. The Hankyoreh. (6 April 2016). http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/738498.html; *N. Korea-China Trade Grows Despite Sanctions*; <http://the-japan-news.com/news/article/0003214197>; Kim Soo-hye. *N. Korea-China Trade Grows Despite Sanctions*. (12 September 2016). http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2016/09/12/2016091201382.html

with the PRC's previous practices. Reports indicate that the PRC initially imposes economic sanctions on the DPRK but, soon after, either relaxes or liberally interprets sanctions to allow certain trade to continue.¹⁰⁹ For example, following UN sanctions passed in March 2016, the PRC allowed exports barred by sanctions to continue based on a clause on livelihood loopholes, which states that trade can continue if a company's survival is at stake.¹¹⁰ As some observers have noted, the PRC's actions are likely in light of its interest to avoid allowing "a failed nuclear state on their doorstep".¹¹¹

The US also cites human rights abuses as rationale for imposing economic sanctions on the DPRK government and the elite. While reports cite human rights issues in the DPRK, the US and ROK governments fail to recognise that in addition to the authoritarian nature of the DPRK government the ongoing conflict between these countries worsens human rights issues in the DPRK.¹¹² The country's economy suffers from international isolation and a lack of investment, and the government "prioritises military defence and national security over human security and political freedoms." The continual tightening of US-led economic sanctions and isolation of the country only serves to harm ordinary citizens and escalate tensions.

¹⁰⁹ Marcus Noland. *The (Non) Impact of UN Sanctions on North Korea*. Peterson Institute for International Economics. (December 2008). <https://piie.com/publications/wp/wp08-12.pdf>; Catherine Jones. *China's Interests, Actors, and the Implementation of Sanctions against North Korea*, Vol. 5, 1. The Asan Forum. (24 September 2015). <http://www.theasanforum.org/chinas-interests-actors-and-the-implementation-of-sanctions-against-north-korea/>

¹¹⁰ Bruce Klingner. *Chinese Foot-dragging on North Korea Thwarts U.S. Security Interests*. The Heritage Foundation. (11 August 2016). <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/08/chinese-foot-dragging-on-north-korea-thwarts-us-security-interests>; Jane Perlez and Yufan Huang. *A Hole in North Korean Sanctions Big Enough for Coal, Oil and Used Pianos*. New York Times. (31 March 2016).

Elise Hu. *The Livelihood Loophole and Other Weaknesses of North Korea Sanctions*. NPR. (15 September 2016). <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/09/15/493889932/the-livelihood-loophole-and-other-weaknesses-of-n-korea-sanctions>

¹¹¹ Elise Hu. *The Livelihood Loophole and Other Weaknesses of North Korea Sanctions*. NPR. (15 September 2016). <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/09/15/493889932/the-livelihood-loophole-and-other-weaknesses-of-n-korea-sanctions>

¹¹² *North Korea: Events of 2015*. Human Rights Watch. (2015). <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/north-korea>; Christine Ahn and Suzy Kim. *Improve North Korean Human Rights by Ending War*. Inter Press Service News Agency. (2 December 2014). <http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/12/opinion-improve-north-korean-human-rights-by-ending-war/>

2. Weapons development and testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The US consistently claims it imposes economic sanctions on the DPRK, conducts military exercises with the ROK, and maintains a military presence in Northeast Asia due to the threat posed by the DPRK government's nuclear testing and missile development programmes. It is easy to understand the US' concern. Increased nuclear development and frequent missile launches signals preparation for use. Also, numerous failed or misguided missile launches by the DPRK raise concerns of irresponsibility and unpredictability. A nuclear or missile mishap could harm citizens and military personnel in the ROK, Japan, PRC, DPRK, and beyond.

The DPRK government has stated that it is the continued conflict with the US and the ROK that creates their security concern and compels it to "divert large human and material resources to bolstering up the armed forces though they should have been directed to the economic development and improvement of people's living standard".¹¹³ While the DPRK economy is weak, it invests approximately 4 billion USD into the military, which is about 25 percent of GDP. The DPRK's GDP per capita is 696 USD and recent reports indicate that malnutrition is around 28 percent of the total population - both statistics are comparable to GDP per capita and malnutrition rates in Afghanistan and Rwanda.¹¹⁴ Again, this overinvestment can be attributed to a combination of the DPRK government's totalitarian governance as well as the fear built up by a seven-decade conflict with countries significantly more powerful than their own.

¹¹³ *AA Nullification Is Bold Decision to Terminate State of War on Korean Peninsula: KCNA Report*. Korea News Service (KNS). (26 March 2013).

<http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:SPhduQg37vQJ:www.kcna.co.jp/item/2013/201303/news26/20130326-17ee.html+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=kh>

¹¹⁴ *GDP and its breakdown at current prices in US Dollars*. United Nations Statistics Division. (December 2015). <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/dnllist.asp>; *Democratic People's Republic of Korea Preliminary Report of the National Nutrition Survey 2012*. UNICEF. (October 2012).

http://www.unicef.org/eapro/DPRK_2012_DPRK_National_Nutrition_Survey_Preliminary_report2012.pdf; *Joint Malnutrition dataset from UNICEF World Bank and WHO*. UNICEF. (December 2016). <http://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/>

DPRK Nuclear Programme

The DPRK's pursuit for nuclear capability began during the Korean War in 1952, after two years of nuclear threats from the US. The nuclear programme progressed over the coming decades, while negotiations to reverse these developments experienced both moments of progress and of stalemate. The most notable event may be the DPRK's agreement to freeze their nuclear programme for nine years as a result of the 1994 Agreed Framework negotiated by the Clinton Administration and initiated by Former US President Jimmy Carter.

However, the 1994 Framework collapsed in 2002, as a result of souring relations between the Bush Administration and the government under Kim Jong Il. The DPRK resumed operation of its nuclear facilities as a result. Four years later, DPRK nuclear weaponry became a reality. The military has since conducted five underground nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013 and two in 2016.¹¹⁵ The first test in 2006 was relatively small though each test has become more powerful. The nuclear test in September 2016 was the largest to date. The DPRK's neighbouring countries are legitimately concerned about these tests, as is the US due to its close relationship and deterrence commitment to the ROK and Japan and its military bases in the region.¹¹⁶

A great concern to the US is whether the DPRK has the capability to consistently miniaturise nuclear warheads to fit onto ballistic missiles. Currently, the DPRK only has the capability to deliver a nuclear weapon to the ROK due to its close proximity. However, since 2013, the DPRK has claimed the capability to place a nuclear warhead on a long-range missile on a number of occasions.¹¹⁷ This claim has not yet been corroborated and it is unlikely the DPRK has the capability yet, although it has been predicted that they will obtain this capability within the next five years.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ *North Korea's nuclear programme: How advanced is it?* BBC News. (6 January 2017).

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11813699>

¹¹⁶ Richard C. Bush. *The U.S. Policy of Extended Deterrence in East Asia: History, Current Views, and Implications*. Foreign Policy at Brookings. (February 2011).

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02_arms_control_bush.pdf

¹¹⁷ Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. *North Korea's Development of a Nuclear Weapons Strategy*. (2015).

http://38north.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/NKNE_Nuclear-Weapons-Strategy_Bermudez.pdf

¹¹⁸ *North Korea's Taepodong and Unha Missiles*. Federation of American Scientists.

<http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearweapons/Taepodong.html>

DPRK Ballistic Missile Programme

The DPRK has launched dozens of ballistic missiles over the past ten years. In 2016, the DPRK launched 24 ballistic missiles, and in 2017, launches have occurred nearly every month.¹¹⁹ Missile launches have steadily increased in frequency and advanced in technology over the past decade. The DPRK military has proven that it can launch short, medium, and long-range missiles. Long-range missiles have been launched into space, demonstrating the capability to reach the West Coast of the United States.¹²⁰

While the DPRK is increasing their range capability, their accuracy and ability to control missiles remains questionable. For example, the DPRK missile test-fire on August 2, 2016, entered Japanese-controlled waters without warning, raising tensions between the two countries, and prompting US and Japan to tighten economic sanctions.¹²¹

The DPRK claims that missile launches are necessary self-defence measures, however the US and the ROK views them as demonstrations of military strength and an attempt to intimidate the ROK. The US-led response to DPRK nuclear tests and missile launches has become rather predictable. They fly nuclear-capable bombers over the ROK, demand steps towards denuclearisation, and then pass economic sanctions on the DPRK government.

¹¹⁹ Remarks by Ambassador Nikki Haley at a Stakeout Following UN Security Council Consultations on DPRK. US Mission to the UN. (8 March 2017). <https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7699>; Sam Kim. *A Timeline of North Korea's Missile Launches and Nuclear Detonations*. Bloomberg News. (16 April 2017). <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-24/ap-exclusive-the-sad-saga-of-north-korea-s-atms>

¹²⁰ Bruce Klinger. North Korea's Missile Launch Shows It Could Target US Homeland. The Daily Signal. (8 February 2016). http://dailysignal.com/print?post_id=244911

¹²¹ International treaties require countries planning a rocket launch to give advance notification to relevant U.N. regulators, International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organization prior to missile launches, in order to warn planes and ships to stay clear of the areas that could be affected by the flight.

The DPRK usually notifies these organisations, but failed to do so for the August 2, 2016. Ju-min Park and James Pearson. *Latest North Korea missile launch lands near Japan waters, alarms Tokyo*. Reuters. (3 August 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missile-idUSKCN10D2Q8>; ICAO sends warning over N. Korea's unannounced missile launches: Seoul. Yonhap News Agency. (8 September 2016). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2016/09/08/0401000000AEN20160908008200315.html>

The US viewpoint is that the DPRK tests nuclear weapons and launches missiles out of maliciousness and that these actions are not provoked by the US. This viewpoint is supported by a recently released report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which mapped DPRK responses to US military exercises. By highlighting instances when the DPRK chose not to react to US military exercises, the CSIS report held that DPRK reactions are not consistent and concluded that US and ROK actions cannot be seen as provoking the DPRK.

