



저작자표시-비영리-변경금지 2.0 대한민국

이용자는 아래의 조건을 따르는 경우에 한하여 자유롭게

- 이 저작물을 복제, 배포, 전송, 전시, 공연 및 방송할 수 있습니다.

다음과 같은 조건을 따라야 합니다:



저작자표시. 귀하는 원저작자를 표시하여야 합니다.



비영리. 귀하는 이 저작물을 영리 목적으로 이용할 수 없습니다.



변경금지. 귀하는 이 저작물을 개작, 변형 또는 가공할 수 없습니다.

- 귀하는, 이 저작물의 재이용이나 배포의 경우, 이 저작물에 적용된 이용허락조건을 명확하게 나타내어야 합니다.
- 저작권자로부터 별도의 허가를 받으면 이러한 조건들은 적용되지 않습니다.

저작권법에 따른 이용자의 권리는 위의 내용에 의하여 영향을 받지 않습니다.

이것은 [이용허락규약\(Legal Code\)](#)을 이해하기 쉽게 요약한 것입니다.

[Disclaimer](#)

국제학석사학위논문

# **Theoretical Analysis on the Termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty:**

Focused on Changing Perception of Threat and  
Declining Credibility

북한·소련 동맹조약 종결에 관한 이론적 분석:  
위협에 대한 인식 변화와 신뢰도 저하를 중심으로

2019년 2월

서울대학교 국제대학원

국제학과 국제협력전공

강 여 은

**Theoretical Analysis on the Termination  
of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty**

Focused on Changing Perception of Threat and  
Declining Credibility

Thesis by

**Yeoeun Kang**

Graduate Program in International Cooperation  
In Fulfillment of Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of International Studies

**February 2019**

**Graduate School of International Studies  
Seoul National University  
Seoul, Republic of Korea**

# Theoretical Analysis on the Termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty

Focused on Changing Perception of Threat and  
Declining Credibility

북한·소련 동맹조약 종결에 관한 이론적 분석:  
위협에 대한 인식 변화와 신뢰도 저하를 중심으로

지도교수 신 성 호

이 논문을 국제학 석사학위논문으로 제출함  
2019년 2월

서울대학교 국제대학원  
국제학과 국제협력전공  
강 여 은

강여은의 석사학위논문을 인준함  
2019년 1월

위 원 장                      정 종 호



부위원장                      김 태 균



위        원                      신 성 호



# **Abstract**

## **Theoretical Analysis on the Termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty:**

**Focused on Changing Perception of Threat and  
Declining Credibility**

Why alliances endure or collapse? What factors influence the endurance or termination of alliances? Why was the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty terminated in 1996 after all those 35 years of endurance? Was an ideological division following the collapse of the Soviet Union solely responsible for the alliance termination? If that is true, then why was the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty not abrogated sooner between the late 1980s and early 1990s when all other Soviet defense pacts, including Warsaw pact were falling apart? The aim of this study is to analyze root causes of the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty from the perspective of alliance politics.

The USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, concluded in 1961, had been a core pillar of North Korean-Soviet relations. The treaty was scrapped in September 1996 due to Russia's refusal to extend. The termination has been recognized as a natural corollary to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Contrary to the general belief, Russia succeeded the treaty in January 1992, while all other Soviet defense pacts were abandoned. The treaty continued in effect until September 1996. From the perspective of alliance politics, the USSR-DPRK alliance could persist not by sheer luck but by its effectiveness that has been remained in part.

Building an analytical framework based on Walt's 1997 article "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," the study focuses on the two variables—changing perception of threat and declining credibility. Using diplomatic documents and archives released from the former Soviet Union and communist states in Eastern Europe, the story of the alliance termination is recounted. The analysis first identifies member-states' initial motives for the alliance formation within the framework of the two variables. Second, it traces the changes of those identified factors. And lastly, it clarifies whether changing threat perception and declining credibility ultimately caused the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.

The study proves the hypothesis that the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was terminated in 1996 because both conditions—changing perception of threat and declining credibility in commitments—were fully met. The study also argues that what protracted the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was the Soviet Union's (later Russia's) powerplay role on the Korean Peninsula. Since the management of North Korea's adventuristic behavior was Moscow's ulterior motive for the alliance formation, they strived to grasp political power over the rogue state via the alliance treaty until the mid-1990s. Meanwhile, North Korea succeeded in practicing brinkmanship tactics toward the Soviet patrons, extracting substantial economic and military aid. This thesis on the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty has significance in that it gives a fresh insight into the unexplored subject and offers salient features of alliance dynamics in the phase of alliance termination.

**Key Words:** The USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, Alliance termination, Powerplay, Changing perceptions of threat, Declining credibility

**Student ID:** 2017-24678

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of Tables and Figures</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1. Terminating Alliances .....	1
2. Proposal of Discussion .....	5
1) Background .....	5
2) Puzzling Observation .....	7
3) Research Question .....	10
<b>II. Literature Review</b> .....	<b>11</b>
1. Previous Studies on Alliance Termination .....	11
2. Previous Studies on the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.....	16
<b>III. Analytical Framework</b> .....	<b>22</b>
1. Research Design .....	22
1) Changing Perceptions of Threat .....	23
2) Declining Credibility in Alliance Commitments.....	25
<b>IV. Analysis</b> .....	<b>28</b>
1. Member-States' Initial Conception of the Alliance Treaty .....	30
1) Threat and Commitments Embedded in the Alliance Treaty .....	30
2) North Korea's Initial Conception of the Alliance Treaty .....	37
3) The Soviet Union's Initial Conception of the Alliance Treaty.....	44
2. Changing Perception of Threat .....	54
1) The Emergence of a New Leader .....	54

2) The End of Sino-Soviet Confrontation and the Rapprochement.....	59
3) Improvement of South Korean-Soviet Relations .....	64
3. Declining Credibility .....	72
1) North Korea’s Declining Credibility in Alliance Commitments.....	72
2) The Soviet’s Declining Credibility in Alliance Commitments .....	80
4. Conditions Unmet.....	87
<b>V. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>List of References .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>국문 초록 .....</b>	<b>106</b>

## **List of Tables and Figures**

Table 1. The Comparison of Two Korea's GDP .....	70
Table 2. The Volume of USSR Trade with South Korea.....	71
Figure 1. The Conclusion and Termination Dates of Soviet Defense Pacts.....	9
Figure 2. The Comprehensive View on Russia's Decision to terminate the Treaty .....	20
Figure 3. Chronology of Major Events related to the USSR-DPRK Alliance .....	27
Figure 4. The Comparison of Soviet Defense Pacts in respect of Threat Perception ...	32
Figure 5. The Alliance Commitments Drawn from the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty	35
Figure 6. North Korea's Initial Conception Underlying the Alliance Treaty .....	43
Figure 7. The Soviet Union's Initial Conception Underlying the Alliance Treaty .....	53
Figure 8. North Korea's Expected Alliance Commitments from the Soviet Union .....	72

# **List of Abbreviations**

CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union

DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea

GDR: German Democratic Republic

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

MPRP: Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party

NPT: Non-Proliferation Treaty

PRC: People's Republic of China

ROK: Republic of Korea

USFK: U.S. Armed Forces in Korea

USS: United States Ship

USSR: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Terminating Alliances

Why alliances endure or collapse?<sup>1</sup> What factors influence the endurance or termination of alliances?<sup>2</sup> Why did the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty terminated in September 1996 after all those 35 years of endurance?<sup>3</sup> Was an ideological division following the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union solely responsible for the alliance termination? If so, why was the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty not abrogated sooner in the late 1980s or early 1990s when all other Soviet defense pacts were falling apart? What kept the Soviet Union and North Korea hovering around this all tattered alliance treaty? Who protracted it how and why? Reasons for the belated timing of the alliance termination remains a puzzle. This study attempts to analyze the

---

1 The phrase refers to the title of Stephen M. Walt's 1997 *Survival* article. Walt, S. (1997). Why alliances endure or collapse. *Survival*, 39(1), 156–179.

2 Leeds et al defines an alliance as follows: "An alliance is a formal agreement among independent states to cooperate militarily. Alliances may include any of a variety of specific promises, but what they share in common is written commitment to coordinated action in the event of crises with the potential to involve military conflict." Ashley, B., & Rice, L. (2007). Terminating Alliances: Why Do States Abrogate Agreements. *Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 1118–1132. Compared to Leeds' narrow definition of an alliance in military sense, Stephen M. Walt adopts a broader meaning of an alliance. He defines it as follows: "An alliance (or alignment) is a formal (or informal) commitment for security cooperation between two or more states, intended to augment each member's power, security, and/or influence." Walt, S. (2009). Alliances in a unipolar world. *World Politics*, 61(1), 86-120.

3 Mean duration of bilateral alliances formed between 1816 and 1989 is 9.3 years. Compared to the mean duration, the USSR-DPRK alliance persisted relatively longer than other alliance treaties. Ashley, B., & Rice, L. (2007). Table 1. 1125.

root causes of the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty from the perspective of alliance politics.<sup>4</sup>

Many scholars have advanced explanations for alliance formation and cohesion since these issues are salient to international relations.<sup>5</sup> They attempted to understand how states choose their alliance partners under what conditions for what reasons.<sup>6</sup> Since credible alliances can become a formidable asset to an individual state, how to entice others and make a team became one of the most pressing security issues in international politics. On the contrary, alliance termination, in spite of its significance in understanding alliance dynamics, has received relatively little scholarly attention compared to alliance formation and management.<sup>7</sup>

During the Cold War period, the clarity of two unchallenged superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—created a new and unprecedented strategic landscape

---

4 Although the word “alliance” is not written into the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, the treaty was widely accepted as a military alliance due to the strong obligation of immediate military intervention in the event of military attack upon either on the contracting parties. However, unlike the heavy responsibility of military intervention, the treaty does not specify their common threat or enemy state. Other defense pacts concluded by the Soviet Union during the Cold War period clearly stipulated member-states’ enemy country, for example, Japan, Germany or NATO. In that respect, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was quite unique and puzzling.

5 Liska states that it is impracticable to discuss international relations without alliance politics. Liska, G. (1962). *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

6 Following references are widely recognized as the most influential studies on alliance politics. All these items focus on alliance formations and cohesions: Walt, S. (1987). *The Origins of Alliance*. Cornell University Press; Snyder, G. (1984). The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), 461–495; Snyder, G. (2007). *Alliance Politics*. Cornell University Press.

7 Walt, S. (1997). 156.

so-called bipolarity.<sup>8</sup> Under the bipolar system, individual states could more readily determine whom to ally with. Because they were given much simpler options than before. First option was to join either side of the two coalitions—the Eastern or Western blocs—and jump on their bandwagon. The other option left was to maintain a state’s position as neutral, being unaffiliated with any side. Such a simplicity helped maintain the equilibrium of global power balance during the Cold War period, whereupon existing alliances and coalitions could also remain intact in counterpoise.<sup>9</sup> For these reasons, scholars paid more attention to the formation and management of international alliances, particularly centered on NATO and Warsaw Pact, rather than alliance termination. By doing so, they could predict how the future of global power balance will shift or the likely outcome of war between the two coalitions.

With the end of the Cold War, a unipolar world emerged. The United States was now at the center of world power attended by Western allies.<sup>10</sup> A big debate over future prospects of Western allies, most notably NATO, has erupted in the post-Cold War era.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, numerous communist alliances, including Warsaw pact began to dissolve or transformed into somewhat alternate conformations. Such events, occurring within the existing alliances were significant in theoretically understanding alliance dynamics

---

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Krauthammer, C. (1990). The Unipolar Moment. *Foreign Affairs*, 70(1), American and the World 1990/91, 23-33.

11 Ibid. 156. For representative views on NATO, refer to the following articles: Mearsheimer, J. (1990). Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War. *International Security*, 15(1), 5-56; Waltz, K. (1993). The Emerging Structure of International Politics. *International Security*, 18(2), 44-79.; Van Evera, S. (1990). Primed for Peace: Europe after the Cold War. *International Security*, 15(3), 7-57; Keohane, R at el. (1993). *After the Cold War: international institutions and state strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*.

particularly during the phase of alliance termination. Unfortunately, alliances of defeated nations were readily forgotten in academic circles. Without much in-depth empirical studies, it was widely accepted that an ideological division severed existing communist alliances, although this was not necessarily true.<sup>12</sup>

What is the significance of alliance termination? Alliance termination is a part of alliance dynamics. Member-states' initial motives for military coalition constitute the underlying values of international alliances. However, if the values of existing alliances crumble, then alliances are likely to be deteriorated and soon after terminated. Therefore, what drives alliance termination correlates with what helps maintain existing alliances. But only scant regard has been paid for understanding alliance termination. Without comprehensive analysis of alliance dynamics, we can only have a partial knowledge of the issue.

Walt points out political importance of comprehending key factors influencing alliance termination. He emphasizes that leaders pay careful attention not only to the forces that bring states together but also to the ones that estrange allies from each other. If we can parse out buried causes of alliance termination, it may help statesmen and policymakers to have a better political acumen in practicing alliance diplomacy. Despite of its significance in statecraft, theoretical scholarship on alliances has overlooked the issue.<sup>13</sup> Once an existing alliance is abandoned, it is easily forgotten. Understanding alliance termination yields insight into the core values of existing alliances and fills the gap left by insufficient grasp of alliance dynamics.

---

12 Until now, there have been no in-depth analysis or studies on what happened to the alliances of the Communist bloc after the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union.

13 Walt, S. (1997). 156.

## 2. Proposal of Discussion

### 1) Background

The study focuses on one alliance termination case. It is a military alliance treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea. So-called the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was first concluded in July 1961. It persisted 35 years and was terminated in September 1996. One of the senior officials in the Soviet Foreign Ministry remarked on the influence of USSR-DPRK alliance vis-à-vis North Korean-Soviet relations as follows:

"The relationship between North Korea and the Soviet Union is based on the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty of July 1961. Both countries are complying with the obligations under the alliance treaty and are satisfied with their bilateral relationship."<sup>14</sup>

Thus, one can say that North Korean-Soviet relations was indeed founded on the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty of 1961.<sup>15</sup> Since the alliance had profound effects on North Korean-Soviet relations for 35 years, both Pyongyang and Moscow must have ruminated over its termination. That means, member-states' decision to break up the alliance treaty was delivered not by recklessness or indifferences, but by thorough consideration. In that sense, this case must reflect salient features of

---

14 Recited from Ministry of Defense, Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia Military Affairs Documentation. 국방부, 한반도 및 동북아 군사정세자료집, (1988.4~1989.3), 191.

15 Choi, M. (2009). *China-North Korea Alliance Relations: History of Uncomfortable Coexistence. jung-gug · bughan dongmaeng-gwangye: bulpyeonhan dong-geoui yeogsa.* 중국·북한 동맹관계: 불편한 동거의 역사. Oleum. 오름. 15.

alliance dynamics at the phase of alliance termination.

Despite of its role in North Korean-Soviet relations, little is still known about the USSR-DPRK alliance. The alliance treaty, codified as the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the most compelling alliance treaty with a handful of "firsts" from various aspects.<sup>16</sup>

From North Korea's perspective, it marked as the first bilateral defense pact since the foundation of the country in 1948. By the alliance treaty, the Soviet Union became North Korea's first official ally. According to the newly released Hungarian diplomatic document, Pyongyang first proposed Moscow to terminate the alliance treaty in October 1971. Such an event helps us understand a part of Pyongyang's alliance diplomacy. As the treaty officially terminated in September 1996, it became North Korea's first broken alliance.<sup>17</sup> After all, the USSR-DPRK alliance is the only North Korean alliance that has lived its entire life, from birth to death.

For the Soviet Union, it was the first bilateral defense pact with an Asian country. In terms of alliance commitments, this was the first Soviet defense pact

---

16 (Jan 23, 1962). Treaties of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Registered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. *United Nations Treaty Series*, 420(6045), 154-158.

17 So far, North Korea had formed military alliances with three different countries—the Soviet Union, China and Cuba. Among them, an alliance treaty with the Soviet Union was the only one being terminated. The rest of alliances with the other two countries are still valid.

without specific enemy state or external threat stipulated in the text of the treaty.<sup>18</sup> Most notably, The USSR-DPRK alliance treaty later became the only Soviet defense pact that has survived through the collapse of the Soviet Union. In summary, the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty is worthy of analysis.

## 2) Puzzling Observation

The termination of USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty is generally interpreted in context of the ideological framework. The traditional view on the alliance termination is that the treaty was naturally extinguished when the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Contrary to the general belief, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty remained intact and carried on by the Russian Federation. As shown in Figure 1, other Soviet defense pacts, including Warsaw Pact were already broken along with the dissolution of the Soviet Union between the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The Russian government announced to succeed the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty in July 1992.<sup>19</sup> The Russian Foreign Ministry even remonstrated with the South Korean government about Seoul's implicit pressure on Moscow to sever military ties with Pyongyang.<sup>20</sup> It seemed apparent that Russia was willing to

---

18 During the Cold War period, the Soviet Union concluded nine defense pacts including the Warsaw Pact. The USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty is the only one without stipulated enemy.

19 Kim, E. (July 29, 1992). North Korean-Soviet Friendship Cooperation Treaty Continued. joseon-solyeon uohyeoblyeogjoyag gyesog yuji. 조선-소련 우호협력조약 계속 유지. MBC News. [http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012\\_19402.html](http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012_19402.html)

20 (July 29, 1992). The Russian Foreign Ministry's protest against North Korea's urge to abolish the North Korea-Soviet Friendship Cooperation Treaty. hangugcheug-ui josouhojoyag pyegi choggue leosia oemubu hang-ui. 조소우호조약 폐기 한국측 촉구

maintain its military connection to the old ally. Until 1994, the government repeatedly stated that the treaty is in effect. However, not long after that, Moscow decided to terminate the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty in September 1995. It is evident that Russian government had been plagued with what to do with the alliance treaty.

It was not a fortuitous result that the alliance treaty was not easily abandoned. From the perspective of alliance politics, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty could prolong its duration because the treaty still had effectiveness in part. What factors protracted and later terminated the treaty still remains a puzzle.

---

에 항의/러시아 외무부. MBC News.  
[http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012\\_19402.html](http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012_19402.html)

**Figure 1. The Conclusion and Termination Dates of Soviet Defense Pacts**

<b>Name of the Treaty</b>	<b>Conclusion Date</b>	<b>Termination Date</b>
Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance, and Postwar Collaboration between the Soviet Union and <b>Polish Republic</b>	Apr 21, 1945	April 7, 1989
<b>Sino-Soviet</b> Treaty of Friendship and Alliance	Aug 14, 1945	Feb 14, 1950
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Romanian People's Republic</b>	Feb 4, 1948	Dec 12, 1989
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Republic of Hungary</b>	Feb 18, 1948	Oct 7, 1989
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the People's Republic of Bulgaria</b>	Mar 18, 1948	Nov 10, 1989
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Republic of Finland</b>	Apr 6, 1948	Dec 25, 1991
<b>Warsaw Pact:</b> Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the USSR	May 14, 1955	Jul 1, 1991
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Democratic People's Republic of Korea</b>	<b>Jul 6, 1961</b>	<b>Sep 10, 1996</b>
Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance, and Co-operation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the German Democratic Republic</b>	Jun 12, 1964	Nov 7, 1989

\* Non-Aggression Pacts and Ententes are excluded.

