

# Evaluating Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime – Case Study: North Korea

Adhi Priamarizki

Strategic Studies, S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University  
E-mail: adhipriamarizki@gmail.com

**Abstract :** This paper try to explain why a country refused to join the nuclear weapons nonproliferation regime. The main argument of this article is the failure of the nuclear weapons nonproliferation regime to create a state-nuclear negara abandon their nuclear weapons because the regime does not successfully complete the core problem that triggered the decision to develop nuclear weapons. The decision will be difficult to change when it is done in order to maintain domestic power in the country that has nuclear weapons. Moreover, the perception of threat also came from rival states with nuclear weapons or non-nuclear states in alliance with the nuclear state. This article uses a case study of North Korea to prove the argument the author.

**Keywords :** nuclear weapon, nuclear nonproliferation regime, nuclear politics, North Korea, Juche

**Abstrak:** Tulisan ini mencoba menjelaskan mengapa sebuah negara menolak untuk bergabung dengan rezim nonproliferasi senjata nuklir. Argumen utama dari artikel ini adalah kegagalan rezim nonproliferasi senjata nuklir untuk membuat negara-negara nuklir meninggalkan senjata nuklir mereka karena rezim tersebut tidak berhasil menyelesaikan inti permasalahan yang menjadi pemicu keputusan untuk mengembangkan senjata nuklir. Keputusan tersebut akan sulit untuk berubah ketika hal tersebut dilakukan demi mempertahankan kekuasaan domestik di dalam negara yang memiliki senjata nuklir. Terlebih persepsi ancaman yang juga datang dari negara rival yang memiliki senjata nuklir atau negara non-nuklir yang beraliansi dengan negara nuklir. Artikel ini menggunakan studi kasus Korea Utara untuk membuktikan argumen penulis.

**Kata kunci:** senjata nuklir, rezim nonproliferasi senjata nuklir, politik nuklir, korea utara, berdikari

## 1. Introduction

Nuclear weapon has created brought major influence in international politics. It shapes the interaction between states. Thus, Andrew Krepinevich (1994) argued that nuclear had brought a revolution to the use of warfare, especially after the assembling of nuclear warheads with ballistic missiles. This nuclear revolution provided the opportunity for instant and complete destruction of its target. Furthermore, it becomes a political fabric for strategic equation.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Bernard Brodie (1946) described nuclear weapon as the absolute

weapon.<sup>2</sup> It is because nuclear weapon is able to result in a catastrophic damage. The drop of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki near the end of World War II demonstrated the power of nuclear weapon. To contain such fears, the nuclear nonproliferation regime was established. However, the regime is not able to influence all of the states in the world to disarm their nuclear weapons.

Why are some states unwilling to join the nuclear nonproliferation regimes? In fact, these nuclear nonproliferation regimes offer various incentives if states are willing to join

<sup>1</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, "From Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions," in Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph A. Maiolo, (eds.), 2008, *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, p. 369

<sup>2</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, "Exploring Roles, Strategies, and Implications: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives," in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), 2008, *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia*, California: Stanford University Press, p 78

the regimes. Nevertheless, some states choose to join the nuclear nonproliferation regimes. Why are these states willing to join, while the others refuse it? If we consider states as rational actors, it will be logical to conclude that the incentives failed to attract these countries. In the sense of “stick” and “carrot”, the right “carrot” for the states which refuse nuclear nonproliferation regime is debatable. This question is central to explain the behavior of new nuclear states, such as India, Pakistan and North Korea.

The hypothesis for this paper is that states maintain their nuclear weapon because it is an instrument to ensure their security. Further, nuclear weapon ensures (or at least stimulate) the support from its people to the government since the weapon boost prestige to the owner. For this paper, I will use North Korea as a case study.

This paper will start by evaluating the nuclear non proliferation regime. The hypothesis is then assessed against the case of North Korea. Then, the paper will conclude with the implication of the findings on policy making in the nuclear nonproliferation regime.

