

Critical Analysis on the Development of North Korea's Nuclear/Missile Technology in the View of Strategic Theory *

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Abstract

The Korean peninsula is a major hot spot of the 21st century where many different types of battles, including conventional provocations, asymmetric warfare, missile/nuclear threats, terrorist attacks, and cyber DDoS attacks, are still waged. While the peninsula is still under a grave threat of a new round of Korean War, it is still difficult to 'explain' (positivism) or 'understand' (post-positivism) Pyongyang's bellicose behaviours due to the lack of theoretical studies of North Korea's national and military strategy. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explain the military behaviours of North Korea in the view of Strategic Theory. In other words, while addressing major concerns and limitations about North Korea's nuclear/missile studies in the field of International Relations, I demonstrate a great inside look at how

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Kim Jong Il created nuclear/missile strategy in a particular view of Strategic Theory. Specifically, in the view of Strategic Theory, I demonstrate theoretical assumptions regarding the ways in which Pyongyang establishes a link between political aims (“Kangsong Taeguk: Strong-Prosperous Nation”) and military means.’ For this, this study will focus primarily on the following three areas:

- A critical Analysis on North Korea’s growing nuclear/missile threats applied to main theoretical concepts such as “strategy”, “strategic culture”, and “security”
- The development of North Korea’s nuclear/missile programme in the view of strategic theory
- Theorising ‘Politico-Strategic Behaviours of Pyongyang’

Key words: North Korea’s nuclear strategy, Pyongyang’s Nuclear/Missile technology, Military Strategy, Strategic Culture, Strategic Theory

I. Introduction

In 2017, Kim Jong Un’s national strategy¹⁾, the so-called “*Byungjin*” (병진)

¹⁾ Principally, the author focuses on Nuclear Strategy during Kim Jong Il regime, 1994-2011 over the all parts in this paper. In this regard, the personal and historical experience are combined with detailed analyse of various military events and campaigns revealed how Kim Jong Il’s outcome was frequently decided by the principle of strategy. Since Kim Jong Un took over from his father, Kim Jong

line Policy (simultaneous economic and nuclear development for both peaceful and military purposes)”²⁾, conceived to launch full-scaled attacks, became a catalyst for escalating military provocations in the Northeast Asian region. In spite of strong UN Security Council sanctions and the unanimous condemnation by the international community, Pyongyang is continuing the miniaturisation and sophistication of its nuclear weapons and the development and testing of ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile), MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System), SLBM (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles) and so on. In this regard, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a ‘nuclear-armed state’ when it comes to the technological achievements resulted from a long-term national strategy. Technically, North Korea has conducted several nuclear tests involving nuclear bombs, providing Pyongyang with the possibility to claim to have successfully “miniaturised” nuclear warheads. Although this claim is improbable or at least highly debated among some experts, Pyongyang's achievements related to nuclear/missile technologies have determined an increasing academic

Il, after he passed away in late 2011, the new regime again has presented repetitive missiles tests like an annual military event in Pyongyang. However, this paper offers no explanation about the mid- and long-term perspectives of Kim Jong Un in that the most recent analyses on the young dictator have not yet been achieved. Therefore, this paper aims to explain, analyse, and interpret those features that characterized the nuclear/missile strategy designed by Kim Jong Il.

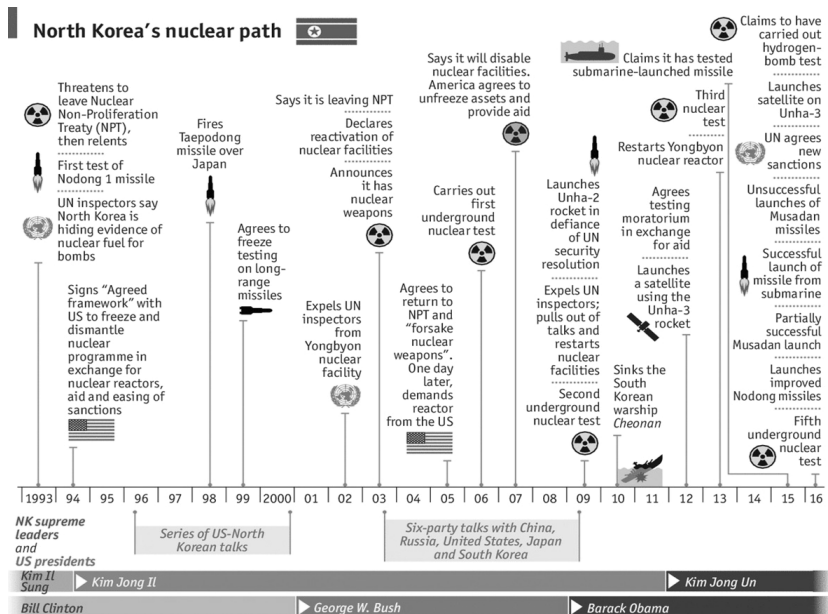
- 2) Since the end of Cold War, Kim Jong Il regime has developed a national ideology of “Military-first Politics(先軍政治),” which aimed for Pyongyang's nuclear strategy. On this basis, the third generation of Kim family rule has adopted the *Byungjin*(^{병진}) line, calling for simultaneous economic and nuclear technology development, as the Kim Jong Un's willingness including scientific socialist thought and plans for the continuing Korean revolution.

focus on global security threats stemmed from the development of North Korea's nuclear capabilities vis-à-vis the enigmatic nature of this Asian state.

In fact, Pyongyang's "unique" attitude towards other countries has forced many observers to stress the "irrational nature" of Pyongyang in pursuing its foreign and domestic policy. On the one hand, North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2017 which demonstrate its advanced nuclear ability escalating security crisis in the Northeast Asian region. On the other hand, the current Kim Jong Un regime is preparing for the worsening of the economic conditions generated by the new economic sanctions imposed after the series of nuclear tests. According to an editorial in the *Rodong Sinmun*, the official newspaper of the ruling Worker's Party of Korea, North Korea may have to go on another 'arduous march' against a severe famine similar to the one that killed as many as 3.5 million of the nation's 22 million people in the early 1990s.³⁾

3) The North Korean famine is known as the "Arduous March(^{고난의 행군})" in North Korea, occurred in North Korea from 1994 to 1998. The famine - in which as many as 3.5 million of the nation's 22 million people died - was brought on by economic mismanagement, natural disasters, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the consequent loss of aid, combined with the regime's insistence on continuing a life of luxury and feeding the military. See Jullian Ryall, "North Koreans Told to Prepare for New 'Arduous March'," *The Telegraph*, 29 March, 2016.

〈Figure 1〉 A Timeline of North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions



Source: The Economist Data Team, "A Timeline of North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions," 9 September 2016.

In other words, Pyongyang spends astronomical amounts of money in developing nuclear programmes despite severe and unceasing poverty at a national level. For example, Pyongyang launched two rockets in 2012, although the mission was a failed attempt. According to South Korea's Ministry of Unification, the launch cost \$600 million, while the overall spending related to the launch site itself was estimated at \$ 400 million. It was said that "This is equivalent to acquiring 4.6million tons of corns".⁴⁾

⁴⁾ Public Briefing, The Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea. (20 April 2012).

To put it simply, it would appear “irrational”(or at least not in compliance with a rational choice approach) for North Korea – a state chronically hit by famines, natural disasters and under severe economic conditions and tough international economic sanctions –to continue to achieve its political aim to be a nuclear-armed state. However, as shown in (Figure 1), North Korea has traditionally committed itself to conceiving and carrying out an effective nuclear strategy. This process - indeed - undoubtedly represents a key feature that linked the past Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il regimes to the present Kim Jong Un regime. In fact, the need for a nuclear strategy and the related nuclear/missile programmes were originally conceived by Kim Il Sung in the aftermath of the Cold War, and then carried out by Kim Jong Il and currently by Kim Jong Un.

Consequently, it is not easy to puzzle the core tenets of North Korea’s nuclear strategy without comprehensive security studies concerning its political systems with hereditary monarchy, geopolitical history before/after the Cold War, and Pyongyang’s domestic politics. Basically, this study aims to explain the military behaviours of North Korea in the view of Strategic Theory. In other words, while addressing major concerns and limitations about North Korea’s nuclear/missile studies in the field of International Relations, I will provide readers with a great inside looking at how Kim Jong Il created nuclear/missile strategy in a particular view of Strategic Theory. Specifically, in the view of Strategic Theory, I demonstrate theoretical assumptions regarding the ways in which Pyongyang establishes a link between political aims (“*Kangsong Taeguk* : Strong-Prosperous Nation”) and military means.’ For this, this study will focus primarily on the following three areas: 1) A critical Analysis on North Korea’s growing missile threats

applied to main theoretical concepts such as 'strategy', 'strategic culture', and 'security'; 2) The development of North Korea's nuclear/missile Programmes in the View of Strategic Theory; and 3) Theorising Strategic Behaviours of Pyongyang. At the end, this study suggests a theoretical framework to anatomize the North Korean contemporary military strategy through the examination of Pyongyang's security concerns and political intentions.