The DPRK has consistently stated that its nuclear weapons programme is a self-defensive measure against US threats. Following the April 2016 missile launch, Ri Jong Ryal, a former DPRK ambassador and current deputy-director general of the Institute of International Studies in Pyongyang, stated the tests were “fair self-defensive measures” against aggressive US actions, pointing to the Key Resolve military exercise to substantiate this claim.¹²² Further, in response to the August 2, 2016 missile test and in reference to the US – ROK decision to deploy THAAD to the Korean peninsula, the PRC’s Ambassador to the UN stated, “[i]f you look at the factors contributing to the tension on the Korean peninsula I think the answer is self-evident.”¹²³ The view of the DPRK, corroborated by the PRC, is that the DPRK is responding to threatening US military expansion and the arms race in Northeast Asia.¹²⁴ The counter argument is that the US and the ROK have made exhaustive attempts to negotiate with the DPRK, but that they all have failed due to the fault of the DPRK. From this perspective, it is believed that the DPRK’s ultimate goal is to end the US – ROK alliance, thereby removing the US’ deterrence over the ROK, and the DPRK can force reunification of the Koreas on its terms.¹²⁵

¹²² Don Melvin, Jim Sciutto and Will Ripley. *North Korea launches missile from submarine*. CNN. (25 April 2016). <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/23/asia/north-korea-launches-missile-from-submarine/>

¹²³ Michelle Nichols. *U.S. envoy hits back at suggestion U.S. provoked North Korea*. Reuters. (3 August 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missile-un-idUSKCN10E1T8>

¹²⁴ See Annex 3 for a detailed cycle of provocations between the US – ROK – DPRK governments from 2015 – 2016.

¹²⁵ Evans J.R. Revere. *Dealing with a nuclear-armed North Korea*. (4 October 2016). The Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/dealing-with-a-nuclear-armed-north-korea/>

3. One-sided narratives subscribed to by parties to the conflict

As conflicts become protracted, narratives become increasingly simple.¹²⁶ Over time, conflicting parties simplify narratives to justify their purpose and to avoid any complexities or questions about their approach. This is equally true in this conflict. Either due to issue fatigue, or simply because of its protracted nature, narratives can settle and remain unchallenged, as they have become around the Korean Peninsula Conflict.¹²⁷

The story presented by the media in the US and the ROK is one of a “brutal,” “paranoid” and “reclusive” North Korean regime led by an “erratic” leader who starves and oppresses its people.¹²⁸ The US government explains that it intervened in the Korean War to save the people from communism. The US must continue its military support to ensure the DPRK will not invade the ROK and force it to reunify under its terms or reach the capacity to send nuclear weapons to the US mainland.¹²⁹ Media in the West and the ROK routinely use two sets of images and videos when referring to the DPRK and solely report on the country’s military actions and oppressive nature of the government. The first type of image routinely circulated is of Kim Jong Un surrounded by other military officials. The second is an eerily empty Pyongyang with people walking briskly and uniformly to their next

¹²⁶ Sarah Cobb. *A Narrative Perspective on Mediation: Toward the Materialization of the ‘Storytelling’ Metaphor*. New Directions in Mediation: Communication Research and Perspectives. (1994).

¹²⁷ From the US government: ‘Paranoid’ North Korea won’t stop building nuclear weapons – US spy chief. The Guardian. (26 October 2016). <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/paranoid-north-korea-wont-stop-building-nuclear-weapons-us-spy-chief>

¹²⁸ *Brutal Killing Of N. Korea Military Chief Reflects Kim Jong-Un’s Insecurity, High-Level Discontent*. Forbes. (14 May 2015). <https://www.forbes.com/sites/donaldkirk/2015/05/14/brutal-execution-of-n-korea-military-chief-reflects-kim-jong-uns-insecurity-high-level-discontent/#722dffa55c4a>; ‘Paranoid’ North Korea won’t stop building nuclear weapons – US spy chief. The Guardian. (26 October 2016).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/paranoid-north-korea-wont-stop-building-nuclear-weapons-us-spy-chief>; Will Ripley, Justin Robertson and Tim Schwarz.

Inside North Korea, the world’s most reclusive country. CNN. (21 February 2017).

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/15/asia/north-korea-photos-video/>; Sam Kim. *North Korea Turns More Erratic as Kim’s Inner Circle Shrinks*. Bloomberg News. (13 January 2016).

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-13/north-korea-turns-more-erratic-as-kim-s-inner-circle-shrinks>; *Park calls N.K. decision-making system ‘irrational’*. Yonhap News Agency. (24 August 2016). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2016/08/24/85/0301000000AEN20160824004553315F.html>

¹²⁹ Jack Kim and Lesley Wroughton. *U.S. warns of ‘other’ options if North Korea continues nuclear, missile tests*. Reuters. (26 April 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missile-idUSKCN0XN00Q>

destination.¹³⁰ The nature of these reports and images lead to speculation that Kim Jong Un is irrational, the only leader making decisions for the country, and that everyday life for all North Korean people is controlled and miserable. It shrouds the country and people in mystery and instils fear in the general public about the leader and life in the country. There are various images and stories demonstrating a normal, daily life for some people in the DPRK, but they are not often acknowledged.¹³¹

The primary North Korean voices broadcasted are interviews with people speaking in communist rhetoric defending their government to reporters.¹³² This is partly due to the fact that minders from the government monitor interviews with North Korean people. There are few examples of non-political, non-controversial conversations with North Korean people in Western media. These may allow for a more nuanced perspective of North Korean people and their daily life.

The narrative that has been created only allows the North Korean people to have one of two identities - as the oppressed or as the oppressor. The public in the US and the ROK have largely accepted this perception and have approved of their governments' punitive approach towards the DPRK. Any other narrative or opinion is met with repudiation and the individual who presents it is assumed to be ignorant of the situation in the DPRK, and is labelled a "sympathiser" for the DPRK regime.¹³³

¹³⁰ North Korea country profile. BBC News. (8 March 2017). <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15256929>; North Korean leader urges nuclear readiness. BBC News. (4 March 2016). <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35723070>;

On orders from Kim Jong-un, North Korea launches more missiles. The Hankyoreh. (19 March 2016). http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/735811.html; Stephen Chung. Why North Korea's capital is the 'perfect science fiction film set.' CNN. (9 September 2016). <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/14/architecture/pyongyang-architecture/>

¹³¹ Jae Young Kim. *The Good Parts To Life In North Korea*. NK News. (2 October 2012).

<https://www.nknews.org/2012/10/the-good-parts-to-life-in-north-korea-2/>; <https://www.nknews.org/2016/06/the-good-things-in-north-korea/>; Fyodor Tertitskiy. *The good things in North Korea* (6 June 2016). <https://www.nknews.org/2016/06/the-good-things-in-north-korea/>; See Pictures by Will Ripley. *Inside North Korea, the world's most reclusive country*. CNN. (21 February 2017). <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/15/asia/north-korea-photos-video/>; Specific pictures here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQkwFuQlv9P/>, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQkd-qU34A/>, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQsPWJegNx1/?taken-by=willripleycnn>; N. Korean leader watches volleyball match photo preview. *European Press Agency*. (7 November 2012). <http://www.epa.eu/politics-photos/government-photos/n-korean-leader-watches-volleyball-match-photos-50587907>

¹³² *North Korea keeps media at distance for Workers' Party Congress*. CBS This Morning. <https://www.youtube.com/user/CBSThisMorning>

¹³³ S. Sonya Gwak. *Be(com)ing Korean in the United States*. (2008). See, Involvement in Korean Peninsula Issues.

Similarly, the DPRK government releases most of its statements in Cold War-era communist rhetoric. In the DPRK's depiction of the Korean War, the US government rejected the desire of the Korean people to unify their nation under a popularly elected communist government in the North. The US military proceeded to invade the North and block unification of the Koreans.¹³⁴ The DPRK government describes the US government as evil with the purpose to destroy the DPRK.¹³⁵ The DPRK media has also used ridicule and stereotypes to describe American and South Korean government leaders.¹³⁶ The DPRK media often refers to the ROK government as a weak, puppet nation of the US government.¹³⁷ The lack of a free press in the DPRK means that these narratives remain unchallenged.¹³⁸

On each side of the conflict, the governments identify themselves as the only party making the moral and rational decisions, describing the other as cruel, irrational and destructive. The rhetoric has become so hateful and deeply rooted in the US, DPRK, and ROK that there is little space for any other perspectives. However, conflicts, countries and the lives of people are complex and are composed of many overlapping stories.¹³⁹ Engaging with a person, country, or conflict without engaging with the many stories that comprise them will always lead to a one-sided understanding. People, countries, and conflicts are more complex than a single story, and to fully understand and properly analyse it is important to listen to and engage with many perspectives, rather than adhere to a single narrative.

¹³⁴ *Founding of the DPRK*. Official Website of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. http://www.korea-dpr.com/founding_dprk.html

¹³⁵ Choe Sang-hun. *North Korean Leader Assails American 'Aggressors'*. The New York Times. (25 November 2014). <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/26/world/asia/north-korean-leader-assails-american-aggressors.html>

¹³⁶ *North Korea Insults Obama, Blames U.S. For Internet Outages*. NBC News. (27 December 2014). <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/sony-hack/north-korea-insults-obama-blames-u-s-internet-outages-n275401>

¹³⁷ *DPRK calls South Korean security report "fig leaf" to cover up inferiority*. (4 April 2017). Xinhua News. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/04/c_136182065.htm

¹³⁸ *North Korea Freedom of the Press 2016*. Freedom House. (2017). <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/north-korea>

¹³⁹ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *The danger of a single story*. TED Conferences. (July 2009). https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

4. Economic and military competition between the United States and the People's Republic of China for influence in East Asia

The first three driving factors describe the current cycle of provocation. However, the protracted nature of the conflict has yet to be addressed. There is a clear power imbalance between the US – ROK alliance and the DPRK. The US has demonstrated that it can act if it perceives an end to a conflict to be in its best interest. On the one hand, the US has reversed decades-long policies to normalise relations with Cuba, Myanmar, and Iran. On the other hand, the US has resorted to military intervention to overthrow regimes, such as in Libya and Iraq. Therefore, it is worth asking why the US has not yet been able to resolve the Korean Peninsula Conflict. Whether calculated or unintentional, the conflict with the DPRK is affected by US interests, in particular, US competition with the PRC for power and influence in Northeast Asia.