## 2. Nuclear Weapon and International Regime

### 2.1. Why Nuclear Weapon?

According to the realist, military power is the instrument to achieve the objective in the international politics. Further, states will acquire and change the quantity and quality of the armed forces they already have. This condition is described by Barry Buzan (1987) as arms dynamics. He also presented three models to explain the arms dynamics. First, the action reaction model explains that the driving force of the arms dynamics is the competitive relations between states. Second, the domestic structure model is the driving

force of arms dynamics comprising the internal economic, organizational and political working of states. Third, technological imperative refers to the arms dynamics that is driven by the improvement of technology.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Robert Art (1980) defined the four functions of military force: defense, deterrence, compellence and “ swaggering. “ The defensive use of force refers to the deployment of military power to parry an attack and minimize damage to oneself if attacked. The deterrent use of force is the deployment of military power in order to prevent an adversary from undesired action which he might be tempted to do. This is achieved by threatening him with unacceptable punishment if he does it. Next, the term compellent explains the use of military power so as to be able to either stop an adversary from doing something that he has already undertaken or get him to do something he has not yet undertaken. The last function, swaggering refers to the use of military force for enhancing the national pride of a people or satisfy the personal ambitions of its ruler. The ruler swaggers in order to enhance the nation’s image, and bargaining power in the councils of international decision-making.<sup>4</sup> Further, Robert Art also noted, for great powers, nuclear weapons have much swagger appeal.<sup>5</sup> Thus, nuclear weapon states believe nuclear forces can leverage their security by maintaining an ability to counter particular threats; to obtain certain policy goals; display national power;

<sup>3</sup> Barry Buzan, 1987, *An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, pp 73-74

<sup>4</sup> Robert J. Art, 1980, “To What Ends Military Power?”, *International Security*, Vol.4 No.4, pp 5-11

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p.17

preserve freedom of action; or as a protection against uncertainty and risks in a changing international environment.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Art's argument also supported by Muthiah Alagappa (2008), who explained that the primary function of nuclear weapon is to ensure survival and preserve the status quo by deterring aggression (deterrence) and compelling an adversary to undo an action that seeks change in the status quo (compellence). Further, Alagappa stated that nuclear weapon can be used as a tool for coercive diplomacy, counterforce role, preserving strategic autonomy, and, power and prestige reason. He added that states use nuclear weapon to compensate their conventional power ability to achieve deterrence capability.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, according to the hard realists, states will likely pursue nuclear weapons if they engaged in enduring rivalries and protracted conflicts in the regions. On the other hand, states in areas of low or moderate conflict will less likely develop nuclear weapon.<sup>8</sup> In high-threat environment, states will pursue a 'security first' approach because they are highly focused about relative gains and less worried about the negative security externalities that they may impose on their enemies. On the contrary, states in the low and moderate conflicts zones are most likely to forgo nuclear weapon.<sup>9</sup>

As noted by Scott Sagan (1996),

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<sup>6</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, "Introduction: Investigating Nuclear Weapons in a New Era," in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), 2008, *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia*, California: Stanford University Press, p 3

<sup>7</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, "Exploring Roles, Strategies, and Implications," in pp 81-87

<sup>8</sup> TV Paul, 2000, *Power vs Prudence: Why Nations Forgo Nuclear Weapons*, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, p 5

<sup>9</sup> Ibid pp 20-22

nuclear weapon is more than instrument of national security. Sagan used the three models to explain states' choice to go nuclear. Sagan believes that nuclear weapon is more than tools of national security. This weapon is a political object of domestic political process. Further, he also noted that nuclear weapon also serves as international normative symbols of modernity and identity.<sup>10</sup> Thus, analyzing nuclear weapon proliferation phenomenon through national security point of view is not enough.