### **3) Research Question**

The study attempts to find answers for the following question: “Why was the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty terminated in 1996?” While some obvious factors, such as the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, largely influenced the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, a careful analysis reveals that the alliance termination cannot be fully explained without considering the underlying, less obvious factors. By throwing the question, the study recounts the stories of unexplored alliance termination.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Previous Studies on Alliance Termination

To date, studies on alliance termination had been underexplored in the academic circles of politics. Stephen Walt lamented this situation and attempted to draw more scholarly attention to this forgotten statecraft in his 1997 article “Why alliances endure or collapse?”<sup>21</sup> However, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a unipolarity had diverted scholarly interests to the future prospect of victor-led allies, most notably NATO.<sup>22</sup> Due to this academic atmosphere, studies on alliance termination again lost its vitality. Ten years after Walt’s attempts, Leeds et al (2007) began to put emphasis upon understanding alliance termination and advanced the study on this subject by exploring some of key factors influencing a state’s decision to break up a military agreements.<sup>23</sup>

While aforementioned studies on alliance termination vary in methodologies and the degree of theoretical sophistication, they share two common denominators. First, circumstances and conditions at the inception of alliance formation that have driven

---

21 Walt, S. (1997)

22 Ibid. 156.

23 Both Walt (1997) and Leeds et al (2007) examine the same subject “why alliances are terminated?” However, the purpose of each study is somewhat different. Walt (1997), from the outset, attempts to find the key factors influencing the endurance or collapse of the alliances in the context of alliance dynamics. However, Leeds et al (2007) seeks to find answers for the question whether the treaties are only valuable as matters stand (*rebus sic stantibus*) or pacts are respected in good faith regardless of changing circumstances (*pacta sunt servanda*). To prove whether international law constrains leaders, they apply military alliance treaty cases. Thus, both of the studies focus on the alliance termination but with different ultimate purposes within the different conceptual framework.

individual state to realize the necessity of military alliance with certain counterpart, are forming the values of an alliance. Second, if one or either side of the member-states experience significant shifts in the values of an existing alliance, chances are that the existing alliance is to be re-evaluated, deteriorated or terminated.

Leeds et al (2007) conducts a quantitative and deductive research, employing 'competing risks model' to test their hypotheses. Based on the current theories of alliance formations, they identify four elements crucial to the values of alliances—the level of external threat faced by the allies, the military capabilities of the allied states, the extent to which policy goals are shared by the allies, and the availability of substitute allies. The study concludes that alliances become vulnerable to opportunistic abrogation when one or more member-states experience profound shifts in these four factors, because such shifts are likely to alter the conditions and values that have underlain the existing alliances.

Prior to the experiment, Ashley et al set a typology of alliance termination and select only those cases in which one side of member-states unilaterally violated and later abrogated its alliance treaty, as for the subject of the study. According to their typology, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty is classified as a fulfilled alliance treaty and not considered to be the subject of the study. That is because the alliance treaty has lasted to its expiration date. Therefore, the result of the study does not reflect, and would not be applicable to explain causes of the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.

However, there lies limitations in the typology. On the surface, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty would be classified as a fully implemented treaty. A year before the expiration date, the Soviet Union unilaterally notified denunciation of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty to North Korea. North Korea remained silence, so the treaty

automatically ended on the expiration date in September 10, 1996.<sup>24</sup> The problem is that facts of violation are indeterminate in most cases of the treaty termination. When states break a treaty, they try to shift blame to each other. Because the credibility of the state violating the alliance treaty will fall, making it difficult to join other treaties in the future.<sup>25</sup> The Soviet Union and North Korea also transferred responsibility to each other, by arbitrarily interpreting provisions of the alliance treaty. Therefore, dates of alliance termination do not always serve as reliable criteria for fulfillment of agreements.

Walt (1997) conducts a qualitative research employing an inductive method. Based on his balance of threat theory, he examines various cases of alliance termination of the past. The study concludes that three factors—changing perceptions of threat, declining credibility and changes in domestic politics—largely affect cohesion of existing alliances, and are causative of alliance termination.<sup>26</sup> The first two factors presuppose that a state is a rational actor, and the last one that a state is an irrational actor.

In terms of changing perceptions of threat, Walt claims that if member-states' external threat, that they perceived at the inception of alliance formation, experience significant changes afterwards, the alliance is likely to be re-evaluated and terminated. Since alliance formation is a state's response behavior towards external threats, perception of threats forms the value of alliance. Thus, when new conditions alter the underlying values of alliances, this may obviate the necessity of alliance. The second reason is declining credibility. When credibility in efficacy of existing alliance declines,

---

24 Lee, S. (Sep 7, 1995). Russia Notifies North Korea to Discontinue the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. *leosia,bughan-e sanghowonjo joyag pyegitongbo*. 러,북한에 韓蘇 상호 원조 조약 폐기통보. *Jung-Ang Il Bo*. 중앙일보.

25 Goldstein, J. (2001) *International Relations* (4th ed.). Longman. 121.

26 Walt, S. (1997). 163-164.

member-states may abrogate them and seek for another reliable alliance partners. Without ability or will of the alliance partner to keep their promises, credibility in efficacy of existing alliance may suffer.

However, Walt's balance of threat theory and his study on alliance termination possess two kinds of limitations in explaining the formation and termination of the USSR-DPRK alliance. The traditional theory of alliance formation presupposes the existence of external threats and capability aggregation. In other words, the alliance is considered as a state's act of combining mutual forces of member-states in order to counter hostile external states or actors. According to this general view, Walt defines external enemies as a threat and motivations for alliance formation. However, many scholars have argued that alliances are formed and managed not only for purposes of power aggregation or security aggrandizement, but also to restrain potential conflicts among member-states. That is, states may use alliances as *pactum de contrahendo* (pacts of restrains).<sup>27</sup>

Rothstein distinguishes the purpose of alliance between military and political aspects. Military purpose is to mobilize the power and capabilities of allies in order to deter their external threats. It also refers to the conventional wisdom about military alliances. The political purpose of alliance is to control and manage the 'adventurous, exuberant' allies. That is, by eliminating unpredictable and unpleasant behavior of rogue allies, states prevent potential conflicts such as excessive friction and unnecessary events

---

27 Paul W. Schroeder laid the cornerstone of this argument in his 1976 article. Schroeder, P. (1976). *Alliances, 1915-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management*. Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. 227-262.

like total war.<sup>28</sup>

Cha in his 2009 article in *International Security*, suggests the concept of “powerplay” to explain the U.S. alliance system in Asia. According to his argument, the United States has intentionally concluded a type of asymmetric bilateral alliance treaty with South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, because it is the most effective way to curb these countries.<sup>29</sup> Although these alliances are still aiming to deter external threat and keep peace in Northeast Asia, ulterior motives of forming bilateral alliances is to temper those rogue states so that Washington does not have to be involved in some unnecessary conflicts.

Second, Walt does not provide a clear definition of neither “credibility” nor “efficacy of an alliance”. Both credibility and efficacy are subjective concepts like love, and needed to be defined in detail. But definitions of terms are not made in his study so that there exists semantic ambiguity within the terms and concepts. Last limitation is the ambiguity in correlations between the three factors. Among them, which causes are the most common? Could different causes occur at the same time? Or how do they affect each other? Thus, to apply Walt’s alliance termination study as a theoretical framework to the case study, lucid definitions of terms and elaborate clarification of the three factors are all the more necessary.

---

28 Rothstein, R. (1968). *Alliances and Small Powers*. New York: Columbia University Press. 49-52.

29 Cha, V. (2009). Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia. *International Security*, 34(3), 158-196.

## 2. Previous Studies on the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty

Under the name of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, Moscow had provided full support to Pyongyang, particularly in military and economic areas.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Soviet influence over North Korea did not receive much attention ever since the end of the Cold War.<sup>31</sup> An oversimplified interpretation of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty has gained more currency than it deserves. The dissolution of the Soviet Union diverted scholarly interests to the PRC-DPRK alliance. Today's academic circle regards the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty as one of the sub-elements explaining the old-time Soviet-North Korea relations. The treaty has been considered simply as given due to the lack of reliable data.<sup>32</sup>

Although not much research was conducted vis-à-vis the USSR-DPRK alliance, there exist studies crucial to understanding the termination of the alliance. Kim (1998) proposes two main reasons why the alliance was broken in 1996.<sup>33</sup> The first reason is

---

30 A senior official of the Soviet Foreign Ministry mentioned the following vis-à-vis the treaty: "The relationship between North Korea and the Soviet Union is based on the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty in 1961. Both countries are complying with the obligations under the treaty and are satisfied with the bilateral relationship." Recited from Choi. (2009). 15. ROK Ministry of National Defense. (1989). Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia Military Affairs Data Book. 한반도 및 동북아 군사정세자료집. 191.

31 For Russia as the forgotten player in the Korean Peninsula despite of its importance, see Cha, V. (2012). *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*. HarperCollins Publishers. 345-369.

32 Kim, B. (2013). The Impact of DPRK-PRC-USSR Relations on Concluding Treaties of Alliances during the Sino-Soviet Split, 1957-1961. *North Korean Studies Review*, 17(2), 171.

33 Kim, D. (1998). North Korea-Russia Relations and Six-Party Talks. bughan-leosia gwangyewa 6jahoedam. 북한-러시아 관계와 6자회담. *The Korean Association of*

Seoul's aggressive promotion of its northern policy in synergy with the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Since then, Moscow has revised its "One Korea" policy, under which North Korea was recognized as the only legitimate government in the Korean Peninsula. Instead, equidistant diplomacy so called "Two Koreas", acknowledging Seoul as another legitimate government was pursued. In 1990, as South Korea and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations, North Korean-Soviet relations cooled down dramatically, so did their military ties.<sup>34</sup>

Second reason is Russia's opposition to North Korea's nuclear development. Russia feared that North Korea's nuclear development would lead to a nuclear armament of South Korea and Japan. At the same time, Russia aimed to prevent nuclear development in their neighboring countries.<sup>35</sup> Kim (1998) concluded that the replacement of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty with the new one will keep being delayed and there would be no major change even if they conclude the new treaty. However, this study is limited in explaining the root causes of the alliance termination because it treats the USSR-DPRK alliance as a sub-explanatory element of the North Korean-Soviet relations.

Yeo In Gon in 1995 looked into the issue on a policy level.<sup>36</sup> When Russian

---

*Slavic-Eurasian Studies*. Seullabeuhagbo. 슬라브학보, 13(2), 75-92.

34 Kim, D. (1998). 79-80.

35 Ibid. 80-81.

36 Yeo, I. (1995). Significance, Evaluation and Situation Analysis of Termination of Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Jo·so uhohyeobjo mich sanghowonjo joyag pyegiui uimiwa pyeong-ga, jeongsebunseog. 조·소 우호협조 및 상호원조 조약 폐기의 의미와 평가, 정세분석. *Minjogtongil yeonguwon*, 민족통일연구

government officially announced its decision to terminate the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty in September 1995, he conducted the research to draw its impact on South Korea. Background of the alliance treaty, explicit and implicit meanings of provisions, Russian intention to abrogate the treaty, and then the impact of the alliance termination on the Korean Peninsula are examined. In that sense his research moderately provides basic understanding of the alliance termination.

According to him, the Soviet Union and North Korea were able to maintain a close relationship in various areas such as ideology, politics, military, and economy based on the socialist internationalism and the 1961 USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. Even though the relations have been at odds intermittently due to North Korea's inclination toward China, the Soviet's harsh criticism of Kim Il Sung's bellicose unification policy, and increasing contacts between the Soviet and South Korea since the 1970s, it was solid in most of the time.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, Russia determined to end the relations in a military sense. Yeo suggests three decisive reasons for Russia's decision.<sup>38</sup> First, Russia wanted to prevent itself from getting embroiled in unwanted conflicts on the Korean Peninsula which, with high probability, would be induced from North Korea's adventuristic provocations. Because Russia's domestic politics and economy by that time was still in fragile stability, getting involved in such unnecessary disputes would cause a negative effect on its national reformation.

---

<sup>37</sup>, 95(07), 1-26.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 5-13.

Second, by terminating the old alliance, Russia wanted to revamp its negative macho image within the Northeast Asia countries. By removing the obstacles to Russia-South Korea relations, Russia aimed to expand economic trade with neighboring countries and attract foreign direct investment. Economic policy was considered more important to Russia than security, as they were desperately in need to overcome domestic economic crisis and to develop Far East areas, including Siberia.

Third, by breaking off its military ties with Pyongyang, Moscow wanted to reduce political, military, and psychological burdens that have been imposed by Pyongyang so that they could concentrate more on their domestic issues. But it does not mean that Russia intended to sever diplomatic relations with North Korea. Rather, they tried to convert the military-focused relations into the normal state-to-state relations based on mutual cooperation and economic exchange.

A Russian Foreign Ministry official stated Moscow informed Pyongyang about its decision to terminate the alliance treaty and proposed a draft of a new treaty. The draft is said to contain similar content to the one signed South Korea and Russia, that is to develop friendly relations based on principles of international law, mutual respect, equality, respect for territory and political independence, and non-interference in domestic matters.<sup>39</sup>

His research is significant in that it reflects the current situation of Russia at that time. However, since the purpose of the study is to derive policy implications rather than to examine the dynamics of the alliance, there is a limit to understanding the alliance termination. If Moscow broke off the alliance treaty due to the three objectives–

---

39 Lee, S. (Sep 7, 1995).

preventing itself from becoming involved in North Korea issue, vitalizing economic exchanges with South Korea and neighboring countries, and easing the burden imposed by North Korea—the alliance treaty should have been terminated before than that.

Based on Kim and Yeo's studies, scholars tend to explain the causes of the alliance termination in three aspects: Russian's fear of entrapment in conflicts on the Korean Peninsula, improvement of South Korean-Soviet (Russia) relationship, and Russia's policy to expand economic exchanges with Northeast Asian countries.

**Figure 2. The Comprehensive View on Russia's Decision to terminate the Treaty**

1	Russia's fear of entrapment into political crisis occurred in the Korean Peninsula
2	the establishment of South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations
3	Russia's urgent need to focus more on economic growth and trade with South Korea and neighboring countries in Northeast Asia to overcome domestic instability

Another recent study related to the subject includes Kim's 2013 domestic research.<sup>40</sup> She explores the correlation between Sino-Soviet split and DPRK's alliance formation with USSR and PRC. She concludes that the rivalry between China and the Soviet Union has offered Kim Il Sung a great chance to conclude alliance treaties. The study has significance in that it provides some of the clues to Soviet's motivation of having the alliance treaty with North Korea.

Shimotomai's comparative political studies conducted in Japan examines the

---

40 Kim, B. (2013).

early stage of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.<sup>41</sup> Like Kim (2013), Shimotomai as well argues that Sino-Soviet split created favorable conditions for Kim Il Sung to form alliances with the two communist giants. However, he points out that when the treaty was signed, distrust between North Korea and the Soviet Union was at the highest. He emphasizes that this peculiar timing indicates insincerity and fragility of the alliance treaty.<sup>42</sup> If that is true, then how could it have been maintained for 35 years? Previous literature upon the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty possess inherent limitations and do not provide answers for the puzzlements.

---

41 Shimotomai, N. (2006). *Mosukuwa to Kim Il Sung*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

42 Ibid. 282-284.

### III. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1. Research Design

In analyzing the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, I formulate two distinct sub-categories based on Walt's 1997 study on alliance termination. As explained in the previous chapter, Walt proposes three different reasons for alliance termination—Changing perception of threat, declining credibility, and domestic politics. The first two concepts are based on the premise that a state is a rational actor.<sup>43</sup> This study aims to explore fundamental causes of the termination of the USSR-DPRK alliance with an assumption that the member-states are rational entity. Therefore, the analytical framework is designed focusing on the first two factors.

The first sub-category is changing perception of threat. The second sub-category is declining credibility. Walt emphasizes that “Even if the level of threat is unchanged, an alliance will become more fragile if its members begin to doubt that the existing arrangements are sufficient to guarantee their security.”<sup>44</sup> In that sense, threat perception and credibility of alliances are concepts that are not only correlated but also separable. Since Walt does not clearly distinguish between these two concepts, an attempt to disentangle them and examine the case at different levels may help overcome the limits of Walt's research and advance the study of alliance termination.

---

43 “The hypotheses just discussed [Changing perception of threat and Declining Credibility] all assume that states are essentially rational actors making decisions in response to shifts in the external environment.” Walt, S. (1997). 161.

44 Ibid. 160.

## 1) Changing Perceptions of Threat

Walt argues that significant changes in perceptions of external threats may lead states to re-evaluate their existing alliance. According to his balance of threat theory, states form an alliance to aggregate military powers and capabilities so they could balance the external threat emanating from belligerent adversary.<sup>45</sup> When the level of external threat changes due to, for example, reduction of opponent's military power, decrease in opponent's offensive intention, or sudden collapse of adversary, then the necessity of military alliances or coalitions is likely to decrease as well. In this respect, Walt's argument sounds logical.

However, these traditional theories possess limitations in explaining the formation of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. The level of external threat coming from the Western bloc does not give sufficient explanation for Soviet motives to conclude, protract and terminate the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. Around the time of the alliance conclusion, there was a sense of reconciliation between Moscow and Washington. The prelude to the Soviet-American détente was about to begin.<sup>46</sup> If external threat is the only driving force for states to form a military alliance, then the conclusion of the USSR-DPRK alliance would not be held in 1961 when the two main opposition powers—the Soviet Union and United States—appeared to be in conciliatory mood.

---

45 Stephen M. Walt. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell University Press. 5-10.

According to balance of threat theory, states balance not only power but also external threat when it comes to alliance formation. Although power distribution is a very important factor, the degree of threat is not determined solely by physical ability. The level of external threat is affected by geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions

46 Marantz, P. (1975). Prelude to Detente: Doctrinal Change under Khrushchev. *International Studies Quarterly*, 19(4), 501-528.

By the time of the USSR-DPRK alliance succession in 1991, the Cold War has just vanished, so did the hostility between the Eastern and Western bloc. Again, Soviet decision to protract the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty poses interesting puzzle. If external threat is the main motives for alliance formation, Soviet succession of the alliance treaty would not have been made. Moreover, the alliance termination should have come at a much earlier time like other Soviet defense pacts that were dissolved in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Previous studies have argued that the Sino-Soviet confrontation had significant influence on the USSR-DPRK and PRC-DPRK alliance formation.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, that does not indicate that the two communist giants in the same bloc would define each other as an external threat.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, if Pyongyang had designated one of the two countries as an enemy, it could not have joined alliances with both the Soviet Union and China at the same time. Another So how could we explain a state's motives for alliance formation, other than external threats?

International relations scholars like Rothstein, Liska and Cha point out that states may use alliances as *pactum de contrahendo* (pacts of restrains).<sup>49</sup> They do agree upon the fundamental assumption of alliance formation that states form military alliances to balance external threats. However, empirical study shows that an alliance does function as a useful political tool to restrict "exuberant or rogue states" that are

---

47 Shimotomai, N. (2006); Kim, B. (2013); Choi, M. (2009).

48 Though Sino-Soviet confrontation continued, the two states did not ostensibly define each other as enemies at first few years. However, since the armed clashes between the two eventually broke out near their borders in 1969, they perceived each other as an absolute external threat.

49 Schroeder, P. (1976); George Liska. *Nations in Alliance*. 26-41.

likely to undermine the regional stability.

The paper accepts the idea of an alliances as parts of restrains. While some obvious external factors like a tension between South and North Korea, and the Cold War framework largely influenced the alliance formation, a careful analysis reveals that less obvious factors affected alliance dynamics as much as external factors. Therefore, a definition of threat is comprehensive in this paper, including potential dangers emanating from rogue member-states. The study analyzes key motives of the Soviet Union and North Korea in forming the USSR-DPRK alliance and examines how their initial threat perception have changed from the 1980s.

## **2) Declining Credibility in Alliance Commitments**

The second cause of the alliance termination is declining credibility in the efficacy of an existing alliance.<sup>50</sup> When member-states discharge alliance commitments with assiduity, the alliance will gain more credibility in the efficacy. On the contrary, if alliance commitments are not likely to be fulfilled, then the alliance will lose its credibility in the efficacy. Both credibility and efficacy are subjective concepts like love and friendship. These are invisible to the eye and difficult to measure. The following questions are must be raised and answered: what is the definition of the efficacy of an existing alliance? How could it be observed or measured?