II. Significant Theoretical Concepts Applied to the Study of North Korea's Nuclear/Missiles Programmes

Judging from its military/diplomatic tactics resting on Pyongyang's unique strategic culture, one important question arises here. Why do classic international relations theories seem to fail to provide effective ways of understating North Korea's nuclear/missile strategy during Kim Jong Il regime? Perhaps the international relations theorists relying on a mere rationalistic perspective see Pyongyang's bellicose military diplomacy as simply irresponsible gesture of North Korea to sustain self-help and its power. However, in reality, such analysis cannot entirely explain the North Korean military strategy since the North did fairly rationalistic calculations in order to achieve their national interests.⁵⁾

⁵⁾ See the paper representing the Constructivist Understanding of North Korea's military strategy, JISUN PARK (2014), 'Constructivist Understandings of North

From a theoretical point of view, the study of North Korean nuclear strategy under Kim Jong Il's regimes requires to investigate possible theoretical implications related to the development of North Korean nuclear/missile programmes. This is because the general trend in the study of North Korea's issues is focused on the origin of Pyongyang's threats to international security caused by the provocative military actions of the three-generation lineage of North Korean leadership. All in all, a large portion of these studies typically prescribe consequences of Pyongyang's nuclear/missile tests based on theories of international politics and security studies (especially in rationalistic approaches) which primarily reflect the views of the authors and the parties he/she represents. Regardless of the overwhelming number of studies on North Korean nuclear issues to date, the main criticism surrounding this academic trend is related to the fact that it tends to relate North Korean nuclear issues to foreign policy-related calculations among the members of the Six-Party Talk during the period 2003-2007. In other words, the scholars belonging to this research approach tend to focus mainly on how North Korean (nuclear) issues may potentially impact on the formulation of foreign policies of the countries in the Northeast region as they generally argue that the outcome of Pyongyang's nuclear development has a profound impact on their future policies.

However, this way of analysing North Korea's nuclear strategy is not enough to explain core principles of North Korea's nuclear strategy in the view of strategic theory. Thus, the need to define and apply concepts such

Korea's Ballistic Missile Programme: National Security Policy Based on North Korea's Strategic Culture', 『Journal of Peace and Unification』, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2014).

as 'strategy', 'strategic culture' and 'security' to the study of North Korea's nuclear/missile programmes requires a preliminary overview of those key theoretical formulations belonging to the field of strategic studies and security studies. In the Penguin Dictionary of International Relations, security studies are defined as a "sub-branch of international relations dealing with explanation of security concepts, their implementation when developing foreign policy and their consequential effect on structures and processes in world politics".⁶⁾ Differently, in the same dictionary, strategic studies are defined as a "research field dealing with procedures through which actors utilize their military assets to achieve given political objectives".⁷⁾

In recent years, scholars have progressively stressed the relevance of security study and minimized the role played by strategic studies. It is interesting to note that during the Cold War security and strategic studies essentially overlapped each other, limiting the scope of security study. However, as effectively pointed out by Baylis and Wirtz, in recent years "the problem with strategy, it is argued, is that it is too narrow and increasingly less relevant at a time when major wars are declining and threats to political, economic, social, and environmental security interests are increasing".⁸⁾

In relation to this point, this paper essentially argues that strategy remains a key and valuable area of academic study as strategy is a pivotal part of security studies in the same fashion as studies on security are part of

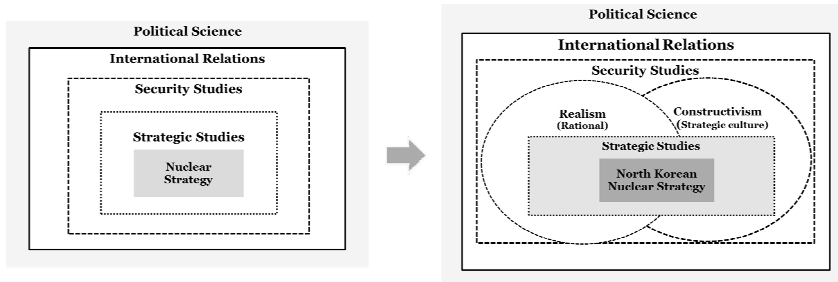
⁶⁾ Graham Evans and Richard Newnham, *Dictionary of International Relations* (Penguin Books, 1998), p.496.

⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, 518.

⁸⁾ John Baylis and James Wirtz, "Strategy in the Contemporary World: Strategy after 9/11," in *Strategy in the Contemporary World 3rd ed.*, ed. John Baylis, James Wirtz and Colin Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13.

International Relations, and thus part of political science (Figure 2). From a theoretical point of view, this claim may be demonstrated by taking into how the notion of ‘strategy’ has progressively absorbed the concept of ‘strategy’. In fact, in recent years, security studies have provided academic community with a rising number of expansive definitions of security that progressively began to absorb concepts belonging to other sub-fields of international relations, such as strategic studies.

〈Figure 2〉 Research Methodology Proposed by the Author



On this point, it is important to stress that the notion of strategy has recently moved away from the sole application of the term in the military formulation as this notion has also an important “peace time application”. For the purposes here, I will rely on Gray’s definition of strategy, that is “strategy is the application of military power to achieve political objectives, or more specifically *the theory and practice of the use, and threat of use, of organized force for political purposes*”.⁹⁾

Another fundamental concept employed in strategic studies that I will use

⁹⁾ On this point, see C.S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

in this work is represented by the definition of 'strategic culture'. For Gray, this term essentially defines "[t]he persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation, that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience"¹⁰).

For the purposes here, author's emphasis on 'strategy' and 'strategic culture' is based on the presumption that the study of North Korea's nuclear strategy as a way to secure political aims requires – from a theoretical and methodological point of view – a sort of 'eclectic approach' that combines various approaches and methodologies. This is because one of the key peculiarities related to the study of North Korea is to merge together different sources of strategic culture that may in turn belong to different theoretical approaches. In fact, the key presumption of this work is that North Korean leaders have been traditionally able to instrumentally use different sources of strategic culture in order to rationally secure one of the basic propositions of realism: state's survival in an anarchic international system.

Particularly, it is fascinating to note that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il have effectively used different sources of strategic culture to secure the survival of North Korea and achieve specific political aims. On this point, as theorized by traditional studies on strategy, the potential sources of strategic culture may shift from transnational forces to normative pressure,

¹⁰ C.S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25 (1999), 4.

encompassing physical, political and social/cultural factors. In the case of North Korea, indeed, this thesis shall try to demonstrate that North Korean strategic culture did not depend only on “traditional strategic factors”, such as physical (e.g. geography, natural resources, generational change or technology) or political features (e.g. political system, elite or military organization). This is because North Korea has not only traditionally relied on rational-strategic calculations in shaping its strategic culture and achieving the related aims. On the contrary, North Korean leadership has also enormously used important social/cultural features (e.g. myths or symbols as theorized by constructivist models on the study of strategy) belonging to Korean historical tradition to achieve important national and strategic goals.¹¹⁾

Thus, in theoretical terms, this paper will rely on a combination of strategic studies, (neo) realist approaches and conventional constructivism. In fact, on the one hand this work will show how the case of North Korea seems to demonstrate a clear theoretical link between key realist formulations (e.g. state-centric, materialist, power-political and conflictual assumptions) and sub-fields belonging to classical, traditionalist literature on strategic studies (war, nuclear proliferation, arms racing, deterrence theory, arms controls, etc.). On the other hand, a valuable analysis of how a poor nation as North Korea used nuclear weapons to essentially achieve political aims cannot only be based on a mere “material analysis”. In fact, it also entails a clear “strategic culture” based on important ideational factors (e.g.

¹¹⁾ For accounts of constructivist models in the field of strategy, see Peter J. Katzenstein, Ed. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 56.

culture, beliefs, norms, identity and ideas) belonging to the peculiar North Korean social/cultural environment.

1. Strategy and Strategic Culture

As stressed in the previous part, thinkers and scholars have progressively focused on different definitions of strategy by focusing each time on different key concepts. In modern era, the formulation of the notion of strategy became something primarily related to war, and based on different key concepts such as “power” or the “process” inherent in the formulation of strategy.¹²⁾

In recent times the formulation of the concept of strategy has progressively shifted from the sole “war time application” in favour of a “peace time” use of the term. Following this perspective, I have defined the concept of strategy by relying on Gray’s definition. For this scholar, strategy is essentially the application of military power to achieve political objectives. On this point, it is important to stress that even in modern era, several military practitioners, military thinkers and scholars began to progressively stress the importance of obtaining “given (political) objectives” in carrying out a given strategy within a “war” or a “war-like scenario”.

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, the definition of strategy and its clear connection with political purposes is not enough to explain how Kim Jong Il built up a Military-First Nation in North Korea. This is

¹²⁾ John Baylis and James Wirtz, “Strategy in the Contemporary World: Strategy after 9/11,” in *Strategy in the Contemporary World 3rd ed.*, ed. John Baylis, James Wirtz and Colin Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

because Kim Jong Il's military-first policy may be considered as a sort of "grand strategy" aimed at obtaining clear political objectives through the development of nuclear/missiles programmes, and the threat of using them. In particular, the concept of "grand strategy" is to cover those industrial, financial, demographic, and societal aspects of war that generally characterizes most of the world's states despite different ideological underpinnings.

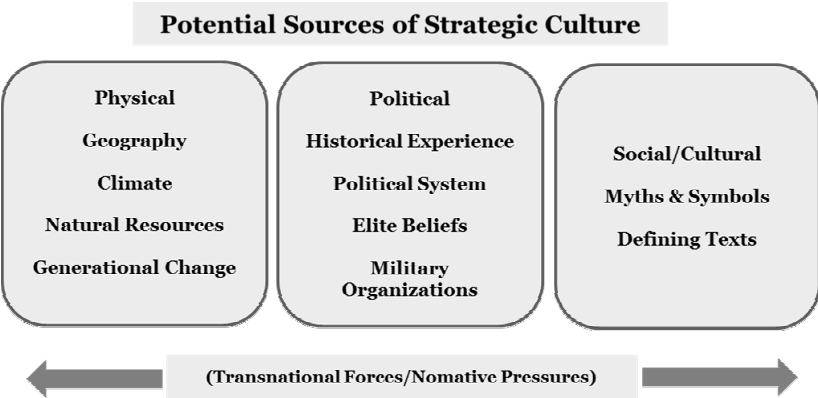
Thus, Kim Jong Il's nuclear strategy may be considered as the Grand Strategy characterizing North Korea during the "Dear Supreme Leader's era". If from a theoretical point of view, a "Grand Strategy" involves the coordination and direction of all the resources of a nation to achieve the attainment of the political objectives¹³⁾; the study of Kim Jong Il's nuclear strategy clearly demonstrates how the "Dear Supreme Leader" mobilized all "material" and "immaterial" resources of the nation to achieve clear political aims.