The first is the security model explains that states pursue nuclear weapon because they need to match power for power. Nuclear weapon is able to produce a massive destruction. As a result, it has a crucial element to ensure national security. Moreover, any state that looked to guard their national security must balance against any rival state that has nuclear weapons by develops a nuclear deterrent itself.<sup>11</sup>

The second is the domestic politics model says that nuclear proliferation appears as a product of bureaucratic process or political interests within the state. In this model, external threats are not the main cause to seek nuclear capabilities. The development of nuclear weapon is pushed by the elements within a state. Therefore, the domestic actors hold a crucial factor in the decision making process to pursue nuclear weapons. According to Sagan, these domestic actors are the state's nuclear energy establishment (nuclear scientists and other elements in the state-run nuclear facilities), a certain component in the

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<sup>10</sup> Scott D. Sagan, Winter 1996/7, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International security*, Vol.21, No.3 , p. 55

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.57

military (usually within the air force, but the navy occasionally interested in nuclear weapon procurement as well), and the last actor is the politicians.<sup>12</sup>

The third is the norms model sees nuclear decisions as pursuing crucial symbolic functions. The procurement of nuclear weapon is seen as a tool to boost prestige. This prestige is used to enhance the state's international influence and security.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Barry O'Neill (1999) argued that nuclear weapon is best fit as symbolic means, since it is so difficult to be used as a military instrument compares to the conventional one.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2. Evaluating Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime

After discussing the reasons that stimulate states to pursue nuclear weapon, this section will elaborate why nuclear nonproliferation regime sometimes fails to prevent nuclear weapon escalations. Since the use of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, people have been trying to prevent the spread of this absolute weapon. To some extent, they succeed in controlling the spread of nuclear weapon. Nevertheless, their efforts cannot force or attract some states to give up their nuclear choice.

The catastrophic effect of nuclear weapon created an urgency to implement disarmament of this weapon. It is assumed that a one-megaton airburst can immediately kill or wound about 50 percent of the people living within 7.5 km of ground zero. Thus, the radiation from nuclear weapon can produce casualties and downgrade the environment.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid p.63

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p.76

<sup>14</sup> Barry O'Neill, 1999, *Honor, Symbols, and War* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p.239

<sup>15</sup> James J. Wirtz, "Weapons of Mass Destruction" in Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer

Since it has the power to eradicate civilization and endanger the human race, people think that they need to implement the goal of a nuclear weapon free world.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, there is a possibility that nuclear weapon could fall into the hands of dangerous irrational actors. There is also fear from the great powers that the widely spread nuclear weapons will decrease deterrence effectiveness.<sup>17</sup> Wars could break out as a result of a failure deterrence strategy.

In order to reduce the risks of nuclear war, nuclear nonproliferation regime emerged as a solution.<sup>18</sup> Although there is no guarantee if arms race will breed a war, disarmament and arms control has become a primary tool to prevent a war.<sup>19</sup> If states join the nuclear nonproliferation regime, their decisions would provide assurance of similar behavior by other states. Further, once states enter it, the exit costs become high. The decision to leave the regime would create stronger international reaction than if it had not joined in the first place.<sup>20</sup>

To some extent, the decision to join nuclear nonproliferation regime create some

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(eds.), 2010, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, pp. 144-145

<sup>16</sup> Michael Mccgwire, 2000, "the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," in John Baylis and Robert O'Neill (eds.) *Alternative Nuclear Futures*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 145

<sup>17</sup> George P. Schultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, 2008, "Toward A Nuclear Free World," *Wall Street Journal*, January 15, p. A13

<sup>18</sup> Scott D. Sagan, "More Will Be Worse," in Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds), 2003 *The Spread Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., pp 78-79

<sup>19</sup> Coit D. Blacker and Glordia Duffy (ed.), 1984, *International Arms Control: Issues and Agreements*, California: Stanford University Press, p. 11

<sup>20</sup> Paul, *Power vs Prudence*, p.28

incentives. It secures certain international economic, financial, and political benefits that could be used to maintain domestic political support.<sup>21</sup>