Economic Dynamics

In 2010, the PRC became the world's second-largest economy, with a growing military to match. The PRC's economic growth has brought it into a new and complex relationship with the US, where the two countries both overtly compete and cooperate economically while each side covertly competes for strategic military advantage over the other.¹⁴⁰

In response to the PRC's economic and military growth, the US implemented a policy described as a “rebalance” or “pivot” to Asia in 2011, in order to strengthen American political, military and economic influence in the region by seeking new trade deals with countries in the region as well as by transferring military equipment and personnel from the Middle East to East Asia.¹⁴¹ In 2014, Daniel Russel, US Assistant Secretary of State for East

¹⁴⁰ Jennifer M. Harris. *America's Fatal Flaw in its Competition With China Is Thinking Militarily, Not Economically*. Council of Foreign Relations. (18 April 2016). <http://www.cfr.org/china/americas-fatal-flaw-its-competition-china-thinking-militarily-not-economically/p37781>; Matthew P. Goodman. *Cooperate and Compete: Getting the Most out of U.S.–China Economic Relations*. Center for Strategic & International Studies. (5 February 2013). <https://www.csis.org/analysis/cooperate-and-compete-getting-most-out-us-china-economic-relations>

¹⁴¹ *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's “Rebalancing” Toward Asia*. Congressional Research Service. (28 March 2012). <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42448.pdf>

Asian and Pacific Affairs, made the following statement before the US Senate regarding the implementation of the policy, “the United States has been, we are and we will remain a Pacific power.”¹⁴²

The US and the PRC economically cooperate through trade and participation in high-level informal and formal dialogue mechanisms. The best example is the China – US Strategic and Economic Dialogue, an annual meeting where the two countries discuss regional and global strategic and economic issues.¹⁴³ In regards to trade, the PRC is the US’ second largest trading partner and its largest source of imports, which contributes to economic growth in both countries.¹⁴⁴

The economic frustrations that exist between the US and the PRC are largely based on the US government’s disapproval of the PRC’s economic and trade practices. The PRC is in the process of restructuring its economy and self-describes as a socialist-market economy, allowing free market forces to determine some areas of economic growth, while allowing the government to play a major role in other areas.¹⁴⁵ Many of the PRC’s leading companies are state-owned and receive preferential treatment by the government over non state-owned companies, including US companies doing business in and with the PRC. The US views this intervention as an overreach by the PRC government and a distortion to their economy because it restrains the US from fully participating and benefitting in the world’s second largest economy.¹⁴⁶

The US and the PRC also compete for economic influence and power in East Asia. In addition to the PRC, three out of ten of the US’ primary trade partners are in the region, including Japan, ROK and Hong Kong, which

¹⁴² *Opportunities and Challenges in the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Republic of Korea Alliances. Testimony by Daniel R. Russel, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.* Official Website of the US Department of State. (4 March 2014).
<https://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2014/03/222903.htm>

¹⁴³ *U.S.-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue Outcomes of the Strategic Track.* U.S. Department of State. (7 June 2016). <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/06/258146.htm>

¹⁴⁴ Wayne M. Morrison. *China-U.S. Trade.* Congressional Research Service. (4 January 2017).
<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33536.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ Wayne M. Morrison. *China’s Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States.* Congressional Research Service. (21 October 2015).
<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Wayne M. Morrison. *China-U.S. Trade.* Congressional Research Service. p. 26. (4 January 2017).
<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33536.pdf>

provide the US with substantial influence in East Asia.¹⁴⁷ Further, Asia is the fastest growing economic region in the world, and Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines and Vietnam are quickly increasing their role and influence as important economic actors. The US fears that PRC economic dominance will translate to fewer Asian economies depending on and modelling their economic practices after the US, and instead looking to the PRC.¹⁴⁸ As a result, the US attempts to contain the PRC's economic influence by maintaining close ties with existing allies, such as with the ROK and Japan, and building solid economic relationships with new allies.

Military Dynamics

The strategic military competition is seen most obviously in the PRC's attempt to claim most of the South China Sea and the strong opposition from the US in response to the claim. The PRC's legal interpretation of its jurisdiction challenges the US' current freedom of navigation and overflight practices in what it views as international waters. Additionally, the PRC's maritime claim overrides the claims of US government allies in the region, including Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines.¹⁴⁹

The PRC has built airstrips and military bases on several atolls or islands within the 9-Dash Line and, along with other claimants, has increased traffic

¹⁴⁷ *Top U.S. Trade Partners*. U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Economic Indicators Division. 2015.

http://www.trade.gov/mas/ian/build/groups/public/@tg_ian/documents/webcontent/tg_ian_003364.pdf

¹⁴⁸ US President Barack Obama is quoted as stating, “[t]he fastest-growing markets, the most populous markets, are going to be in Asia, and if we do not help to shape the rules so that our businesses and our workers can compete in those markets, then China will set up the rules that advantage Chinese workers and Chinese businesses.” Representative Dave G. Reichert (R-WA) stated, “[t]his is really about a crossroads for America and its leadership for the world.” “We set the tone, we set the path for the global economy by being leaders. And if we don’t, other countries step in.”

Jonathan Weisman. *At Global Economic Gathering, U.S. Primacy Is Seen as Ebbing*. The New York Times. (18 April 2015).

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/18/business/international/at-global-economic-gathering-concerns-that-us-is-ceding-its-leadership-role.html?_r=0; *America's Role in Asia*. The Asia Foundation. (2008). <http://www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/AmericasRoleinAsia2008.pdf>; Peter Apps. U.S. influence in Asia falters, allies increasingly look to themselves. Reuters. (31 July 2015).

<http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/07/31/u-s-influence-in-asia-is-faltering/>

¹⁴⁹ Jeffrey Bader, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael McDevitt. *Keeping the South China Sea in Perspective*. The Brookings Institution. (August 2014)

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2014/08/south-china-sea-perspective-bader-lieberthal-mcdevitt/south-china-sea-perspective-bader-lieberthal-mcdevitt.pdf>

of fishing boats, coastal patrols and naval ships in the contested waters.¹⁵⁰ The US response can be seen through the increase of naval and defence systems in East Asia as well as “freedom of navigation” naval patrols which involve passing closely by PRC - held islands.¹⁵¹ Much of the US activity is possible due to the US policy shift to Asia and the transfer of military personnel and equipment from the Middle East to the East Asia region.

The US military is also responding to the PRC’s maritime claims and military growth by maintaining and expanding its presence throughout the East Asian region. In 2015 and 2016, the US negotiated the re-opening of the US Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines – a base which was closed by the Philippines government in 1992 - and gained access to five other military bases in the country.¹⁵² The US is also sending troops and combat aircraft to the Philippines for “regular, more frequent rotations and will conduct more joint sea and air patrols with Philippine forces in the South China Sea.”¹⁵³ Further, the US has made arrangements with Vietnam and Cambodia to stockpile US military equipment in both countries due to the advantage of their geographic location.¹⁵⁴ The US is also increasing, or in the process of talks to increase, its military personnel and equipment in Australia, Singapore, and Guam.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Yi-Hsuan Chen. *South China Sea Tension on Fire: China's Recent Moves on Building Artificial Islands in Troubled Waters and Their Implications on Maritime Law*. Maritime Safety and Security Law Journal, 1, 8-9. (January 2015). http://www.marsafelawjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Issue1_Chen_Article.pdf; *China's Maritime Disputes*. Council on Foreign Relations. (2017). <http://www.cfr.org/asia-and-pacific/chinas-maritime-disputes/p31345#/#p31345>

¹⁵¹ Ben Blanchard. *U.S. says its forces will keep operating in South China Sea*. Reuters. (20 July 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinesea-ruling-usa-idUSKCN1000PD>

¹⁵² *Philippines To Re-open Former US Military Base*. Defense News. (16 July 2015). <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/asia-pacific/2015/07/16/philippines-re-open-former-us-military-base/30273327/>; Andrew Tilghman. *The U.S. military is moving into these 5 bases in the Philippines*. Military Times. (21 March 2016). <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/21/us-plans-use-five-new-bases-philippines/82072138/>

¹⁵³ *Joint Press Conference by Secretary Carter and Secretary Gazmin in Manila, Philippines*. US Department of Defense. (14 April 2016). <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/721687/joint-press-conference-by-secretary-carter-and-secretary-gazmin-in-manila-phil>

¹⁵⁴ Dan Lamothe. *These are the bases the U.S. will use near the South China Sea. China isn't impressed*. The Washington Post. (21 March 2016). https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/03/21/these-are-the-new-u-s-military-bases-near-the-south-china-sea-china-isnt-impressed/?utm_term=.6a5101625661; Franz-Stefan Gady. *Deterring China: US Army to Stockpile Equipment in Cambodia and Vietnam*. The Diplomat. (18 March 2016). <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/deterring-china-us-army-to-stockpile-equipment-in-cambodia-and-vietnam/>

¹⁵⁵ *U.S. enters talks with Australia on increasing military presence in northern Australia*. Xinhua News. (9 March 2016). http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/09/c_135169537.htm; *US to base four warships in Singapore as China flexes military muscles*. The Guardian. (18 February 2015). <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/18/us-to-base-four-warships-in-singapore-as-china-flexes-military-muscles>; Anna Fifield. *Some in Guam push for independence from U.S. as Marines prepare for buildup*. The Washington Post. (17 June 2016). https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/some-in-guam-push-for-independence-from-us-as-marines-prepare-for-buildup/2016/06/16/e6152bd2-324b-11e6-ab9d-1da2b0f24f93_story.html

The maintenance of an American military presence can also be seen throughout Northeast Asia as 50,000 military personnel remain in Japan and Okinawa 70 years after the end of World War II, and 28,500 US military personnel are stationed in the ROK 60 years after the end of the Korean War.¹⁵⁶ At this point, US military bases completely surround the PRC, as shown in the map on the next page.

