The Future of American Foreign Policy Towards North Korea

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**Introduction**

On March 12, 2004, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun was impeached by the parliament for election-law violations, incompetence, and corruption. The impeachment of President Roh, who had favored a policy of openness and engagement towards North Korea, prompted a stern response from the North Korean government. The government immediately claimed that the impeachment, which was initiated by Roh’s conservative opposition, was an attempt by the United States to “install an ultra-right pro-U.S. regime” in Seoul.¹ The government went onto state, “The Korean people, who consider independence to be their life and soul, are keeping a close eye on the U.S. move, while further strengthening the self-defense nuclear deterrent to cope with them.”² This development is the latest escalation in a tense standoff between the United States and North Korea that has emerged during the Bush administration.

This standoff has centered on the North Korean nuclear weapons program, which North Korea restarted in 2002 in response to what it perceived as hostile action by the Bush administration. During this standoff, it has become common practice for the North Korean government to reference its “nuclear deterrent” as a means to respond to the United States. It is somewhat ambiguous what North Korea means by this phrase, but, based on its statements and the potential of its nuclear weapons program, it is increasingly likely that North Korea is referring to its possession of actual nuclear weapons. The possible attainment of nuclear weapons by North Korea was not the outcome that the U.S. intended when it embarked in a determined way to prevent North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons in 1993 during a similar standoff.
In 1993, North Korea announced its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to produce nuclear weapons. The Clinton administration concluded that the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea would pose a threat to the United States’ interests on the Korean peninsula. Clinton stated that the goals of the United States were clear -- "a non-nuclear peninsula and a strong international non-proliferation regime. To these ends we are prepared to discuss with North Korea a thorough, broad approach to the issues that divide us and, once and for all, to resolve the nuclear issue." The United States, therefore, undertook negotiations with North Korea for more than a year in an attempt to prevent the state from pursuing nuclear weapons. The negotiations proceeded slowly. As it began to appear that the two states would not reach an agreement, the U.S. prepared to take preventative military action against North Korean nuclear facilities. Intervention by former President Jimmy Carter prevented the need for such action. He traveled to North Korea and spoke with Kim Il Sung, the leader of the North Korean government. Carter convinced Kim Il Sung to return to the negotiating table and work towards an agreement. The subsequent negotiations produced the 1994 Agreed Framework under which North Korea pledged to freeze its nuclear weapons program and over time dismantle its weapons facilities in exchange for U.S. energy assistance.

This agreement began to dissolve in early 2002 when the Bush administration labeled North Korea part of the “axis of evil” along with Iraq and Iran. This was a label that North Korea did not respond well to. The Agreed Framework completely unraveled later in 2002 when the Bush administration accused North Korea (now led by Kim Jong Il, the son of the late Kim Il Sung) of cheating on the agreement by beginning a covert
nuclear weapons program in 1997, a charge that North Korea appeared to concede. The Bush administration then abandoned the Agreed Framework and refused to deal with North Korea until it dismantled its nuclear weapons program. North Korea responded by restarting its nuclear weapons program and demanding that the United States return to the Agreed Framework. This was the beginning of the current standoff in which the two states have consistently exchanged hostile rhetoric and taken actions to counter each other’s objectives.

During the past year, the two states have made several attempts to resolve the current situation through multilateral negotiations that included Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea. After three rounds of negotiations, little progress has been made. The most recent negotiations ended in frustration when the U.S. demanded that North Korea undertake the “complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling” of all nuclear facilities before the U.S. would offer any concessions while North Korea maintained that it would dismantle nothing until it received economic aid and security assurances from the U.S. The next round of negotiations is set to take place in July of 2004, but given the continued hostilities and the stances of the two governments, it seems unlikely that any progress will be made during these negotiations.

Why is the United States so concerned with North Korea’s potential nuclear proliferation? Based on statements made by the Bush and Clinton administrations, the answer is simple: The U.S. simply does not trust North Korea with nuclear weapons. From a U.S. viewpoint, the secretive and unpredictable nature of the government coupled with its massive domestic problems make North Korea a potential supplier of nuclear weapons to terrorists and states that support terrorists. For the same reasons, the U.S.
views North Korea as a state that would consider the hostile use of nuclear weapons. Additionally, other states share these U.S. concerns about North Korean proliferation. These concerns could lead other states to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrent to North Korean capabilities. This would destabilize the international non-proliferation regime. The Clinton administration voiced these concerns about North Korea in 1993-94. The Bush administration has voiced these concerns repeatedly throughout the current standoff.

If the North Korean situation continues to develop along its current course, these U.S. concerns may become realities. As previously stated, North Korea has already claimed that it has a “nuclear deterrent.” As ambiguous as this term may be, it seems clear by this and other statements that if North Korea does not already have nuclear weapons, it will have them soon. It is clear that if the United States wishes to meet its stated objective of keeping the Korean peninsula nuclear free, then it needs to act quickly. Judging from the series of events that have taken place over the last two years, it does not appear that the Bush administration’s foreign policy strategy is adequate for meeting this goal in a timely manner. The administration has made little progress since the standoff began while North Korea has moved consistently closer to the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

It is, therefore, the task of this thesis to analyze the current North Korean nuclear dilemma and, based on this analysis, develop a comprehensive American foreign policy strategy to effectively resolve it. This strategy will be aimed at immediately halting further developments in the weapons program and terminating the program over time. Ideally, the United States should have a plan to present to the North Korean government
by the July round of negotiations to prevent further developments in the North Korean nuclear program.