However, these incentives are not enough to attract some new nuclear states to join the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Why this is happening? To answer this question, I will use Sagan's models of why states pursue nuclear weapon capabilities. In addition, this model and the hypothesis of this paper will be assessed with North Korea case study. Colin Gray (1992) explained that the arms control regime tends to focus on objectives or contingent promises, rather than upon the strategic issues of means and ends. Arms control also cannot resolve a conflict, because arms are not the heart of the problem.<sup>22</sup> In the case of North Korea's nuclear weapons procurement, its motivations to develop nuclear weapons are not merely about Pyongyang's strategic purpose, but there are also domestic politics and symbolic means.

In order to enhance Gray's explanation, I would like to add my arguments to solve the puzzle. First, nuclear nonproliferation regime does not resolve security problems of some new nuclear states. Moreover, if these new nuclear states are located in the high conflict region, denuclearization will be unlikely happen. Nevertheless, non-nuclear policy and full allegiance to the nuclear nonproliferation regime would occur only if conflict in their regions is defused.<sup>23</sup> Further, Neil Cooper

(2006) noted that disarmament and arms control are designed to support the military hegemony of the United States and the West.<sup>24</sup>

To a certain degree, the nuclear umbrella also plays an important part in this context. The US nuclear umbrella will threaten non-US ally states. Since the United States provides the protection, there is no necessity to develop nuclear capabilities for US ally states. Thus, it is a nonnuclear proliferation tool.<sup>25</sup> US nuclear umbrella does not work for these countries, and they are unlikely to forgo their nuclear weapons.

Second, nuclear states would be unwilling to join nuclear nonproliferation regime if nuclear weapon is used as a symbolic status to support the establishment of local government. In the Sagan's domestic model, as one of the actors that influenced nuclear weapons procurement decision, the politicians need the symbolic means of nuclear weapons to attract the support from the people. The leaders of these nuclear states, especially in authoritarian countries, will avoid the risk of being overthrown because they lose the support from their people.

### 3. Case Study – North Korea: Untamed “Hermit” Kingdom?

North Korea is often called as a Hermit Kingdom. This term appears because Pyongyang limited its interaction with the outside world. North Korea is one of the nuclear states members. In the last decade, it has done several missile tests. The last missile

<sup>21</sup> Etel Solingen, Fall 1994, “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No.2, p. 139

<sup>22</sup> Colin S. Gray, 1992, *House of Cards: Why Arms Control Must Fail*, New York: Cornell University Press, p. 220

<sup>23</sup> Op cit, p. 29

<sup>24</sup> Neil Cooper, “Putting Disarmament Back in the Frame,” *Review of International Studies*, 32, p. 354

<sup>25</sup> Ralph A. Cossa and Brad Glosserman, 2011, “Extended Deterrence and Disarmament: Japan and the New US Nuclear Posture,” *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol 18, no.1, p. 128

test was on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012, but this test was failed to launch.<sup>26</sup>

North Korea joined the Nuclear Nonproliferation treaty (NPT) on December 1985. However, it announced the intention to withdraw from the treaty on 1993. On October 1994, the United States and Democratic People's Republic of Korea signed the Agreed Framework between the two countries. The framework called to freeze North Korea's nuclear weapon proliferation. Nevertheless, North Korea unfreezes its nuclear program on December 2002. Finally, the DPRK announced its withdrawal from the nuclear nonproliferation on January 2003. This action is followed by several ballistic missiles tests; one of the remarkable tests was Taepodong missile test. Further, several efforts were made done to shut down North Korea's nuclear proliferation, including six party talks<sup>27</sup>. Nonetheless, the efforts seem not to have achieved the objective to resolve the crisis.