Finally, another fundamental theoretical concept relates to the notion of 'strategic culture'. As effectively summarized by Gray (2010), scholars generally define strategic culture as persisting socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, preferred methods of operation etc. that are more or less specific to given security community vis-à-vis unique historical experiences. However, in dealing with the notion of 'strategic culture', it is important to stress that scholars have traditionally relied on specific sources of strategic culture in order to instrumentally support given theoretical approaches. For examples, realist observers have stressed the role played by physical and political

¹³⁾ John Baylis and James Wirtz, "Strategy in the Contemporary World: Strategy after 9/11," in *Strategy in the Contemporary World 3rd ed*, ed. John Baylis, James Wirtz and Colin Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

features in determining the strategic culture of a given country, as has seen in (Figure 3). However, this work argues that social/cultural features may also contribute to portray the national strategic culture of a given country, and thus the related ‘strategies’ aimed at achieving given (political) goals.

(Figure 3) Potential Sources of Strategic Culture



Source: *Compiled by author from ideas of Jeffrey S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, “Strategic Culture”¹⁴⁾ in *Strategy in the Contemporary World* 3rd ed.

In the contemporary era, scholars have developed the so-called “cultural approach” to the analysis of strategic studies. For the purposes here, I argue that a key theoretical framework to understand and explain North Korean nuclear strategy is represented by Alastair Iain Johnston’s Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History. This is because this paper will try to demonstrate the existence and character of a specific North

¹⁴⁾ Jeffrey S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, “Strategic Culture,” in *Strategy in the Contemporary World* 3rd ed, ed. John Baylis, James Wirtz and Colin Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 91.

Korean nuclear strategy that relies on a specific strategy culture as conceived and achieved by Kim Jong Il to achieve specific political aims against external threats. In fact, similarly to Johnston's "Cultural Realism", this work seriously takes into account the "ideational milieu that limits behavioural choices"¹⁵⁾ of Kim Jong Il in making its nuclear strategy. However, I will also show how these "cultural limitations" did not prevent Kim Jong Il from securing - through a new national strategy - North Korean long-standing political objective: the need to secure the survival of the North Korean regime, as predicted by realism.

In other words, the importance of North Korean strategic culture is related to the fact that a mere realist explanation of how North Korea tried to achieve political objectives would prevent readers from understanding the different sources of strategic culture that characterized Kim Il Sung's and Kim Jong Il's era. This is because a realist analysis would essentially stress the main national goal of North Korea that is the state's survival vis-à-vis external threats. In addition, such kind of analysis would define Kim Jong Il's nuclear strategy as a mere "tool" within a "newly conceived strategy" that relies on traditional "traditional forces" rather than also on "normative forces" of strategic culture, as shown in (Figure 3). This is the reason why I argue that, although important theoretical limitations to the use of Johnston's "Cultural Realism, it may represent a valuable way of investigating and understanding North Korea's strategic culture, and thus why Kim Jong Il decided to initiate a nuclear strategy vis-à-vis the need to secure specific

¹⁵⁾ Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995).

political aims.

2. The Sources of Strategic Culture

As shown in [Figure 3], sources of strategic culture can be summarized in three main categories: physical, political and social/cultural. In relation to the category of physical elements, geography undoubtedly represents an important key to understand why some countries adopt given strategic policies rather than others. As I will show in the next pages, indeed, proximity to great powers has played an important role in determining security policies for North Korea.¹⁶⁾ In relation to the political sources of strategic culture, historical experience determines important implications in relation to the foundation and evolution of states, and in determining the consequent strategic cultural identities.¹⁷⁾

Another fundamental source of strategic culture is represented by the political structure of a given country. In fact, the democratic or semi-democratic institutional arrangement of a given country may play an important role in determining its strategic culture, and thus a given national strategy vis-à-vis specific objectives. In the case of North Korea, the dictatorial structure of the state itself and the refusal of any Western liberal democratic style played

¹⁶⁾ For a study on the role played by geography in determining security policies, see Nina Graeger and Halvard Leira, "Norwegian Strategic Culture after World War II. From a Local to a Global Perspective," *Cooperation and Conflict* 40, no. 1 (2005): 45-66.

¹⁷⁾ Jeffery S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture," in *Strategy in the Contemporary World 3rd ed*, ed. John Baylis, James Wirtz and Colin Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 90.

a crucial role in shaping North Korean traditional strategic culture. The study of strategic culture also entails other important physical sources of strategic culture, such as generational change and technology as well as cultural sources represented by myths and symbols. These elements, understood as “cultural groupings”, represent a crucial in determining key stabilizing factors in the evolution of North Korean strategic cultural identity.

As shown in 〈Figure 3〉, it is important to stress that the potential sources of strategic culture are regulated by two contending dynamics: transnational forces and normative pressure. In strict constructivist terms, “transnational norms” entail the notion of “norms” understood as “intersubjective beliefs” about the social world that may help to define actors, their situations, and the possibilities of action. In strategic studies, Farrell and Terriff points out those norms may define “the purposes and possibilities of military change [and] provide guidance concerning the use of force”¹⁸⁾. However, for constructivists “norms, state identity, and state behaviour does not flow in one direction, with norms determining state identity and behaviour. States may initially develop their preferences in response to external stimuli, but state practice then shapes the content and character of global norms”.¹⁹⁾

This theoretical claim implies one key dynamic about the study of North Korean sources of strategic culture. On the one hand North Korean strategic culture under Kim Il Sung was determined by specific sources of strategic culture determined by specific transnational forces (e.g. the Soviet military

¹⁸⁾ Theo Farrell, Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 7.

¹⁹⁾ Heather Smith-Cannoy, *Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 27.

patronage and the consequent primacy of the party over the state; the use of the myth of the “guerrilla state”). However, Kim Jong Il’s strategic culture was influenced by significant external shocks and related “transnational norms” (mostly the collapse of the Soviet Union and Western states’ attitude to military intervention under the rhetoric “humanitarian intervention” in the aftermath of the Cold War).

This fact determined the need for North Korean leader to choose new sources of strategic culture (e.g. technological change, that is nuclear technology; new institutional arrangements that is the primacy of the army over the party and state; new myths and symbols), which in turn determined a new strategy (a nuclear one) to secure political aims of regime survival. In other words, if, on the one hand, norms may represent a key dynamic within potential sources of strategic culture as norms may define “the purposes and possibilities of military change [and] provide guidance concerning the use of force”²⁰⁾, and on the other hand, Kim Jong Il’s new strategic culture also continued to reflect traditional state practice of the North Korean state within socially transmitted ideas and unique historical experience.

Finally, a final point needs to be added here. In strategic studies, concepts such as ‘strategy’, ‘strategic culture’ and ‘Grand Strategy’ are generally referred to states. Consequently, this paper considers North Korea as a rational and unitary actor. In fact, although constructivist prism shows

²⁰⁾ Theo Farrell, Terry Terrif, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 7.

effectiveness in providing a comprehensive framework concerning sources of strategic culture, this paper argues that North Korea's development of nuclear/missile programmes is based on rationalistic decisions within a specific strategic culture.

III. The Development of North Korea's Nuclear /Missile Programme in the View of Strategic Theory

As I stressed in the previous parts, this paper relies on a combination of strategic studies, (neo) realist approaches and conventional constructivism. Such academic work demonstrates how the case of North Korea seems to demonstrate a clear theoretical link between key realist formulations (e.g. state-centric, materialist, power-political and conflictual assumptions) and sub-fields belonging to classical, traditionalist literature on strategic studies (war, nuclear proliferation, arms racing, deterrence theory, arms controls, etc.). Therefore, by reflecting a positivist, foundationalist and realist portray, this part will try to demonstrate that North Korea is a unified rational state that has traditionally tried to achieve key political aims related to the state's survival by rationally formulating over the decades different national (grand) strategies.

This year, once more, North Korea conducted its sixth underground nuke test on Sunday, 3 September 2017 after the fifth nuke test in 2016, even though the North was experiencing ever-tougher economic sanctions based

on the strongest decision of the United Nation Security Council.²¹⁾ After the sixth nuke test, North Korea has claimed: “perfect success” in testing a hydrogen bomb weapon many times more powerful than an atomic bomb. Furthermore, according to state media in Pyongyang, it was said that the fifth test (on Friday, 5 September 2016) reflected the current leader Kim Jong Un’s intention to be a nuclear-armed nation, which would enable North Korea to produce “a variety of smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear warheads of higher strike power”.²²⁾

It means that North Korea’s nuclear/missile programmes are not originated for a mere nuclear-related industry purposes, such as military-industrial complex and nuclear energy, but as a long-term national strategy to achieve Kim Jong Il’s political aims during the years 1994-2012. If this is so, how did the poverty-stricken country, North Korea, accomplish its successful nuclear capability²³⁾ against relatively wealthy neighbour countries – in particular, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the U.S? I argue that North Korea undeniably has a rational nuclear strategy, which substantiates

²¹⁾ See the UN Security Council Resolution 2270 (2 March 2016), I extract some texts concerning the strong condition from the resolution.

“... Regretting the DPRK’s diversion of financial, technical, and industrial resources toward developing its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program, and condemning its declared intent to develop nuclear weapons ...”

²²⁾ CNN News, “North Korea Claims Successful Test of Nuclear Warhead,” 10th September, 2016.

²³⁾ According to South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staffs (JCS), “We estimate the North has carried out its biggest test to date with the device giving an explosive yield reaching 10 kilotons,” It means that the yield was higher than an estimated six kilotons detected in the fourth nuclear test, Yonhap News Agency, “N. Korea Conducts 5th Nuclear Test,” 9th September, 2016.

a link between its political aim and military means in the new nuclear age. Therefore, it is necessary here to clarify academically what is meant by the rationale of North Korea's nuclear strategy.