**The Crafting of an Effective Foreign Policy**

It is the goal of this thesis to conduct an in depth and broad analysis of the current nuclear standoff between North Korea and the United States. This analysis will be conducted throughout the course of four chapters. Each chapter has a specific and necessary purpose in the development of the foreign policy. The chapters are aimed at gaining an understanding of the North Korean situation and the options that exist for the United States. This analysis will enable the crafting of comprehensive foreign policy strategy in the fifth and final chapter. An overview of the course that this thesis will take in developing this strategy is presented below.

**NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS** - The intention of this chapter will be to develop a framework in which to undertake the subsequent analysis. To achieve this aim, this chapter will examine the dynamics of the nuclear proliferation debate among policymakers and scholars. Specifically, it will examine the competing theoretical models for the motives of nuclear proliferation and the two contending schools of thought regarding nuclear proliferation in general; namely, nuclear proliferation pessimism and optimism. It will be imperative in crafting a foreign policy that deals with North Korea to understand the possible motives of the state and how best to address them from a U.S. standpoint. Similarly, an investigation must be made into whether or not the United States should oppose nuclear proliferation or not. Nuclear proliferation pessimists believe that the United States should oppose proliferation while
nuclear proliferation optimists assert the contrary position. These analyses are fundamental to the development of an effective foreign policy.

**NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM: CONTEXT, MOTIVES, CAPABILITIES, AND RISKS** - The purpose of this chapter is clear. In order to craft an effective foreign policy, the specifics of the North Korean case must be examined. This chapter will investigate the North Korean case in four ways. First, the historical context in which the North Korean nuclear weapons program was developed will be examined. Second, an analysis of the North Korean government’s motives for developing this program will be undertaken. The theoretical models developed in the previous chapter will be applied in this analysis. Third, an assessment will be made of the capabilities of the state’s nuclear weapons program. Lastly, the risks associated with North Korean nuclear proliferation will be investigated. This investigation will draw on the arguments of the nuclear proliferation optimists and pessimists. This chapter will attempt to develop an understanding of the North Korean nuclear weapons program, so that the United States can better address the problems posed by its development.

**THE UNITED STATES: GOALS, SUCCESSES, AND FAILURES** – This chapter will examine the foreign policy of the United States towards North Korea during the Clinton and Bush administrations. These policies will be examined to ascertain their successes and failures. The policies will be assessed in two ways. They will be assessed in terms of their success at meeting the goals of the respective administrations, and they will be assessed in terms of their success at moving towards a permanent resolution of the North Korean situation. The objective of this analysis is two-fold. First, this analysis will identify policies in both administrations that have succeeded and failed. This
understanding of what works with North Korea and what does not will be useful in deciding which policy options the U.S. should pursue in the future. Second, as will be shown, the goals of the two administrations have not always been consistent. The divergent policies of the administrations reflect this fact. It will, thus, be important for this analysis to clearly define the goals of the United States regarding North Korea in order to gain a firm understanding of what this policy is meant to accomplish. This chapter will put forth options that should and should not be pursued as policy. Additionally, it will offer the policy an overall direction.

**OTHER UNITED STATES. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS –** This chapter will undertake a discussion of U.S. policy considerations that are relevant to the development of an effective foreign policy towards North Korea, but have not been discussed in the previous three chapters. Specifically, this chapter will discuss three main policy considerations. First, it will discuss the views of Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea regarding the North Korean situation. These are the four other nations that are taking part in the multilateral negotiations in addition to the United States and North Korea. For reasons to be discussed, the United States is going to have to take the views of these states into account in its foreign policy towards North Korea. Second, the Bush administration’s proposal for a national missile defense (NMD) system will be discussed in order to establish whether or not this is a viable option for dealing with the North Korean situation. Lastly, an investigation into the unique stability of the North Korean government in the face of enormous domestic troubles will be undertaken. This stability may limit the ability of the U.S. to pursue certain policy options. All of these issues are
highly relevant to current North Korean situation and will, thus, significantly influence the options available to the U.S. regarding North Korea.

THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY REGARDING NORTH KOREA - In the final chapter of this thesis, the analytic conclusions of the previous chapters will be synthesized into the development of a detailed step-by-step foreign policy strategy by which the United States can achieve its to be defined goals regarding North Korea. An explanation of why this method is best suited for diffusing the nuclear standoff will follow. A step-by-step contingency plan will then be put forth in case this strategy fails. This thesis is designed to develop the best foreign policy strategy possible. It is, nonetheless, a reality that this strategy may fail due to reasons beyond the control of the United States. A contingency plan must, therefore, be developed, so that the United States will not be caught off guard in the event of such a failure. This contingency plan will also be based on the analytic conclusions that will be drawn throughout the analysis. It is hoped that by putting forth this comprehensive foreign policy plan and a contingency plan that the United States will be able to permanently resolve the current North Korean situation.