The US military presence in Northeast Asia has not come without controversy. US troops in Japan and the ROK have been unpopular with some of the immediate local population surrounding the bases in both countries due to environmental degradation and poor behaviour displayed by some American troops.¹⁵⁷ There have been several demonstrations in Japan against US bases and the attempt to build a new military seaport in Okinawa. Similarly, South Korean protesters have denounced a new deal to expand and relocate US military bases from central Seoul to Pyeongtaek, ROK.¹⁵⁸ While there has been pressure on the governments of Japan and the ROK from some of these communities to annul existing military agreements or deny new agreements for US troops and expanded bases, the majority of both populations are, and have been, in support of a military alliance with the US due to security concerns from the DPRK and the PRC.

¹⁵⁶ Emma Chanlett-Avery and Ian Rinehart. *The U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa and the Futenma Base Controversy Congressional Research Service*. (16 January 2016).

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42645.pdf>; Defense Manpower Data Center. U.S. Department of Defense. (30 September 2015). https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/rest/download?fileName=DRS_54601_309_Report_P1509.xlsx&groupName=milRegionCountry

¹⁵⁷ Jon Mitchell. Contamination: Documents reveal hundreds of unreported environmental accidents at three U.S. Marine Corps bases on Okinawa. *The Japan Times*. (19 November 2016).

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/11/19/national/contamination-documents-reveal-three-u-s-bases-okinawa-slow-disclose-environmental-accidents/#.WNHu7nR973A>; Jonathan Taylor. Environment and Security Conflicts: The U.S. Military in Okinawa. California State University – Fullerton. <http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org/the-geographical-bulletin/2000s/volume48-1/article1.pdf>;

Andrew Yeo. (14 June 2010); Anti-Base Movements in South Korea: Comparative Perspective on the Asia-Pacific. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 8 (24) 2. 4. (13 May 2006); Medea Benjamin. Pave Paradise, Put Up a Naval Base: South Korean Activists' Extraordinary Struggle to Save Jeju Island. *The World Post*.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/medea-benjamin/jeju-island_b_7469736.html

¹⁵⁸ Minami Funakoshi. Thousands in Japan rally against U.S. base on Okinawa. *Reuters*. (21 February 2016).

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-politics-okinawa-idUSKCN0VU0BG1>; Andrew Yeo. (14 June 2010); Anti-Base Movements in South Korea: Comparative Perspective on the Asia-Pacific. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 8 (24) 2. 4; (13 May 2006). Thousands rally against U.S. base relocation plan. *APArchive*.

<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/f47b0b6cea40f2fd9d5f503e293dae53>.

U.S. MILITARY IN THE WEST PACIFIC

■ With active U.S. bases • Naval bases ▲ Air Force bases



NAF: Naval Air Facility, CFA: Commander Fleet Activities

Sources: Military Balance 2011, Commander Navy Installations, Pacific Air Forces

REUTERS

Results of a 2016 AP Poll demonstrated a rise in overall Japanese support over the past six years for American military bases “as fears spread that neighbouring China and North Korea are threats to peace.”¹⁵⁹ Polls conducted from 1997 to 2014 indicate a positive attitude by the majority of South Korean citizens towards the US – ROK military alliance, reaching an all-time high in 2014.¹⁶⁰ Polls also show that the majority of South Koreans believe it necessary to maintain the military alliance even in the case of Korean reunification to guard against threats posed by others in the region, likely the PRC.

The US military maintains that its presence in the ROK and Japan is due to security concerns about the DPRK’s weapons development and testing, as well as the PRC’s growing military strength and maritime claims. The US both capitalises on this opportunity and amplifies actions by governments in Pyongyang and Beijing in order to maintain its presence.¹⁶¹ As tensions rise over the DPRK’s missile launches and nuclear tests, any demands for US troops to leave the ROK and Japan become overwhelmed by the perceived need for increased protection and closer cooperation with the US military.

The US - ROK agreement to deploy THAAD to the ROK is a prime example. The deployment of THAAD contributes to the arms race in Northeast Asia and gives the US military missile surveillance capabilities in the region, nevertheless, it is proceeding after years of US pressure and as a response to actions by the DPRK considered provocative.

¹⁵⁹ Malcolm Foster. *Support for keeping US bases in Japan grows as China, N. Korea seen as threats*. Associated Press – GfK Poll. (5 September 2016). <http://ap-gfkpoll.com/featured/ap-gfk-poll-support-for-keeping-us-bases-in-japan-grows-as-china-korea-seen-as-threats>

¹⁶⁰ Eric V. Larson, Norman D. Levin, Seonhae Baik and Bogdan Savych. *Ambivalent Allies? A Study of South Korean Attitudes Toward the U.S.* Rand Corporation. (March 2004). http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2005/RAND_TR141.pdf; Kyutoi Moon. *South Korean Public Opinion Trends and Effects on the ROK-U.S. Alliance*. Center for U.S.-Korea Policy. (February 2011). <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/MoonPublicOpinion.pdf>; *South Korean Attitudes on the Korea-US Alliance and Northeast Asia*. The ASAN Institute for Policy Studies. (24 April 2014). <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/asan-report-south-korean-attitudes-on-the-korea-us-alliance-and-northeast-asia/>

¹⁶¹ Leo Shane III. *Incoming Joint Chiefs chairman calls Russia, China top threats*. Military Times. (9 July 2015). <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/07/09/dunford-confirmation-hearing-russia-china-top-threats-joint-chiefs-of-staff-chairman/29912233/>

The US government's primary concern in Northeast Asia is to maintain influence against a rising PRC. The PRC, on the other hand, recognises that US presence on its Eastern border is a possible threat to its security.¹⁶² With the US and other Northeast Asian states acting out of fear of a possible DPRK nuclear or missile attack, the US is able to maintain and justify a significant military presence throughout the region. These cycles of competition, both military and economic, between the US and the PRC do affect the Korean Peninsula Conflict and, in some cases, prolong it.

¹⁶² An article by The People's Daily China states: "The goal of the US pivot's redeployment of 50 to 60 percent of the US Navy's fleet by 2020 to contain China and sever what China calls the "Maritime Silk Road," is now at risk." *China's economic lure outshines US military bases in Asia*. The People's Daily. (11 November 2016). <http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/1111/c90000-9140296.html>



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LEVERAGE POINTS

This section attempts to identify elements of the conflict dynamics from this analysis that can be leveraged to influence the conflict and transform current tensions. In order for transformation to occur, one of the conflict parties will have to take the first step to break the cycle of provocation and demonstrate a commitment to peace. Both the DPRK and the US are positioned to transform the conflict towards peaceful and productive relationships. However, there is an imbalance between the US and the DPRK in terms of political and economic influence as well as military capacity and size.¹⁶³ The US is the more powerful and influential country, and with power and influence comes responsibility. As such, this section will emphasise actions the US can take.

The structure of the leverage points places the responsibility to act first with the US, while acknowledging the necessity for equal and cooperative responses from the DPRK.

The leverage points are as follows:

- 1. Engage with the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and address disputes through dialogue and negotiation.*
- 2. Adopt long-term perspectives and realistic expectations for progress and change in the conflict.*
- 3. Elevate and listen to alternative narratives to understand the complexities of the conflict and humanize North Koreans.*
- 4. Understand and acknowledge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's national priorities and perspectives while engaging with them.*

¹⁶³ *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 2015*. U.S. Department of State. (December 2015). <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/2015/>; World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update, *A Shifting Global Economic Landscape*. International Monetary Fund. (January 2017). <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2017/update/01/index.htm>; Joseph S. Nye Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. (27 April 2005). http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/joe_nye_wielding_soft_power.pdf

5. *Approach all parties to the conflict with impartiality by responding to contributions to the cycle of provocations in an equal and balanced way.*
6. *Engage in diplomatic activities with the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to build the confidence required to establish sustainable diplomatic relationships with the country.*
6. *Integrate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's economy into the global economy to influence the government and the people, improve the quality of life for North Korean people, and gain leverage for negotiation.*
7. *Acknowledge the merging of the disputes between the United States and the People's Republic of China with the conflict between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and make a conscious decision to separate them.*

1. Engage with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and address disputes through dialogue and negotiation.

The first step to determine the best way to approach this conflict is to begin by defining the long-term desired scenario.¹⁶⁴ This section will define the long-term desired scenario and divide it into three time frames for clarity. It will then proceed to review the three possible options that can be taken going forward. The way to determine the best path forward will be at the intersection of one of the options with the desired long-term scenario.

The first time frame is based on what could reasonably be achieved within the next twelve months. It is reasonable to assume that some military provocations between the conflicting parties could be halted, for example, cancelling US - ROK joint military exercises geared towards the DPRK, in exchange for a freeze of the DPRK’s nuclear programme. Additionally, the easing of some punitive economic measures could occur, especially those not directly related to the DPRK’s nuclear programme.

The second time frame is what could occur over the next five to ten years. This time frame would include the continued easing of military and economic measures and provocations, as well as diplomatic dialogue to achieve peaceful relations. This transition should be non-violent in nature and focus on discussing ways to move into long-term peaceful relations between the conflict parties.

The long-term scenario would occur over the next 15 to 20 years, and involves establishing stable and functional diplomatic relations and economic cooperation between all four parties to the conflict. This, in turn, would lead to free flow of travel for all Koreans across the peninsula and begin the process of establishing a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. The DPRK has stated that it will not dismantle its nuclear programme as long as they see

¹⁶⁴ The focus on a long-term desired scenario is based on the CDA Collaborative Analysis on the Syrian Conflict and has been adapted for this analysis on the Korean Peninsula Conflict. *The Syrian conflict: A system conflict analysis*. CDA Collaborative. (February 2016). <http://cdacollaborative.org/publication/the-syrian-conflict-a-systems-conflict-analysis/>

any direct or indirect threats from another nuclear capable state. However, it is possible that following 15 to 20 years of trust and relationship building between the US and the DPRK, the leadership may feel sufficiently secure to begin denuclearisation.

The next step is to determine how to achieve the long-term time frame by reviewing three options for going forward. The first option is to maintain the status quo – to continue to place economic, political, and military pressure, and punitive measures on the DPRK and wait for the government to alter their policies or collapse. This option does not resolve any of the problems affecting Korean, American, or Chinese people or governments party to the conflict. It merely prolongs the conflict and exacerbates tension that risks a nuclear conflict. There has been an assumption by recent US and ROK administrations that the DPRK leadership will eventually concede and meet their requests if sufficient sanctions and pressure are placed on the government. However, history has demonstrated that sanctions only provoke and further isolate the DPRK. Also, the DPRK has adapted and survived under trying and difficult circumstances, and has developed methods to circumvent sanctions to ensure, at the very least, that the elite in society remain unaffected.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, depending on a collapse of a government as a strategy carries an inherent risk, as any collapse would result in unknown and unforeseen consequences, such as violence and regional instability.