This part scrutinises the rationale aimed at achieving an outstanding technical superiority in the nuclear and missile fields and disguised as the rogue behaviours. After North Korea carries out a series of increasingly provocative nukes tests, one question needs to be asked: North Korea's technological achievement such as even a hydrogen bomb testing on Sunday 3 September 2017 is getting powerful, although nuclear and missile programmes are under the strong sanctions of the international community. If this is so, how can Pyongyang's nuclear capability advance? On the same theme, the key analysis of the author on the fifth nuclear test of the North on 9th September 2016 was as followed:

The DPRK is the most warlike nation on the face of the earth in the 21st century. Pyongyang is studying for the ability to maintain the overwhelming force in the nuclear, conventional arenas, and even cyber warfare (e.g. DDoS attacks) for more than 50years. Importantly, North Korea's nuclear/missile programmes are **a long-term national strategy to achieve Kim Jong Il's political aims during the years 1994-2012**. After the death of Kim Jong Il's, Kim Jong Un's political doctrine, the so-called "Byungjin line Policy (Simultaneous economic and nuclear development)" to launch full-scale attacks is similar to the one his father, Kim Jong Il,²⁴⁾

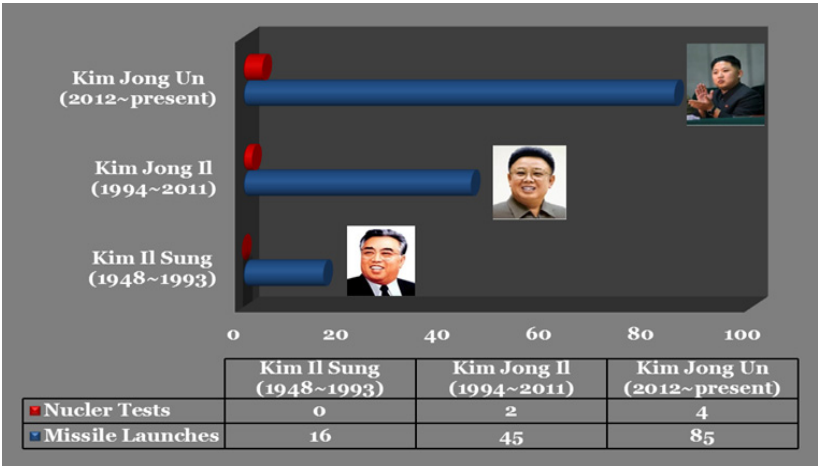
As has shown in <Table 1>, <Table 2>, North Korea has conducted six

²⁴⁾ The author has an interview with YLE(Finnish Broadcasting Company) concerning the fifth nuke test of North Korea. YLE, "Ulkomaiset asiantuntijat Ylelle: Pakotteet eivät pure Pohjois-Koreaan, mutta vaihtoehtojakaan ei ol," 10th September, 2016.

nukes tests and 146 times different types of missiles have launches from 1984 to present. After inheriting power from his father Kim Jong Il in 2012, Kim Jong Un surprised the international community in bringing North Korea into the world stage by carrying out more than 80 missile launches. In this regard, President Donald Trump has delivered a strong warning to Pyongyang in his first speech to the United Nations general assembly – “telling Kim Jong Un that “Rocket Man is on a suicide mission” and threatening the “total destruction” of this county should he attack the US.”²⁵⁾ Thus, this shows a need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by the political, technological, and strategic achievements of Pyongyang’s nuclear/missile technologies.

<Table 1> North Korea Nuclear Tests/ Missile Launches: 1984–Present(1)

*The table needs to be updated.



²⁵⁾ Harriet Alexander, “Donald Trump says US may have to ‘totally destroy’ North Korea,” The Telegraph, 19 September, 2017, accessed 20 September, 2017.

〈Table 2〉 North Korea Nuclear Tests/ Missile Launches: 1984–Present (2)

Regime	Timeline	Missile Launches/ Nuclear Test	Number Launched
Kim Jong Un (2011,12~)	September-14-2017	Hwasong-12 (IRBM)	1
	September-03-2017	The Sixth Nuclear Test	100-140 kt yield
	August-28-2017	Hwasong-12 (IRBM)	1
	August-26-2017	KN-21 Scud variant (SRBM)	3
	July-28-2017	Hwasong-14 (ICBM)	1
	July-04-2017	Hwasong-14 (ICBM)	1
	June-07-2017	Kumsong-3 (ASCM)	4
	May-28-2017	KN-18 MaRV Scud-variant (SRBM)	1
	May-21-2017	KN-15 (MRBM)	1
	May-14-2017	Hwasong-12 (IRBM)	1
	April-29-2017	Hwasong-12 (IRBM)	1
	April-16-2017	Hwasong-12 (IRBM)	1
	April-05-2017	Hwasong-12 (IRBM)	1
	March-22-2017	Unknown	1
	March-06-2017	Scud-ER (MRBM)	4
	Feburary-12-2017	KN-15 (Pukkuksong-2)	1
	October-19-2016	Musudan	1
	October-15-2016	Musudan	1
	September-09-2016	The 5th Nuclear Test	10 kt yield
	September-05-2016	No Dong	3
	August-24-2016	KN-11 (SLBM)	1
	August-03-2016	No Dong	1
	July-18-2016	SRBM (Scud variant)	3
	July-09-2016	KN-11 (SLBM)	1
	June-22-2016	Musudan	2
	May-31-2016	Musudan	1
	April-28-2016	Musudan	2
	April-23-2016	KN-11 (SLBM)	1
	April-15-2016	Musudan	1
	March-09-2016	SRBM (Scud variant)	2
	Feburary-07-2016	Taepodong-2 / Unha-3 /	1
	January-06-2016	The 4th Nuclear Test	7-10 kt yield
	December-21-2015	KN-11 (SLBM)	1

Regime	Timeline	Missile Launches/ Nuclear Test	Number Launched
	November-28-2015	KN-11 (SLBM)	1
	June-14-2015	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	3
	May-09-2015	KN-11 (SLBM)	1
	April-03-2015	KN-02 (SRBM)	4
	March-02-2015	SRBM (Scud variant)	2
	February-08-2015	KN-02 (SRBM)	5
	February-07-2015	Kumsong-3 (Cruise Missile)	1
	September-6-2014	KN-02 (SRBM)	3
	September-1-2014	KN-02 (SRBM)	1
	July-26-2014	SRBM (Scud variant)	1
	July-13-2014	SRBM (Scud variant)	2
	July-9-2014	SRBM (Scud variant)	2
	March-25-2014	No Dong	2
	March-03-2014	SRBM (Scud variant)	2
	February-27-2014	SRBM (Scud variant)	4
	February-12-2013	The 3rd Nuclear Test	6-9 kt yield
	May-(19/20)-2013	SRBM	3
	May-18-2013	SRBM	3
	Mar-13	KN-02 (SRBM)	2
	December-12-2012	Taepodong-2 / Unha-3 /	1
	April-01-2012	Taepodong-2 / Unha-3 /	1
	January-11-2012	KN-02 (SRBM)	2
Kim Jong Il (1994~2011)	October-12-2009	KN-02 (SRBM)	5
	July-01-2009	Scud-ER (MRBM)	4
	July-01-2009	No Dong 2	2
	May-25-2009	The 2nd Nuclear Test	2.4 kt yield
	May-25-2009	KN-02 (SRBM)	3
	Apr-5-2009	Taepodong-2 / Unha-3 /	1
	May-08	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	3
	March-01-2008	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	3
	June-01-2007	KN-02 (SRBM)	3
	June-19-2007	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	1
	June-7-2007	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	2
	May-25-2007	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	1
	October-09-2006	The 1st Nuclear Test	1-2 kt yield
	July-05-2006	No Dong	2

Regime	Timeline	Missile Launches/ Nuclear Test	Number Launched
	July-05-2006	SRBM (Scud variant)	4
	July-05-2006	Taepodong 2	1
	March-08-2006	KN-02 (SRBM)	2
	May-01-2005	KN-02 (SRBM)	2
	April-01-2004	KN-02 (SRBM)	1
	March-01-2003	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	1
	October-01-2003	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	2
	August-31-1998	Taepodong-1	1
	May-31-1994	KN-01 (Cruise Missile)	1
Kim Il Sung (1948~1993)	May-01-1993	No Dong 1	2
	May-01-1993	Hwasong 6 (SRBM)	2
	June-01-1992	No Dong 1	1
	October-01-1991	Hwasong 6 (SRBM)	1
	August-01-1991	No Dong 1	1
	June-01-1990	Hwasong 6 (SRBM)	1
	May-01-1990	No Dong 1	1
	April-01-1984	Hwasong 5 (SRBM)	7

*Source: Compiled by author from official documents of 2012, 2014, 2016 Defence White Paper, Ministry of Defence, Republic of Korea, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)

*Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), Satellite Launch Vehicle / Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (SLV / ICBM) Medium-range Ballistic Missile (MRBM), Submarine-launched ballistic missile, Short-range Ballistic Missile (SRBM), Medium-Range Ballistic Missile (MRBM), Surface-to-surface antiship cruise missile (ASCM)

It is now generally recognised that North Korea is a “virtual” and “defacto” nuclear state, although public commentary, government rhetoric, and scholars have multiple arguments related to “recognition”. In spite of strong UN Security Council sanctions and the unanimous condemnation by the international community, Pyongyang is continuing the miniaturisation and sophistication of its nuclear weapons and the development and testing of ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile), MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket

System), SLBM (Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles) and so on. Some of the key evidence shows that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a 'nuclear-armed state' when it comes to the technological achievements resulted from a long-term national strategy. Technically, North Korea has conducted several nuclear tests involving nuclear bombs, providing Pyongyang with the possibility to claim to have successfully "miniaturised" nuclear warheads.