Concluding Remarks

The task that will be undertaken in this thesis is difficult. There is a great deal of debate among both policymakers and scholars about the best way for the United States to proceed regarding North Korea. This debate stems not just from the specifics of the North Korean situation, but also from a broader controversy over the dynamics of nuclear proliferation. Furthermore, the stakes are very high in this situation. No one is sure what North Korea will do once it has nuclear weapons, but it is certain that the United States
wants to prevent the world from having to find out. Time is running out if the U.S. wishes to achieve this goal. A timely and effective strategy for resolving this situation must be found.

Many scholars and policymakers have offered solutions to this problem based on their particular view of the situation and the dynamics of proliferation. This analysis will attempt to examine this wide array of views in order to impartially determine the best course of action for the U.S. to take. It is hoped that by undertaking such a broad investigation that this analysis will be able to conclusively refute some of these views and conclusively support others. By doing so, this analysis is aimed at not only pushing the United States closer to a resolution of this situation, but also at pressing the debate surrounding nuclear proliferation and, specifically, the North Korean case forward.

With such a difficult situation, an effective strategy for reaching a resolution can only be reached through much discussion and debate. This debate has taken place for more than a decade. It seems that it is time for a conclusion to be reached. If a conclusion is not reached in a timely manner, North Korea will attain nuclear weapons and all the discussion and debate will have been for nothing. This thesis is aimed at ensuring that does not happen. It will either set forth a plan that the United States will follow to a resolution, or it will set forth a plan that will drive the current debate towards the development of a strategy that the U.S. can follow towards such a purpose. This is the overall objective of this thesis.
Notes


2 Ibid


4 “North Korea Raises Nuclear Tension.”
Chapter One

Nuclear Proliferation: A Theoretical Analysis

Prior to engaging in the task of developing a specific policy that addresses the North Korean dilemma, it is first necessary to establish the framework in which this policy will be developed. Largely due to the lack of empirical evidence, there is currently a contentious theoretical debate on the subject of nuclear proliferation. This debate is two-fold. There is significant dissension among both policymakers and nuclear proliferation scholars concerning: (1) the causes of nuclear proliferation and how to address them from a U.S. policy standpoint; and (2) whether or not nuclear proliferation should be opposed by the U.S. in general. Both of these debates have fundamental implications for U.S. foreign policy towards North Korea.

Regarding the first debate, it is imperative that the motives of North Korea are determined and a method for dealing with these motives developed before an effective policy can be crafted. Similarly, in regard to the second debate, a firm understanding of the nuclear proliferation debate must be attained in order to construct this policy. If the U.S. opposes nuclear proliferation in general, its policy towards North Korea will look markedly different than if the U.S. does not oppose proliferation. The examination of these debates will significantly impact the course of development that this analysis takes. This chapter will examine the abovementioned debates by comparing, contrasting, and assessing the major theories that have been put forth by nuclear proliferation scholars. The framework in which the rest of this analysis is to be conducted will then be discussed.
The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation

There are approximately thirty states that have the “industrial infrastructure and scientific expertise to build nuclear weapons on a crash basis if they chose to do so.”¹ Not all of these states have chosen to build nuclear weapons, though. There are only eight states that are declared nuclear powers. Why do some states choose to build nuclear weapons while others choose to remain non-nuclear states? Many theoretical models have been developed to answer this question. For the purpose of this analysis, it will be valuable to examine four predominant models regarding the motives of nuclear proliferation: the security model, the domestic politics model, the norms model, and the economic liberalization model. The first three models are drawn largely from the work of Scott Sagan, who has made an effort to comparatively categorize the pertinent arguments surrounding this debate. The fourth model, developed by Etel Solingen, is highly relative to North Korean case, and has, thus, been included in this analysis.²

Since the beginning of the nuclear age, the security model has been the dominant model that has been used to explain nuclear proliferation. It is still the dominant model among policymakers in the United States. It stresses the importance of a state’s national security and sovereignty considerations in its decision to develop nuclear weapons. The domestic politics model, on the other hand, maintains that it is not enough to examine external factors in a state’s decision to develop nuclear weapons. The interests of bureaucracies and political leaders must be considered because they may be driving forces for a state’s nuclear ambitions. Following from the domestic politics model, the economic liberalization model examines domestic politics in terms of international economic liberalization. This model argues that states with governments dominated by
Since the dawn of the nuclear age, the security model has been the dominant model concerning the causes of nuclear proliferation:

Many U.S. policymakers and most international relations scholars have a clear and simple answer to the proliferation puzzle: states will seek to develop nuclear weapons when they face a significant military threat to their security that cannot be met through alternative means; if they do not face such threats, they will willingly remain non-nuclear states. 3

This model purports that the international system of states is anarchic. In order for a state to maintain its national security and sovereignty in this system, a state must rely on self-help practices. In other words, a state must seek to make itself as strong as possible to
balance threats from other states. Every state will seek to become the strongest state in this system because being the strongest state means being the most secure. If a state cannot become the strongest or strong enough, then it must seek to ally itself with a stronger state that can protect it.\(^4\)

Pertaining to nuclear weapons, this logic shows not only why nuclear weapons have spread, but also why they were developed in the first place. In order to restore stability to the international level during World War II, all of the major powers in the war (the United States, Soviet Union, England, Britain, and Japan) sought to develop nuclear weapons to gain an upper hand on their opponents. The United States developed nuclear weapons first because it invested in the program more and happened to make the right technological and organizational decisions. The attainment of nuclear weapons by the U.S. ended the war between the United States and Japan, and made the U.S. the dominant state in the international system. The new power status of the United States was threatening to other states in the system, especially the Soviet Union, which was the chief rival of the U.S. after World War II:

Every time one state develops nuclear weapons to balance against its main rival, it also creates a nuclear threat to another state in the region, which then has to initiate its own nuclear weapons program to maintain its national security. From this perspective, one can envision the history of nuclear proliferation as a strategic chain reaction.\(^5\)

The Soviet decision to build nuclear weapons in turn encouraged England and Paris to build nuclear weapons in response. China built nuclear weapons because it felt threatened by the United States after the U.S. considered using nuclear weapons against it at the end of the Korean War. India developed the weapons in response to China, who it
had recently fought a war with, which prompted Pakistan to build nuclear weapons, and so on.

From this perspective, the U.S. policy of opposing nuclear proliferation can only slow proliferation. The U.S. can only offer so much in terms of security guarantees, and nuclear proliferation treaties, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), can only make a state feel secure for so long. If the security environment changes and a state feels that there is an increasing threat, it may decide that it needs its own nuclear arsenal and opt out of international agreements restraining nuclear development. This states decision to build nuclear weapons will alter the security environment of other nations around it, which then may make similar decisions. The security model assumes that nuclear proliferation is inevitable.  

The domestic politics model shifts the focus from the external factors of the security model to internal factors: “Whether or not the acquisition of nuclear weapons serves the national interests of a state, it is likely to serve the parochial bureaucratic or political interests of at least some individual actors within the state.” This model argues that there are certain individuals or groups within a state that will benefit from the development of nuclear weapons, and these people push the state to develop nuclear weapons even if it is not in the state’s best interests. These driving influences characteristically appear in three areas within a state: the state’s nuclear energy establishment, influential parts of the professional military, and politicians in states where special interests or the general public favors nuclear weapons.  

Nuclear weapons can bring prominence and new challenges to all three groups. This alone may be their motivation to pursue the weapons: “When such actors form
coalitions that are strong enough to control the government’s decision-making process [...] nuclear weapons are likely to thrive.”^9 This model suggests that states may develop nuclear weapons even if it does not face external threats or even if nuclear weapons do not enhance its security against external threats: “Instead, nuclear weapons program are solutions looking for a problem to which to attach themselves so as to justify their existence.”^10 In order to promote their interest in developing nuclear weapons, these coalitions may seek to exaggerate, exploit, or create security threats for their benefit. They will present the benefits of nuclear weapons as far outweighing the costs in order to sway those around them.

The policy implications of this model are somewhat limited because it can be very difficult for the U.S. to alter domestic influences. Sagan argues that the best thing for the United States to do is support coalitions in these states that oppose the development of nuclear weapons. This includes inducing monetary penalties for developing nuclear weapons programs in the form of reduced international loans, providing coalitions with more accurate information about the costs and benefits of the program, and most importantly leading by example. The U.S. should adhere to international agreements regarding nuclear weapons, work to reduce its nuclear arsenal, and pledge that it will not use nuclear weapons first. It is evident, though, that this model clearly limits the options for the U.S. to control nuclear proliferation.

One major fault of the domestic politics model, which Sagan points out, is that it is not very well developed. Despite empirical evidence that supports this model (discussed later in this chapter), there is no adequate domestic politics model that identifies under what conditions these coalitions will form and gain enough power to
bring about the development of nuclear weapons. The work of Etel Solingen, however, does develop a model that establishes the circumstances under which coalitions will gain enough power to influence a country’s nuclear development. Her model focuses on economically based coalitions, though, rather than the coalitions discussed in the domestic politics model. Nonetheless, the economic liberalization model does seem to draw somewhat on the domestic politics model.

The economic liberalization model is designed to address states that Solingen terms “fence sitters,” that is states that have the ability to develop nuclear weapons, but have not yet proceeded with their development. This model proposes that states whose governments are heavily influenced and dominated by coalitions favoring economic liberalization are much less likely to develop nuclear weapons or maintain an ambiguous nuclear status. For this model to hold, these states do not have to have liberal economies yet, nor do they have to be democracies, but the dominant coalitions in the government do have to favor liberalization. Coalitions in a state that favor liberalization are typically made up of people and groups seeking to maximize the benefit of open markets, such as liquid-asset holders, large banking and industrial complexes, state monetary agencies, highly-skilled laborers, and other groups “oriented towards an open global economic and knowledge system.”

The ability of these coalitions to influence the government will determine the government’s disposition towards economic liberalization.

This notion that pro-liberalization governments will not build nuclear weapons is based on two assumptions. First, these governments are tied to economic and other international processes that affect their perception of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in terms of trade-offs: “For example, a state’s decision to maintain
ambiguity in nuclear intentions […] has involved, since the 1970s, a series of trade-offs: access to international markets, capital, investments, and technology has been curtailed, directly and indirectly.”12 On the contrary, if a state chooses not to develop nuclear weapons despite the fact that it has the capability to do so, it can expect the opposite reaction from the international community: “A policy of nuclear disarmament enhances their status with international institutions and powerful states, who associate these coalitions with the promise of democracy, rationalization, and regional cooperation.”13 This model suggests that the goals of nuclear proliferation and economic liberalization are not reconcilable for a state.