As the status quo maintains the current, unacceptable conditions of the conflict, a second option can be reviewed. This would involve military intervention to resolve the conflict, forcing the capitulation of one government. Military intervention entails violent actions, therefore, this option is also unacceptable as it does not peacefully resolve the Korean Peninsula Conflict. Any resort to military force can only result in the loss of human lives and sentiments of anger instead of building positive and functional relationships. The desired, long-term scenario involves a peaceful transition, thus military action does not converge with this scenario.

¹⁶⁵ The famine in the DPRK from 1995-1999 resulted in the deaths of approximately one million people. The legitimacy of the government did not waiver during the famine or in the aftermath. Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland. *Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid, and Reform*. Columbia University Press. (2007).

The third and final option is to engage with the DPRK government and resolve on-going disputes through dialogue and negotiation. This is the only option that does not intensify or prolong the state of the conflict, or risk shifting it into a violent conflict. If a constant communication channel can be kept open and both sides work towards understanding the other, then misunderstandings are less likely and progress towards functional diplomatic relations is more likely. Based on the long-term desired outcome for the conflict, engagement with the DPRK is the only way forward.

The argument has been made that engagement has already been attempted in the past but has always failed because one party did not keep up their side of the agreement. To break the cycle of provocation in this conflict, one party will have to lead and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to peace no matter the perceived provocation from the other side. To reach the desired, positive scenario, each party cannot become preoccupied with short-term goals or saving face, but must develop and maintain a long-term vision of peace for the Korean peninsula and the sustainable diplomatic relations between its governments.

Additionally, there is historical precedent, as well as recent requests from the DPRK, indicating that attempts at engagement with the DPRK have the potential to be successful.¹⁶⁶ The DPRK also has political, economic, and security incentives to normalise diplomatic relations with the US, which should be taken into consideration. The only way for the US and other external actors to strengthen their understanding of the DPRK's perspective in order to address the on-going conflict is to engage with DPRK government officials.

¹⁶⁶ See Annex 1

2. Adopt long-term perspectives and realistic expectations for progress and change in the conflict.

All parties to the conflict should adopt long-term perspectives, keeping in mind the desired scenario for transforming the conflict over 20 years, when determining ways to move forward. For example, the US government has stated that it cannot accept the DPRK as a nuclear power. However, the Obama administration's practice of "strategic patience" has also resulted in the DPRK maintaining its nuclear capability. Shifting from the decision that the DPRK must immediately denuclearise before negotiations can begin to the decision to talk due to an agreement to freeze their nuclear programme does not accept the DPRK as a nuclear power, yet adheres to the long-term vision. Initially, relationships and trust need to be established before such change can be expected.

3. Elevate and listen to alternative narratives to understand the complexities of the conflict and humanize North Koreans.

Alternative perspectives, including unheard and less heard voices, should be elevated to deepen understanding of the conflict and those affected by the conflict. All conflict parties have the opportunity to practice empathy, listen to the opposing argument, and allow for additional voices to be heard.

There are North Korean voices missing in the current narrative. The US and ROK governments and media are elevating voices of North Koreans who emigrated from the DPRK after experiencing harsh and unusual punishment by the government. These stories are crucial to understanding the experience of those North Koreans who have suffered maltreatment under the government and their voices should continue to be elevated and understood.

These voices are not, however, replacements for people currently living in the DPRK or for economic migrants who have left the country. There are North Koreans who are aware of economic progress and other forms of governance around the world and remain proud of their society's accomplishments and

prefer to live in the DPRK.¹⁶⁷ There are also North Koreans who used to live in the DPRK and left to seek an improvement in living standards but not to defect from the government. To ignore, suppress, or deny validity to these voices is problematic and creates a singular narrative. It is necessary to acknowledge and provide dignity to the North Korean people who have not and do not wish to leave their country.

Additionally, the DPRK government does provide some services to their people and the overall standard of living is improving, particularly in Pyongyang.¹⁶⁸ The DPRK provides universal healthcare and the physician-to-patient ratio is on par with high-income countries at 33 physicians per 10,000 persons.¹⁶⁹ Malnutrition has declined and food production has advanced. The economy is growing slowly but steadily and access to information and foreign media has improved. Additionally, Pyongyang residents are increasingly able to afford consumer goods, such as televisions and cell phones.¹⁷⁰

4. Understand and acknowledge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's national priorities and perspectives while engaging with them.

One of the obstacles in the DPRK's relationship with the US and the ROK are the human rights structures within their own countries and the mandates that have been created within the UN system to monitor human rights in the DPRK. The UN structures created to focus on these issues are the Office of

¹⁶⁷ A 2017 Study by Beyond Parallel reported that 91.6 percent of North Koreans they interacted with have access to foreign media at least once per month. *Information and Its Consequences in North Korea*. Beyond Parallel. Center for Strategic and International Studies. (12 January 2017). <http://beyondparallel.csis.org/information-and-its-consequences-in-north-korea/>; Based on conversations CPCS held with peace specialists who work with DPRK officials abroad and those who oversee programs inside the DPRK, the North Korean citizens they spoke with are aware of the advanced economic status and democratic political systems in the ROK, US and other countries, and prefer to remain living in their home country.

¹⁶⁸ *A North Korea Primer for 2017 U.S. Policy Makers 3rd Edition*. National Committee on North Korea. (March 2017). http://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/NCNK_NK_Primer_Mar2017_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶⁹ *Physicians per 1,000 People*. World Health Organization's Global Health Workforce Statistics, OECD, supplemented by country data. The World Bank. 2011. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS>

¹⁷⁰ *A North Korea Primer for 2017 Policy Makers*. The National Committee on North Korea. (15 September 2015). <http://www.ncnk.org/resources/News-archive/2016-news-archive/a-north-korea-primer-for-2017-policy-makers>; Yoon Ja-young. *One out of 10 North Koreans using mobile phones*. The Korea Times. (15 December 2015). http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/biz/2015/12/488_193240.html; Statistics Korea. <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/index.action>

the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) with offices in Geneva and Seoul, the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the DPRK and two independent experts on accountability which have been appointed to assist the Special Rapporteur.¹⁷¹

These UN bodies cite human rights violations of individuals who used to live in the DPRK. Their mandate is to simultaneously assign accountability for the alleged violations and engage with the DPRK leadership to advise them on improving conditions.¹⁷² The DPRK has rejected the validity of these bodies and has so far refused to allow them entry into the country stating that they fundamentally disagree with their purpose and approach.¹⁷³

The DPRK claims that these human rights bodies attempt to infringe upon their sovereignty and impose values on them and their citizens which are not their own. As identified in this analysis, the highest priorities of the DPRK are maintenance of sovereignty and national security. From the DPRK's perspective, this approach would be seen as a violation of their primary interests.

The DPRK claims that they fully guarantee basic human rights based on their way of governance involving socialist and *Juche* values, and the Asian concept of human rights.¹⁷⁴ The declared human rights focus in the DPRK is on the community, and for the whole of the nation to progress economically, rather than a focus on civil and political rights as defined by the US, the UN and other countries.

¹⁷¹ *Democratic People's Republic of Korea Homepage*. United Nations Human Rights. Office of the High Commissioner. (2017).

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/KPIndex.aspx>

¹⁷² *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. United Nations Human Rights Council. (22 February 2017).

¹⁷³ *Statement by H.E. Mr. RiYong Ho, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the United Nations General Assembly*. United Nations Official Website. (23 September 2016).

<https://gadebate.un.org/en/71/democratic-peoples-republic-korea>

¹⁷⁴ Grace Kim. *Questioning the Universal Declaration: North Korea's case*. Asia Times. (4 February 2017). <http://www.atimes.com/questioning-universal-document-case-north-korea/>

It is not necessary for the US, the ROK, or UN human rights groups or other parties attempting to engage with the DPRK to agree with their perspective on human rights. However, as the situation has become stalled, it would be constructive to engage with the DPRK by acknowledging and understanding their point of view. Within this space, the DPRK will need to engage with the US, the ROK and UN human rights groups understanding their perspective on human rights as well.

Another reason progress cannot be made between these parties on this issue is because human rights issues in the DPRK is not a singular issue separate from the other factors of the conflict. Neither is it a root cause of the conflict. Rather, it is a consequence of those causes and factors that fuel the conflict. For example, part of the reason the DPRK restricts the freedom of its people is out of the concern and fear that has built up within the leadership since the division of Korea. The root causes of the conflict should be addressed so that human rights issues in the DPRK may also be addressed.

5. Approach all parties to the conflict with impartiality by responding to contributions to the cycle of provocations with an equal and balanced response.

Based on this analysis, both sides of the conflict are contributing to the cycle of provocation. Therefore, international bodies such as the United Nations are in a position to react to both sides of the conflict in a balanced manner. All conflict parties should be approached with the same method - either with punitive measures or diplomatic engagement to convince them to withdraw or alter their contributions to the conflict.

6. Engage in diplomatic activities with the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to build the confidence required to establish sustainable diplomatic relationships with the country.

As a first step, the US government can begin by engaging in diplomatic activities such as government funded people-to-people exchanges between the US and the DPRK.¹⁷⁵ This option would not require any major changes to existing policy or sanctions and can be included in the US North Korean Human Rights Act. In this way, “diplomats and officials can go through low-stakes ‘dry-runs’ of cooperation” and “elevate these diplomatic capacities to higher-level dialogues when the time comes.”¹⁷⁶

People-to-people sports and cultural exchange projects should be encouraged to help to humanize North Koreans to the rest of the world, and vice versa. The path to normalised relations with Myanmar, Cuba, Iran, the PRC, and Russia were all preceded by government-sponsored people-to-people exchanges.¹⁷⁷ These exchanges are not presently being conducted with the DPRK but can deepen understanding between the people of these two nations.