### 3.1. North Korea's Nuclear Choice

The foundations of Pyongyang's nuclear policy are *songun* (military-first) politics and *juche* (self reliance) ideology. Since the development of nuclear weapons need massive resources, *songun* politics enables the DPRK to ensure that the proliferation is supported by sufficient material. Thus, the justification to concentrate the resources in the military side is strengthened by the application of *Juche*

ideology.<sup>28</sup> These two ideologies were born as a result of the international politics dynamics around North Korea and ensure North Korea regime's survival. Moreover, North Korea security environment also played an important part to drive Pyongyang's nuclear option.<sup>29</sup>

#### 3.1.1. Juche Ideology

The word *juche* was used for the first time on December 28, 1955. It was in the speech from Kim Il Sung entitled "On the Need to Repel Dogmatism and Formalism and to Establish *Juche* in Carrying Out Ideological Programs". In that period, North Korea was starting to recover from the defeat and devastation of the Korean War. Thus, it faced declining levels of assistance from its Communist allies. Nevertheless, the implementation of *Juche* ideology actually began after December 6, 1967, when Kim Il Sung gave a speech to the first session of the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly.<sup>30</sup>

Although North Korea claims that the origins of the *Juche* ideology could be traced back to June 1930, many Western analysts of North Korean politics believed that the ideology was born as a response to cope with the Sino-Soviet conflict.<sup>31</sup> Further, Kim Il Sung made *Juche* an instrument for developing a personality cult of himself, and a means

<sup>26</sup> Alyssa New Combb, Luis Martinez, Martha Raddatz, 2012, "North Korean Rocket Launch Fails: US Officials," *ABC NEWS*. Accessed May, 19<sup>th</sup> 2012, 04 : 02 PM. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/north-korea-launches-test-rocket/story?id=16125951>

<sup>27</sup> Yoichi Funabashi, 2007, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis*, Washington: The Brooking Institution, p.477-482

<sup>28</sup> John S. Park and Dong Sun Lee, "North Korea: Existential Deterrence and Diplomatic Leverage," in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), 2008, *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia*, California: Stanford University Press, p.275

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ilpyong J. Kim, "Kim Jong Il's Military-First Politics," in Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim (eds.), 2006, *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival*, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc, p. 62

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

defining DPRK 'independence' and 'separateness' from both the Soviet Union and China.<sup>32</sup> Actually North Korea adopted Marxism-Leninism as its ruling philosophy when it proclaimed the country, an establishment on September 7, 1948. Consequently, the Juche ideology has developed into a state ideology that the North Koreans represent as a higher form of Marxism-Leninism. Juche was a creative application of Marxism-Leninism to fit into the local condition in DPRK.<sup>33</sup>

Juche starts from the proposition that humans are masters of all things and are uniquely endowed among all the creatures of nature. Thus, humans (according to juche ideology) have three special attributes: *chajusong* (the spirit of independence and self reliance), creativity and consciousness of their own identity and potential. The doctrine also emphasized the importance of the popular masses. However, the masses cannot succeed in their struggle without a uniquely qualified leader to interpret, give form to their aspirations and direct their efforts. Kim Il-sung (followed by his son Kim Jong Il, and now his grandchildren, Kim Jong Un) was such a leader.<sup>34</sup> Kim Il Sung declared Juche as independence in politics, self sustenance in the economy and self defence in national security.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Young Whan Kihl, "Staying Power of the Socialist 'Hermit Kingdom'" in Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim (eds.) *North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc; 2006) p. 7

<sup>33</sup> Donald N. Clark (ed.), 1996, *The Koreans: Contemporary Politics and Society, third edition*, Colorado: Westview Press, p. 166

<sup>34</sup> Ibid p. 170

<sup>35</sup> Charles K. Amstrong, "A Socialism of Our Style: North Korean ideology in a Post-Communist Era," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), 1998, *North Korean Foreign Relations In The Post-*