Second, governments in favor of economic liberalization pay attention not only to international constraints brought about by nuclear weapons, but also to domestic constraints:

For instance, the political effects of doing away with nuclear ambiguity often includes the weakening of state bureaucracies and industrial complexes that constitute an impediment to economic rationalization. Conversely, denuclearization tends to be part of a broader program of domestic reform that strengthens market-oriented forces and the political entrepreneurs and central economic institutions promoting their development.14

The development of nuclear weapons programs will only strengthen domestic forces that constrain economic liberalization, such as state control and unproductive military investments. These domestic forces are often, at least, partly responsible for the economic problems of these states that coalitions in favor of liberalization seek to remedy. Therefore, from both a domestic and international standpoint, it appears to be in the best interest of a state seeking economic liberalization to definitively renounce its nuclear weapons program.
This model also proposes an alternative argument addressing states that are inclined to build nuclear weapons; namely, states that are dominated by “inward-looking, nationalist, and radical-confessional coalitions.”\textsuperscript{15} These coalitions normally include two types of groups and people. First, there are those that are affected by the “distributional consequences of economic liberalization,” such as blue-collar workers, white-collar state employees, small businesses, import-competing firms, and politicians that rely on the state bureaucracy for political patronage. These groups are opposed to economic liberalization because of how it affects them in terms of power and economic stability. Second, there are nationalist coalitions (prevalent in the Middle East and South Asia) that attract extremist religious movements, which “thrive on popular resentment over adjustment policies they regard as externally-imposed, reliance on foreign investment, and the ‘Western’ principles and norms embodied in most international governments.”\textsuperscript{16}

These coalitions label economic liberalization as intrinsically flawed because it comes from the West, and may oppose it solely on this basis. They desire to have self-sufficient and self-deterministic governments and will spread myths “that justify the allocation of state resources to the wide array of interests backing an inward-looking strategy.”\textsuperscript{17} Governments influenced by these two types of coalitions are much more likely to develop nuclear weapons or maintain an ambiguous nuclear status because they are not beholden to the same international institutions and norms that the pro-liberalization coalitions are. In addition, these governments may see nuclear weapons programs as a way to stand opposed to the international community, as a way to demonstrate to their citizens that the West does not influence them, or as a way to gain respect or attention from the international community.
This model states that governments dominated by coalitions in favor of economic liberalization will recognize the benefits of refraining from nuclear weapons development and that states dominated by inward-looking coalitions will not. This translates into U.S. policy considerations in a very important way. The U.S. must realize that many of these dominant pro-liberalization coalitions face fierce competition in their state. For these coalitions to remain the dominant influence over the government, real benefits must be realized from their policy in favor of economic liberalization. The U.S. must encourage economic liberalization by doing more than engaging these countries economically. It must also encourage the institutional organizations that provide credit, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and define the terms for trade and investment, such as the World Trade Organization, to refrain from imposing harsh structural changes on countries seeking to liberalize their economies. The U.S. should also encourage these institutions to promote more even economic distribution within these countries and throughout the world. Otherwise, it likely that domestic opposition will undermine these coalitions by painting them as self-serving subordinates of the international community. The U.S. must ensure that its policy and that of international institutions helps strengthen domestic coalitions favoring liberalization rather than undermining them.

The final model to be discussed for the purpose of this analysis is the norms model. This model considers nuclear weapons in terms of their symbolic value for a state at the international level. It is the “deeper norms and shared beliefs” of a state regarding weapons acquisition that will influence its decision to develop nuclear weapons. The model goes beyond just looking at the interests of coalitions, governments, and
individuals to examine where these interests come from and how they are shaped, that is the root causes of the interests:

Individuals and organizations may well have ‘interests,’ but such interests are shaped by the social roles actors are asked to play, are pursued according to habits and routines as much as through reasoned decisions, and are embedded in a social environment that promotes certain structures and behaviors as rational and legitimate and denigrates others as irrational and primitive.¹⁸

These norms developed within the international social environment will shape a state’s perceptions of the world, and these perceptions will determine the way a state proceeds in its nuclear weapons development. If a state views the development of nuclear weapons as appropriate “modern” behavior, that is if a state believes that nuclear weapons are “part of what modern states […] have to possess to be legitimate, modern states,”¹⁹ then they may choose to build these weapons. In other words, the way in which other states, especially powerful states, portray nuclear weapons may have an impact on the way they are viewed by a certain state. The norms that powerful states create will affect the perceptions of all states.

William Long and Suzette Grillot expand on this model in their work, setting forth a derivation of the norms model, which they term the ideational model. This model examines why states may respond in different ways to changing international norms. They say that a state forms preferences based on its basic interests and causal beliefs:

We maintain that [basic interests] are what Jeffery Frieden calls ‘tastes,’ basic desires that motivate behavior in a wide variety of situations. Causal beliefs are ‘beliefs about the cause-effect relationships which derive authority from the shared consensus of recognized elites.’ In short, preferences combine basic interests and ideas or beliefs.²⁰