On June 23, 2016, US Representatives Charles Rangel (D-NY), John Conyers (D-MI), and Sam Johnson (R-TX) introduced House Resolution 799, calling for the US government to resume talks with the DPRK to recover thousands of US service members who remained unaccounted for at the end of the Korean War.¹⁷⁸ Earlier that month, Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced a resolution encouraging reunions of Korean-Americans with their family members in the DPRK, which would “constitute a positive humanitarian

¹⁷⁵ One example of this type of opportunity is the US government's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) as pointed to by the American Friends Service Committee. Daniel Jasper. *Engaging North Korea Building toward dialogue with U.S. government-sponsored people-to-people exchange programs*. American Friends Service Committee. (June 2016). https://www.afsc.org/sites/afsc.civicactions.net/files/documents/Engaging%20North%20Korea_WEB.pdf

¹⁷⁶ Daniel Jasper. “Engagement Games:” *Obama's Last Chance with North Korea*. Zoom in Korea. (9 September 2016). <http://www.zoominkorea.org/engagement-games-obamas-last-chance-with-north-korea/>

¹⁷⁷ Daniel Jasper. *Engaging North Korea Building toward dialogue with U.S. government-sponsored people-to-people exchange programs*. American Friends Service Committee. (June 2016). https://www.afsc.org/sites/afsc.civicactions.net/files/documents/Engaging%20North%20Korea_WEB.pdf

¹⁷⁸ *Recent Legislation on North Korea*. The National Committee on North Korea. (30 June 2016). <http://www.ncnk.org/>

gesture by North Korea and contribute to the long-term goal of peace on the Korean peninsula shared by the governments of North Korea, South Korea, and the United States.”¹⁷⁹

7. Integrate the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea economy into the global economy to influence the government and the people, improve the quality of life for North Korean people, and gain leverage for negotiation.

After national sovereignty and security, DPRK Leader Kim Jong Un defined the country’s next priority as growing its economy. This is an opportunity to work with the government and improve the quality of life for North Korean people. The DPRK economy has steadily grown since 2000.¹⁸⁰ In order to decrease the implications of isolation and improve the quality of life in the DPRK, the economy will need to be supported. By incrementally lifting sanctions on the economy, especially those that are not directly related to the DPRK’s weapons development programmes, international trade can begin with the US and other important international trade partners, and improve the standard of living. It is also beneficial to integrate the DPRK economy into the global economy so that there can be healthy negotiation based on trade between the DPRK and other nations. The incremental lifting of US sanctions would also work towards diminishing the hostile atmosphere between the two countries and better allow for dialogue and progress to be made.¹⁸¹

The US has already begun lifting sanctions and normalising relations with several other countries after they proved to be ineffective and harmful. This includes Cuba in 2014, and Iran and Myanmar in 2016. The US has the opportunity to take the same approach towards the DPRK. In December 2014, in relation to US – Cuba relations, President Obama stated, “[t]hese 50 years

¹⁷⁹ *S. RES. 190: Encouraging reunions of Korean Americans who were divided by the Korean War from relatives in North Korea*. US Congress. (3 June 2015).

<http://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/BILLS-114sres190is.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ *Gross Domestic Product Estimates for North Korea in 2015*. The Bank of Korea. (23 July 2016).

http://www.nkeconwatch.com/nk-uploads/GDP_of_North_Korea_in_2015_ff.pdf

¹⁸¹ *North Korea Sanctions Program*, E.O. 13722. Office of Foreign Assets Control. US Department of the Treasury. (2 November 2016).

<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/nkorea.pdf>

have shown that isolation has not worked. It's time for a new approach.”¹⁸² Equally, these 66 years of isolation and sanctions against the DPRK have not worked, and a different approach, consisting of dialogue and engagement, is needed instead.

As the President of the US-ASEAN Council, Ernest Bower has explained:

The presence of U.S. companies abroad helps to promote the values we as a nation espouse, including human rights and fair labor standards. They promote democratic values, set a positive example, and improve the general quality of life by providing fair pay, safe working conditions, and health and education benefits.

President Bower also gave the example of foreign investment in Myanmar as an extremely effective means of advancing economic and social development, which shouldn't be abandoned in favour of measures such as sanctions, which are not likely to succeed.¹⁸³

8. Acknowledge the merging of the disputes between the United States and the People's Republic of China with the conflict between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and make a conscious decision to separate them.

On April 6, 2017, US President Donald Trump and PRC President Xi Jinping met for the first time in the US. Government and media reports from both countries have been optimistic that the meeting was positive and would improve diplomatic relations between the two countries.¹⁸⁴ President Trump

¹⁸² *Obama moves to normalize relations with Cuba as American is released by Havana.* The Washington Post. (17 December 2014). https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/report-cuba-frees-american-alan-gross-after-5-years-detention-on-spy-charges/2014/12/17/a2840518-85f5-11e4-a702-fa31ff4ac98e_story.html

¹⁸³ Ernest Z. Bower, President, U.S.-ASEAN Council for Business and Technology Inc. *Statement before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.* (22 May 1996).

¹⁸⁴ *Remarks by President Trump After Meeting with President Xi of China.* The White House. Office of the Press Secretary. (7 April 2017). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/04/07/remarks-president-trump-after-meeting-president-xi-china>; An Baijie and Chen Weihua. *Xi's visit to US called constructive.* China Daily. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-04/10/content_28857384.htm

and President Xi now have an opportunity to use this new relationship to have an explicit discussion acknowledging that although competing economic and military interests between the US and the PRC had, in the past, affected the dynamics of the Korean Peninsula Conflict, it is important to establish that those competing interests are separate to the unresolved Korean Peninsula Conflict. By choosing to acknowledge that these interests and tensions are separate, both the US and the PRC can clarify and set aside the extent and existence of their competing interests in regards to the Korean peninsula and begin to work together for a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

As two of the most influential and powerful countries in the world, the US and the PRC are in a position to acknowledge that any dispute they are involved in can merge with disputes elsewhere and affect conflict dynamics. The option, instead, to work together in order to develop an approach to resolve the Korean Peninsula Conflict does exist should either country make it a priority. As the US recalibrates and reformulates its foreign policy towards East Asia under a new presidential administration, choosing to separate, rather than conflate, competing interests with the PRC on the Korean peninsula can positively influence dynamics within the Korean Peninsula Conflict.

ANNEX 1

Highlights of US - DPRK - ROK Relations: 1988 to 2016

- July 1988: ROK President Roh releases a declaration calling for “the promotion of political, economic and cultural exchanges; the promotion of inter-Korean trade; and pledges to aid Pyongyang in improving relations with the U.S. and Japan.”¹⁸⁵
- 1988: The US administration under President Ronald Reagan begins diplomatic initiative to decrease isolation of the DPRK.¹⁸⁶
- May 1990: The DPRK allows for transfer of American military remains from the DPRK to the US. The agreement continues until 2005.¹⁸⁷
- September 1991: The DPRK and the ROK are simultaneously admitted to the United Nations.
- September 22, 1991: The US announces that it will withdraw nuclear weapons from the ROK pursuant to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with the USSR.¹⁸⁸ The withdrawal is confirmed in September 1992.
- December 1991: The DPRK and ROK sign the *Basic Agreement* which calls for reconciliation and nonaggression, and established four joint commissions to work toward the details of the *Basic Agreement*: 1. South-North reconciliation; 2. South-North military affairs; 3. South-North economic exchanges and cooperation; and 4. South-North social and cultural exchange.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ ROK Ministry of Unification. *Special Presidential Declaration for National Self-Esteem, Unification, and Prosperity*. White Paper on South-North Dialogue, pp. 461-465. (20 August 2001). <http://eng.unikorea.go.kr/content.do?cmsid=1889&mode=view&page=10&cid=32075>

¹⁸⁶ *North Korea: A Country Study*. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, p. 277. (2008)

¹⁸⁷ Peter Maas. *Somber Ceremony at Korean Border*. The Washington Post. (29 May 1990).

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/05/29/somber-ceremony-at-korean-border/e4022ad8-bb1d-427c-8612-5006fbdacb53/?utm_term=.3827f51e16ec

¹⁸⁸ Lee Jae-Bong. *US Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s South Korea & North Korea's Nuclear Development*. (February 2009). <http://apjjf.org/-Lee-Jae-Bong/3053/article.html>

¹⁸⁹ *Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between South and North Korea*. United Nations Peacemaker. (13 December 1991). <http://peacemaker.un.org/korea-reconciliation-nonaggression91>

- January 30, 1992: The DPRK signs the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement to provide a declaration of its nuclear programme, facilities, and materials, and allows IAEA inspectors access to verify that nuclear facilities and material are not misused or diverted from peaceful uses.¹⁹⁰
- January 1992: The ROK and DPRK sign the Joint Declaration on denuclearisation prohibiting both sides from testing, manufacturing, producing, receiving, possessing, storing, deploying, or using nuclear weapons, and forbids the possession of nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities. It also establishes a North-South Joint Nuclear Control Commission (JNCC) to verify the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.¹⁹¹
- January 1992: US President George H.W. Bush and ROK President Roh Tae-woo agree to cancel the scheduled annual joint military exercise.¹⁹²
- June 1992: DPRK Leader Kim Il Sung responds by suspending annual anti-US rally celebrating victory in the Korean War. Kim Il Sung states, “if the United States takes the road to improve relations with us, we shall also do so without recalling the past.”¹⁹³
- 1992: US and DPRK diplomats meet several times in Beijing in 1992 to explore various possibilities to resolve their differences on nuclear issues.
- 1992 – 1993: *The Basic Agreement, Joint Declaration* and *IAEA Safeguards Agreement* collapse during implementation stages due to mounting distrust, and a change in US and ROK presidential administrations.

¹⁹⁰ *Basics of IAEA Safeguards*. International Atomic Energy Agency. <https://www.iaea.org/topics/basics-of-iaea-safeguards>; *Fact Sheet on DPRK Nuclear Safeguards*. International Atomic Energy Agency. <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/dprk/fact-sheet-on-dprk-nuclear-safeguards>

¹⁹¹ *Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula*. United Nations Peacemaker. (20 January 1992). <http://peacemaker.un.org/korea-denuclearization92>

¹⁹² *North Korea: A Country Study*. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, p. 278. (2008)

¹⁹³ Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson. *Korean-American Relations: 1866-1997*, p. 127-128. (December 1998).