As North Korea's national strategy, at the very least, Juche refers to state survival and protection of national sovereignty.<sup>36</sup> Otherwise, Juche doctrine aims to be the force to lead North Korea towards the strongest position in the world.<sup>37</sup> Besides that North Korea Realized the importance of ideology as a means of political control in the DPRK.<sup>38</sup>

The Juche ideology becomes a drive to make North Korea a global major power, while at the same time, it ensures the survival of the Kim's authoritarian regime in North Korea. As a result, nuclear weapons, as the absolute weapon, become a prominent tool to achieve the objective to become a global major power. Thus, nuclear weapons, at least, would be able to guarantee the survival of North Korea. The Juche ideology also provides justification for the allocation of resources towards the advancement of the nuclear weapon program.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.1.2. Songun Policy

The leadership of the Kim's family in North Korea adopted a totalitarianism regime style. It consists of six characteristics of totalitarianism as identified by Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. North Korea has an absolute dictator and mass party; an elaborate ideology; its people live in a condition of terror of a repressive coercive apparatus with a

*Cold War Era*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p.36

<sup>36</sup> Victor D. Cha, 2002 "North Korea's Weapon of Mass Destruction: Badges, Shields, or Swords?" *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 117, No. 2, p. 214

<sup>37</sup> Samuel S. Kim, "In Search of a Theory of North Korean Foreign Policy," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), 1998, *North Korean Foreign Relations In The Post-Cold War Era*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p.3

<sup>38</sup> Amstrong, "A Socialism of Our Style: North Korean Ideology in a Post-Communist Era," p.34

<sup>39</sup> Park and Lee, "North Korea: Existential Deterrence and Diplomatic Leverage," p. 275

centralized economy; and there is total control of the media of mass communication by the local government.<sup>40</sup>

In order to gain elite loyalty, especially the Korean People's Army (KPA), all the top officers in KPA gained luxury gifts from the government. Further, Kim Jong Il declared *Songun-chongci* (military-first policy) on October 20, 1998. It is believed in that period that Kim Jong Il have lost confidence in the old cadres who were associated with his father. A number of defectors appeared at that time, especially professor of Juche ideology at Kim Il Sung University, Hwang Jang Yop.<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, Kim Jon Il tried to develop a critical base to support him. The "military-first" policy indicated that the important entity (the authoritarian government main supporter) is no longer the Korean Worker's Party, but the Korean People's Army. Although the apparatus from the party appears to be loyal to the local regime, its allegiance to Kim Jong Il probably is not as strong as it was to his father. Meanwhile, soldiers, in particular, appear to be extremely local by most accounts, even though there have been some defections within the armed forces.<sup>42</sup> Kim Jong il was also determined that political power should be derived from the support of the North Korean military forces.<sup>43</sup>

Through the Songun policy, North Korea emphasized development in the military sector. The implementation of this policy is supported by the Juche ideology. Despite great economic problems, Kim's regime has been

able to configure and implement its nuclear policy. The leadership of the Kim's regime in North Korea would be dependent on the management and maintenance of the system, thereby boosting prospects for the survival of Kim's family in the North Korea's throne.<sup>44</sup> As noted by one of North Korean defectors, Yim Yong Son, the officers and soldiers of the KPA are proud of the development of nuclear and chemical weapons.<sup>45</sup> In this case, nuclear weapon plays an important part in ensuring loyalty from the armed forces.

### 3.1.3. North Korea's Security Environment

There are at least three security aspects in the consideration for North Korea to pursue nuclear weapon. The first aspect is the huge development gap between DPRK and the Republic of Korea; the second, the fall of Soviet Union; and the third aspect, the United States hostile policy toward Pyongyang.