However, unlike the analysis that North Korea has a long-term nuclear strategy, Kim Jong Il's political options towards the development of the WMDs (weapons of mass destruction) might have been underestimated by the international community from the advent of Kim Jong Il's regime to the first years of the 2000s. In the meanwhile, many policy-makers and security analysts in Washington seemed to have 'one-sided image of North Korea – one that sees it solely as a rogue outlaw, and thus a source of danger and instability'.²⁶⁾

For instance, since the late 1980s, the U.S. Department of State has identified North Korea as one of the rogue states and even an 'outlaw' country owing to Pyongyang's external behaviour in defying international norms (i.e., regional aggression, sponsorship of terrorism and proliferation of WMD capabilities).²⁷⁾ The U.S. regarded the North as such an action to be irrational and unnecessarily aggressive, and consequently Washington

²⁶⁾ Roland Bleiker, "A Rogue is a Rogue: US Foreign Policy and the Korean Nuclear Crisis," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 79, No. 4 (July, 2003), 721.

²⁷⁾ In a major speech to the American Bar Association in July 1985, President Reagan identified Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba and Nicaragua as 'outlaw' government who are sponsoring international terrorism.

concluded the North Korean military adventurism produced negative effects on the enforcement of the international laws and norms such as the United Nations Charter. In addition to this, the cabinet of Washington was also concerned that Pyongyang's growing anti-Americanism and political slogans — reflecting the increased the antagonism between the two countries — could be a grave threat to the U.S. domestic security as well.²⁸⁾

In one word, in the beginning of 2000s, 'North Korea is the archetypal rogue state, and an old-fashioned communist on at that, motivated to nuclear arm by paranoid hostility to the outside world'.²⁹⁾ According to Sigal(2000), the image of rogue state has influenced both American policy-makers and its intelligence assessments about North Korea from the late 1990s through to the early 2000s. To illustrate this, some officials in Washington's cabinet made a conclusion that 'the only way to stop North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes was to bring about the collapse of the community regime'³⁰⁾. It means that the concept of rogue state was a term frequently used in the view of Western powers during the period with the uncertainty of Pyongyang's nuclear capability, but there is no consensus from the perspective of strategic theories in the new nuclear age.

On the other hand, the country directly named as a rogue state, North Korea consistently elevates its plausible voice against the image of an irrational and reckless rogue state. While a variety of interpretations related

²⁸⁾ See Jisun Park, "Constructivist Understandings of North Korea's Ballistic Missile Programme: National Security Policy Based on North Korea's Strategic Culture," *Journal of Peace and Unification*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2014), 76.

²⁹⁾ Leon V Sigal, "Rogue Concepts: Misperceptions of North Korea," *Harvard International Review*, Vol.22, No.2 (Summer 2000), 63.

³⁰⁾ *Ibid*, 64.

to Kim Jong Il's political willingness have been suggested, Pyongyang overtly argued that 'Nuclear deterrent serves as the most effective treasured sword for protesting sovereignty which nothing can substitute for in the present world where a country weak in strength is fated to abandon its sovereignty and become a slave'.³¹⁾

No matter what the repetitive arguments of Pyongyang were neglected by the international community, strategists of Pyongyang strived to deliver the uncomfortable arguments for the development of nuclear weapons programmes to North Koreans and its allies. In particular, Pyongyang's speech justifying the development of nuclear/missile programme was plausibly accepted by Pyongyang's allies in the international arena. At the beginning of the Cold War, North Korea had diplomatic relationships with Communist countries in principal. Over the following decades, it established relations with developing countries and joined the Non-Aligned Movement. The continuous efforts of Pyongyang to secure new allies against the U.S were able to apply leverage for a useful catalyst to proliferate its WMDs to the rest of world.³²⁾

³¹⁾ Korean Central News Agency, 'Slams hostile forces' Cry out for DPRK's Dismantlement of Nukes, 14 March 2013.

“힘이 없으면 스스로 주권을 포기하고 노예가 되어야 하는 현 세계에서 핵억제력은 그 무엇으로도 대신할 수 없는 자주권수호의 가장 튼튼한 보검이다.”
- 조선중앙통신 론평, “핵독점 시대는 끝났다”-

³²⁾ The author introduces Pyongyang' allies related to the development of nuclear/missile in Chapter 5 “Defining North Korea's Nuclear Strategy in the New Nuclear Age”.



〈Figure 4〉 Propaganda Poster Saying
“The U.S. has escalated nuclear war
exercises against the DPRK”³³⁾



〈Figure 5〉 Propaganda Posters
Saying “Military–first Politics Aimed
for a Strong and Prosperous Nation”
in Pyongyang³⁴⁾

As we can see in 〈Figure 4〉 and 〈Figure 5〉, the North Korean people got used to watching propaganda posters against security and foreign policies of White House. In particular, the first poster, which can easily see on the street of Pyongyang, describes the U.S has escalated nuclear war exercises against the DPRK. In general, the images of posters are so amusing because they tell us indirectly a lot about the everyday in North Korea – behaviour, conditions, conduct.³⁵⁾ In the view of Pyongyang, the rationale related to the development of nuclear weapons seems to be based on the concept of self-defence against the U.S. rather than an unacceptable and irrational gesture of rogue states. For North Koreans, the open reason belonging to its nuclear programmes was to boost the value of strategic

³³⁾ The propaganda poster is provided by an anonymous North Korean defector, who resides in South Korea. (Unknown Source)

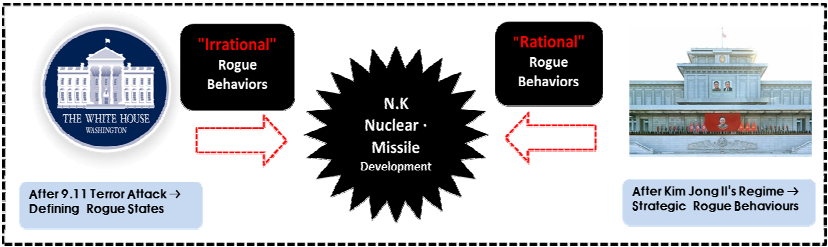
³⁴⁾ Ibid.

³⁵⁾ The Guardian, “The North Korean posters that got me arrested for espionage,” 20th July, 2015.

means to achieve Kim Jong Il's political aim, although the propaganda poster is not a strictly rational way to persuade the citizens in Pyongyang from the Western perspective. At least, the existence of nuclear/missile is a prestige for North Koreans because the absolute weapon has five states as nuclear-weapon states (the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China) and other states with open evidence (e.g. North Korea, India, Pakistan, Israel etc.) in the world.

To sum up, Washington and Pyongyang have different perceptions related to the concept of rogue states on account of the perception gap. This is because the two countries had their respective national strategies to hold each other in continuous check. It appears that foreign/security policy at international level is no longer a determination based on the dominant perception of major powers during the Cold War.

〈Figure 6〉 Showing Different Perception on the Conception of Rogue States



Thus, this shows a need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by the different perspective on the term, 'rogue state' between the DPRK and the West. Granted that North Korea showed the unexpected military adventurism for using nuclear warheads against super powers such as the U.S, why do we regard North Korea as an irrational rogue state? Obviously,

the warlike nation, North Korea, can be a good model of rogue behaviours, but its actions are not irrational from the perspective of strategy. Rather, the key problem of such perception – crime and punishment approach to disarm North Korea’s nuclear capability— can provide a rational motivation to develop a strong strategic weapon against a targeted enemy force or facilities related. Hence I argue that because of the fixed image, the so-called one of rogue states, the international community fails to fully acknowledge the significance of North Korea’s rational intention behind rogue behaviours.

In this sense, Bleiker (2003) states: ‘the image of North Korea as a ‘rogue state’ severely hinders both an adequate understanding and a possible resolution of the (nuclear) crisis’,³⁶⁾ He points out that American foreign policy against North Korea as the rhetoric of rogue state was close to a continuation of dualistic and materialist Cold War thinking patterns.³⁷⁾ In other words, it is generally recognised that rogue states are the new threat images that ‘rose to prominence when Cold War ideological schism gave way to a more blurred picture of global politics’.³⁸⁾ On the basis of such rogue image, the ‘hawks’ within Washington’s policy makers, who was dominated by hard-line realistic positions, maintained the pattern of seeing North Korea as a rogue state.³⁹⁾ The hawks within Washington’s policy

³⁶⁾ Roland Bleiker, “A Rogue is a Rogue: US Foreign Policy and the Korean Nuclear Crisis,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 79, No. 4 (July, 2003), 721.

³⁷⁾ Ibid.

³⁸⁾ Roland Bleiker, “A Rogue is a Rogue: US Foreign Policy and the Korean Nuclear Crisis,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 79, No. 4 (July, 2003), 731.

³⁹⁾ There are heated debates between hawks and doves within Washington's policy circles, and as a result periods dominated by hard-line realist positions have

circles identified some of the key rogue states, such as North Korea, Iraq, Iran, and Libya, by sharing their common rogue behaviours: 'they are small or medium nations that have achieved some success in thwarting American policy'.⁴⁰⁾ In fact, the hawks and doves in the Bush administration had controversial views on how to deal with the military adventurism with the development of nuclear/missile programmes. The office of hawks decided to opt for different types of military tool such as diplomatic and financial pressures, even though the cabinet of hawks did determine a military strike towards Pyongyang.⁴¹⁾ For the hawks, a critical analysis was that North Korea, widely understood throughout the diplomatic history between Pyongyang and Washington, had no a rational strategy from the view of the West. In other words, in the beginning of 2000s, most policy-makers and security analysts did not assert that North Korea has its indigenous nuclear capability with a long national strategy, the so-called 'military-first politics'. This is because comprehensive studies on Pyongyang's nuclear strategy are recent debates reflecting academic participations for less than decade. Namely, many papers have been written on North Korea's nuclear/missile programmes in the last 10 years (2003-2013). Accordingly, the key academic

alternated with periods during which softer and more liberal policies prevailed. But the persistent pattern of seeing North Korea as a rogue state is far more striking, and in many ways far more significant, than the strategic policy manoeuvring that takes place within these patterns.