- 1993 - 1997: ROK President Kim Young Sam initially takes a hard-lined approach against the DPRK, but changes his policy by planning a Korean Summit with Kim Il Sung in 1994 (Kim Il Sung died before this took place).
- June 1994: The agreement between the IAEA and the DPRK collapses. The DPRK does not allow the IAEA to inspect its nuclear facilities. The US prepares to pass economic sanctions on the DPRK and sends reinforcements to the ROK in anticipation of war between the two countries.¹⁹⁴
- 1994: Former US President Jimmy Carter visits Pyongyang resulting in the easing of tensions between the two countries and the signing of the Agreed Framework signed in October.¹⁹⁵
- October 1994: The US, the ROK, Japan, and the DPRK sign the 1994 US – DPRK Agreed Framework. The multilateral Framework requires the DPRK to halt nuclear activity, allow for IAEA monitoring and the eventual dismantling of its nuclear facility.¹⁹⁶ In exchange, the US, Japan, and the ROK are to provide the DPRK with an interim energy supply and the US will build nuclear power reactors to provide safe nuclear energy still required by the DPRK. The Framework succeeds in halting DPRK plutonium processing for nine years.
- 1997: The International Monetary Fund Crisis and delays by the US Congress delay the US commitment to meet their requirements under the 1994 Agreed Framework.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Leon V. Sigal. *The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Understanding The Failure of the 'Crime-and-Punishment' Strategy*. (1 May 1997). Arms Control Association. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997_05/sigal

¹⁹⁵ Leon V. Sigal. *The North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Understanding The Failure of the 'Crime-and-Punishment' Strategy*. (1 May 1997). Arms Control Association. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997_05/sigal

¹⁹⁶ *The U.S. – DPRK Agreed Framework at a Glance*. Arms Control Association. (August 2004). <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/agreedframework>

¹⁹⁷ *Denuclearization and the Two Koreas, 1993–2001*. US Department of State. Office of the Historian. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/two-koreas>

- 1998: ROK President Kim Dae Jung (1998 – 2003) establishes the “Sunshine Policy” to support openness and dialogue with the DPRK. One strategy of the Sunshine Policy was a commitment to a peaceful relationship with the DPRK by responding to provocative actions with engagement in direct talks and standing by existing plans for cooperation.
- 1998: A DPRK submarine infiltrates ROK waters multiple times. Instead of retaliation, ROK President Kim continues dialogue with the DPRK and goes on to approve the Mt. Kumgang tourism plan and the first vice-ministerial talks between the two nations later that year.¹⁹⁸
- June 2000: The first Inter-Korean Summit is held in Pyongyang.
- January 2001: US President George W. Bush enters into office.
- January 2002: US President Bush names Iraq, DPRK, and Iran as “the axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world” in his State of the Union address.
- January 2003: The DPRK withdraws from Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- February 2003: The DPRK restarts nuclear facilities.
- March 2003: The US invades Iraq and overthrows Saddam Hussein.
- 2003: ROK President Roh Moo-hyn (2003-2008) expands Sunshine Policy as the “Policy for Peace and Prosperity” to approach the relationship with the DPRK through persuasion, appeasement and cooperation.
- 2003: The first round of Six Party Talks occurs with all parties present.

¹⁹⁸ Pearl Jinju Kwon. *The Re-evaluation of the Sunshine Policy: Failure or Success?* The Public Sphere. (2014). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IPA/images/Documents/PublicSphere/2014/7-Kwon-Sunshine.pdf>

- October 2007: The second Inter-Korean Summit is held in Pyongyang.¹⁹⁹ The Inter-Korean Summits lead to the creation of a joint industrial zone, the negotiation of 40 different types of agreements on political and economic cooperation, and the resumption of family reunification visits.²⁰⁰ These agreements are designed to encourage behaviour that produces mutually beneficial outcomes for both Koreas.
- 2005: The second round of Six Party Talks mark renewed relations between the Koreas as well as a reversal of the Bush Administration's non-engagement policy with the DPRK.
- 2005: Pyongyang pledges to abandon "all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes" and return to the NPT, marking a critical breakthrough in relations.
- 2007: The parties agree on a series of steps to implement the 2005 agreement.²⁰¹
- 2007 - 2009: The US and the DPRK fail to agree on a verification protocol required to implement the 2005 agreement before the end of Bush's term.
- January 13, 2009: During US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's confirmation hearing, she expresses the Obama administration's interest in engaging with the DPRK. In relation to preventing non-proliferation with the DPRK and Iran, Secretary Clinton states, "[t]oday's security threats cannot be addressed in isolation. Smart power requires reaching out to both friends and adversaries, to bolster old alliances and to forge new ones."²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ *An Overview of Inter-Korean Relations Issue Brief*. The National Committee on North Korea. (July 2011). http://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications/NCNK_Issue_Brief_ROK%20_DPRK-07-2011.doc

²⁰⁰ Pearl Jinju Kwon. *The Re-evaluation of the Sunshine Policy: Failure or Success?* The Public Sphere. (2014).

²⁰¹ *Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy*. Arms Control Association. (October 2016). <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>

²⁰² *Nomination of Hillary R. Clinton to be Secretary of State*. Hearing Before the Committee on foreign relations United States Senate. (13 January 2009). <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111shrg54615/pdf/CHRG-111shrg54615.pdf>

- April 5, 2009: The DPRK launches a multistage rocket. The DPRK states that it was for peaceful purposes to place a rocket into orbit.²⁰³
- April 13, 2009: The UN Security Council releases a statement condemning the April 5 launch.²⁰⁴
- April 14, 2009: The DPRK responds to the UN statement by announcing its withdrawal from Six Party Talks.²⁰⁵
- February 29, 2012: The DPRK agrees to freeze nuclear programme in exchange for US aid.²⁰⁶
- April 2012: After the DPRK launches a rocket earlier in the month, the US and the DPRK enter a dispute in relation to the February 29 agreement.
- July 25, 2012: The DPRK requests a peace treaty with the US. The US refuses due to the breakdown of the February 2012 agreement.
- February 2013: The DPRK declares the February 2012 agreement void and conducts nuclear test.
- January 2016: The DPRK requests the conclusion of a peace treaty with the US. The US refuses, stating that the DPRK must demonstrate by its actions that it is serious about denuclearisation before any dialogue can begin.

²⁰³ *Statement by the President of the Security Council*. United Nations Security Council. (13 April 2009). http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/2009/7; Six Party Talks. Nuclear Threat Initiative. (4 August 2011). http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/6ptalks.pdf?_=1316553863

²⁰⁴ *Statement by the President of the Security Council*. United Nations Security Council. (13 April 2009). http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/2009/7;

²⁰⁵ *Six Party Talks*. Nuclear Threat Initiative. (4 August 2011). http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/6ptalks.pdf?_=1316553863

²⁰⁶ *Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy*. Arms Control Association. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron#2012>

- June 2016: At the Northeast Asian Security Dialogue and before US State Department officials, a DPRK Foreign Ministry official reportedly outlines terms to resume dialogue with the US. The terms declared that the DPRK would be willing to discuss halting future nuclear development, but would not destroy any existing nuclear assets.²⁰⁷
- July 6, 2016: A DPRK spokesman announces that the country is willing to discuss denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula with the US. The US ignores the request.²⁰⁸
- October 2016: DPRK officials and former officials of US administrations meet in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the DPRK's position on its nuclear programme and the US – DPRK diplomatic relationship.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Josh Rogin. *Inside the secret U.S.-North Korea 'Track 2' diplomacy*. The Washington Post. (28 August 2016). https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/inside-the-secret-us-north-korea-track-2-diplomacy/2016/08/28/ef33b2d4-6bc0-11e6-ba32-5a4bf5aad4fa_story.html?utm_term=.89b043207f64

²⁰⁸ *DPRK Government Denounces U.S., S. Korea's Sophism about "Denuclearization of North."* Korea News Service (KNS). (6 July 2016). www.kcna.co.jp/item/2016/201607/news06/20160706-41ee.html; Robert Carlin. *North Korea Said it is Willing to Talk about Denuclearization... But No One Noticed.* 38 North. (12 July 2016). <http://38north.org/2016/07/rcarlin071216/>;

²⁰⁹ *N. Korean Diplomats meet with ex-US officials in Malaysia.* Yonhap News Agency. (22 October 2016). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2016/10/22/38/0301000000AEN20161022002651320F.html>

ANNEX 2

United States' Direct Threats or Implied Uses of Nuclear Weapons against the Democratic People's Republic Korea: November 1950 – September 2016²¹⁰

November 30, 1950	US President Harry Truman threatened use of the atomic bomb by declaring the US might use any weapon in its arsenal.	The New York Times. 30 November and 1 December 1950.
April 5, 1951	“US Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered immediate atomic retaliation against Manchurian bases if large numbers of new troops came into the fighting or, it appears, if bombers were launched from there against US assets.”	<i>Korea: forgotten nuclear threats</i> . Le Monde diplomatique. December 2004.
January 1958	The US military secretly places nuclear-capable missiles and atomic cannons in the ROK.	<i>US Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s South Korea & North Korea's Nuclear Development</i> . Jae-Bong, Lee. February 2009.
June 22, 1975	Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger warns the DPRK: “if circumstances were to require use of tactical nuclear weapons [to defend the ROK] I think that that would be carefully considered . . . I do not think it would be wise to test [U.S.] reactions.”	<i>Schlesinger Warns N. Korea U.S. May Use Nuclear Arms</i> . St. Louis Post-Dispatch. June 22, 1975.
August 18, 1976	Following the Poplar Tree incident, the US Administration dispatched a squadron of nuclear-capable B52s, a navy task force and an aircraft carrier to the ROK.	<i>Crisis Summary: POPLAR TREE no. 274</i> . ²¹¹

²¹⁰ A similar chart and concept has been introduced by Joseph Gerson. Joseph Gerson and John Feffer. *Empire and Nuclear Weapons*. Foreign Policy in Focus. (30 November 2007). http://fpif.org/empire_and_nuclear_weapons/; Joseph Gerson. *Empire and the Bomb: How the United States Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World*. Pluto Press. (May 2007).