Let's start with the first question. What is the efficacy of an alliance? For each state entering into an alliance, there are certain alliance commitments that they expect

---

50 Walt, S. (1997). 160.

from the counterparts. These commitments are reflected in the alliance treaty. If the commitments set out in the treaty are discharged as fully as promised, the function of an alliance works well. That means, the high rate of commitment fulfillment of member-state forms the efficacy of an existing alliance. In other words, the efficacy of an alliance exists when the commitments stipulated in the articles are sincerely carried out. Conversely, if the commitments are unfaithfully carried out, the credibility will decrease and the alliance's function will be lost. In general, weak states expect military support from great powers in case of contingencies. Credibility in the alliance will be high if a strong ally immediately sends troops to the weak state at a time when the weak state is threatened by external threats.

Then how can we evaluate the efficacy of an existing alliance? If we can see how often alliance commitments have been effectuated in the past, we can certainly verify the credibility in the alliance's efficacy. However, it is not easy to examine it. Not only do the member-states disclose all the information related to their treaties, but there are also very limited circumstances in which some commitments such as automatic military intervention can be effectuated. It is also limited to check the frequency of commitments implementations, because some of commitments such as mutual respect, mutual communication and cooperation are uncountable and subjective concepts.

The study, therefore, relies heavily on circumstantial accounts focusing on the events listed in Figure 3. Based on diplomatic archives newly released from former communist states and remarks of leaders and decision-makers, the study tracks down credibility of alliance commitments. During the 35-year-long alliance relations, leadership of the Soviet Union and North Korea occasionally debated and pondered over the USSR-DPRK alliance. Sometimes the alliance itself played a pivotal role in major political events, reflecting its functions and commitments in the process.

**Figure 3. Chronology of Major Events related to the USSR-DPRK Alliance**

Date	Major Events
1961. 7. 6	Conclusion of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty
1961. 7. 11	Conclusion of the PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaty
1968. 1. 23	The North Korean seizure of the USS Pueblo
1970~1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Declaration of the Nixon Doctrine</li> <li>✓ The emergence of Sino-American rapprochement and Soviet-American Détente</li> <li>✓ Partial withdrawal of USFK</li> </ul>
In the late 1971	North Korea's Proposal to terminate the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty
1972. 7. 04	The July 4 <sup>th</sup> South-North Joint Communiqué
1985. 12. 12	North Korea's ratification of Non-Proliferation Treaty
1990. 09. 30	Establishment of South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations
1991. 12. 26	The collapse of the Soviet Union
1992. 1. 23	Russia's succession of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty
1993. 3. 12	North Korea's withdrawal from Non-Proliferation Treaty
1995. 9. 7	Russia's notification to North Korea of the alliance termination
1996. 9. 10	The Termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty

## **IV. ANALYSIS**

Analysis falls into four major sections. The first section examines the Soviet Union and North Korea's initial ideas about threats and alliance commitments. The task is undertaken based on the full text of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty and the circumstantial evidence based on two member-states' security environments at the time of the alliance conclusion. As a matter of course, member-states initial conceptions must be reflected in the treaty. Leaders embed their needs, promises and commitments into the articles of a treaty so that an agreement can practically ensure their security. Since the two forces—perception of threat and alliance commitments—that brought the Soviet Union and North Korea together in July 1961 were stimulated by exogenous variables, understanding historical context around that time period hints at threats and political needs they faced.

The second and third sections trace changes in the two factors—perception of threat and credibility in alliance commitments—respectively from the late 1980s to early 1990s. With a close observation on these variables, the study attempts to recount the stories behind the alliance termination, identify correlation between the two variables and clarify whether changing perception of threat and declining credibility in alliance commitments ultimately caused the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.

The last section elucidates one significant event related to the USSR-DPRK alliance—North Korea's sudden proposal to abrogate the USSR-DPRK alliance treaty prior to the July 4<sup>th</sup> South-North Joint Communiqué in 1972. This event reveals a part of alliance dynamics between the member-states. It demonstrates how partial changes in the two factors would affect the existing alliance, but not suffice to cause ultimate termination of the alliance treaty.

The first section, defining the initial state of the two independent variables, should be meticulously carried out. Because the member-states' initial conception underlying the alliance treaty serves as the starting point for the observation taken in the second and third sections. As discussed in previous chapters, ostensible threats coming from the Western bloc alone does not provide sufficient explanation for the Soviet Union's motives for alliance conclusion, protraction and termination.

The late 1950s and early 1960s, around the time of alliance conclusion, marked as the prelude to the Soviet-American détente.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, by the time of the alliance treaty succession in 1991, the threat of Western bloc was diminishing at one swoop due to the Soviet-American détente and the end of the Cold War. All of the Soviet Union's defense pacts, losing its impetus, were waning and dissolved naturally, only except the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. Empirically, Soviet's alliance behavior toward North Korea came across as opposite to the level of external threat.

Without a careful interpretation of member-states' initial conception underlying the alliance treaty, there may occur the potential problem of omitted-variable bias. In that case, such an incoherence in the Soviet Union's alliance behavior will remain a puzzle. Thus, to prevent an omitted-variable bias and to understand the Soviet Union's (later Russia's) enigmatic decisions to conclude the alliance treaty belatedly in 1961 and to protract it even after the end of the Cold War until 1996 when all other Soviet defense pacts were already broken from the late 1980s, the first section of analysis should be carefully carried out.

---

51 Marantz, P. (1975). Prelude to Detente: Doctrinal Change under Khrushchev. *International Studies Quarterly*, 19(4), 501-528.

## 1. Member-States' Initial Conception of the Alliance Treaty

### 1) Threat and Commitments Embedded in the Alliance Treaty

To help understand the Soviet Union and North Korea's initial conception of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, the full text of the treaty itself is a good place to start. In a bargaining process, Negotiating States exert the utmost effort to maximize their own interests and reflect it into the written form.<sup>52</sup> However, according to *Pacta sunt servanda*, the treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith.<sup>53</sup> Hence, all Contracting States are ought to be bound by their own words. To ensure their expected alliance commitments are embedded in the treaty while securing enough space for autonomy in their governmental actions, prudent leaders discreetly design wordings, terms, and structure of a treaty.

Kennan points out that a wise leader does not commit himself to the promise that may confine or reduce the autonomy or sovereignty of his nation.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, a written form of an alliance treaty is a political craft with great delicacy of each member-states. In that sense, a written form of a treaty must hint at their pursuits of security interests explicitly, as well as implicitly. What could be drawn from the USSR-DPRK

---

52 Vienna Convention of the law of treaties. Article 2. Use of Terms. 1. For the purposes of the present Convention (e) "Negotiating State" means a State which took part in the drawing up and adoption of the text of the treaty. (f) "Contracting State" means a State which has consented to be bound by the treaty, whether or not the treaty has entered into force.

53 Vienna Convention of the law of treaties. Article 26. *Pacta sunt servanda*. Every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith.

54 Kennan, G. (1984). *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War*. New York: Pantheon.

## Alliance Treaty?

The USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty consists of a preamble and six articles. The preamble defines a principle of socialist internationalism as a basic norm of the treaty and puts forward a firm resolution of mutual military supports. A commitment on military intervention in case of contingencies is restated in Article 1. Such a reiteration of military obligation indicates the military purpose of the treaty and two member-states' staunch allied supports. As demonstrated by the strong eagerness for military cooperation in emergency, it seems that the Soviet Union and North Korea were in great need of an outside patronage. If so, what were the source of dangers and threats they faced? From who did they wanted to be protected from?

Interestingly, unlike other defense facts concluded by the Soviet Union, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty does not stipulate neither specific hostile country nor common threat. For example, as shown in the table below, the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty straightforwardly designates their common external threat as "the revival of Japanese imperialism and the repetition of aggression on the part of Japan." Warsaw Pact also clearly defines that "West European Union with the participation of a remilitarized West Germany and its inclusion in the North Atlantic bloc" are the source of threat. As one can see, it is easy to track down member-states' threat perception by referring to the text of a treaty itself.

The USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, however, shows obvious distinction compared to the others. The treaty does not designate any hostile state and. It simply describes "any State or coalition of States" in Article 1 as a potential threat. It may sound lucid and comprehensive. But at the same time, it is quite puzzling. The USSR-DPRK treaty was concluded in the middle of the Cold War. One can readily conjure up either the United States, Japan, or South Korea as a common threat of the Soviet Union and

North Korea. But none of them is referred in the text. If there existed no certain enemy, what is the need of an alliance in the first place?

**Figure 4. The Comparison of Soviet Defense Pacts in respect of Threat Perception**

<b>Name of the Treaty</b>	<b>Stipulated Threat</b>
Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance, and Postwar Collaboration between the Soviet Union and <b>Polish Republic</b>	Germany
<b>Sino-Soviet</b> Treaty of Friendship and Alliance	Japan
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Romanian People’s Republic</b>	Germany
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Republic of Hungary</b>	Germany
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the People’s Republic of Bulgaria</b>	Germany
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the Republic of Finland</b>	Germany
<b>Warsaw Pact:</b> Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the USSR	The North Atlantic bloc
Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the DPRK</b>	<b>Any State</b>
Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance, and Co-operation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and <b>the German Democratic Republic</b>	Revanchism, a revision of the outcome of the Second World War

Thus, it is limited to draw out the Soviet Union and North Korea's initial threat perception of from the text of the alliance treaty. Why did the two member-states phrase such an unclear and vague remark of threat? What should be noted here is the significance of ambiguity embedded in terms itself. This is not the outcome of member-states' carelessness. Rather, the wording could be deliberately designed ambiguously. It indicates that there was no obvious threat or enemy in common. In that sense, the Soviet Union and North Korea may have different perception of threat so that they could not agree upon their respective conception. This is the reason why identification of their threat perception is all the more necessary and must be preceded.

If it is limited to identify threat perception based on the text of the alliance treaty, how about expected alliance commitments? can they be defined? What obligations do the preamble and articles of the treaty impose upon the member-states? The following table summarizes alliance commitments stipulated in each article. As noted earlier, the preamble and Article 1 stipulate the obligation of automatic military intervention in case of contingencies. Article 2 prohibits two member-states from participating in any coalitions or actions that can undermine their respective interests. Article 3 stipulates that member-states should consult with each other prior to a key decision related to national interests. Article 4 guarantees autonomy of states based on mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs. This seems to be a political measure to secure states' autonomy and sovereignty.<sup>55</sup>

---

55 It is not only a weak state that lose political flexibility because of the treaty. A weak state could also exert some limited influence over a great power nation through an alliance treaty. For examples, the superpowers are also restricted in their governmental actions due to an alliance commitment like automatic military intervention. Chances are that superpowers may embroil in an unwanted dispute or even a total war. For the influence of weak nations, refer to the following items: Rothstein R. (1968). *Alliances and Small Powers*. New York:

Interestingly, unlike other defense pacts of the Soviet Union, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty includes an article related to the unification of a nation, since North Korea is a part of a divided country. Article 5 of the treaty declares that the unification of the Korean peninsula should proceed in a peaceful and democratic manner. It signifies that the Soviet Union would not support unification of Korea, if it is forced by any use of military power. By specifying the pursuit of peaceful unification only, Moscow prevented itself from embroiling in any of further armed clash in the Korean Peninsula.

Generally, individual state refrain from joining a military alliance with either party of a divided country.<sup>56</sup> Because building an alliance with one party may unnecessarily stimulate the ally of the other party of a divided country. In this case, it was the United States, South Korea's staunch ally. Indeed, as confirmed by one of senior officials in CPSU, Moscow was not interested in joining mutual defense pact with a divided country.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, Article 5 is seen as the Soviet Union's efforts to reduce the risk of its entrapment into an unwanted conflict. The last article sets out the administrative procedure of the treaty, such as duration, extension, and termination of the treaty.

---

Columbia University Press; Keohane R. (1971). Big Influence of Small Allies. *Foreign Policy*, 2, 161-182.

56 Choi, M. (2009). 18-19.

57 Tkachenko, V. (Dec, 1993). North Korea-Soviet Diplomacy Stories behind the Curtain Delivered by Former Deputy Director of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In 1972, Pyongyang asked Moscow to Terminate the Treaty of Friendship between the Soviet Union and North Korea. jeon solyeongongsandang gugjebu bubujang-i malhaneun bughan-solyeon oegyobihwa, 72nyeon pyeong-yang-eun moseukeuba-e josouhojoyag pagileul yoguhaessda. 전 소련공산당 국제부 부부장이 말하는 북한-소련 외교비화, 72년 평양은 모스크바에 조소우호조약 파기를 요구했다. *Wolganmal*. 월간말, 90, 62-65.

**Figure 5. The Alliance Commitments Drawn from the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty**

Contents of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty	Implication
<p><b>Preamble.</b> [...] Resolved to extend assistance and support to one another in the event of military attack upon either of the Contracting Parties by any State or coalition of States, [...]</p>	<p>▶ <b>A commitment on automatic military intervention in case of contingencies</b></p>
<p><b>Article 1.</b> [...] Should either of the Contracting Parties suffer armed attack by any State or coalition of States and thus find itself in a state of war, the other Contracting Party shall immediately extend military and other assistance with all the means at its disposal.</p>	<p>▶ <b>Ambiguous description of external threat</b></p>
<p><b>Article 2.</b> Each Contracting Party undertake not to enter into any alliance or to participate in any coalition, or in any action or measure, directed against the other Contracting Party.</p>	<p>▶ <b>Prohibition of any political action against each member</b></p>
<p><b>Article 3.</b> The Contracting Parties shall consult together on all important international questions involving the interests of both States, in an effort to strengthen peace and universal security.</p>	<p>▶ <b>A commitment on mutual consultation prior to a key decision</b></p>
<p><b>Article 4.</b> The two Contracting Parties undertake [...] in accordance with the principles of equal rights, mutual respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-intervention in each other's domestic affairs, to develop and strengthen the economic and cultural ties, between the USSR and the DPRK, to render each other all possible assistance and to affect the necessary co-operation in the economic and cultural fields.</p>	<p>▶ <b>A commitment on economic and military assistance based on the principle of mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs</b></p>

<p><b>Article 5.</b> The two Contracting Parties consider that the unification of Korea should be brought about on a peaceful and democratic basis [...].</p>	<p>► <b>A commitment on peaceful unification of Korea</b></p>
<p><b>Article 6.</b> [...] This Treaty shall remain in force for ten years. If neither of the Contracting Parties gives notice one year before the expiration of the said period that it wishes to denounce the Treaty, it shall remain in force for the succeeding five years and shall thereafter continue in force in accordance with this provision.</p>	<p>► <b>Administrative Procedure: duration, extension, and termination of the treaty</b></p>

In conclusion, detailed interpretation of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty provides the following implications about member-states' threat perception and expected alliance commitments. First, the perception of common threat was ambiguous. Such an ambiguity implies a high possibility that the Soviet Union and North Korea may have different perception of threat. Second, alliance commitments they pursued are automatic military intervention in case of contingencies, prohibition of political actions against each other, mutual communication and consultation, mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs, and pursuit of peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula.

Why did they leave ambiguities in defining threat perception? It could be a mere coincidence or with intent to hide their threat perception from each other. What were the intentions behind the alliance commitments stipulated in each article? It is unclear for whom and why it was designed in certain way. To find answers to the remaining riddles, the study focuses on circumstantial evidence based on the security environment that the Soviet Union and North Korea faced during the time of alliance conclusion.

## 2) North Korea's Initial Conception of the Alliance Treaty

Compared to the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty that Seoul and Washington concluded right after the end of the Korean War in 1953, USSR-DPRK and PRC-DPRK military alliances were formed relatively late in time, which was in July 1961.<sup>58</sup> It took eight more years for North Korea to secure allied supports. Moreover, Washington already had completed building the Southern Triangular Alliance system in 1960 that ties the United States, Japan, and South Korea's military might altogether. This alliance system is a part of the US-led hub-and-spokes system that puts the United States at the hub and its bilateral alliances with Japan and Republic of Korea at spokes.<sup>59</sup> Per contra, North Korea was remained without a single military ally to back them up.<sup>60</sup> Assuredly,

---

58 Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea was signed on Oct 1, 1953 after the end of the Korean War. The alliance has been a core pillar of the U.S.-led security architecture in Northeast Asia. For the negotiating process of the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, refer to the following book: Hong, Y, P. (2000). *State Security and Regime Security: President Syngman Rhee and the Insecurity Dilemma in South Korea 1953-1960*. London: Macmillan Press. For the full text of the treaty, refer to the following site: [http://www.usfk.mil/Portals/105/Documents/SOFA/H\\_Mutual%20Defense%20Treaty\\_1953.pdf](http://www.usfk.mil/Portals/105/Documents/SOFA/H_Mutual%20Defense%20Treaty_1953.pdf)

59 The United States and Japan revised the Treaty on Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan in 1960. In the name of Southern Triangular Alliance system, Korea and Japan are now under the command of US military army in the Pacific region. Southern Triangular Alliance system is also a part of the San Francisco system or hub-and-spokes system. According to the system, the United States are the hub and its bilateral alliances with Japan, Republic of Korea, and Republic of China are spokes with no apparent connections between the three. Duffield, J. (2001). Why Is There No APTO? Why Is There No OSCAP?" *Contemporary Security Policy*, 22(2), 70.

60 In 1950, a military alliance treaty was signed between China and the Soviet Union. But both countries rejected North Korea's proposal to form alliance. Therefore, the Northern Triangular Alliance system that Kim Il Sung planned to build, only had one linkage between China and the Soviet Union.

this situation had only augmented North Korea's deep security fears. What made communist states to hold off on building military ties?

The delay was caused not because either Pyongyang or Moscow was ignorant about the importance of alliance politics. Indeed, Kim Il Sung was fully aware of the necessity to build joint defensive mechanisms that can balance the Southern Triangular Alliance system. For this reason, Kim continuously requested both Moscow and Beijing to ally with Pyongyang since 1949.<sup>61</sup> At that time, Eastern European communist countries already finished forming military alliances with the Soviet Union under the name of "treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual defense."<sup>62</sup> North Korea desired to have one of that kind. Despite of Kim's repetitive requests, Moscow rejected his earnest demand and offered him only to conclude Economic and Cultural Cooperation Treaty in March 1949.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the delay was caused not by North Korea but by the Soviet Union and China. Both of the two communist giants were reluctant to engage with North Korea.<sup>64</sup>

---

61 Kim Il-sung consistently requested for military alliance treaty to the Soviet Union since 1949. Despite his persistent requests, Soviet ambassadors consistently refused to make such an agreement. Tkachenko, a Russian expert on North Korean issues was a government official working in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He stated that the Soviet leadership had always been reluctant to engage with North Korea. During the negotiation process for the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, Khrushchev also told Kim Il Sung that Stalin also hesitated to enter into alliance relations with North Korea. Shimotomai, N. (2004). *The True story behind the foundation of North Korea. Bukhan-jeonggwon tansaeng-ui jinsil*. 북한정권 탄생의 진실. Seoul: Giparang. 기파랑, 62-63.

62 Out of nine defense pacts concluded by the Soviet Union, two were signed in 1945 with Poland and China. Four were concluded in 1948 with Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland.

63 Choi, M. (2009). 20.

64 China has also rejected North Korea's demand for an alliance treaty. However, in March

North Korea was not an attractive alliance partner for the two. As remarked by one of senior officials in CPSU, Moscow did not consider one side of the divided nation as an appropriate alliance partner.<sup>65</sup> However, in 1961, the Soviet Union and China suddenly began to show their interest in building military ties with North Korea.<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, Khrushchev postponed his visit to Pyongyang several times. In Kim Il Sung's view, Moscow seemed hesitant to sign the treaty. In the meantime, Park Chung Hee assumed power and the anti-communist sentiment in South Korea became much stronger. In the midst of escalating tensions in the Korean Peninsula, Kim Il Sung decided to visit Moscow himself to meet Khrushchev and conclude the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.