Gap between DPRK and ROK. North Korea began to develop nuclear weapon in 1980s. It is believed that one of the reasons of nuclear weapon proliferation was the reaction to South Korea's development. Seoul was able to overtake and surpass Pyongyang's development in the late 1970s.<sup>46</sup> The two Koreas have been involved in intense international competition for legitimacy, prestige and support. The confrontation in the Korean Peninsula has been happening since 1948.<sup>47</sup> Since 1948, DPRK had set the goal for

<sup>44</sup> Park and Lee, "North Korea: Existential Deterrence and Diplomatic Leverage," p. 275

<sup>45</sup> Michael J. Mazarr, 1995, *North Korea and The Bomb: A Case Study in Nonproliferation*, New York: St. Martin Press, p. 101

<sup>46</sup> David Kang, "North Korea's Military and Security Policy," in Samuel S. Kim (ed.), 1998, *North Korean Foreign Relations In The Post-Cold War Era*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 180

<sup>47</sup> Clark, *The Koreans: Contemporary and Politics*

<sup>40</sup> Andrew Scobell, March 2006, "Kim Jong Il and North Korea: The Leader and The System," *The Strategic Studies Institute*, p.3

<sup>41</sup> Ilpyong J. Kim, "Kim Jong Il's Military-First Politics," p. 65

<sup>42</sup> Op cit p.25

<sup>43</sup> Op cit.p.66



“victorious unification” (*songong t’ongil*) over South Korea. However, with the widening gap between the two of them, the idea to overthrow the South and unify the peninsula by DPRK seems difficult to obtain.<sup>48</sup>

The fall of Soviet Union The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War created a massive impact on North Korea’s security environment. These circumstances undermined North Korea’s position in the international politics. Moreover, the Soviet Union’s successor, Russia chose to normalize relations with Seoul on September 1990. The worst condition for DPRK was when Russia declared not to honor Soviet Cold War security agreements to DPRK defence.<sup>49</sup>

The United States’ hostile policy towards Pyongyang. The threat to use nuclear weapons during the Korean War and the deployment of nuclear weapon system in South Korea by the U.S. produced North Korea’s sense of vulnerability to the U.S. attacks.<sup>50</sup> Further, the axis of evil branding to DPRK by George W. Bush added Pyongyang’s insecurity.<sup>51</sup> As noted by North Korean Foreign Ministry on January 13, 2010 that North Korea will probably no longer require nuclear weapons, if the US nuclear threat is abolished and removed its nuclear umbrella from South Korea.<sup>52</sup> Even though this factor cannot be counted as the main trigger of Pyongyang’s nuclear decision, Washington’s hostility takes a part in DPRK’s nuclear

development.<sup>53</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion and Policy Implications

As opposed to the liberalist’s view that state will join the international regime to enhance perpetual peace; this paper finds that nuclear states would not join the nuclear nonproliferation regime if there are no guarantees for their security. Furthermore, the local regime or government’s survivability must be counted as a consideration. Nuclear weapon, as the absolute weapon, provides a deterrence strategy to deter an attack from the adversaries. The North Korea case study has shown that nuclear weapon gives guarantee for the local regime or government longevity. Even though nuclear weapon acquisition in North Korea created a negative impact for its economy, DPRK has a bargaining power because of nuclear weapon.

Nuclear nonproliferation regime must evaluate their “stick and carrot” strategy. Using financial gains as an incentive to attract states to forgo their nuclear proliferation is not the best way, because it does not resolve the security problem. Further, nuclear non proliferation regime should consider the local regime or government survivability factor in the negotiation table.

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*and Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition pp 234-235

<sup>48</sup> Cha, “ North Korea’s Weapon of Mass Destruction: Badges, Shields, or Swords?” p. 215

<sup>49</sup> Ibid p. 218

<sup>50</sup> Park and Lee, “ North Korea: Existential Deterrence and Diplomatic Leverage,” p. 270

<sup>51</sup> Op Cit p. 209

<sup>52</sup> *East Asian Strategic Review 2010*, The National Institute for Defense Studies Japan, May 2010, p.72

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<sup>53</sup> Dingli Shen, 2008, “China Nuclear Perspective: Deterrence, Reduction, Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament,” *Strategic Analysis*, Vol 32, no.4, p.640

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