Roland Bleiker, "A Rogue is a Rogue: US Foreign Policy and the Korean Nuclear Crisis," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 79, No. 4 (July., 2003), 721.

⁴⁰⁾ Ibid.

⁴¹⁾ Ramon, Pacheco Pardo, *North Korea-US Relations under Kim Jong Il: The Quest for Normalization?* London & New York: Routledge, 2014, 55.

task of the author to theorise Kim Jong Il strategic effects is to clarify that Pyongyang has a rational strategy disguised as the rogue behaviours for using nuclear-armed forces. In the next part, I suggest an assumption: Pyongyang has a rational strategy aimed at achieving both military and political aims expressed through an apparent irrational behaviour.

IV. Key principles of Strategic Theory Applied to the Development of North Korea's Nuclear/Missile Technology

Most importantly, in order to enable the international community to perceive the rational rogue behaviours related to North Korea's nuclear issues, I address possible assumptions regarding the ways in which Pyongyang establishes a link between military means (e.g. nuclear warheads, missiles) and political aims. By applying "Rules of Understanding: The Key Features of Strategic Theory"⁴²⁾, North Korea's nuclear issues are associated with the five key rules embodying a plausible Strategic Theory. The key rules applied to a real case dealing with North Korea's nuclear/missile strategy are a cornerstone to question the wondrous developments of high-tech military weapons such as the fifth nuclear test on 9th September 2016. According to Smith and Stone (2011), "it is important to appreciate what Strategic Theory is not, as much as what it is".⁴³⁾ Nonetheless,

⁴²⁾ M. L. R. Smith, & J. Stone, "Explaining Strategic Theory," *Infinity Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 2011, p. 27-30.

the importance of theoretical approaches regarding Kim Jong Il's strategic behaviours may leave scholars or practitioners unfocused on, or underestimated for because the international community did not accept Kim Jong Il's strategic effects with the uncertainty of nuclear capability. Thus, it can be an essential step in that we scrutinise general concepts and definition of Strategic Theory with North Korea's nuclear issues. Similarly, here, I categorise five key rules of Strategic Theory applied to North Korea's nuclear/missile strategy.

The first principle of Strategic Theory is generally understood to mean: "Strategy is concerned with the ways in which available means are employed in order to achieve desired ends".⁴⁴⁾ On the basis of this principle, North Korea's nuclear/missile strategy is concerned with the ways in which the development of nuclear/missile technology was employed in order to achieve Kim Jong Il's political aim. Kim Jong Il overtly declared his political ends to the international community. The political ends are to establish "Kangsong Taeguk"⁴⁵⁾ (Strong-Prosperous Nation)" with a crafty strategy taking advantages generated from the development of nuclear/missile technologies. In order to pursue his political goal, Kim Jong Il affirmed the high-tech military weapons (e.g. WMDs and Cyber technology) among available strategic resources are the second best option in the pursuit of his goal. He recognised that it is difficult to create the best/absolute option for "Kangsong Taeguk"⁴⁶⁾ (Strong-Prosperous Nation)" as long as the Korean peninsula is

⁴³⁾ Ibid.

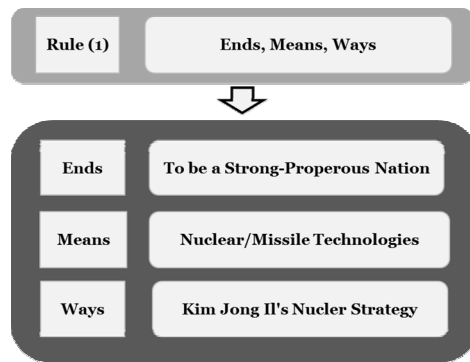
⁴⁴⁾ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁾ 강성대국, 强盛大國.

⁴⁶⁾ 강성대국, 强盛大國.

divided into the two Koreas. In the end, his strong willingness towards the development of high-tech military weapons produces a crafty strategy regarding Pyongyang's cost-benefit calculation, which is integrated by politico-strategic factors in the Korean peninsula.

〈Figure 7〉 Key Features of Strategy Theory & Application: Rule (1)



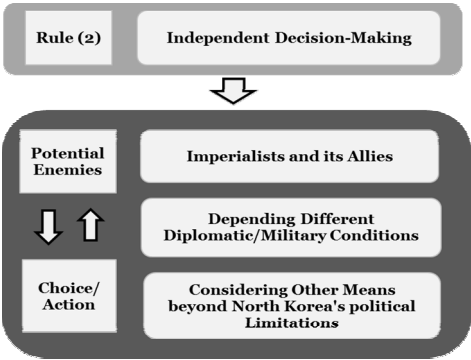
Source: Suggested by the author.

The second principle of Strategic Theory is that a “Key feature of Strategic Theory is that decision-making is influenced by the existence of a wilful adversary (or adversaries) set on achieving its (or their) own ends”.⁴⁷⁾ When it comes to Kim Jong Il's strategic decision-making it was influenced by the existence of adversaries caused by the tragic division of the two Koreas. From the perspective of North Korea's political thoughts its adversaries are characterised as imperialist countries such as Washington and Washington's alliances like South Korea and Japan. The main feature of strategic decision-making during Kim Jong Il regime is interpreted by Clausewitz's dictum on

⁴⁷⁾ M. L. R. Smith, & J. Stone, “Explaining Strategic Theory,” *Infinity Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 2011, 27-30.

Strategy, which “links together the series of acts which are to lead to the final decision”.⁴⁸⁾ In other words, Pyongyang’s strategic decision-making is dependent on the choices and actions based on the multifaceted diplomatic and military relationship in the Korean peninsula. Kim Jong Il and Pyongyang’s power elites experienced the fluid environment in the Korean peninsula, where they must create a plan of the war against potential enemies within the unique political system in the North. In this sense, it works the principle of interdependent decision-making in the pursuits of Pyongyang’s political objective towards nuclear weapons and missile capability. From this perspective, North Korea’s willingness to achieve a nuclear program is not only influenced by a security dilemma; but it also reflects the complicated international relations surrounded by the Korean peninsula in reality. In the end, Pyongyang’s strategic-making is dependent on the choices and actions of others beyond the political system.

〈Figure 8〉 Key Features of Strategy Theory & Application: Rule (2)



Source: Suggested by the author.

⁴⁸⁾ Carl von Clausewitz, trans., *On War*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), 133.

The third principle concerning Strategic Theory is to study for ‘Political Actor as the Central Unit of Analysis’. “Strategic Theory analysis is interested in describing the choices available to such actors and evaluating the quality of their decision-making”.⁴⁹⁾ As matter of the fact, North Korea’s nuclear/missile Strategic Theory is an academic endeavour to trace “the line of a particular political entity to comprehend how it seeks to achieve its objective”.⁵⁰⁾ Kim Jong Il and Pyongyang’s power elites as the central unit of analysis play a key role in the development of nuclear/missile technologies because Pyongyang has its unique political structure during the process of decision-making. When it comes to its political system characterised as a despotic government, Kim Jong Il can be regarded as a single ‘unitary’ leader, who creates the structure of well-organised power elites during Kim Jong Il regime.⁵¹⁾ Indeed, the study for ‘Political Actor as the Central Unit of Analysis’ is a significant academic approach to evaluate the quality of Pyongyang’s decision-making process. This is because it is the North Korean international posture itself – marked by a significant (and apparently contradictory) diplomatic isolation along with unexpected military provocations – that actually reflects an effective decision-making mechanism centered around a solid and coherent strategic calculation reflecting the

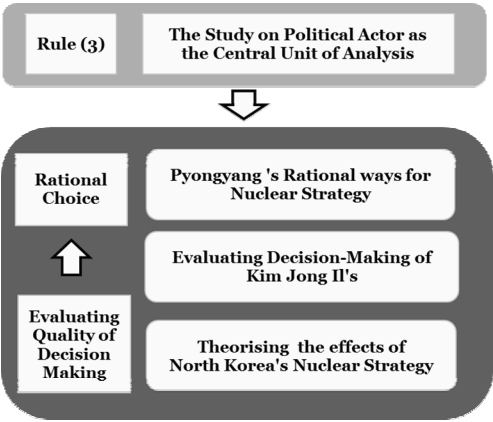
⁴⁹⁾ M. L. R. Smith, & J. Stone, “Explaining Strategic Theory,” *Infinity Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 2011, 27-30.

⁵⁰⁾ M. L. R. Smith, & J. Stone, “Explaining Strategic Theory,” *Infinity Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 2011, 28.

⁵¹⁾ In this regard, I analyse 245 political actors such as statesmen, sub-state entities, social-opinion grouping to concern of how interdependent decisions of power elites are influenced by Kim Jong Il’s nuclear/missile strategy in Chapter 2 of this paper.

central unit of analysis model. In other words, it means that the more the international community is called to counter the strategic effects of political actors in Pyongyang, the more it is possible to theorise the quality of North Korea's decision-making process concerning nuclear/missile strategy and how the North seeks to achieve the related aims of this strategy.

〈Figure 9〉 Key Features of Strategy Theory & Application: Rule (3)



Source: Suggested by the author.