On July 6 of 1961, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev and the founding father of North Korea, Kim Il Sung met in the Kremlin palace in Moscow. There, the two communist leaders officially signed the first bilateral military alliance treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea. The treaty was codified as the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. <sup>67</sup> Mutual cooperation between the Soviet Union and

---

1960, the Chinese government began to consider signing a treaty with North Korea. North Korea is the only weak state that China has officially signed a military alliance with. Choi, M. (2009). 18-19.

65 Tkachenko, V. (Dec, 1993). 62-65.

66 Kim, B.(2007). 171.

67 (Jan 23, 1962). Treaties of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Signed at Moscow, on 6 July 1961. Registered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 23 January 1962. *United Nations Treaty Series*, 420(6045), 154-158.

North Korea had been already made in various sectors. But this was the first time that the two states officially concluded a military alliance treaty with a defensive purpose.

Immediately after signing the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, Kim Il Sung headed straight from Moscow to Beijing. He met Zhou Enlai, the first Premier of the People's Republic of China. The document of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was handed over to Chinese side. Five days later on July 11, Kim concluded another alliance treaty with China that of similar characteristics to the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. Interestingly, PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaty contains a much strict obligation of automatic military intervention. It indicates the competition between two communist giants and North Korea's increasing strategic value under the circumstances.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, Kim Il-Sung has accomplished his long-standing grand strategy to create the Northern Triangular Alliance System that can counterbalance the Southern Triangular Alliance System. He gave a following remarks on the USSR-DPRK and PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaties:

“Our nation is now more tightly united with our great federation, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, by the invincible alliances. The people of the Soviet Union and the people of China are giving their full support to the people of Joseon who are fighting for the construction of socialism and peaceful unification of their homeland. It also declares our great friendship and solid unity founded based on our alliance treaties. These alliances do not impede the peaceful unification of the Korean people, and moreover, they maintain the peace of DPRK and create the condition

---

68 For the argument that Chinese leadership intentionally stipulated a much stronger military obligation in the PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaty, because of the competition with the Soviet Union, refer to the following book. Choi, M. (2009).

favorable to the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula.”<sup>69</sup>

As demonstrated by his long-standing demands for building military alliances and the remark following the alliance conclusion, Kim recognized the USSR-DPRK alliance as a defensive-oriented military measure. The primary goal of the alliance formation was the unification of the Korean Peninsula. In this respect, South Korea was the main threat to North Korea. Moreover, the Soviet Union was the only country that could provide Pyongyang with a nuclear umbrella at that time.

The early 1960s, however, marked as the beginning of Sino-Soviet confrontation. Kim Il Sung thought of the event as a serious impediment to the future of the Communist bloc. He complained to other Communist leaders about this unnecessary conflict occurred within the same side. He emphatically stressed that since the Sino-Soviet conflict is an internal problem within the two, it should be remained and resolved between the two instead of involving others communist states.<sup>70</sup> He also hoped the

---

69 (July 15, 1961). No-dong Shinmun. 노동신문. "이제 우리나라는 우리의 위대한 연방인 소련 및 중화인민공화국과 불패의 동맹으로 더욱 굳게 결합되어 있습니다. 소련 인민과 중국 인민이 사회주의 건설과 조국의 평화적 통일을 위하여 투쟁하는 조선 인민에게 강력한 지지를 표명한 것이며 조선과 소련 중국 인민들 간의 위대한 친선과 단결을 시위하는 것입니다. 이 동맹 조력들은 우리 민족의 평화적 통일위업에 저촉되지 않을 뿐만 아니라 조선에게 평화를 유지하며 우리나라의 평화적 통일을 실현하기 위한 유리한 조건을 조성하여 줍니다." Immediately after the ratifications of the USSR-DPRK and PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaties were officially exchanged, Kim Il Sung held a report on the general committee of the 4th General Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea on September 11, 1961. There, he declared that the alliance treaties were defensive- and deterrence-oriented. Choi M, H. (2009). 19-20.

70 (Jun 10, 1971). Minutes of Conversation on the Occasion of the Party and Government Delegation on behalf of the Romanian Socialist Republic to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. 43/1971.

dispute to be settled as soon as possible for the development of the Communist bloc.<sup>71</sup> His comments reveal a wary attitude of North Korea being embroiled in Sino-Soviet confrontation. To prevent Pyongyang from the potential entrapment, Kim had to maintain certain distance from the two. Concluding official alliance treaties with both the Soviet Union and China at the same time is considered to be a part of Kim's struggle under this unordinary circumstance. Contrary to his desire, Sino-Soviet conflict has been prolonged until the late 1980s.

In conclusion, North Korea's primary motive for the alliance formation were to compete with the Southern Triangular Alliance system and to contain its biggest rival, South Korea. Pyongyang desired to secure stable military and economic supports from great powers like the Soviet Union and China in normal peacetime, like South Korea does from the United States. Until the alliance treaty terminated in September 1996, Moscow has given a full support to North Korea in various aspects. The second motive was to officially keep certain distance from both the Soviet Union and China in purpose of preventing Pyongyang from engaging in Sino-Soviet confrontation. The following table shows North Korea's initial threat perception and expected alliance commitments.

---

71 Ibid.

**Figure 6. North Korea's Initial Conception Underlying the Alliance Treaty**

Threat	Description of Threat in Detail
South Korea	A competition with South Korea over power in the Korean Peninsula
Sino-Soviet Confrontation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Soviet pressure on North Korea to make it to stand by Soviet side (Being entrapped into the Sino-Soviet confrontation)</li> <li>3. Moscow's intervention in Pyongyang's domestic affairs under the pretense of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty</li> </ol>

  

Expected Alliance Functions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Containing South Korea's military power and balancing the Southern Triangular Alliance System</li> <li>2. Preventing Moscow's intervention in Pyongyang's domestic affairs</li> </ol>

  

Expected Alliance Commitments from the Soviet Union
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Article 1) Commitment on automatic military intervention in case of contingencies</li> <li>2. (Article 4) Commitment on economic and military assistance</li> <li>3. (Article 4) Commitment on mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs</li> </ol>

### **3) The Soviet Union's Initial Conception of the Alliance Treaty**

Why did the Soviet Union suddenly change its stance toward the USSR-DPRK alliance and begin to express willingness to join an alliance treaty with North Korea in 1961? This belated timing of the alliance conclusion drops a hint of the Soviet Union's initial and ulterior motives underlying the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. It indicates that something unexpected and unprecedented events occurred and created the new security landscape of the Soviet Union.

At that time, negotiations between Moscow and Washington over various international affairs were underway. From late 1950s to early 1960s which is around the time of the USSR-DPRK alliance conclusion, marked as the prelude to the Soviet-American détente.<sup>72</sup> When Khrushchev postponed his visits to Pyongyang, Kim Il Sung thought that it was due to the Soviet-American rapprochement. Because things related to the Korean Peninsula easily embroil both Washington and Moscow in a dispute. In the cordial atmosphere, there is no reason for Moscow to unnecessarily get on Washington's nerves. When Kim Il Sung pestered Khrushchev to visit Pyongyang in purpose of concluding the alliance treaty, Khrushchev said:

“Kim Il Sung thinks my deferment of visit to Pyongyang is related to the conclusion of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. He thinks as if the alliance treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea is signed, Moscow would not be interested in strengthening its relations with the United States. This is not true at all. [...] The

---

72 Marantz, P. (1975). Prelude to Detente: Doctrinal Change under Khrushchev. *International Studies Quarterly*, 19(4), 501-528.

alliance treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea will be nullified if things between Moscow and Washington goes well.”<sup>73</sup>

Such comments reflect how much Khrushchev hoped to improve relations with the United States at the time and how external threats from the Western bloc was not related to the USSR-DPRK alliance. If a military alliance with North Korea negatively affects the improvement of Soviet-U.S. relations, they are ready to sever ties with Pyongyang at any time. In other words, threats from the United States in the early 1960s were not a decisive motivator of the USSR-DPRK alliance for the Soviet Union. Rather, Moscow was afraid that an alliance with North Korea would hinder its relations with the United States. Furthermore, conflicts on the Korean Peninsula are likely to embroil both the United States and the Soviet Union. Under such circumstances, it was not necessary to form an alliance with North Korea which will definitely heighten tensions on the Korean Peninsula and become an obstacle to the Soviet-American détente.

Surprisingly, genuine motives were found within the Communist bloc. In the same period, deep divergences emerged between the Soviet Union and China. What bothered Moscow the most was the growing power of China and its increasing resistance to Soviet leadership. Signs of Sino-Soviet split began to emerge at the 20<sup>th</sup> CPSU congress in February 1956. During the meeting, the first secretary Nikita Khrushchev delivered a four-hour tirade against Stalin, denouncing Stalin’s atrocities such as murder, genocide, deportations, and summary executions. Khrushchev's speech of de-Stalinization triggered the confrontation between the Soviet Union and China. Because, it was Stalinist policies upon which Mao Zedong created his political base since 1955.

---

73 Shimotomai, N. (2012).

De-Stalinization movements would topple Mao's foundation of power.<sup>74</sup> Mao could not bear this situation.

Moreover, in the eyes of Chinese leadership, Moscow seemed to pretend like a leader of an imperialist state. Displeased with Moscow's changing attitude after the death of Stalin, Mao had to reshape Chinese role inside of the Communist bloc and re-evaluate the orientation of Chinese policy toward the Soviet Union. In the past, because of the Soviet Union's unchallenged power and Chinese national interests benefited from economic and military exchanges with the Soviet Union, China had to maintain a cooperative attitude toward the Soviet Union.<sup>75</sup>

Besides, China's role assigned by Stalin in the past could not be disregarded. As the Chinese Revolution became more likely to succeed in 1949, Stalin came to consider China's role in East Asia. He abandoned Yalta Agreements, the existing international norm under which the Soviet Union, United States and Britain are obligated to consult and cooperate on the Asian issue. Instead, the idea of carrying out the Cold War in Asia was accepted by Moscow, with a plan to build a strong military alliance with China as the base of socialist movement in Asia. With this plan, Mao Zedong was asked to visit Moscow in February 1950 and sign the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty.<sup>76</sup> Stalin informed Beijing that the Soviet Communist Party is responsible for strategic issues at a macro level such as Soviet-American relations. Chinese Communist Party was given responsibility for the socialist revolution and movements in Asia. Thus, Beijing has been

---

74 Luthi, L. (2008). *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton University Press, 46-48.

75 Kim, B. (2013). 174.

76 Shimotomai, N. (2006). 58-60.

recognized by the Soviet Union as a leader of the Asian Communist Party.

But the situation has changed. The Soviet Union already became a post-socialist nation. Soviet leadership was not interested in further socialist revolutions. Rather, they enjoyed status quo. Mao, who did not have any intention to accommodate to the new political direction of the Soviet Union, had to seek Chinese role in the Communist bloc himself. The Sino-Soviet conflict gradually escalated as the two states expressed different opinions on the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in late 1958 and the Sino-Indian border war in the early 1960s. When Sino-Indian border disputes erupted in 1959, Moscow virtually stood by India. Khrushchev even issued letters to the leaders of communist states to settle their border disputes not by force but by peaceful manner. The letters aroused sharp reactions from Beijing.<sup>77</sup>

The gap between the two countries widened further as the Soviet Union publicly criticized China's Great Leap Forward movement.<sup>78</sup> Mao also disagreed with Khrushchev's new diplomatic concept so-called "peaceful coexistence." China-Soviet relations worsened considerably on April 20, 1960, when Chinese government journals published a paper criticizing the Soviet Union's "imperialism international revisionism."<sup>79</sup> Since then, the two states began to publicly criticize each other by

---

77 Kuisong, Y. (2000). The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement. *Cold War History*, 1(1), 23.

78 Kim, B. (2013). 174.

79 The publication of a paper called "Long live Leninism!" has caused a great stir in the Communist bloc. The paper expresses doubt about the Soviet leadership in the international communism movement by criticizing the concept of Khrushchev's peaceful coexistence, citing the main literature of Lenin and Marx. Ibid.

calling "revisionist, socialist imperialism" and "doctrinarian."<sup>80</sup>

In July 1960, the Soviet Union summoned all Soviet experts in China and drastically cut all Soviet economic and military aid toward China. The ideological dispute developed into economic sanctions. By imposing economic pressures and positioning Beijing in political isolation, Khrushchev wanted to put Mao at risk and retrain Chinese leadership to be more submissive as it used to be. Unlike Moscow's intention, Mao took Soviet behavior as a target of criticism. Mao maintained his dogmatic political stance and claimed that the failure of the Great Leap Forward was due to the economic damage caused by the Soviet Union.<sup>81</sup>

At first, the conflict between the Soviet Union and China erupted because of ideological differences. But later, the tension escalated into a border disputes and was developed into bloodshed at the end. Two armed clashes happened between Soviet and Chinese frontier guards at Zhenbao Island–Damanskii Island in Russian–on 2 and 15 March 1969. It was the Chinese side who initiated the armed clash.<sup>82</sup> Neither the Soviet Union and China had intention to step down.

Although Mao provoked the clash, he seemed scared and even asked other

---

80 Ibid.

81 Kaple, D. (1998). *Soviet Advisors in China in the 1950s. Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. 117-141.

82 Kuisong, Y. (2000). 21. Based on the Russian and Chinese documents, the author argues that it was Beijing who started the armed conflicts at Zhenbao Island in March 1969. According to the argument, the event at border led Mao to reshape its orientation of US policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since the clash, Beijing initiated its rapprochement with Washington.

communist leaders about the possibility of a Soviet invasion of China.<sup>83</sup> Mao's concerns came to reality. The threat of imminent war was dominant. Grechko, one of the top Soviet leaders, suggested a preemptive nuclear attack on Chinese nuclear facilities in order to completely eliminate the Chinese threat.<sup>84</sup> Thankfully, the event never came to pass. Because, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Andrei N. Kosygin sought a more restrained approach to settle the dispute. In late March 1969, Moscow issued a statement to warn China that the Soviet is prepared to launch military action against further Chinese provocation along the borders.<sup>85</sup> Since then, no more armed conflicts occurred near the borders. By the military clashes at Zhenbao, it became clear that the two communist giants, once in a staunch alliance, are now the most dangerous enemy to each other. Interestingly, it was a common communist ideology that served as a necessary reagent for this surprising rift.

The Sino-Soviet confrontation affected their Third World allies as well. There arose a competition between Moscow and Beijing to expand their influence over other communist states. Both of them tried to entice Third World nations into their own side. How would small states fare as the Sino-Soviet rivalry unfolds within the Communist bloc? In this situation, one of the Third World nations, Albania, who was once in an

---

83 Mao asked such questions to the top leaders of other communist states. "In your opinion, will Khrushchev attack us? Is it possible that the Soviet Union might dispatch its troops to occupy Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, or even Inner Mongolia?" (Oct 7, 1964). Mao Zedong's Conversations with Choi Yong Kun. (Choi was in second place among the top leaders of North Korea) Minutes. Some of International Relations scholars, including Xiong Xianghui, Li Danhui, and Ielizavetin argue that the incident was intentionally triggered by Mao to drop a hint to Washington for the purpose of Sino-American rapprochement. Kuisong, Y. (2000). 21.

84 Shevchenko, A. (1986). *Breaking with Moscow*. Shijie Zhishi. 194-5.

85 Kuisong, Y. (2000). 32.

alliance with the Soviet Union, severed all ties with Moscow in 1961 and established an asymmetric alliance with China. Albania choose China over the Soviet Union. From then on, Albania and China were publicly giving their respective political supports to each other. These surprising Sino-Albania relations bothered the Soviet even more when Albania started acting as China's spokesperson in international stage and organizations.<sup>86</sup>

With regard to the Sino-Soviet competition over Third World nations, North Korea was no exception. North Korea's strategic value as an alliance partner also increased. What path will North Korea take amid escalating tension between the Soviet Union and China? Against this backdrop, Moscow leadership should have concerned of situation in which North Korea stands by Chinese side any time later like Albania. It seemed urgent for both the Soviet Union and China to entice North Korea and accept its long-standing request to conclude an alliance treaty. Kim Il Sung, who was fully aware of Sino-Soviet split and two states' competition over small states, skillfully manipulated the situation, win over both of them and succeeded to conclude USSR-DPRK and PRC-DPRK alliance treaties at the same time.<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile, in the 1960s, the Soviet Union's concerns over North Korea's adventuristic behavior heightened.<sup>88</sup> After the alliance conclusion, Pyongyang's misbehavior even got worse. North Korea was causing international problems in and

---

86 Albania severed all ties with the Soviet Union in 1961. From then on, China has gained the most lasting political leverage on Albania during the Cold War period. Markn, Y. (2017). China and Albania: The Cultural Revolution and Cold War Relations. *Cold War History*, 17(4), 367-383.

87 Kim, B. (2013).

88 "If small powers try to control a larger one, the multilateralism is effective. But if great powers seek control over smaller ones, bilateral alliances are more effective." Cha, V. (2009). 160.

around the Korean Peninsula.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Fourth Central Committee of the Korean Worker's Party in January 1962, Kim Il Sung proposed the new concept so-called self-reliance in national defense composed of four military goals—militarization of the whole people, fortification of the whole nation, improvement of, and modernization of the entire army.<sup>89</sup> The dialogue between the Hungarian and Soviet ambassadors vis-à-vis the North Korean military policy clearly shows Moscow's profound distrust of North Korea. North Korea's top senior officials tried to persuade foreign ambassadors that a nuclear war would soon break out in the Korea Peninsula, so that it would be necessary to prepare for the coming danger—construction of trench, fortification, and so on. But other communist states could not agree with North Korea's view.<sup>90</sup>

Socialist countries in Eastern Europe including the Soviet Union determined that North Korea intensified its military power in order to provoke South Korea. They were anxious about Pyongyang's unpleasant intentions. In particular, the Soviet Ambassador Moskovsky expressed concern about North Korea's adventurism by saying "Would their economic difficulties possibly plunge them into some adventure?"<sup>91</sup> The Soviet forecast was not wrong. North Korean adventurism continued afterwards and peaked in the late 1960s. In 1968, North Korea seized the US naval intelligence ship USS Pueblo and brought down the US jet with thirty-one soldiers.

---

89 Ibid. 211-244.

90 (Feb 15, 1963). Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 6. doboz, 5/d, 0011/RT/1963.

91 Ibid.

Therefore, the Soviet Union's primary motives to form the USSR-DPRK alliance was first, not to lose North Korea in competition with China, and second, to contain North Korea's unpredictable and adventuristic behaviors. North Korea, the Soviet satellite and a brotherhood country, needed to be controlled and managed so that it cannot become a bigger nuisance in Sino-Soviet confrontation and Soviet-American détente.

**Figure 7. The Soviet Union's Initial Conception Underlying the Alliance Treaty**

<b>Threats</b>	<b>Possible Dangerous Scenarios</b>
<b>China</b>	<b>Competition with China over political power upon North Korea</b>
<b>North Korea</b>	<b>1. North Korea's inclination toward China that may cause reduction in Soviet influence in the Korean Peninsula 2. North Korea's adventuristic behaviors that may embroil Moscow into the unnecessary conflicts with Washington</b>

  

<b>Expected Alliance Functions</b>
<b>1. Containing China's growing influence over North Korea 2. Gaining control or management of North Korea's adventurism</b>

  

<b>The Most Expected Alliance Commitments from North Korea</b>
<b>1. (Article 3) Communication: Prior Notification / Mutual Consultation</b>

In conclusion, for North Korea, the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was the only way to balance external threat and receive military and economic support. For the Soviet Union, the alliance treaty was a useful political tool to manage unpredictable North Korea's behavior, since the treaty guarantees the Soviet's right to consult with Pyongyang on security issues and to intervene in their domestic affairs particularly in terms of its relations with China and South Korea. Thus, Moscow and Pyongyang had quite different ulterior conception of the USSR-DPRK alliance treaty.