²¹¹ Available at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/icb/dataviewer/>

July 12, 1993	US President Bill Clinton warns the government in Pyongyang that if they ever use nuclear weapons, "it will be the end of their country."	<i>Clinton Threatens Annihilation If N. Korea Uses Nuclear Arms.</i> The Washington Post. July 12, 1993. ²¹²
1995	US General Habiger states that the threat of U.S. nuclear use was passed to the DPRK back in 1995, when the DPRK refused to reverse their reactor approach.	<i>U.S. nuclear threats: Then and now.</i> Natural Resources Defense Council (2006), Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. ²¹³
December 2001	The 2002 US Nuclear Posture Review identifies the DPRK as a possible target for nuclear attack.	<i>2002 US Nuclear Posture Review.</i> Nuclear Threat Initiative. ²¹⁴
October 17, 2006	Condoleezza Rice reaffirms that the US has the will and the capability to meet the full range of its deterrent and security commitments to Japan.	<i>Lou Dobbs Tonight CNN Transcript.</i> October 18, 2006. ²¹⁵
October 20, 2006	Secretary Rumsfeld affirms US commitment and immediate support to ROK, including continuation of the extended deterrence offered by the US nuclear umbrella.	<i>Joint Communiqué of the 38th U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting.</i> October 20, 2006. ²¹⁶
May 1, 2007	The US reaffirms that the full range of US military capabilities, both nuclear and non-nuclear, extend to the defence of Japan (against the DPRK).	<i>Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee.</i> May 1, 2007. ²¹⁷

²¹² Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/07/12/clinton-threatens-annihilation-if-n-korea-uses-nuclear-arms/302b6139-f009-47b6-919e-a65f05b0eea2/?utm_term=.8f215dc4a68b#

²¹³ Available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00963402.2006.11461021>

²¹⁴ Available at <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/nuclear-posture-review/>

²¹⁵ Available at <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0610/18/ldt.01.html>

²¹⁶ Available at <http://archive.defense.gov/news/Oct2006/d20061020uskorea.pdf>

²¹⁷ Available at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/pdfs/joint0705.pdf>

April 6, 2010	US Defense Secretary states that all options are on the table for countries like North Korea and Iran, including the use of nuclear weapons.	<i>Gates Discusses New Nuclear Posture, U.S. Relations With Karzai.</i> US Department of Defense Online News. April 11, 2010. ²¹⁸
January, 11 2016	US flies nuclear-capable B-52 bomber over Osan, ROK - 48 miles south of the DMZ.	<i>U.S. flies B-52 over South Korea after North's nuclear test.</i> Reuters. January 11, 2016. ²¹⁹
April 26, 2016	US President Obama states, "we could, obviously destroy North Korea with our arsenals. But aside from the humanitarian costs of that, they are right next door to our vital ally, Republic of Korea."	<i>Obama on why the U.S. won't "destroy North Korea."</i> CBS News. April 26, 2016. ²²⁰
September 13, 2016	The US military fly nuclear-capable B-1 bombers over Osan, ROK.	U.S. bombers fly over South Korea in show of force after nuclear test. Reuters. September 13, 2016. ²²¹

²¹⁸ Available at <http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=58700>

²¹⁹ Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN0UN0Y420160111>

²²⁰ Available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/president-obama-north-korea-challenge-south-china-sea-aggression/>

²²¹ Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN11J059>

ANNEX 3

A review of interactions between the US and the DPRK demonstrates a cycle of provocation: November 2015 to December 2016

- November 13: The US Treasury Department sanctions the DPRK Ambassador to Myanmar along with three other DPRK officials. The imposition of a unilateral sanction on an ambassador of another country, in a third country, is an unprecedented action.²²²
- December 8: The Treasury Department passes additional sanctions on the DPRK to include its Strategic Rocket Force, six DPRK bankers, and three shipping companies.²²³
- December 10: The US, as Chair for the UN Security Council during the month of December, “organizes another special meeting of the Security Council on the alleged violations of human rights in the DPRK, even though the Security Council has no jurisdiction over human rights issues under the UN Charter.”²²⁴
- January 6: The DPRK conducts its fourth nuclear test.
- January 10: The US responds by flying nuclear-capable aircraft over Osan Air Force Base, 48 miles south of the DMZ.²²⁵

²²² *North Korea Designations; Terrorism Designations; Libya Designation Removal*. US Department of the Treasury. (13 November 2015). <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20151113.aspx>

²²³ *North Korea Designations; Non-proliferation Designations*. US Department of the Treasury. (8 December 2015).

https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20151208_33.aspx

²²⁴ United Nations Security Council 7575th Meeting Report. S/PV.7575. (10 December 2015). http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_7575.pdf; Veterans for Peace Statement. (4 January 2016).

²²⁵ Tony Monroe and Jack Kim. *U.S. flies B-52 over South Korea after North's nuclear test*. Reuters. (10 January 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN0UN0Y420160110>

- February and March: US Congress and the UN Security Council pass economic sanctions on the North Korean government.²²⁶
- March 2 – April 30: The ROK - US Combined Forces Command engages in annual Key Resolve and Foal Eagle exercise.²²⁷
- April 23: Seven days prior to the conclusion of the US- ROK joint military exercise, the DPRK fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile.
- April 26: US President Obama states, “we could destroy the DPRK with our arsenals” but the will not due to the humanitarian costs and close proximity of the ROK.
- June 22: The DPRK launches two Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missiles.
- July 6: The US imposes sanctions on Kim Jong-Un (the first time Kim Jong-Un has been sanctioned as an individual), and 10 other top DPRK officials, as well as five entities referencing human rights abuses.
- July 8: The DPRK condemns sanctions as hostile and an act of war.
- July 8: The US and ROK agree to deploy THADD, a controversial missile defence system, to the ROK.
- July 9: The DPRK tests a submarine-launched ballistic missile. The missile fails after only traveling a few kilometres.

²²⁶ *Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, and Ambassador Oh Joon, at the Security Council Stakeout Following the Adoption of Resolution 2270 on DPRK Sanctions.* United States Mission to the United Nations. (2 March 2016). <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/7164>; H.R.757 - *North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016.* US Congress. (18 February 2016). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/757>; *Security Council Imposes Fresh Sanctions on Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2270 (2016).* United Nations Security Council. (2 March 2016). <http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12267.doc.htm>

²²⁷ *CFC Announces Start of Key Resolve and Foal Eagle 2016.* United States Forces Korea. (6 March 2016). <http://www.usfk.mil/Media/Press-Releases/Article/686836/cfc-announces-start-of-key-resolve-and-foal-eagle-2016/>

- July 19: The DPRK fires three ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast.
- August 4: The DPRK fires two ballistic missiles into waters off its east coast, one of which reportedly lands in Japan's exclusive economic zone.
- August 22 – September 2: The ROK and US engage in joint military exercise, Ulchi Freedom Guardian Drills.
- August 24: The DPRK test-fires a submarine-launched ballistic missile.²²⁸
- September 5: The DPRK fires three intermediate-range ballistic missiles from Hwangju region into the sea off its east coast hitting Japan's air defence identification zone.²²⁹
- September 9: The DPRK conducts its fifth nuclear test and the largest-ever reaching 10 kilotons.²³⁰
- September 13: Two US B-1 nuclear bombers fly over Osan Air Base, 48 miles from the DMZ.²³¹
- September 21: US flies nuclear-capable aircraft over Osan Air Force Base and pledges to impose additional economic sanctions on the DPRK.²³²

²²⁸ Ju-min Park and Jack Kim. *North Korea fires submarine-launched ballistic missile towards Japan*. Reuters. (24 August 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-idUSKCN10Y2B0>

²²⁹ Ju-min Park. *North Korea fires three ballistic missiles as G20 leaders meet in China*. Reuters. (5 September 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-idUSKCN11B0B5>

²³⁰ *North Korea conducts 5th nuclear test*. The Korea Times. (9 September 2016). http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/485_213789.html

²³¹ James Pearson and Ju-min Park. *U.S. bombers fly over South Korea in show of force after nuclear test*. Reuters. (13 September 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-nuclear-idUSKCN11J059>

²³² *Statement of Daniel R. Russel Assistant Secretary Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs U.S. Department of State Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific*. (27 September 2016). <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA05/20160927/105386/HHRG-114-FA05-Wstate-RusselD-20160927.pdf>

- October 3 - 21: US, ROK, New Zealand, and NATO forces engage in a joint military drill, Exercise Red Flag, at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska. The drill involves the simulation of airstrikes.²³³
- October 13 – 26: US – ROK militaries hold Teak Knife drill to practice “surgical strikes” against the DPRK’s nuclear and missile facilities. The two militaries have regularly practiced the Teak Knife drill since the 1990s.²³⁴
- October 31 – November 11: ROK military conduct a two-week long drill to practice interoperability among forces and to inspire troops to be ready to fight at any moment.²³⁵
- November 30: UN Security Council votes to tighten economic sanctions on the DPRK.²³⁶
- December 11: DPRK State News Agency reports that a special operations drill conducted by North Korean forces targeting the ROK recently occurred.²³⁷

²³³ 6 South Korean fighter jets leave for Red Flag exercise. Yonhap News Agency. (1 October 2016). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2016/10/01/0200000000AEN20161001001600315.html?did=2106m>

²³⁴ Senior Airman Colville McFee. *Air Commandos, South Koreans exercise interoperability*. Air Force Special Operations Command. (26 October 2016). <http://www.afsoc.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/5003/Article/989450/air-commandos-south-koreans-exercise-interoperability.aspx>

²³⁵ S. Korea, U.S. hold joint amphibious drill amid N. Korean threats. Yonhap News Agency. (31 October 2016). <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2016/10/31/38/0301000000AEN20161031002600315.F.html>

²³⁶ *UN Documents for DPRK (North Korea)*. UN Security Council Report. (2017). <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/dprk-north-korea/>

²³⁷ Ju-min Park, Yun Hwan Chae and Tony Munroe. *North Korea’s Kim guides special operations drill targeting South*. Reuters. (11 December 2016). <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-southkorea-idUSKBN14004J>



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