The fourth principle is to understand 'value systems and preferences' of warlike North Korea. In general, strategic theorists are concerned with "asking how actors construct their interests in light of their ideological motivations, how these interests translate into specific objectives and how they shape the choice of means employed to achieve them".⁵²⁾ Indeed, it is hard to explain Kim Jong Il's strategic decisions without understanding what motivates the

⁵²⁾ M. L. R. Smith, & J. Stone, "Explaining Strategic Theory," Infinity Journal, Vol. 1, Issue 4, 2011, 28.

actors under the consideration of values systems and priorities to gain any political aims in North Korea. A dictum, the so-called ‘Songun-Jungchi (Military-First Politics)⁵³⁾’ is constituted by Kim Jong Il’s political thoughts and the geopolitical environment in the Korean peninsula corresponding the second rule of Strategic Theory. The main concepts of military-first politics are simultaneously connected to the theoretical backgrounds of Pyongyang’s nuclear/missile strategy. In the same way, the author studied for North Korea strategic culture, which can minimise the uncertainty about North Korea’s military provocations such as nuclear threats.⁵⁴⁾ Such approach is used in its broadest sense to refer to cultural effects on the interests and national security policies of states. I argue that North Korea demonstrates idiosyncratic social structures requiring new interpretations in the scope of international security of the 21st century.⁵⁵⁾ In this sense, understanding Pyongyang’s value systems and preferences is concerned with asking “how actors construct their interests in light of their ideological motivations, how these translate into specific objectives and how they shape the choice of means employed to achieve them”.⁵⁶⁾

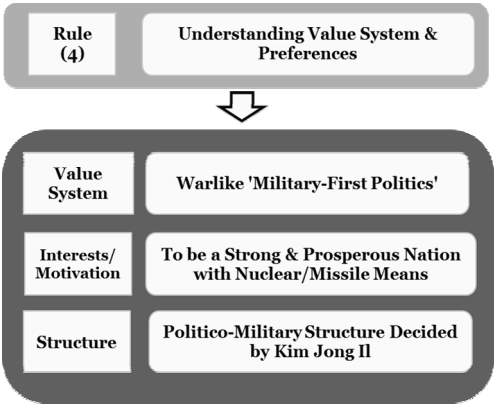
53) 선군정치, 先軍政治.

54) See Jisun Park, “Constructivist Understandings of North Korea’s Ballistic Missile Programme: National Security Policy Based on North Korea’s Strategic Culture,” *Journal of Peace and Unification*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2014), 77.

55) Ibid.

56) Ibid.

〈Figure 10〉 Key Features of Strategy Theory & Application: Rule (4)



Source: Suggested by the author.

The fifth principle is that Strategic Theory presumes behaviours of rational actors. “It is merely a presupposition that actors’ decisions are made after some kind of cost-benefit calculation that result in a decision to employ means so as to optimise a desired end in accordance with an actor’s values”.⁵⁷⁾ Kim Jong Il’s nuclear/missile strategy shows a series of behaviours “that is consistent with the attainment of his desired ends”. The more we trace the origin of North Korea’s nuclear strategy the more Kim Jong Il’s rational choice is associated with strategic calculation such as a cost-benefit explanation showing the efficient application of nuclear/missile techniques.⁵⁸⁾ In general, “we do not want the costs of fighting to outweigh the benefits we associate with victory.”⁵⁹⁾ I argue that Kim Jong Il achieved his aims in at least four

⁵⁷⁾ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁾ In Chapter 3, ‘Theorising North Korea’s Nuclear Strategy’, great details to explain Kim Jong Il’s a cost-benefit calculation are examined in the view of strategic theory.

⁵⁹⁾ John Stone, *Military Strategy: The Politics and Technique of War*, (London: The

areas: 1) the development of nuclear/missile technology; 2) economic benefits; 3) domestic Politics; and 4) a new actor in the second nuclear age.

For instance, the international community closely observed that a poverty-stricken country, the DPRK, carries out an asymmetric strategy against comparatively affluent neighbours such as South Korea and the U.S. Specifically, when it comes to the comparison of the economic indicators South Korea's Gross National Income (GNI) with a population twice that of North Korea is estimated at about 43 times that of the North. In one word, overall national power of South Korea currently surpasses that of the North. As a military level, North spent \$10 billion as of 2013, approximately 30 percent of the South's 2014 defence budget of \$32.5 billion. The North's defence spending accounts for 20 to 30 percent of its gross domestic product, compared with 2.38 percent of the South.⁶⁰⁾ It seems that the ROK's military power has been developing a force of superior quality such as quality-based capabilities in network-centric warfare (NCW) to disarm its potential adversary.

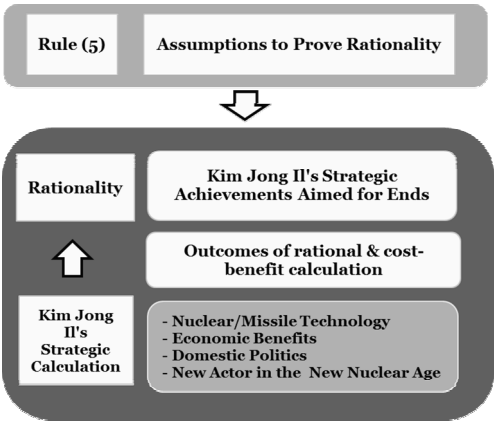
However, in reality, South Korea did not overthrow Pyongyang's nuclear deterrence strategy planned by its cost-benefit calculation. In other words, North Korea has focused on the development of nuclear weapons and other WMDs, whereas South Korea has concentrated on proactive-defence deterrence strategy relied on combined ROK-U.S. forces. Consequently, Pyongyang has deployed about more than 300 new rocket launchers along its border with South Korea, which can hit Seoul and the

Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 6.

⁶⁰⁾ The Dong-A Ilbo, "N. Korean military spending nearly 30% of S. Korea's: defense minister," 5 May 2016.

surrounding regions posing a new threat to the U.S. as well as Seoul.

〈Figure 11〉 Key Features of Strategy Theory & Application: Rule (5)



Source: Suggested by the author.

Above all, the five key assumptions mentioned above help fill a gap whether we can regard North Korea's nuclear/missile plans as a Strategic Theory in the 21st century. The international community requires rational explanations about political effects generated from North Korea's nuclear strategy. However, there has been a little theoretical approach or systematic investigation, which can trace the fact that North Korea has a decisive political will to develop its nuclear strategy over the period of more than 50 years.⁶¹⁾ Furthermore, the enormous literature related to North Korea up to

⁶¹⁾ Kim, Jong Il, *Kim Jong Il Seonjip Volume 1(1960.08~1964.06)*, (Pyongyang: Korean Worker's Party Press, 2009), 148. *According to *Kim Jong Il Seonjip Volume 1 (1960.08~1964.06)*, Kim Jong Il emphasized military threats caused by Washington's nuclear warheads and missiles in a public speech, Kim Jong Il as a supreme leader of North Korea started the preparation for violent conflicts including the building

date are not enough to explain core principles of North Korea's nuclear strategy when it is compared with Western strategic theories such as the concept of nuclear deterrence during the Cold War.

In other words, it seems to fail to fully acknowledge Kim Jong Il's strategic attempts to systematically investigate what strategies and tactics regarding Pyongyang's nuclear/missile technology have engaged in political aims and what prominent effects have produced. However, the enigmatic phenomenon might be answered in the light of the essential principle of strategy, which can explain the development of North Korea nuclear/missile programmes over five decades. On the basis of these assumptions the next part is focused on rationalistic assumptions to explain North Korea's nuclear/missile strategy during the reign of Kim Jong Il hinged on fundamental nuclear theories.

V. Conclusion

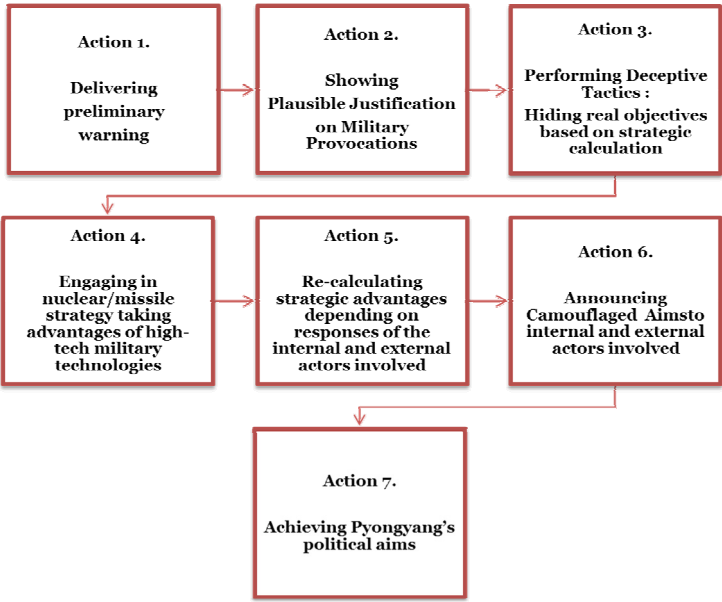
: Theorising Politico-Strategic Behaviours of Pyongyang

In conclusion, I suggest the strategic pattern of Pyongyang's nuclear strategy, the so-called "Pyongyang's Seven Actions to Translate Nuclear Means

of nuclear weapons and missile technologies. (**Kim Jong Il Seonjip* is the key collection of books including Kim Jong Il's political thoughts, administrative directions, dialogues, letters, official documents, articles etc.)

into Political Gains”, showing a link between military means and political ends. Clausewitz states: “war is only a part of political intercourse, therefore by no means an independent thing in itself.”⁶²⁾ In this sense, Pyongyang demonstrated a repetitive strategic pattern throughout the six nuke tests of Pyongyang. For instance, strategic actions related to the third nuclear test in the North are constructed by seven features in the course of North Korea’s strategic behaviours as shown in <Figure 12>.

<Figure 12> Pyongyang’s Seven Actions to Translate Nuclear Means into Political Gains



Source: Suggested by the author.

⁶²⁾ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, tr. J.J. Graham, Colonel (New York: Barren & Noble, 2004), 698.