## 2. Changing Perception of Threat

### 1) The Emergence of a New Leader

The new and young Soviet leader, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev's accession to power in March 1985 in the Kremlin marked the beginning of a revolution in modern Soviet history.<sup>92</sup> Under the leadership of Gorbachev, the Soviet Union embarked on major domestic policies in socio-economic area under the banner of Perestroika and Glasnost. In regards to Soviet diplomacy, foreign policy, and international relations, Moscow pursued "New political thinking" (hereafter cited as New thinking). With a wind of change, the Soviet Union began to reorganize its external relations. North Korean-Soviet relations was no exception.

Newly-embraced concepts under the name of New thinking were quite antithetical to the conventional Soviet foreign policy that had been implemented ever since the end of the World War II.<sup>93</sup> A central tenet of New thinking was that security should be grounded not on a cut-throat military buildup or rough-and-tumble policies, but on a common interest in pursuit of political measures such as arms control, confrontation reduction, mutual cooperation, and regional stability. Gorbachev believed

---

92 For the origins of New Thinking, see Wallander, C. A. (2002). Lost and found: Gorbachev's "New thinking." *Washington Quarterly*, 25(1), 117-129. Wallander argues that although New thinking emerged in the 1980s, the roots are deeply embedded in former Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's idea. Following the death of Joseph Stalin and Cuban missile crisis in 1962, Khrushchev realized the devastating dangers of global nuclear war and moved toward a conception of peaceful coexistence based on global common interest. Although the idea was disregarded after Khrushchev's ouster from power in 1964, the legacy of his rethinking—the existence of cohort and exposure to the ideas of mutual security—laid the cornerstone of Gorbachev's New thinking.

93 Holloway, D. (1988). Gorbachev's New Thinking. *Foreign Affairs*, 68(1), 29.

that such changes would create an external environment conducive to the domestic growth of the Soviet Union.

In virtue of the accommodating attitudes of counterpart countries, Gorbachev's New thinking could successfully harmonize with their foreign policies. Consequentially, the Soviet Union's external relations in context of the USSR-DPRK alliance underwent two dramatic shifts—Sino-Soviet rapprochement and the improvement of South Korean-Soviet relations. Taken together, these two historical shifts ultimately created ripple effects upon North Korean-Soviet alliance and completely changed the Soviet Union's threat perception that have underlain the USSR-DPRK alliance for more than three decades.

Shortly after Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Soviet Union in March 1985, he initiated a three-pronged reformation to change the structure of the Soviet system<sup>94</sup> Firstly, in the economic sector, Gorbachev launched Perestroika (restructuring) in order to eliminate fundamental causes of economic stagnation. One of the major forces that have constrained domestic economic growth was the sclerotic attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy and labor forces towards accountability. Lacking both individual and collective responsibilities, inefficiency was deeply rooted inside of the Soviet industries.<sup>95</sup> To enhance the accountability and productivity, Gorbachev adopted a new economic system based on positive sanctions and rewards for individual performance, while keep maintaining its state-run economy. Such half-measures were

---

94 Wallander, C. A. (2002). 117-118.

95 Meyer, M. S. (2011). The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security. *International Security*, 13(2), 128.

not sufficient to revive a stagnant economy.<sup>96</sup>

Secondly, on the political front, he implemented Glasnost (openness) in attempt to weaken the authority of the state and Communist Party, because they were the major impediments to national development. Practical policies such as amendments to the Constitution and the adoption of the Law on Elections were undertaken to erode influence of the Communist Party and push for democratization.<sup>97</sup> Glasnost is considered to be more successful than Perestroika. However, it unleashed strong opposition forces against Gorbachev. Later on, these forces ousted him from power in August 1991.<sup>98</sup>

The third prong of Gorbachev's initiative was taken within Soviet foreign policy. So-called 'Novoe politicheskoe myshlenie' (New political thinking) proved to be the most far-reaching reformation that successfully overturned the conventional Soviet Leninist theory of international relations.<sup>99</sup> Gorbachev's speech at the 43<sup>rd</sup> United Nations General Assembly Session in December 1988 conveyed clear concepts of New thinking. He disavowed the Brezhnev doctrine under which the Kremlin justified its military intervention in Eastern Europe. He acknowledged the failure of the old Soviet foreign policy, "correlation-of-forces." Unnecessity of force and threat of forces as an instrument of foreign policy was also highlighted with other notions such as the importance of human interest as a top noble value, significance of mutual cooperation

---

96 Wallander, C. A. (2002). 117.

97 For Gorbachev's efforts for economic and political reforms, see Address by Mikhail Gorbachev at the UN General Assembly Session (Excerpts). (1988). History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, CWIHP Archive.

98 Wallander, C. A. (2002). 117.

99 Ibid.

transcending ideological differences, “freedom of choice” as a universal principle and the value of rule of law.

Moreover, practical policies in relations to the security were informed as follows: “The Soviet Union has made a decision on reducing its armed forces. In the next two years, their numerical strength will be reduced by 500,000 persons, and the volume of conventional arms will also be cut considerably. These reductions will be made on a unilateral basis, unconnected with negotiations on the mandate for the Vienna meeting. By agreement with our allies in the Warsaw Pact, we have made the decision to withdraw six tank divisions from the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and to disband them by 1991. [...] The Soviet forces situated in those countries will be cut by 50,000 persons, and their arms by 5,000 tanks. All remaining Soviet divisions on the territory of our allies will be reorganized. They will be given a different structure from today’s which will become unambiguously defensive, after the removal of a large number of their tanks.”<sup>100</sup>

As shown in Gorbachev’s address, New thinking was built upon the three core pillars.<sup>101</sup> First, New thinking rejected the old Soviet conception of the Cold War. According to the Soviet conception, the interests of eastern and western blocs were intrinsically a zero-sum game, so that one’s well-being represents a direct threat to the other. Instead of such a deadlock view on national interest, New thinking embraced a different worldview based on the liberal democratic philosophy. Now, Moscow did not

---

100 In his address, Gorbachev announced major cuts to the Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe and along the Chinese border. Address by Mikhail Gorbachev at the UN General Assembly Session (Excerpts). (1988). History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, CWIHP Archive.

101 Wallander, C. A. (2002). 118-120.

see the world in black and white.

Second pillar is so-called “reasonable sufficiency” and “defensive defense.” Upon the concepts, New thinkers stressed unnecessary of deploying four million soldiers and massive armaments in order to protect the nation. Rather, non-offensive defense in Europe and reduction in Soviet nuclear and conventional arms were highly recommended as a substantive policy for stabilizing the Eurasian region.<sup>102</sup> Gorbachev’s announcement of major cuts to the Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe and along the Chinese border clearly reflected the concept of reasonable sufficiency and defensive defense.

Third pillar is the changing view on purpose of having military power. In the eyes of old Soviet leadership, the reason of Soviet army’s existence was to defeat Soviet adversaries and prosecute them. Now, a new purpose of Soviet military might is to prevent potential dispute, conflict and war. Based on the aforementioned three pillars, Gorbachev made rapid changes in Soviet foreign policy.<sup>103</sup> As a result, New thinking brought about significant diplomatic achievements such as Sino-Soviet rapprochement, Improvement of South Korean-Soviet relations, and Soviet-American détente. All these changes have overturned the Soviet’s initial threat perception underlying the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.

---

102 Andrei, K. (1988). Defence is Best for Stability. *New times*, 33(18).

103 Wallander, C. A. (2002). 118-120.

## 2) The End of Sino-Soviet Confrontation and the Rapprochement

Between 1982 and 1985, signs of the Sino-Soviet rapprochement first began to emerge in Moscow.<sup>104</sup> The ailing Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev's 1982 Tashkent speech foreshadowed the changes of Soviet policy toward China. He expressed Moscow's readiness to improve relations with China.<sup>105</sup> Here is the excerpt of his remark on Soviet perception of China.

“First, [...] We did not deny and do not deny now the existence of a Socialist system in China. Second, we have never supported and do not support now in any form the so-called ‘concept of two Chinas’ and have fully recognized and continue to recognize the PRC's sovereignty over Taiwan Island. Third, [...] we are ready at any moment to continue talks on existing border questions for the purpose of reaching mutually-acceptable decisions. We are also ready to discuss the question of possible measures to strengthen mutual trust in the area of the Soviet-Chinese frontier. Fourth, we remember well the time when the Soviet Union and People's China were united by bonds of friendship and comradely co-operation. [...] We are prepared to come to terms [normalization of Sino-Soviet relations] on measures acceptable to both sides to improve Soviet-Chinese relations on the basis of mutual respect for each other's interests, non-interference in each other's affairs and mutual benefit.”<sup>106</sup>

---

104 Vladislav Zubok. (2017). The Soviet Union and China in the 1980s: reconciliation and divorce. *Cold War History*, 17(2), 122.

105 (1982. Nov 12). Brezhnev Tried to Advance Moscow's Goals through Détente. *The New York Times*.

106 (1982). Sino-Soviet Relations, President Brezhnev's speech, Tashkent 24 March 1982 (excerpts), *Survival*, 24(4), 186.

As shown in the speech, Moscow conveyed conciliatory gestures and its sincere willingness to accommodate Chinese socialist system, to acknowledge ‘One China’ rather than the two, to resume negotiations with the aim of settling Sino-Soviet territorial disputes, and finally to normalize the relations with China, leaving behind the two-decade of ideological quarrel.<sup>107</sup> In synergy with the inception of China’s new “independent foreign policy,” Sino-Soviet relations developed steadily. Negotiations between the two resumed in the fall of 1982 and four more rounds of talks were held until the late 1984.<sup>108</sup>

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in 1985, the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations was already underway in various fields, including cultural, educational, and technological exchanges. Gorbachev began to accelerate the progress. It was his Vladivostok speech of July 1986 in which Gorbachev first publicly revealed his will to enhance relations with China. Then he redelivered similar conciliatory messages toward Beijing in his 1988 Krasnoyarsk speech.<sup>109</sup>

In response, Beijing stressed that the ultimate normalization of Sino-Soviet relations depends upon Moscow’s resolution of “the Three obstacles.”<sup>110</sup> Since the Soviet Union’s occupation of Afghanistan, China had insisted on the three things—the Soviet Afghanistan occupation, the massive Soviet military presence along the Chinese

---

107 Vladislav Zubok. (2017).

108 Talks between high-level officials resumed in the form of funeral diplomacy at the coffin rites of Brezhnev and Andropov. Garver, J. (1989). The “New Type” of Sino-Soviet Relations. *Asian Survey*, 29(12), 1136-1152.

109 Ahn, B. (1991). South Korean-Soviet Relations: Contemporary Issues and Prospects. *Asian Survey*, 31(9), 816.

110 Garver, J. (1989). 1137-1138.

northern borders, and Soviet support for Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia—as the major obstacles to Sino-Soviet relations.<sup>111</sup> If the Three obstacles are not removed, the Soviet Union will have a great difficulty in enhancing cooperation with China at political level.

Gorbachev resolved to take actions to eradicate the Three obstacles.<sup>112</sup> In February 1988, he officially declared that six regiments of Soviet troops will withdraw from Afghanistan. The disarmament also reflected the "reasonable defense readiness," which was one of the pillars of his New thinking. Moscow then agreed with Washington to destroy 436 mid- and long-range nuclear missiles near the Chinese border. Soon after that, another initiative to withdraw Soviet army and air force from Mongolia was announced. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Mongolia was carried into execution on the very day of Gorbachev's first official visit to Beijing.<sup>113</sup>

The Beijing summit between Deng Xiaoping and Mikhail Gorbachev in May 1989 signaled the formal end of the three decades-long Sino-Soviet confrontation.<sup>114</sup> Both side described the summit meeting as marking the beginning of normalization of

---

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 The General Secretary of the MPRP, Batmunkh visited Pyongyang in November 1986. He expressed concern about Gorbachev's discussion of the Soviet's withdrawal from Mongolia due to Sino-Soviet normalization. Mongolian leadership thought that without Soviet troops in Mongolia, PRC will try to expand its power toward them. Although Kim Il Sung simply answered that Sino-Soviet normalization will help advance socialist movement, Kim would have thought that Moscow's changing foreign policy may influence Pyongyang as well. (Nov 20, 1986). Record of Conversation between Comrade J. Batmunkh and Kim Il Sung. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Mongolian Foreign Ministry Archive, fond 3, dans 1, kh/n 183, khuu 123-164.

114 Ahn, B. (1991). 816.

relations.<sup>115</sup> Since Nikita Khrushchev's bitter visit to Beijing in September 1959, it was the first visit by the Soviet supreme leader.<sup>116</sup> During the meeting between Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping, Deng asked Gorbachev whether he remembers his messages delivered through the Romanian president in 1986. In the message, Deng proposed a future meeting, if the Three obstacles to Sino-Soviet normalization were overcome. Gorbachev replied, "I valued this step appropriately, that the message stimulated out thinking, which also went in the same direction."<sup>117</sup> For the past three years, Gorbachev has proven Soviet sincerity of normalizing Sino-Soviet relations, by accepting China's demands and actively removing the Three obstacle.

In May 1991, Jiang Zemin arrived in Moscow. He was the first Chinese Communist Party leader to visit the Soviet Union in 34 years.<sup>118</sup> In the presence of Mikhail Gorbachev and Jiang Zemin, Sino-Soviet Pact was signed in the Kremlin by the Soviet and Chinese foreign ministers. The border agreement settled portions of the eastern Chinese-Soviet frontier between Outer Mongolia and North Korea. The remains of border dispute, including Zhenbao Island where armed clash between Chinese and Soviet soldiers occurred in 1969, were completely settled later in November 1997 during

---

115 Kristof, N. (May 16, 1989), Gorbachev Meets Deng in Beijing; Protest Goes On. *The New York Times*.

116 Garver, J. (1989). 1136. When Nikita Khrushchev visited China, the two sides fiercely quarreled over policy toward India.

117 (May 16, 1989). Meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping (Excerpts). *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Mikhail Gorbachev, Zhizn'i Reformy*, 2(Moscow: Novosti, 1995), pp.435-440. Excerpt from this conversation are also produced in Mikhail Gorbachev, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, 14.

118 Dobbs, M. (May 17, 1991). Sino-Soviet Pact Signed in Moscow; Agreement Eases Border Dispute. *The Washington Post*.

Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin's visit to China.<sup>119</sup> Finally, Russia succeeded in settling the border hostility that has deteriorated Sino-Soviet relations for three decades.<sup>120</sup>

Sino-Soviet relations have started improving gradually since the early 1980's. The relations rapidly advanced since Gorbachev's visit to Beijing in 1989 and the settlement of border hostility. In December 1991, China recognized the Russia Federation. The two officially entered into diplomatic relations with it at the ambassadorial level.<sup>121</sup> The leaders of both countries described its relations as a "constructive partnership aimed at strategic cooperation in the 21st century."<sup>122</sup> Now, the competition between the two biggest communist powers is gone. They no longer needed to fight over small states of the Communist bloc.<sup>123</sup> Eventually, Sino-Soviet rapprochement resulted in reducing North Korea's strategic value that North Korea has been effectively utilizing in relations with its communist allies.

---

119 (Nov 10, 1997). Yeltsin in China to Put an End to Border Issue. The New York Times.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/1997/11/10/world/yeltsin-in-china-to-put-an-end-to-border-issue.html>

120 Ibid.

121 China and Russia: Partnership of Strategic Coordination. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.  
[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/ziliao\\_665539/3602\\_665543/3604\\_665547/t18028.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18028.shtml)  
1

122 Kristof, N. (May 16, 1989)

123 Ahn, B. (1991). 824.

### **3) Improvement of South Korean-Soviet Relations**

South Korean-Soviet relations improved remarkably in 1990-1991 as demonstrated by the three successive summit meetings between South Korean President Roh Tae Woo and the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev—San Francisco in June 1990, Moscow in December 1990, and Jeju Island in April 1991.<sup>124</sup> The evolution from hostile toward cordial relations between the Soviet Union and South Korea did not come at one stroke. It was an enduring accomplishment made by combined efforts of Moscow and Seoul that began from the late 1980s in earnest. In the process, Gorbachev's reassessment of Asia policy toward two Koreas, and Roh's Nordpolitik in synergy with the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics played a pivotal role in mending the fences.<sup>125</sup> Considering that South Korea was the biggest external threat to North Korea, the improvement of South Korean-Soviet Relations had a profound effect on threat perception and later became a primary reason for the termination of the USSR-DPRK alliance.

Under the banner of New thinking in international relations, Soviet foreign policy toward Asia was gradually shifting from military to economic interests. However, changes were unnoticeable during the early Gorbachev period. In his first two or three years, only subtle changes were detected from the renewed formulation of the 27th Party Congress in February 1986, presided over by Gorbachev for the first time as the General

---

124 A formal talk between South Korean President Roh Tae Woo and the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev on June 4, 1990 in San Francisco marked the first summit meeting in the history of South Korean-Soviet relations. This historical summit resulted in the establishment of South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations on September 30, 1990, in the midst of vehement protests by North Korea.

125 Ahn, B. (1991). 816-825.

Secretary.<sup>126</sup> Aside from that, Moscow's foreign policy in Asia-Pacific region remained nearly the same, still reflecting the old Soviet Leninist doctrine of international relations.<sup>127</sup>

The Soviet Union's military buildup in Asia continued as well as in the Korean Peninsula. Pledge of supports for North Korea was given by the Kremlin during Kim Il Sung's two visits to Moscow in the mid-1980s. Substantial economic and military aid, including oil and other main products were sent to Pyongyang as well as advanced technology for nuclear power plants.<sup>128</sup> Pyongyang paid in part by exporting shoddy materials and sending North Korean laborer to Siberia. The rest was provided just on credit. Considering that North Korean exports to the Soviet Union constituted approximately 60% of their total foreign trade, USSR-DPRK relations was backing up the North Korean economy in the 1980s.

At a military level, permissions were granted for Soviet ships to touch at chief ports of North Korea. Soviet air forces could fly over the North Korean airspace which was conducive to Soviet surveillance operation in the Far East and Vietnam. Annual joint

---

126 See Meyer, M. S. (2011). 126. The old formulation stated as follows: "The party will do everything necessary to reliably defend the homeland." The new formulation as follows: "The party will do everything to ensure that the imperialist countries do not attain military superiority." The new wording appeared to be relatively weak in contributing to defense. Internal controversy over the new phrase was aroused but it was preserved and carried out to the final program.

127 Meyer, M. P. (1992). Gorbachev and Post-Gorbachev Policy toward the Korean Peninsula: The Impact of Changing Russian Perceptions. *Asian Survey*, 32(8), 758-759.

128 Ahn, B. (1991). 822-823. After Kim Il Sung's visit to Moscow in 1984, the Kremlin promised Pyongyang with 60 MiG-23 fighter-bomber and 30 SA-3 surface-to-air missiles. *Rodong Shinmun*, (Oct 26, 1986). During his second visit, Moscow pledged to supply such items and technologies: MiG-29, SU-25 aircraft, SA-5 surface-to-air missiles, and early warning radar.

naval exercises were held in the fall of 1985.<sup>129</sup> With such an atmosphere around the Korean Peninsula in 1980s, it seemed improbable for the Soviet and South Korea to overcome their deep-rooted hostility towards each other and build a basis for cooperation.<sup>130</sup> The South Korean-Soviet relations, which seemed completely devoid of vision for improvement, underwent radical change in the run-up to the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Starting from the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, the relationship between the Soviet Union and the ROK has made rapid progress. The 1988 Seoul Olympics, in which a record-breaking 14,000 athletes and officials from 160 countries participated, turned out to be no ordinary sport event but rather, a mega-event with a potent force for drastic changes in many quarters.<sup>131</sup> The Games, in particular, brought about epoch-making events in South Korean diplomatic relations with socialist countries. Seoul not only successfully staged the quadrennial international sports event and proved to the world that the country had arrived among the developed nations, but also facilitated implementation of Nordpolitik toward China, the Soviet Union, and other socialist

---

129 Meyer, M. P. (1992). 758-759.

130 The Korean sentiment toward the Soviet Union was negative due to the Korean Air Lines flight 007 shootdown. On September 1, 1983, Korean Air flight 007 from New York to Seoul was attacked by Soviet air forces during the flight and crashed west of Sakhalin. A total of 269 passengers from 16 countries have been killed. Soviet fighters attacked and shot down an unmanned airliner, causing tremendous repercussions in the South Korea and West. The Korean government called for the UN Security Council and protested the shooting.