Based on these preferences, states will pursue strategies. States do not have a predisposition towards one strategy or another, but rather pursue strategies based on what
it believes the best-suited course is to meet its underlying goals and preferences. States will change strategies when the environment around them changes because a change in environment may change a state’s notion of the efficacy of its current strategy in meeting its preferences. The change in environment referred to in this model is equivalent to the change in international norms discussed in the norms model. This model highlights the notion that not all states will respond in the same way to the changing international norms. States will respond based on their preferences. This is an important contribution to the norms model; thus, this analysis will define the norms model as taking into account both the international norms about nuclear proliferation and a state’s preferences.\textsuperscript{21}

The norms model suggests that U.S. policy must realize that the international norms that it is helping to create regarding nuclear weapons can have profound impact on a state’s decision to build nuclear weapons. The U.S. will not be able to convince other nations that nuclear weapons do not bring about international prestige and power, if the United States continues to use nuclear weapons for those purposes:

Leaders of non-nuclear states are much less likely to consider their own acquisition of nuclear weapons to deter adversaries with chemical and biological weapons illegitimate and ill-advised if the greatest conventional military power in the world can not refrain from making such threats.\textsuperscript{22}

For instance, the U.S. first-use doctrine shows that the United States is willing to use nuclear weapons as leverage over other states. Why should smaller states refrain from doing the same? Another policy implication concerns the desire for prestige. If this is of major concern to a state seeking nuclear weapons, the U.S. should seek alternative methods of raising international prestige while attempting to change this norm regarding nuclear proliferation.
This model is cautiously optimistic that policy can prevent nuclear proliferation by creating international norms against it. This viewpoint extols the virtues of the NPT and other international agreements, which are working to create a norm against nuclear proliferation. The addition of the ideational model to the norms model does, however, caution against assuming that every nation will react to this change in norms the same way. They state that the U.S. should “caution against sweeping generalizations regarding the inevitable pressure for nuclear weapons proliferation or denuclearization in a post-Cold War world.” What will be most important according to this model is that policymakers take into account the underlying norms causing states to build nuclear weapons and find ways to address them, whether its building confidence in international nonproliferation governments or helping to build a state’s international prestige.

Now that these four models have been explained, the question must be posed: Which of the models is right? It will be constructive to examine empirical evidence regarding nuclear proliferation to determine this. For reasons to be discussed below, this analysis will only discuss one empirical case: South Africa. South Africa began an ambiguous nuclear weapons program in the 1970s and developed six weapons before 1980, when the program was halted. These weapons were stored disassembled until 1991 when South Africa destroyed its arsenal and made the decision to join the NPT as a non-nuclear state. Each of the four models above offer some explanation to explain this case. The three other models use a refutation of the security model as the starting point for their analysis. The discussion will, thus, begin by presenting and critiquing the security model position.
The security model proposes that South Africa built its nuclear weapons in response to a threat from the Soviet Union. South African government statements about the program seem to support this models claim:

As President F.W. de Klerk explained in his speech to Parliament in March 1993, the Pretoria government saw a growing ‘Soviet expansionist threat to southern Africa’; ‘the buildup of Cuban forces in Angola from 1975 onwards reinforced the perception that a deterrent was necessary, as did South Africa’s relative international isolation and the fact that it could not rely on outside assistance should it be attacked.’

This model states that South Africa developed its nuclear weapons while it was being threatened during the Cold War. In order to ensure its security, South Africa felt it needed to be able to deter a Soviet attack. Once the Cold War and this threat ended, South Africa no longer saw the benefits of sustaining its nuclear arsenal, and, therefore, destroyed it.

The three other theories point out flaws in this argument, though. First of all, the other theories warn that there is often conflict between a government’s stated purpose of a nuclear program and its actual purpose. In this case, it appears that military use of the nuclear program was an afterthought. The program was actually developed “on the independent authority of the Minister of Mines.” The program was to be used to conduct Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNE) only, and “was championed within the government by the South African nuclear power and mining industries to enhance their standing in international scientific circles and to be utilized in mining situations.” The military was not even consulted in the original development of South African nuclear weapons.

Second, even after the South African government began considering nuclear weapons for military purposes, they were never designed in a way that made their use
possible: “Long distances and lack of suitable delivery systems precluded use outside the region.”

South Africa faced no threat in its region that it could not deter with its conventional military forces. Additionally, it was not possible for the state to use its weapons against the Soviet Union. Their force could, thus, not be used to deter Soviet aggression. Third, if South Africa’s nuclear program had been discovered, it likely would have decreased its security. If the nuclear program were discovered, the West would likely have further ostracized the state, leaving it more open to Soviet attack than it was without nuclear weapons. These are several important inconsistencies in the security model’s logic.

The domestic politics model offers a different view of the South African case to remedy these inconsistencies. The above facts regarding the actual history of the nuclear development seem to support this model’s notion that powerful coalitions (the scientific community and mining industry) could drive the state to produce nuclear weapons. Once the nuclear weapons were produced, it was only natural that the military would become interested in the program, seeking to expand and prolong it for their bureaucratic purposes. This model also notes the timing of the decision to destroy the nuclear weapons arsenal. President de Klerk began researching the possibility of dismantling the weapons in September 1989, before the Cold War ended (the fall of the Berlin Wall came in November 1989). The government did not choose to dismantle the bombs as a result of a reduced security threat. Domestic factors seemed to be the deciding factor in destruction of the arsenal:

The weapons components were dismantled before IAEA inspections could be held to verify the activities, and all nuclear program’s plans, history of decisions, and approval and design documents were burned prior to the public announcement of the program’s existence. This was a highly unusual step and
strongly suggests that fear of ANC control of nuclear weapons (and perhaps also concern about possible seizure by white extremists) was critical in the decision. According to this model, the South African government chose to dismantle the nuclear weapons because the end of apartheid was looming, and it was afraid of a new government inheriting these weapons. The decision was not in response to a reduced external security threat.