More specifically, prior to the third nuclear test in 2013, in public Pyongyang insisted that a plausible reason for having nuclear weapons is to constitute its nuclear deterrence for self-defence against threats caused by the U.S and distrust towards South Korea. With an ‘Advance Warning’ in the vein of the needs of nuclear weapons for self-defence, North Korea threatened and blackmailed not only Washington and Seoul but also other enemy countries related to their strategic aims with the fully-developed nuclear weapons. Continuously, one day before the third North Korean nuclear test on 12 February 2013, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) stressed the need to continue the series of the long-range rockets such as Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), the so-called ‘Kwangmyongsong’.⁶³⁾ In order to justify the third missile test, the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of WPK adopted a decision “On Marking the 65th anniversary of the DPRK and the 60th anniversary of the victory in the Fatherland Liberation War as grand festivals of victors”.⁶⁴⁾ As suggested in <Figure 12>, these are to exemplify a series of strategic patterns in order for Pyongyang’s political aims subordinated to military-technical dominance. To sum up the processes, the North constantly delivered the ‘Advance (prior) Warning (Action 1)’ by showing ‘Plausible Justification (Action 2)’ such as the concept of nuclear deterrence for Pyongyang’s self-defence. It is produced by the decision of North Korea’s Political Bureau, even though

⁶³⁾ *Kwangmyongsong* (광명성), ‘Political Bureau of WPK Central Committee Meets’, Korean Central News Agency (12.02.2013), <http://www.kcna.kp/kcna.user.home.retrieveHomeInfoList.kcmsf>.

⁶⁴⁾ Ibid.

such political propaganda intends for the 'Hiding real objectives based on cost-benefit calculation by harassing tactics (Action 3)' in practice.

Afterwards, as 'Engaging in nuclear/missile strategy taking advantages of high-tech military technologies (Action 4)', North Korea on 12 February 2013 was engaged in the third nuclear test. While considering (Action 5)—'Re-calculating strategic advantages depending on responses of the internal and external actors involved', North Korea disclosed the decision of North Korea's Political Bureau justifying the 3rd nuclear test to the international community. Whereas the North concealed 'Camouflaged Purposes to internal and external factors involved (Action 6)' in reality, North Korea offered the needs of the 3rd nuclear test via public speeches and mass media. The needs are as follows: 1. "The Need to further deepen and accomplish the sacred cause of holding in high esteem the great Comrade Kim Il Sung and Comrade Kim Jong Il as eternal leaders of the WPK and the revolution"⁶⁵; 2. "The Need to resolutely foil all the hostile forces' moves to isolate and stifle the DPRK by achieving proud victory in building an economic and power and improving the people's living standard"⁶⁶; and 3. The Need of "aggression at a strike and wipe out the brigandish U.S. imperialists and South Korean puppet army to the last man and the historic cause of national reunification".⁶⁷

In the last stage—'Achieving Pyongyang's Political Aims (Action 7)', North Korea's nuclear strategy produced effective outcomes, which prove a link between means and ends. According to Stone (2011), the pursuit of military

⁶⁵) Ibid.

⁶⁶) Ibid.

⁶⁷) Ibid.

-technical superiority is related to an important choice of strategic objectives.⁶⁸⁾ In theory the North Korean military means is attached to a strategic principle, “the greater our (military-technical) superiority, the more rapidly we can achieve our strategic objectives”.⁶⁹⁾ When it comes to Pyongyang’s military-first politics headed for a ‘Strong and Prosperous Nation’, the development of military technology played a pivotal role to achieve their political aims in the short term. As the result of such strategic choice, the more rapidly North Korea achieves their political aims with military means, the more easily Pyongyang’s strategists avoid serious resistance generated from their adversaries.

For instance, one of the strategic achievements is a sophisticated calculation among Pyongyang’s strategists, which requires more attention to be paid to the superiority of nuclear/missile technologies within the frame of global security. Firstly, no realistic military countermeasures were taken by the international community regardless of how much Pyongyang’s aggression created tensions in the Korean peninsula and the Northeast Asian region. Although the UN Security Council passed a series of more than ten resolutions (S/RES/2375(2017), S/RES/2371(2017), S/RES/2321(2016), S/RES/2270(2016), S/RES/2094(2013), S/RES/2087(2013), S/RES/1928(2010), S/RES/1887(2009), S/RES/1874(2009), S/RES/1718(2006), S/RES/1695(2006), S/RES/1540(2004), S/RES/825(1993)) to denounce and affect sanctions against North Korea’s military provocations, such endeavours of the international community failed to dissuade Pyongyang from its nuclear ambition. (*See

⁶⁸⁾ John Stone, *Military Strategy: The Politics and Technique of War* (London: Continuum, 2011), 11.

⁶⁹⁾ Ibid.

〈Figure 12〉)

Secondly, Pyongyang's consecutive negotiations during the Six-Party Talks between 2003 and 2007 verified a fact that its politico-strategic option to develop nuclear technologies was adequate within the geopolitical complexity surrounding the Korean peninsula. In fact, the Six-Party Talks was a framework to discuss such matters concerning North Korea by her neighbouring countries, which was founded in 2003. The participants for the Six-Party Talks consist of Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the United States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.⁷⁰⁾ The purpose of the multilateral composition meeting was to offer a framework for a peace-building effort on the Korean peninsula. Actually, the task of the Six-Party Talks for the members other than North Korea was clear — ending the North Korean nuclear weapons programmes and scraps relevant technological capability.

However, since North Korea during the so-called, 'second nuclear crisis' in 2002, regardless of efforts of members of the Six-Party Talks, Pyongyang announced the existence of a secret HEU (Highly Enriched Uranium) project to develop nuclear weapons in October 2002, and initiated a series of ballistic missile firing tests to demonstrate its potential capability to deliver nuclear warheads, especially over the Japanese and the United States' territory during the period 2003-2007.

To fully exploit North Korea's nuclear strategy, the other consequence is that Pyongyang's strategic patterns using nuclear/missile programmes during

⁷⁰⁾ Both official and unofficial designation for the participants of the Six-Party Talks members will be used in mixture including such terms as, for example, North Korea, the North, Kim Jung-Il regime and Pyongyang.

the process in achieving their political aims might be a new theoretical feature compared with the first tradition of nuclear power states. To be sure, for North Korea, there is, first of all, an effective nuclear strategy demonstrating a repetitive pattern throughout politico-strategic processes. Basically, Pyongyang's leader, Kim Jong Il during the seizure of power created a political doctrine, the so-called 'Kangsong Taeguk'.

In conclusion, my argument is to clarify the presumption of fact that since the long-term seizure of Kim's dynasty (including Kim Il Sung⁷¹⁾, Kim Jong Il, and currently Kim Jong Un), Pyongyang has created a brand-new nuclear strategy in the second nuclear age through all the means in order to achieve definitive political aims mentioned above. In particular, the possession of nuclear weapons as the outcome of Pyongyang's nuclear strategy functioned like a rational strategic option for Kim Jong Il's political aims, which is eager to convert the economically poor country into a strong and prosperous great power.

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⁷¹⁾ For North Koreans, Kim Il Sung was called by possible every honorary title such as 'the great leader, the great Suryong, peerless patriot, national hero, ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander, an outstanding leader of the international Communist movement, an ingenious thinker, the sun of the nation, the red sun of the oppressed people of the world, the greatest leader of our time, and on and on'. Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 316.

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전략이론 관점에서 본 북한의 핵·미사일 기술개발에 관한 연구

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국문요약

21세기 한반도는 재래식 무력 충돌, 비대칭 전쟁, 핵·미사일 위협, 사이버 DDoS 공격, 테러리즘과 같은 다양한 전쟁의 모습을 보여주는 치열한 각축장이다. 그러나 제2의 한국 전쟁의 위협이 여전히 상존하는 국제정치학적 요충지이지만, 북한의 호전적인 군사행위를 국제정치학적 이론의 틀 안에서 ‘합리적으로 설명(positivism)’하거나 군사행위 대한 ‘후기 실증주의적 이해(post-positivism)’를 돕는 이론 연구는 도입단계에 있다. 본 연구는 전략이론의 관점에서 핵·미사일 기술 개발에 따른 북한의 군사 행위들을 이론적으로 분석하는 데 그 목적이 있다. 이는 국제정치학이라는 학문적 틀 내에서 다룰 수 있는 북한 핵·미사일 연구의 한계와 함축적 의미에 통해 북한 연구에 대한 폭넓은 학문적 토대를 마련하고자 하는 것이다. 본 연구에서 저자는 북한(*김정일 시대)의 핵·미사일 개발의 정치적 목표(*強盛大國)와 군사적 수단의 긴밀한 연결구조가 보여주는 이론적 가설들을 통해 현실 정치(Realpolitik)에서의 북한 핵전략의 이론적 체계를 정립하는 데 기여하고자 한다.

주제어: 북한 핵전략, 핵·미사일 기술, 군사전략, 전략문화, 전략이론.

박지선(Park, Jisun)

영국 킹스 칼리지 런던(King's College London)에서 전쟁학 Graduate Diploma, 국제분쟁학 석사(M.A, International Conflict Studies)학위를 취득하고 현재 동 대학원 전략학과(War Studies) 박사과정에 있다. 주요 연구실적으로는 *Russia as a "New Seasoned Facilitator" in Making Medium and Long-Term Prosperity for the Korean Peninsula within the Framework of the 'Six-Party Talks* (서울대학교 통일평화연구원, 통일과 평화, 2015), *Constructivist Understandings of North Korea's Ballistic Missile Programme: National Security Policy Based on North Korea's Strategic Culture* (Journal of Peace and Unification, 2014), 한반도 신뢰프로세스를 통한 비핵국가 한국의 핵 안보전략: 제2차 핵시대를 맞이하여(한국국방연구원, 국방정책연구, 2013, 공저), 클라우제비츠의 전쟁이론으로 본 냉전 이후 북한의 핵·미사일 전략에 관한 연구(군사학연구, 2010, 공저)가 있다.