131 Through the Seoul Olympic Games, South Korea experienced drastic sociopolitical changes in domestic politics, economy and diplomacy with socialist countries. In regard to the changes within domestic politics, the Games played a pivotal role in bringing expanded freedoms and democracy to South Korea. For the detailed information on the effectiveness of the Seoul Olympics, refer to the following document: Sung-Joo, H. (1989). South Korea in 1988: A Revolution in the Making. *Asian Survey*, 29(1), 29-38.

countries in Eastern Europe that did not recognize the Seoul government for the past three decades.<sup>132</sup>

Nordpolitik, named after Ostpolitik or the former West Germany's foreign policy toward the former East Germany, is recognized as Roh Tae Woo's landmark foreign policy toward the Northern Region, that of promising rewards for target states' compliance.<sup>133</sup> Nordpolitik had succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1990 and with China in 1992. The concept of Nordpolitik is well defined in Roh's July 7th Declaration. Two months ahead of the Seoul Olympics, Roh announced the Special Declaration for National Self-esteem, Unification, and Prosperity on July 7, 1988.

The declaration adroitly interlinked two different diplomatic goals. The first one is to pursue a forward-looking relationship with North Korea, and the second goal is to improve South Korean relations with socialist countries in the Northern Region. The sixth provision of the declaration clearly indicates Roh's Nordpolitik policy. According to the provision, Nordpolitik is mainly focusing on the improvement of South-North Korea relations. Foreign policies toward North Korea and the Northern Region shared the same political direction.

---

132 Sung-Joo, H. (1989). 34.

133 Izumikawa, Y. (2006). South Korea's Nordpolitik and the Efficacy of Asymmetric Positive Sanctions. *Korea Observer*, 37(4), 606. To refer to the success of Nordpolitik, South Korea's positive sanctions aimed to improve relations with the two communist superpowers, see the above-mentioned article. The author addresses how Nordpolitik scored remarkable successes in the early 1990s, and points out the importance of the Sino-Soviet rapprochement and the reluctance of the United States and Japan as the permissive condition for the successes of Nordpolitik.

“Provision 6. To create an atmosphere conducive to durable peace on the Korean peninsula, we are willing to co-operate with North Korea in its efforts to improve relations with countries friendly to us including the United States and Japan, and in parallel with this, we will continue to seek improved relations with the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries.”<sup>134</sup>

Convivial atmosphere in the run-up to the 1988 Olympics created propitious opportunities for Seoul to accelerate Nordpolitik. Seoul aggressively approached to socialist countries with the aim of inviting them to the Games. In response to Seoul’s cordial and repetitive requests, the Soviet Union, China and other socialist states in Eastern Europe decided to send large contingents of athletes for the Seoul Olympics in spite of the vehement protests by their old ally, North Korea.<sup>135</sup>

Participation by countries from both the eastern and western blocs symbolized the diplomatic triumph of South Korea, since the two previous Olympic games had been boycotted by each bloc respectively and were remembered as half-way games.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, socialist countries’ decision to join the Games in the midst of North Korea’s fierce opposition also redounded to South Korea’s fruitful diplomacy.<sup>137</sup>

---

134 For the full text of the special declaration made on 7 July 1988 by President Roh Tae Woo in the Interest of National Self-Esteem, Unification and Prosperity, visit the following website: [http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/59189/S\\_1999-EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/59189/S_1999-EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

135 Sung-Joo, H. (1989). 34. With the Soviet athletes, some cultural groups, including the Bolshoi ballet company were also accompanied. Lho, K. (1989). Seoul-Moscow Relations: Looking to the 1990s. *Asian Survey*, 29(12), 1153.

136 The 1980 Moscow Olympic game was boycotted by capitalist states while the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic game was boycotted by communist states. Izumikawa, Y. (2006). 622.

137 Ibid.

The origin of Nordpolitik—a foreign policy toward communist bloc that of providing rewards for target countries’ compliance—dates back to 1970s. The idea was first proposed by South Korean President Park Chung Hee in the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Declaration in 1973. Park publicly expressed Seoul’s willingness to establish economic connection with communist states, transcending ideological disparities and geographic separations.<sup>138</sup> He addressed as follows:

“The republic of Korea will open its doors to all the nations of the world on the basis of the principles of reciprocity and equality. At the same time, we urge those countries whose ideologies and social institutions are different from ours to open their doors likewise to us.”<sup>139</sup>

Yet, North Korea was not included in the list of target communist states. It reflected Park’s underlying political calculation of which to isolate North Korea by weakening Pyongyang’s bond with the major communist powers.<sup>140</sup> The intention underneath Nordpolitik was as well manifested in the statement of then Prime Minister Kim Chong Pil. He made a following remark about the implication of Park’s June 23<sup>rd</sup> Declaration: “Under our foreign policy on peaceful unification, there will be a new level of diplomatic competition with the North, [...] There will be economic competition. We must win all these competitions. [...] Only when we win, will the road to unification be

---

138 Izumikawa, Y. (2006). South Korea's Nordpolitik and the Efficacy of Asymmetric Positive Sanctions. *Korea Observer*, 37(4), 612.

139 Recited from Izumikawa, Y. (2006). 613. For the original citation, see Yoon, S. (1994). South Korea’s ‘Nordpolitik’ with Special Reference to Its Relationship with China. The Ph. D. Dissertation. George Washington University

140 Ibid. 613.

shortened.”<sup>141</sup> Thus, Seoul’s big picture was to improve relations with communist states by promoting economic exchange, win them over, outstrip North Korea in economic competition, and alienate Pyongyang from its great power allies.

With the wake of American-Soviet détente in the early 1970s, South Korea’s northern policy began in earnest.<sup>142</sup> Moscow responded quit favorably in non-political way. They granted visa issuance to South Korean citizens for the first time in 1973.<sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, it was inadequate to bear fruit before the 1980s.<sup>144</sup> Before the mid-1970s, South Korea’s GDP was lower than North Korea’s. Lacking economic power, Seoul was not an attractive partner to Moscow.

**Table 1. The Comparison of Two Korea’s GDP**

(US \$ million)

Year	ROK’s GDP	DPRK’s GDP	Year	ROK’s GDP	DPRK’s GDP
1956	1,450	1,499.5	1980	60,327	41,383.7
1965	3,006	5,502.6	1982	71,300	42,196.1
1974	18,701	21,187.3	1985	89,695	45,268.3
1975	20,795	25,424.9	1986	102,789	48,484.6
1976	28,550	28,221.5	1987	128,921	54,347.1
1977	36,629	27,092.7	1988	172,776	55,977.5
1978	51,341	32,720.9	1990	237,900	57,158.6

Source: Hwang. (1993). 120-121.

141 Recited from Izumikawa, Y. (2006). 613. Clough, R, N. (1987). *Embattled Korea: The Rivalry for International Support*. Boulder: Westview Press. 278.

142 Kim, H. (1997). The Process Leading to the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between South Korea and the Soviet Union. *Asian Survey*, 37(7), 637.

143 Ibid. 614. Since then, South Koreans were allowed to participate in sports events and activities held by international organization. Officials visits, however, were not permitted till 1982.

144 Kim, H. (1997). 637-638.

As shown in Table 1, South Korea's GDP soared and became threefold of North Korea's GDP in the late 1980s. The economic success of South Korea took the international society by surprise, as well as the Soviet Union. It paved the way for Nordpolitik's success.

With Nordpolitik, the 1988 Seoul Olympics marked a watershed event in South Korean-Soviet relations. The improvement of South Korean-Soviet relations proceeded apace in the months after the Olympic Games. Contacts between Seoul and Moscow began to increase dramatically in the months after the Olympics. As a sudden increase in trade between Korea and the Soviet Union proves, the two countries were indeed facing a new phase of the relations.

**Table 2. The Volume of USSR Trade with South Korea**

(US \$ million)

Year	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Import	25.0	26.2	59.7	49.9	76.2	100.0	207.7	519.0
Export	23.0	31.1	62.3	63.9	97.0	178.0	391.7	370.0

Source: KOTRA, Ahn, B. (1991). 819.

Soon after the Games, the two established diplomatic relations. In Soviet view, South Korea could no longer be a potential threat. In the late Gorbachev period, the Soviet Union became the only country having established diplomatic ties with both South and North Korea. The Soviet Union seemed to be the best mediator between the two Korea which soon found out to be an erroneous assumption.<sup>145</sup>

---

145 Meyer, P, F. (2018).

### 3. Declining Credibility

#### 1) North Korea's Declining Credibility in Alliance Commitments

North Korea's the most anticipated alliance commitment from the Soviet Union was by far the promise of automatic military intervention in case of contingencies. The second commitment the North expected was economic and military assistance during normal peacetime. On the other hand, North Korean leadership has been constantly wary of the Soviet Union's ambition to expand their influence on the Korean Peninsula. The competition between Moscow and Beijing over Third World allies heightened Pyongyang's concern over their intervention in North Korea's internal affairs under the pretense of the USSR-DPRK and PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaties. For this reason, the principle of mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs were embedded in Article 4 of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. This chapter examines how North Korea's trust in three alliance commitments—Commitment on automatic military intervention in case of contingencies, commitment on economic and military assistance, and commitment on mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs—have changed and were undermined over time.

**Figure 8. North Korea's Expected Alliance Commitments from the Soviet Union**

<b>North Korea's Expected Alliance Commitments from the Soviet Union</b>
<b>1. (Article 1)</b> Commitment on automatic military intervention in case of contingencies
<b>2. (Article 4)</b> Commitment on economic and military assistance
<b>3. (Article 4)</b> Commitment on Mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs

The following excerpt of a negotiation held in Moscow in November 1964 between Soviet Council of Ministers Chairman Alexie Kosygin and a North Korean

delegation headed by Kim Il, manifests three alliance commitments that North Korea expected from the Soviet Union.

“[Firstly] The Korean leaders were distrustful of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet government, they could not count on that the Soviet government would keep the obligations related to the defense of Korea it assumed in the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, Kim Il said, and therefore they were compelled to keep an army of 700,000 and a police force of 200,000. These huge armed forces constituted enormous expenses for the national economy of the DPRK, and this is why neither industry nor agriculture had made headway in the last two years, they [the KWP leaders] could not invest substantial sums in these [sectors]<sup>146</sup>

[Secondly] Kim Il found injurious that in 1956 the leaders of the CPSU had organized a conspiracy against the supreme leaders of the Korean Workers’ Party [...]

Finally, Kim Il found injurious that the leaders of the CPSU as well as the Soviet government had branded the leaders of the KWP nationalists because of that the latter propagated the [idea of] regeneration through one’s own efforts [Kor. Jaryeok Gaengsaeng], which was, in his view, a right standpoint, this way they took full advantage of the local conditions and developed their national economy.”<sup>147</sup>

During the conversation, Kim Il strongly remonstrated with Kosygin about the

---

146 “[...] Comrade Kosygin asked him what caused this distrust. In the view of Kim Il, the Soviet Union had betrayed Cuba at the time of the Caribbean crisis [the Cuban missile crisis], and later it also betrayed the Vietnamese. For instance, it happened as late as 8 days after the Tonkin [Gulf] provocation that the Soviet government made a mild pro-Democratic Republic of Vietnam statement.”

147 (Jan 8, 1965). Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, National Archives of Hungary. XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-100, 001819/1965.

three key damages North Korea had to suffer due to Moscow's irresolution and unnecessary intervention into Pyongyang's internal affairs. First, Kim voiced North Korea's deep-rooted distrust of the Soviet Union's promise on military assistance in case of contingencies. Due to the Soviet's past actions against the United States at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, North Korean side argues that they lost trust in the Soviet's unconditional military support. Second, Kim added that because of the low credibility, North Korea had to find a way to protect themselves. This caused enormous budget spending on the military instead of investing in industry and agriculture. The argument highlights that they are in need of additional military and economic aid. Third, Kim Il kept complaining about Moscow's infringement on North Korea's sovereignty. The August incident in 1956 and the Soviet Union's criticism against North Korea's domestic policies were cited as the reason for reducing Pyongyang's national autonomy.

Abovementioned three damages completely coincide with commitments written in the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. According to the dialogue, none of the commitments were satisfactorily fulfilled. But such an expression of dissatisfaction is widely known as North Korea's favorite strategy. To achieve advantageous outcome, they often inflate, exaggerate, or deteriorate a situation so that their counterparts may be driven by impetuosity. Because of this, the study examines the level of credibility on each alliance commitment.

#### ***Commitment on automatic military intervention in case of contingencies***

When North Korea's naval and air forces seized the USS intelligence gathering ship Pueblo on January 1968, killing one crew member and putting the rest in prison, The White House assumed that Pyongyang had committed the seizure under Moscow

instruction.<sup>148</sup> As a result, this highly provocative incident triggered an acute international crisis between the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>149</sup> However, unlike the Johnson administration's assumption, Soviet leadership had no ideas of the unexpected act of North Korea. Besides, Soviet leadership had a hard time figuring out Kim Il Sung's hidden agenda behind the provocation.<sup>150</sup> It indicates that Kim Il Sung in the late 1960s, enjoyed enough autonomy from Moscow that he can plot himself such an uproar without the permission of the communist superpower.

When the tension between North Korea and the United States increased, Kim Il Sung sent a letter to Moscow, warning about potential military collision in Korea. Kim then showed the expectation of the Soviet's military intervention in case of contingencies under the alliance treaty obligations.<sup>151</sup> Although Soviet leadership conveyed political support to the North, they had no intention to deliver the promise of military intervention. Brezhnev emphatically stressed diplomatic way in solving the conflict. Moreover, they realized the existence of different approaches between the two member-states on international affairs.<sup>152</sup> Besides, Kim Il Sung's harsh measures taken in the Pueblo

---

148 Radchenko, S. (2011). The Soviet Union and the North Korea Seizure of the USS Pueblo: Evidence from Russian Archives. Cold War International History Project. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper, 47.

149 Lerner, M. (2002). *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign Policy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

150 Radchenko, S. (2011). 1.

151 (Apr 9, 1968). "On the current problems of the international situation and on the struggle of the CPSU for the unity of the international communist movement," Excerpts from Leonid Brezhnev's speech At the April 1968 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party.

152 "[...] Despite the existence of different approaches between us and the Korean comrades on a series of questions of the international communist movement and other [problems]." Ibid. 62.

incident make the Soviet feel unpleasant. Moscow's distrust of North Korea got worse. They did not believe North Korea's assertion that the USS naval ship was detained in their territorial waters.<sup>153</sup> As a result, the incident revealed hesitation of the Soviet Union in supporting North Korea militarily.

Kim Il Sung was well aware of this. He often told other communist leaders that North Korea's allies—The Soviet Union and China—are reluctant to engage in Korean issues.

“We have friendship and mutual assistance agreements with the PRC and with the Soviet Union. The outbreak of a conflict between the North and the South will definitely involve the Soviet Union and China, as well as Japan and the United States [Since South Korea is linked to Japan through agreements; they signed such agreements with the Americans as well]. If we are not careful enough, we could trigger a global-scale war out of an Asian conflict. The peoples of the world will not welcome this and they don't want this to happen; neither the PRC nor the Soviet Union wants to get involved in such a confrontation.”<sup>154</sup>

Later, one of the former Russian Ambassadors to South Korea, Georgi Kunaze publicly spoke about the Soviet's real intention. He remarked on the commitment on military intervention as follows:

“According to this alliance treaty, automatic military intervention of the Soviet Union troops appears to be guaranteed when an emergency occurs in the Korean

---

153 Ibid. 62.

154 (June 10, 1971). Minutes of Conversation on the Occasion of the Party and Government Delegation on behalf of the Romanian Socialist Republic to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. History and Public Policy Program Digital.

Peninsula regardless of time, place and condition. However, if you look closely at the treaty, military intervention is dependent on Soviet interpretations. It is designed by the top Soviet officials of the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Although North Korea has believed in the Soviet Union's automatic military intervention in case of contingencies, the Soviet Union did not consider the promise to be in effect.<sup>155</sup>

It is not certain whether North Korea has somehow discerned that the Soviet leadership had no intention to fulfill the promise of automatic military intervention from the very first. Since the 1964 protest raised by Kim Il, there has been no mutual discussion on the alliance commitment on military intervention between the Soviet Union and North Korea. North Korean leadership did not raise the issue anymore, and so did the Soviet as well. This situation implies two things: First, North Korea's low level of trust in the commitment on Soviet military intervention and second, Soviet Union's avoidance of further discussion related to the issue.

### ***Commitment on Economic and Military Assistance***

Noticeable changes in Soviet foreign policy were unseen during the early period of Gorbachev administration. Rather, Soviet behavior in Asia-Pacific region

---

155 “이 동맹조약에서 때와 장소 및 조건에 관계없이 한반도 긴급 상황이 발생시 소련의 자동군사개입이 보장된 것처럼 보이나, 조약 내용을 자세히 보면 소련의 해석에 따라 좌우되게 돼 있다. 이는 소련 외무부 관리들의 고도의 전문성에 따라 작성됐다. 조약의 효력에 대해 북한은 소련의 자동군사개입을 믿어왔지만, 소련은 오히려 자동개입을 생각하지 않았다. 소련과 북한은 해방 직후 매우 밀접한 협력과 동맹관계로 시작했으나 한국전쟁 이후 양국 간의 특별한 관계는 매우 어려운 상황에 빠지게 됐으며 아이러니컬하게도 이러한 과정에서 동맹조약에 체결된 것이다.” Recited from Choi, M. (2009). The remarks of the former Russian Ambassador to South Korea, Georgi Kunaze, were mentioned at a meeting hosted by the Korea Forum on May 20, 1995.

remained nearly the same, constantly reflecting the old Brezhnev doctrine.<sup>156</sup> As military buildup of Soviet forces in the region continued, so did the Soviet military and economic aid to North Korea. In the middle of 1980s, Moscow aided Pyongyang with following weaponry and technologies with top-level human resources to operate them: SU-25 Frogfoot attack aircraft, SA3 and SA-5 surface-to air missiles, M-2 helicopter gunships, early warning radar, advanced nuclear technology for power generation and MiG-29 Fulcrum fighters.<sup>157</sup>

It was the late 1980s when the North Korean-Soviet relations became estranged. During that time, contacts between the Soviet and South Korea began to increase in the run-up to the 1988 Seoul Olympics and even more intensified after the Games.<sup>158</sup> As the South Korean-Soviet relations improves, the North Korean-Soviet relations quickly cooled down. Just before the establishment of South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations in 1990, Soviet supply of offensive weapons such as the MIG-29 and SU-25 to North Korea suddenly stopped. Since 1992, arms trade between Russia and North Korea has been insignificant.<sup>159</sup> In addition to trade, the Soviet Union accounted for 58% of North Korea's trade while China had only 13%, but imports from the Soviet Union in 1990 fell by 14.6%.<sup>160</sup>

When asked about the reduction of Soviet economic aid toward the North, the

---

156 Meyer, M. P. (1992). 758-759.

157 Ibid.

158 Radchenko, S. (2011). Sport and Politics on the Korean Peninsula-North Korea and the 1988 Seoul Olympics. *NKIDP*.

159 Kim, D. (1998). 78.

160 Recited from Ahn, B. (1991). 823. (Apr 1, 1990). *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

former Russian ambassador to South Korea Kunadze stated: “They had no money to pay for our supplies, and we had no ability to continue [these supplies] on credit.”<sup>161</sup>

Initially, when Moscow began to get close to Seoul for economic interest, they tried to separate economics and politics in order to not provoke its old ally, North Korea.<sup>162</sup> But Seoul’s Nordpolitik sought to expand its political leverage in the Northern region in requital for economic cooperation with Moscow. South Korea’s aggressive foreign policy ultimately led the Soviet to establish not only economic but also political ties with Seoul. On September 30, 1990, by signing a joint communique to establish South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations, Seoul succeeded in linking the economy and politics of the Soviet Union that had been separated.<sup>163</sup>

### ***The Principle of Mutual Respect and Non-intervention in Domestic Affairs***

As North Korea’s efforts to acquire nuclear weapons became evident, the Soviet’s concern deepened.<sup>164</sup> The Soviet Union pressured North Korea to sign the NPT. Soviet leadership could not afford the sharp international criticism if they transferred nuclear technology to a state who refused to join the NPT.<sup>165</sup> North Korea acceded to

---

161 Radchenko, S. (2015). Russia’s Policy in the Run-Up to the First North Korean Nuclear Crisis 1991-1993. Cold War International History Project. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper Series, 4.