Conversely, the norms model suggests that South Africa believed that it was a part of the West and pursued its nuclear weapons in order to prevent Western abandonment. Based on the international norms during the Cold War, which stated, “A country believed to be able to make nuclear weapons is treated with greater circumspection,” South Africa sought to develop nuclear weapons while maintaining an ambiguous status so that it had the option to gain attention from the West if necessary. Nuclear weapons were a political strategy that South Africa saw as advantageous in the Cold War environment. If South Africa were invaded by the Soviet Union, it would set off a nuclear weapon in the desert and demand Western intervention. The state perceived nuclear weapons as a form of leverage over the West.

The decision to dismantle the bomb came with the changing international norms at the end of the Cold War. The West began to further alienate South Africa after the Cold War ended because the state no longer had any strategic value. This meant that the West could pressure the state to end the domestic policies that it disapproved of, such as apartheid. The West pressured South Africa through increased sanctions, which further contributed to South Africa’s economic problems and growing domestic unrest. In this situation, nuclear weapons were no longer perceived to have any value. South Africa’s nuclear weapons program could only further exacerbate its problems in this new context.
The international norms had changed and, in line with its preference to be accepted by the West, South Africa chose to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. After dismantling its weapons program, South Africa announced its existence simultaneously with its decision to join the NPT as a non-nuclear state. This act was well received by the international community and recognized it as a respectable step towards joining the international community. This positive reception to North Korea’s actions reflected the fact that the norms had changed in the post-Cold War environment. Based on international norms, South Africa first chose to develop nuclear weapons as a strategy for achieving its goal of being included in the West. When the norms changed, it changed its strategy and dismantled its weapons. 30

Etel Solingen does not directly address the South African case in her work, but it is easy to see how the economic liberalization model could be applied to this case. Nuclear weapons were first developed in South Africa during the height of apartheid. This was an inward-looking government focused on maintaining its dominance. This ruling coalition chose to pursue nuclear weapons as a method of gaining international respect scientifically and militarily, rather than changing its policies and gaining full inclusion in the international community. When South Africa made the decision to end its program under President de Klerk, the government had become much more aware of its need to become engaged in the international community, especially because of the economic problems that post-Cold War sanctions had caused the state. This ruling coalition, thus, realized the conflict of interest between maintaining a nuclear weapons program and joining the international economic community. It, thus, ordered that the program be dismantled.
The discussion of the South African case is very important in developing the framework for the discussion of the North Korean nuclear weapons program because it illustrates the limit of the theoretical models. In the South African case, there is evidence that supports every model. An adequate argument can be made for all four of these models. Deciding which one is “right,” or comes closest to explaining this case, appears to be more a matter of judgment than theoretical certainty. One could make the argument that the South African case is anomalous and that other empirical cases will fit the models more closely. In researching the empirical cases concerning nuclear proliferation, however, it is apparent that in almost every case more than one model can be applied. Indeed, although some fit certain cases better than others, an argument could probably be made for every model in every case. The point is that no model fits every case perfectly. Based on these models, it cannot be said with any certainty that there are underlying influences that affect every case nor can it be said that there are not.

As Scott Sagan affirms, “no single policy can ameliorate all future proliferation problems.”31 The North Korean nuclear dilemma will not be solved by strictly applying one of these models. As this analysis proceeds, these models will be used as guidelines to evaluate the specifics of the North Korean case. Where these models are pertinent, they will be discussed, and their policy suggestions will be taken into account. At times, policy considerations from the various models are likely to conflict. For instance, it may be difficult for the U.S. to maintain strong security guarantees while trying to “delegitimize nuclear weapons use and acquisition.”32 It will, therefore, also be the task of this analysis to assess the policies and make an informed judgment based on the specifics of this case regarding which policy should be pursued. The specifics of North
Korean case must be examined to ascertain why it is seeking to build nuclear weapons. The theoretical models are important because they put forth possibilities that should be taken into account, but for the purposes of this investigation, an attempt will not be made to use them beyond this extent. It would not be prudent to examine North Korean case in the narrow context of a specific model.

The Nuclear Proliferation Debate: Pessimism versus Optimism

The other aspect of the nuclear proliferation debate is over the issue of whether or not the United States should oppose nuclear proliferation in general. The debate is divided between two schools of thought: the nuclear proliferation optimists and the nuclear proliferation pessimists. Proliferation optimists maintain that the spread of nuclear weapons may actually contribute to peace and stability at the international level because of the deterrent effects of nuclear weapons. This argument is based largely on the work of Kenneth Waltz, who uses rational deterrence theory as the foundation for this notion. Proliferation pessimists, on the other hand, contend that the spread of nuclear weapons is dangerous, and if it is not checked, increases the likelihood of a devastating nuclear accident, war, or terrorist attack. Scott Sagan uses organizational theory to make this case. This section will investigate these two schools of thought relying significantly on the works of Waltz and Sagan, who have made two of the more compelling and extensive arguments for their respective sides of the debate. There is some disparity between scholars within each school regarding specifics. Waltz and Sagan, however, provide a good overview of both sides of the debate, which will be sufficient for the purpose of this analysis.
The intent here is to determine if the United States should be concerned with North Korean nuclear proliferation as a matter of policy. As has been made clear, the U.S. government is opposed to nuclear proliferation. This section will attempt to determine if this policy stance is correct. Undertaking this argument is imperative to the forthcoming analysis of United States policy towards North Korea. A policy towards North Korea must be developed based on a definitive stance towards proliferation. This stance on proliferation will considerably impact the course of this investigation. It is essential that this debate be closely scrutinized to make sure that the subsequent analysis is firmly grounded.