162 Ahn, B. (1991). 818.

163 Ibid.

164 Because they knew that it was not easy to restrain the North Korea dictator, they denied him advanced nuclear technology. Szalontai, B., & Radchenko, S. (2006). North Korea’s Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives. Cold War International History Project. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper Series, 53.

165 Ibid.

the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1985 apparently under Soviet pressure.<sup>166</sup>

Moscow later suspended its civil nuclear cooperation programs to North Korea and joined with Washington in pressuring them to sign a safeguards agreement.<sup>167</sup> Moscow threatened Pyongyang that they would cut Soviet supply of fuel for its nuclear reactor unless the North sign the agreement with the IAEA.<sup>168</sup> Soviet attempt to impose political control over Pyongyang resulted in declining the commitment on non-intervention.

## **2) The Soviet's Declining Credibility in Alliance Commitments**

The Soviet Union's most anticipated alliance commitment from the North Korea was by far the promise of mutual communication. With an aim to rein in Kim Il Sung and to keep Pyongyang on the Soviet side in the Sino-Soviet confrontation, Moscow had to bear the liability in exchange for mutual consultation.

In May 1990, the first South Korean-Soviet summit was held in San Francisco. The two leaders, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and South Korean President Roh Tae-woo, agreed to establish diplomatic relations and further develop their bilateral cooperation in all areas including diplomacy, politics, economics, science and culture. Pyongyang harshly criticized Soviet behavior as quislingism to legally recognize the two

---

166 Mack, A. (1991). North Korea and the Bomb. *Foreign Policy*, 83, 87-104.

167 Ibid. 92.

168 Radchenko, S. (2015). 5.

Koreas.<sup>169</sup> Such a response from North Korea seemed reasonable. Moscow has not consulted with Pyongyang even once about its improving relations with Seoul. Moreover, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had repeatedly made promises to North Korea that they will not establish any political ties with Seoul.<sup>170</sup> Moscow behaviors against such commitments given by senior-level officials, was enough to bewilder Pyongyang.

In spite of the promises with North Korea, the Soviet decided to normalize its relations with South Korea. In September 1990, a month before the establishment of South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Eduard Shevardnadze visited Pyongyang to inform Kim Il Sung about the upcoming event between Moscow and Seoul.<sup>171</sup> Shevardnadze repeatedly asked for face-to-face talk with Kim Il Sung but Kim impassively rebuffed Shevardnadze's earnest requests. Instead of Kim Il Sung, Shevardnadze had to talk with Foreign Minister of the DPRK, Kim

---

169 Before that, the Soviet Union had maintained its policy of recognizing North Korea as the only legal state among two Koreas in the Korean Peninsula. Park, J. (2011). *North Korea and Russia in the 21st Century: Myths, Aspects, and Evolution, 21segiui bughangwa leosia: sinhwa, bihwa geuligo jinhwa, 21 세기의 북한과 러시아: 신화(神話), 비화(秘話) 그리고 진화(進化)*. Seoul: Oleum. 서울: 오름. 121.

170 Kopto, A. (1996). Excerpts from Recollections by the Former Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Aleksandr Kopto. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Na Perekrestkakh Zhizni: Politicheskii Memuary. Moskva: Sotsialno-Politicheskii Zhurnal,, 433-436. Gorbachev, during the [North] Korean-Soviet talks in October 1986, said: "We will under no circumstances change our principled position with regard to South Korea." Shevardnadze during the talks in December 1986 his visit to the DPRK said: "I confirm that there is no intention to establish political, diplomatic and state relations with South Korea. I give a Communist's word. The Soviet Union has no intention to officially recognize South Korea, [and] establish political and diplomatic relations with it."

171 (Sep 2, 1990). Shevardnadze holds talks in North Korea. United Press International.

Young nam.<sup>172</sup>

The meeting was held in a very heavy atmosphere. Kim Young nam launched into a lengthy tirade against Moscow, denouncing its betrayal and preposterous attempt to impose a German Unification scenario upon North Korea. According to the memorandum delivered by Kim, the Soviet Union has violated Article 3 of the alliance treaty.<sup>173</sup> Kim added that North Korean leadership has never been informed any of the contact between South Korea and the Soviet Union, which definitely undermines North Korea's national interest. Thus, the establishment of South Korean-Soviet diplomatic relations annuls the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty and leads to North Korea to focus more on obtaining the nuclear deterrent and departure from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.<sup>174</sup>

“In case of the cancellation of the Korean-Soviet treaty of alliance—it was then stated—we will have to look for ways to resolve many questions on our own. And as South Korea hosts US nuclear weapons, it is necessary to follow the road of development of weapons to counteract the aforesaid weapons. In this case, the DPRK will have to depart from the Treaty of Nuclear Non-Proliferation. The development of the situation in this direction on the Korean peninsula—Kim Yeong Nam continued—will intensify the nuclear arms race, sharpen to the utmost extent the situation in Korea, and bring

---

172 Kapto, A. (1996). 433-436.

173 Article 3 requires both parties to consult each other on all important international issues relating to their interests. This article is considered as one of commitments that the Soviet Union demanded from North Korea, reflecting Moscow's intention to control and manage Pyongyang's uncertain behavior. Ironically, the article at the end has worked against the Soviet Union.

174 Kapto, A. (1996). 433-436.

unexpected consequences to the general development of the situation. [...] You know better [than I] what fate awaits the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if we, willingly or unwillingly, quit this Treaty.”<sup>175</sup>

Compared to the 1971 event when the North first brought up the agenda of terminating the USSR-DPRK alliance, this time was a little different. If the 1971 proposal of alliance termination was made out of thorough consideration, this time, it was more like a threat. North Korea's changed attitude compared to 1971 indicates that they wanted to maintain its alliance with the Soviet Union. However, From the perspective of alliance politics, the USSR-DPRK alliance was lacking threat factors. The Soviet Union already improved relations with the United States and China in the late 1980s. The Soviet Union was now about to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea, the main threat of North Korea.

The competition with China to take the Communist throne has ended, so even though North Korea is on China's side, it is no longer a serious problem for the Soviet Union. In the memorandum, the North craftily links the cancellation of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty to North Korea's nuclear development and its withdrawal from the NPT. It states that if the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty is cancelled, then the DPRK will first have to develop its own nuclear weapons program to counter U.S nuclear weapons provided to South Korea. Second, to keep its nuclear program, they said they will depart from the NPT. It was clear that North Korea, against the Soviet-South Korean rapprochement, was threatening the Soviet under the pretexts of its nuclear weapons

---

175 Kopto, A. (1996). Excerpts from Recollections by the Former Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Aleksandr Kopto. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. Na Perekrestkakh Zhizni: Politicheskie Memuary. Moskva: Sotsialno-Politicheskii Zhurnal,, 433-436.

development and withdrawal from the NPT.

“Nuclear weapons development and then withdrawal from the NPT.” Why were these two excuses? Because that is the situation the Soviet Union is most concerned about. A threat is an act of obtaining what one wants by using the other's fear. North Korea understood both the logic of the threat and the weakness of the Soviet Union too well. Looking back on the history of Soviet-North Korea relations over the past three decades, it seemed quite obvious. Thus, using those two excuses as their bargaining chips, North Korea was taking advantage of the Soviet Union in purpose of impeding the Soviet-South Korean rapprochement.

The Soviet Union has made great efforts to stop North Korea from developing nuclear weapons and to make them ratify the NPT and IAEA. The function of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was to manage North Korea staying within the international norms for non-proliferation. Therefore, those two issues North Korea has raised were completely coincide with the alliance commitments the Soviet had expected from North Korea. Although North Korea's behavior seemed suspicious from time to time, the alliance commitments were perceived to be relatively well-fulfilled, as North Korea did not seem to have developed its own nuclear weapons and also finally joined the NPT in 1985. Thus, the function of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty seemed effective throughout the 1980s.

Then the question goes to “what does non-proliferation mean to the Soviet Union?” North Korea's nuclear development and its withdrawal from the NPT symbolized Soviet's perfectly humiliating failure both in their non-proliferation efforts and alliance management. Moscow's priority policy toward North Korea in the 1980s was to prohibit the nuclear weapons development and ensure peaceful use of nuclear technology. Things didn't change much in the 1990s when it comes to non-proliferation

issue. Halting the spread of weapons of mass destruction has become the dominant post-Cold War interest.<sup>176</sup> In particular, Russia bears a degree of moral responsibility for the North Korean nuclear program.<sup>177</sup> After President Eisenhower's initiative "Atoms for Peace," the Soviet Union also embarked on similar initiative, enabling hundreds of North Korean students and scientists to be educated in Soviet nuclear research institutions in the 1950s. To both superpowers, transferring nuclear technology to their Third World allies was a useful political tool to show off their technological superiority and entice small allies.<sup>178</sup> In the 1960s, the Soviet even supplied a research reactor and built nuclear facilities at Yongbyon.<sup>179</sup> North Korean specialists who launched a nuclear program were those who were trained in the Soviet Union. As a consequence, the Soviet's inadvertent provision of nuclear technologies helped establishing the foundation of North Korea's nuclear development.

Russia had to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons and leaving the NPT. Although North Korea threatened the Soviet Union, it had not implemented nuclear development and the withdrawal of the NPT. Russia kept the alliance because North Korea made impression that it is remained under the Soviet control. In Moscow's view, the function of the alliance treaty was still valid unless North Korea stays in NPT. But it did not take that long for Russian leadership to fall in a dilemma. Inside the Cabinet, opinions over Russian relations with North Korea began to

---

176 Mazarr, M. (1995). Going Just a Little Nuclear. *International Security*, 20(2), 92-122.

177 Sergey Radchenko. 2015. Russia's Policy in the Run-Up to the First North Korean Nuclear Crisis. Nuclear Proliferation International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. 14

178 Szalontai, B., & Radchenko, S. (2006).

179 Hecker, S. (2010). Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises. *Daedalus*, 139(1), 44-56.

be divided severely. The dilemma was shown in the disagreement between the president Boris Yeltsin and the Russian foreign ministry.

After the 1992 South Korean-Russia summit meeting in Seoul, a subtle dissensus was noticed between Russian President Yeltsin and the Russian foreign ministry vis-à-vis the issue of the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. During the summit meeting with South Korean President Roh Tae-woo in December 1992, Yeltsin clarified that the Article 1 of the USSR-DPRK Treaty stipulating automatic military intervention has already proved to be a dead letter. On the other hand, deputy Foreign Minister Panov remarked in the interview with Moscow Interfax following his visit to North Korea stated “the Article 1 could only be effectuated in the case of invasions not provoked by Pyongyang.” He also added that a definition of invasion will be determined by Moscow.

When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT in 1993, Russia completely lost every function of the alliance treaty. In July 1994, it was reported that North Korea possessed five nuclear weapons. With North Korea's official nuclear weapons development and the departure of the NPT, credibility in Russia's commitments has no longer remained.

#### 4. Conditions Unmet

The first debate over termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty took place in the fall of 1971.<sup>180</sup> In the midst of the Sino-American rapprochement and the Soviet-American détente, North Korean delegation led by North Korean Deputy Premier Bak Seong Cheol, visited Moscow and requested a meeting with Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. During the talk, Bak proposed the termination of the 1961 USSR-DRPK Alliance Treaty.<sup>181</sup> He tried to persuade Brezhnev that if the Soviet Union and North Korea first terminate the alliance treaty, then the United States and South Korea will follow suit. According to Pyongyang's scenario, once the ROK-US mutual defense pact is abrogated, chances are the United States will withdraw the rest of American forces from South Korea. He added that this opportunity will create favorable conditions for unification of the Korean Peninsula. It was obvious that North Korea is aggressively promoting peace offensive at the expense of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty.

North Korea's unilateral decision to sever ties with the old ally could be seen as a part of its adventuristic behavior to put Soviet's credibility to the test. When North Korea seizure the American naval intelligence ship USS Pueblo in January 1968 and shot down a U.S. spy plane with thirty-one men in on board in April 1969, Pyongyang's

---

180 Tkachenko, V. (Dec, 1993). 62-65.

181 This is also found in Hungarian archives. "In the fall of 1971, Pak Seong Cheol in Moscow, proposed to abrogate the Soviet-Korean treaty; the Soviet side, of course, could not approve this [idea]." Hungarian Foreign Ministry. (July 13, 1972). Memorandum, Hungarian Foreign Ministry. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j-Korea, 1972, 59.

ulterior intention was to see Moscow's responses.<sup>182</sup> The what was the motives behind this time? Was it due to changing perception of threat or declining credibility? Or was it aimed to put the Soviet Union to the test?

In the early 1970s, North Korea's threat perception started changing rapidly since the promulgation of the Nixon Doctrine in July 1969. By 1970, in the spirit of "limited withdrawal," Washington notified Seoul of its plans to remove a part of American troops stationing in South Korea. According to the plan, an authorized strength of 640,000 US soldiers in South Korea would be reduced to about 40,000. Additional withdrawal was being discussed inside the US cabinet, and the final number of soldiers left in South Korea was even as low as 5,000.<sup>183</sup> It was a long-desired scheme of Kim Il Sung. With the peaceful atmosphere, he aggressively promoted his strategy of unification so-called "offensive peace." His propaganda began both in homeland and abroad.

Abroad, Pyongyang heavily relied on Beijing. On behalf of North Korea, China strongly demanded the complete withdrawal of US troops from the Korean Peninsula.<sup>184</sup> Although Washington could not give the promise of a total withdrawal, it partially accepted Beijing's demand. Consonant with the Nixon Doctrine, USFK was indeed leaving the Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang must feel grateful for the Chinese effort. What

---

182 Schaefer, B. (2004). North Korea "Adventurism" and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972. Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper Series, 44.

183 Beecher, Wi. (Nov 5, 1970). U.S. to Withdraw Division on Guard at de in Korea. The New York Times.

184 Armstrong, C., & Kotch, J. (2015). Sino-American Negotiations on Korea and Kissinger's UN Diplomacy. *Cold War History*, 15(1), 113-114.

China expected from the North was to ease tensions in the Korean Peninsula so it may help Sino-American rapprochement go through.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, both Pyongyang and Beijing were in need of each other. Even Kissinger later told the head of the PRC mission to the UN, “I think that relations between Peking and Washington helped start negotiations between Pyongyang and Seoul.”<sup>186</sup>

In homeland, Pyongyang approached to Seoul. When the North Korean delegation came visit to Brezhnev and proposed the termination of the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, North Korea and South Korea were already engaging in intensive covert negotiations.<sup>187</sup> Lee Hu Rak, then the head of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency, unofficially visited Pyongyang to discuss specific details of a mutual agreement. The document was later announced as the “July 4<sup>th</sup> North -South Joint Communiqué” in 1972. During the meeting with Lee, Kim Il Sung strongly emphasized the need of total withdrawal of US troops for the sake of loosening the tension between the two Koreas and building peace.<sup>188</sup>

As the rapprochement gained momentum, Kim Il Sung became more audacious in pursuing his political goal. Two months before the announcement of the 1972 joint communique, Kim Il Sung gave an interview to The New York Times. During the conversation, he expressed confidence that the withdrawal of American forces would

---

185 Ibid.

186 Recited from Armstrong, C., & Kotch, J. (2015). (July 26, 1972). Memorandum of Conversation, Kissinger and Huang Hua, PRC Mission to the UN. United States and the Two Koreas Collection, Digital National Security Archives, 5.

187 (Nov 3, 1972). Conversation between Lee Hu-Rak and Kim Il Sung. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive.

188 Ibid.

open up the way for peaceful unification of Korea.<sup>189</sup> He also added “If the United States has improved its relations with China and the Soviet Union, why does it still need troops in South Korea, where their function is supposed to be to guard against the expansion of Communism?”<sup>190</sup> To Kim’s view, Soviet-American détente would favor his insistence on the withdrawal of US troops. To keep up the momentum toward the peace offensive strategy, Pyongyang was ready to sacrifice the old fraternal alliance. Thus, the intention of North Korea’s tough proposal was not to put the Soviet Union to the test. They needed the termination of the USSR-DPRK alliance as a useful pretext for both Soviet-American détente and the withdrawal of US forces.

Vadim Tkachenko, a former vice foreign minister of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, recalls that North Korea’s sudden proposal took the Soviet leadership by surprise. They were not even noticed about the ongoing rapprochement of the two Koreas.<sup>191</sup> His statement indicates that the Soviet leadership at that time did not contemplate North Korea’s proposal of alliance termination.

Brezhnev disapproved the idea.<sup>192</sup> He told North Korean delegation that any wording or phrases of the treaty is not against the unification of Korea. Tkachenko remarked on the event as follows:

---

189 Salisbury, H. (May 31, 1972). North Korean Leader Bids U.S. Leave the South as Step to Peace. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/31/archives/north-korean-leader-bids-us-leave-the-south-as-step-to-peace-north.html>

190 Ibid.

191 Washington noticed Moscow of the South-North Korea rapprochement. Until then, the Soviet leadership had no idea what’s happening in the Korean Peninsula. Tkachenko, V. (Dec, 1993).

192 Hungarian Foreign Ministry. (July 13, 1972).

“We told North Korea that the treaty does not indicate any views opposite to the unification of Korea. We could not figure out what kind of unification the North had planned. Moreover, we could not have sufficient certainty for their idea. Neither the United States nor China seemed to follow suit and terminate their alliance treaties with South and North Korea. We were more concerned of the situation where the absence of the USSR-DPRK alliance leads to the decline of Soviet Union’s influence on the Korean Peninsula.”<sup>193</sup>

Moreover, Tkachenko’s recollection offers somewhat interesting part of the story more than just the historical accounts. It reflects the Soviet’s underlying political calculation. While North Korean side consistently accentuated the significance of terminating the ROK-US alliance as the major precondition for peaceful Korean unification, the Soviet Union somehow involved PRC-DPRK alliance in dealing with the issue. Brezhnev refused to break the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty because not only the United States but also China does not seem to follow suit. There emerged obvious differences in their viewpoints.

This indicates that the Soviet Union and North Korea had different conception of the Korean unification. the former perceived the termination of the PRC-DPRK alliance as another step to be taken prior to the Korean unification, while the latter did not. Pyongyang considered the US-ROK alliance as the only primary threat.<sup>194</sup> Because

---

193 Tkachenko, V. (Dec, 1993).

194 With regard to the matters of Inter-Korean relations, Kim Il Sung remarked as follows: “Regarding the existence of the danger of a war, the reason is just one: the presence of the Americans in South Korea. If the Americans pull out of South Korea, the possibility of a war becomes limited.” (June 10, 1971). Minutes of Conversation on the Occasion of the Party and Government Delegation on behalf of the Romanian Socialist Republic to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. History and Public Policy Program Digital

of that, they tried to alienate the United States from South Korea. Besides, Beijing strived to secure Pyongyang's interest while negotiating with Washington. By contrast, the Soviet-American summit barely touched upon Korean issue, only once in passing.<sup>195</sup> In this circumstances, North Korea does not consider Chinese factor as a threat. It explains why the North planned to break only the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, not the PRC-DPRK Alliance Treaty. Unlike North Korea, the Soviet Union put more weight on Chinese factor. In fact, the two communist giants just had finished bloody border disputes near Zhenbao Island in 1969. Since the split, they have been competing for Third World allies, and now compete for American power. As a consequence, due to the different political stance toward Chinese factor, the gap between two member-states' threat perception has widened considerably.

From the perspective of alliance theory, a fundamental reason for North Korea's proposal was due to its massive shift in threat perception. The threat from South Korea dramatically reduced by the substantial withdrawal of USFK. In the course, Beijing played a pivotal role in persuading Washington to lessen the tension in the Korean Peninsula. This situation changed North Korea's initial threat perception underlying the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. The strategic value of the alliance treaty to North Korea decreased. However, since the armed clashes along borders, Sino-Soviet conflict has been severely aggravated. As a consequence, a substantial discrepancy in threat perception between the member-states emerged.

Brezhnev's rationale behind the disapproval of the alliance termination was

---

Archive, Archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. 43/1971.

195 Armstrong, C., & Kotch, J. (2015). 266. Based on the records of the Soviet-American summit, Brezhnev raised Korean issue only once

correct, reasonable, and indisputable. Indeed, the treaty does not undermine the significance of Korean unification. Rather, Article 5 of the treaty manifests Soviet's continued supports for peaceful and democratic unification of the Korean Peninsula in pursuit of the peace in the Far East. It must have been difficult for North Korea to keep insisting on alliance termination, because the function of the alliance treaty was still in effect at that time. If Pyongyang went against Moscow, that will directly make the two states turn their back to each other. North Korea could take an alliance for larger goals, but it did not want to turn the Soviet Union into an enemy. What they wanted to do was to persuade the Soviet Union to accept the peace offensive strategy, not to quit Soviet military and economic support by upsetting the Soviet leadership.

## V. CONCLUSION

Why was the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty terminated in September 1996? The treaty was terminated because both conditions—changing perception of threat and declining credibility in commitments—were fully met. Since the emergence of Gorbachev, there occurred dramatic shifts in member-states' initial threat perception. Due to the end of Sino-Soviet confrontation, the two communist giants no longer needed to compete over North Korea. The Soviet Union's primary motive for the alliance formation now disappeared. At the same time, North Korea's second main motive, which was to prevent itself from involving in Sino-Soviet conflict disappeared as well.

For a long time, Kim Il Sung desired the Sino-Soviet conflict to be over soon. Ironically, once it is settled, North Korea's strategic value declined as a result. The improvement of South Korean-Soviet relations acted against North Korea too. The establishment of relations between South Korea and the Soviet Union in May 1990 put Moscow in the position where they can no longer define South Korea as a potential enemy.

Interestingly, what protracted the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty was the Soviet Union's (later Russia's) powerplay role in the Korean Peninsula. At the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, there only remained two unchanging factors vis-à-vis the member-states' threat perception. From the Soviet Union's perspective, North Korea was still a rogue state. Since the management of North Korea's adventuristic behavior was Moscow's ulterior motive for the alliance formation, they strived to grasp political power over the rogue state via the alliance treaty until the mid-1990s. From North Korea's perspective, South Korea was still the biggest external threat. As a consequence, a serious discrepancy between two member-states' threat perception emerged.

Credibility in automatic military intervention stayed low since the late 1960s. Due to the changing threat perception, there was no possibility that the Soviet Union would keep carrying out commitments on military and economic aid. Besides, Russia's domestic economic situation could not afford aid toward other countries. Moscow even joined with Washington in pressuring North Korea to sign a safeguards agreement.<sup>196</sup> Credibility in commitment on mutual respect and non-intervention in internal affairs declined. The last alliance commitment was broken by North Korea's departure from NPT and continuous development of nuclear weapons in the mid-1990s. When all conditions have met in 1995, Russia finally released the grasp on North Korea. There was no sign of refusal from the North. Without any threat factors or credibility, the alliance treaty became a white elephant to both of member-states. Moscow was fatigued with the liability and Pyongyang was not about to accommodate with changed Russia.

---

196 Mack, A. (1991). 92.

# List of References

## Books

Cha, V. (2012). *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Choi, M. (2009). *China-North Korea Alliance Relations: History of Uncomfortable Coexistence*. jung-gug·bughan dongmaeng-gwangye: bulpyeonhan dong-geoui yeogsa. 중국·북한 동맹관계: 불편한 동거의 역사. Oleum. 오름.

Clough, R, N. (1987). *Embattled Korea: The Rivalry for International Support*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Goldstein, J. (2001) *International Relations* (4th ed.). Longman.

Hong, Y, P. (2000). *State Security and Regime Security: President Syngman Rhee and the Insecurity Dilemma in South Korea 1953-1960*. London: Macmillan Press.

Kaple, D. (1998). *Soviet Advisors in China in the 1950s. Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press: Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Kennan, G. (1984). *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War*. New York: Pantheon.

Keohane, R at el. (1993). *After the Cold War: international institutions and state strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*. Harvard University Press.

Lerner, M. (2002). *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign*

- Policy. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Liska, G. (1962). *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Luthi, L. (2008). *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton University Press.
- Park, J. (2011). *North Korea and Russia in the 21st Century: Myths, Aspects, and Evolution, 21segiui bughangwa leosia: sinhwa, bihwa geuligo jinhwa, 21 세기의 북한과 러시아: 신화(神話), 비화(秘話) 그리고 진화(進化)*. Seoul: Oleum. 서울: 오름.
- Rothstein, R. (1968). *Alliances and Small Powers*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schroeder, P. (1976). *Alliances, 1915-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management*. Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Shevchenko, A. (1986). *Breaking with Moscow*. Shijie Zhishi.
- Shimotomai, N. (2004). *The True story behind the foundation of North Korea. Bukhan-jeonggwon tansaeng-ui jinsil. 북한정권 탄생의 진실*. Seoul: Giparang. 기파랑.
- Shimotomai, N. (2006). *Mosukuwa to Kim Il Sung*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Snyder, G. (2007). *Alliance Politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Walt, S. (1987). *The Origins of Alliance*. Cornell University Press

## **Journals & Diplomatic Documents**

Ahn, B. (1991). South Korean-Soviet Relations: Contemporary Issues and Prospects. *Asian Survey*, 31(9), 816.

Andrei, K. (1988). Defence is Best for Stability. *New times*, 33(18).

Armstrong, C., & Kotch, J. (2015). Sino-American Negotiations on Korea and Kissinger's UN Diplomacy. *Cold War History*, 15(1), 113-114.

Ashley, B., & Rice, L. (2007). Terminating Alliances: Why Do States Abrogate Agreements. *Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 1118–1132.

Cha, V. (2009). Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia. *International Security*, 34(3), 158-196.

Duffield, J. (2001). Why Is There No APTO? Why Is There No OSCAP?" *Contemporary Security Policy*, 22(2), 70.

Garver, J. (1989). The "New Type" of Sino-Soviet Relations. *Asian Survey*, 29(12), 1136-1152.

Hecker, S. (2010). Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises. *Daedalus*, 139(1), 44-56.

Holloway, D. (1988). Gorbachev's New Thinking. *Foreign Affairs*, 68(1), 29.

Izumikawa, Y. (2006). South Korea's Nordpolitik and the Efficacy of Asymmetric Positive Sanctions. *Korea Observer*, 37(4), 606.

Kapto, A. (1996). Excerpts from Recollections by the Former Soviet Ambassador in

North Korea Aleksandr Kapto. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Na Perekrestkakh Zhizni: Politicheskie Memuary. Moskva: Sotsialno-Politicheskii Zhurnal,, 433-436.

Keohane R. (1971). Big Influence of Small Allies. *Foreign Policy*, 2, 161-182.

Kim, B. (2013). The Impact of DPRK-PRC-USSR Relations on Concluding Treaties of Alliances during the Sino-Soviet Split, 1957-1961. *North Korean Studies Review*, 17(2), 171.

Kim, D. (1998). North Korea-Russia Relations and Six-Party Talks. bughan-leosia gwangyewa 6jahodam. 북한-러시아 관계와 6자회담. *The Korean Association of Slavic-Eurasian Studies*. Seullabeuhagbo. 슬라브학보, 13(2), 75-92.

Kim, H. (1997). The Process Leading to the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between South Korea and the Soviet Union. *Asian Survey*, 37(7), 637.

Krauthammer, C. (1990). The Unipolar Moment. *Foreign Affair*, 70(1), American and the World 1990/91, 23-33.

Kuisong, Y. (2000). The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement. *Cold War History*, 1(1), 23.

Lho, K. (1989). Seoul-Moscow Relations: Looking to the 1990s. *Asian Survey*, 29(12), 1153.

Marantz, P. (1975). Prelude to Detente: Doctrinal Change under Khrushchev. *International Studies Quarterly*, 19(4), 501-528.

Markn, Y. (2017). China and Albania: The Cultural Revolution and Cold War Relations.

*Cold War History*, 17(4), 367-383.

Mazarr, M. (1995). Going Just a Little Nuclear. *International Security*, 20(2), 92-122.

Mearsheimer, J. (1990). Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War. *International Security*, 15(1), 5-56.

Meyer, M. P. (1992). Gorbachev and Post-Gorbachev Policy toward the Korean Peninsula: The Impact of Changing Russian Perceptions. *Asian Survey*, 32(8), 758-759.

Meyer, M. S. (2011). The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security. *International Security*, 13(2), 128.

Ministry of Defense, Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia Military Affairs Documentation. 국방부, 한반도 및 동북아 군사정세자료집. (1988.4~1989.3). 191.

Radchenko, S. (2011). Sport and Politics on the Korean Peninsula-North Korea and the 1988 Seoul Olympics. *NKIDP*.

Radchenko, S. (2011). The Soviet Union and the North Korea Seizure of the USS Pueblo: Evidence from Russian Archives. Cold War International History Project. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper Series, 47.

Schaefer, B. (2004). North Korea "Adventurism" and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972. Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper Series, 44.

Snyder, G. (1984). The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), 461-495.

Sung-Joo, H. (1989). South Korea in 1988: A Revolution in the Making. *Asian Survey*, 29(1), 29-38.

Szalontai, B., & Radchenko, S. (2006). North Korea's Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives. Cold War International History Project. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Working Paper Series, 53.

Tkachenko, V. (Dec, 1993). North Korea-Soviet Diplomacy Stories behind the Curtain Delivered by Former Deputy Director of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In 1972, Pyongyang asked Moscow to Terminate the Treaty of Friendship between the Soviet Union and North Korea. jeon solyeongongsandang gugjebu bubujang-i malhaneun bughan-solyeon oegyobihwa, 72nyeon pyeong-yang-eun moseukeuba-e josouhojoyag pagileul yoguhaessda. 전 소련공산당 국제부 부부장이 말하는 북한-소련 외교비화, 72년 평양은 모스크바에 조소우호조약 파기를 요구했다. Wolganmal. 월간말, 90, 62-65.

Van Evera, S. (1990). Primed for Peace: Europe after the Cold War. *International Security*, 15(3), 7-57.

Vienna Convention of the law of treaties.

Vladislav Zubok. (2017). The Soviet Union and China in the 1980s: reconciliation and divorce. *Cold War History*, 17(2), 122.

Wallander, C. A. (2002). Lost and found: Gorbachev's "New thinking." *Washington Quarterly*, 25(1), 117-129.

Walt, S. (1997). Why alliances endure or collapse. *Survival*, 39(1), 156-179.

Walt, S. (2009). Alliances in a unipolar world. *World Politics*, 61(1), 86-120.

Waltz, K. (1993). The Emerging Structure of International Politics. *International Security*, 18(2), 44-79.

Yeo, I. (1995). Significance, Evaluation and Situation Analysis of Termination of Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Jo·so uohyeobjo mich sanghowonjo joyag pyegiui uimiwa pyeong-ga, jeongsebunseog. 조·소 우호협조 및 상호원조 조약 폐기의 의미와 평가, 정세분석. *Minjogtongil yeonguwon*, 민족통일연구원, 95(07), 1-26.

Yoon, S. (1994). South Korea's 'Nordpolitik' with Special Reference to Its Relationship with China. The Ph. D. Dissertation. George Washington University

(Jan 23, 1962). Treaties of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Registered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. *United Nations Treaty Series*, 420(6045), 154-158.

(Jan 23, 1962). Treaties of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Signed at Moscow, on 6 July 1961. Registered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 23 January 1962. *United Nations Treaty Series*, 420(6045), 154-158.

(Feb 15, 1963). Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 6. doboz, 5/d, 0011/RT/1963.

(Jan 8, 1965). Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, National Archives of Hungary. XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-100, 001819/1965.

(Jun 10, 1971). Minutes of Conversation on the Occasion of the Party and Government Delegation on behalf of the Romanian Socialist Republic to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archives of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. 43/1971.

(July 13, 1972). Memorandum, Hungarian Foreign Ministry. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j-Korea, 1972, 59.

(July 26, 1972). Memorandum of Conversation, Kissinger and Huang Hua, PRC Mission to the UN. United States and the Two Koreas Collection, Digital National Security Archives, 5.

(Nov 3, 1972). Conversation between Lee Hu-Rak and Kim Il Sung. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive.

(1982). Sino-Soviet Relations, President Brezhnev's speech, Tashkent 24 March 1982 (excerpts), *Survival*, 24(4), 186.

(Nov 20, 1986). Record of Conversation between Comrade J. Batmunkh and Kim Il Sung. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Mongolian Foreign Ministry Archive, fond 3, dans 1, kh/n 183, khuu 123-164.

(1988). Address by Mikhail Gorbachev at the UN General Assembly Session (Excerpts). History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, CWIHP Archive.

(May 16, 1989). Meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping (Excerpts).

History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Mikhail Gorbachev, Zhizn'i Reformy, 2(Moscow: Novosti, 1995), pp.435-440.

(Oct 9, 1991). Record of Conversation between Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR A. S. Dzasokhov with the DPRK Ambassador Son Seong Pil. State Archive of the Russian Federation. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. Fond P9654, opis 10, delo 339, list 225.

## News

Beecher, Wi. (Nov 5, 1970). U.S. to Withdraw Division on Guard at de in Korea. The New York Times.

Kim, E. (July 29, 1992). North Korean-Soviet Friendship Cooperation Treaty Continued. joseon-solyeon uhohyeoblyeogjoyag gyesog yuji. 조선-소련 우호협력조약 계속 유지. MBC News. [http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012\\_19402.html](http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012_19402.html)

Dobbs, M. (May 17, 1991). Sino-Soviet Pact Singed in Moscow; Agreement Eases Border Dispute. The Washington Post. <Http://search.proquest.com/docview/307413730?accountid=6802>

Kristof, N. (May 16, 1989), Gorbachev Meets Deng in Beijing; Protest Goes On. The New York Times.

Lee, S. (Sep 7, 1995). Russia Notifies North Korea to Discontinue the USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty. leosia,bughan-e sanghowonjo joyag pyegitongbo. 러,북한에 韓.蘇 상호원조 조약 폐기통보. Jung-Ang Il Bo. 중앙일보.

Salisbury, H. (May 31, 1972). North Korean Leader Bids U.S. Leave the South as Step to Peace. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/05/31/archives/north-korean-leader-bids-us-leave-the-south-as-step-to-peace-north.html>

(July 15, 1961). No-dong Shinmun. 노동신문.

(Nov 12, 1982.). Brezhnev Tried to Advance Moscow's Goals through Détente. The New York Times.

(Oct 26, 1986). No-dong Shinmun. 노동신문.

(Apr 1, 1990). Yomiuri Shimbun.

(Sep 2, 1990). Shevardnadze holds talks in North Korea. United Press International.

(July 29, 1992). The Russian Foreign Ministry's protest against North Korea's urge to abolish the North Korea-Soviet Friendship Cooperation Treaty. hangugcheug-ui josouhojoyag pyegi choggue leosia oemubu hang-ui. 조소우호조약 폐기 한국측 촉구에 향의/러시아 외무부. MBC News. [http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012\\_19402.html](http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1992/1747012_19402.html)

## 국문 초록

### 북한·소련 동맹조약 종결에 관한 이론적 분석

위협에 대한 인식 변화와 신뢰도 저하를 중심으로

동맹의 지속과 종결은 어떤 요소에 의해 영향을 받는 것일까? 무려 35년간 지속되었던 북한·소련 동맹조약은 왜 1996년 9월에 종결된 것일까? 냉전 종식과 소련의 해체의 결과로 발생한 이념적 분절만을 북한·소련 동맹조약 파기의 주요 원인으로 단정 지을 수 있을까? 만일 그것이 사실이라면, 바르샤바 조약기구를 비롯하여 냉전 간 소련이 타국과 체결한 모든 방위 조약들이 1980년 말과 1990년 초에 종결된 것처럼, 북한·소련 동맹 역시 좀 더 이른 시점에 파기되었어야 하지 않을까? 이 연구의 목적은 북한·소련 동맹조약 종결의 근본적인 원인을 동맹 정치학적 시각에서 분석하는 것이다.

북한·소련 동맹조약은 1961년에 최초 체결되었으며 북한-소련 관계에 있어 핵심적 기둥 역할을 수행했다. 해당 조약은 러시아의 조약 연장 거부로 인해 1996년 9월 파기되었다. 그동안 북한·소련 동맹 조약의 파기는 냉전 종식과 소련 해체로 인한 자연스러운 결과로 인식되어 왔다. 그러나 통념과는 달리, 소련은 1991년 조약을 연장하였으며 소련 붕괴 이후 러시아는 1992년 1월 동 조약을 계승할 것을 밝혔다. 따라서 조약은 1996년 9월까지 유효성을 지속하였다. 동맹정치학적 시각으로 비추어 보아, 북한·소련 동맹이 장기간 유지될 수 있었던 이유는 단순한 운에 의한 것이 아니라, 부분적으로 존재한 조약의 실효성에 기인한 것이었다.

연구는 Stephen Walt의 1997년 연구 “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse?”를 기반으로 분석적 틀을 구축하였으며 두 가지 요소-위협에 대한 인식 변화와 신뢰도 저하-를 연구변수로 상정하였다. 구소련과 동구권내의 구 공산주의 국가들의 외교 사료와 고문서들을 활용하여 북한·소련 동맹조약의 종결과정을 서술하였다. 분석은 첫째, 동맹 가입 국가들의 동맹체결 동인요소를 분석적 틀에 따라 규정하고 둘째, 규정된 요소들의 변화과정을 추적하며, 마지막으로, 위협에 대한 인식변화와 신뢰도 저하가 북한·소련 동맹조약 파기의 근본적 원인으로 작용하였는지 그 여부를 규명한다.

연구는 “북한·소련 동맹조약이 1996년 파기된 이유는 동맹파기에 영향을 끼치는 두 가지 요소-위협에 대한 인식변화와 신뢰도 저하-가 모두 충족되었기 때문이다”는 가설을 증명한다. 또한 소련(러시아)의 한반도 내 Powerplay역할이 북한·소련 동맹조약 연장의 결정적인 요인으로 작용하였음을 주장한다. 소련에게 있어 북한·소련 동맹조약 체결의 이면적 동인요소는 동맹을 통해 북한의 모험주의적 행위를 관리하고자 하는 의도였으며, 이로 인해 모스크바는 1990년대 중반까지 불량국가(rogue state)를 통제하기 위해 노력한 것이다. 한편, 북한은 소련을 대상으로 벼랑끝전술을 구사하여 오랜 동맹국에게서 최대한의 이익을 얻어냈다. 북한·소련 동맹조약 종결에 대한 이 논문은 미개발 연구주제에 대한 새로운 통찰력을 부여하며 더 나아가 종결 단계에서 나타나는 동맹역학의 주요한 특징을 제공한다.

**주제어:** The USSR-DPRK Alliance Treaty, Alliance termination, Powerplay, Changing perceptions of threat, Declining credibility

**학번:** 2017-24678