Nuclear optimists base their argument on rational deterrence theory, which is the notion that nuclear weapons are so powerful and so destructive that no rational government leader would dare to use them. Nuclear weapons are a deterrent against conventional warfare because everyone realizes the costs of nuclear war: “Because catastrophic outcomes of nuclear exchanges are easy to imagine, leaders of states will shrink in horror from initiating them. With nuclear weapons, stability and peace rest on easy calculations of what one country can do to another.”33 These calculations are easy to make for all types of leaders. One does not need to pay attention to domestic concerns or the specific characteristics of a certain state or its leaders. Every state will be deterred from using nuclear weapons or going to war with a nuclear state.

Waltz offers five points to support this notion. First, since the costs of war have been raised, conflict on large scale is unlikely. In the face of nuclear weapons, de-escalation is more likely than escalation because the closer a state comes to defeating a nuclear power in conventional warfare, the more likely it is that the state will be attacked
with nuclear weapons. Total victory is not an option in the nuclear world. Second, states are much more cautious about war when nuclear weapons are involved: “Why fight if you can’t win much and might lose everything?” Third, states no longer need to seek to acquire territory to increase their security. A nuclear deterrent offers more security than additional territory. Fourth, a state becomes much more likely to use its nuclear weapons when it is in the name of self-defense. This further inhibits hostile actions by states in the name of territory. The third and fourth points remove a major cause of conventional war; namely, the acquisition of territory. Finally, knowing the exact strength of one’s opponent makes war less likely. If a state is certain that another state has the power to destroy it, the original state will be unlikely to attack. Conventional wars are always waged by states that think they can win, even if they cannot. This misjudgment is unlikely in the face of nuclear weapons. It is based on these five points that Waltz suggests that the possibility of major warfare among states with nuclear weapons approaches zero.

Viewing the spread of nuclear weapons in this light, it seems that proliferation may not be so bad, as long as stable proliferation occurs. There are four major requirements for stable proliferation: (1) Preventative war cannot be waged during the transition period when one state has weapons and another state is building them; (2) States must be able to inflict a second-strike; (3) Nuclear arsenals must not be prone to accidental or unauthorized use; and (4) Nuclear weapons must not be made more accessible to terrorists by proliferation. Based largely on empirical evidence from the Cold War, Waltz argues that new nuclear states will meet these criteria because it is in their best interests to do so.
There are two stages of development in a nuclear program. The early stage when a state is clearly not capable of producing nuclear weapons, and the advanced stage when it is not clear whether or not a state has developed nuclear weapons. Waltz states that a nuclear state is unlikely to preventatively strike a state in the early stages of development if it cannot be assured of destroying all future development of nuclear weapons: “If the blow struck is less than devastating, one must be prepared either to repeat it or to occupy and control the country. To do either would be forbiddingly difficult.”37 A state is even less likely to undertake such a strike during the more advanced stages of nuclear development because “one’s own severe punishment becomes possible.”38 Once it is possible that a state has nuclear weapons, the points laid out above apply and the possibility of war, even preventative war, approaches zero: “For a country to strike first without certainty of success, all of those who control a nation’s nuclear weapons would have to go mad at the same time.”39 To illustrate this theory, Waltz points out that with the exception of Israel’s strike against Iraq’s nuclear facilities (in early stages of development), no state has undertaken preventative war against a developing nuclear state, despite having incentives to do so. For example, the U.S. had the opportunity and incentive to strike the Soviet Union during its early stages of development, and both the U.S. and Soviet Union had the opportunity and incentive to strike China’s developing facilities.

Waltz also argues that states must be able to build invulnerable second-strike forces as a pre-condition for stable nuclear deterrence. Any state that pursues nuclear weapons will likely be able to do achieve this aim because only a small number of
nuclear weapons are necessary to develop a second-strike force. Waltz suggests that no rational nuclear power would permit all of its forces to be vulnerable to enemy attack:

Because so much explosive power comes in such small packages, the invulnerability of a sufficient number of warheads is easy to achieve and the delivery of fairly large numbers of warheads impossible to thwart, both now and as far as anyone into the future can see.40

Waltz argues that nuclear weapons are easy to move, and, thus, easy to hide. No state will have all of its nuclear weapons concentrated in one area. They will be dispersed. Additionally, states will likely deploy decoys to deceive any potential attacker. Thus, if states can easily develop a reliable second-strike force, it will be very difficult for any state to attack with the certainty that it can locate and destroy all of its enemy’s nuclear weapons. Waltz points to China’s ability to deter the Soviet Union with its inferior nuclear arsenal because, despite the fact that Moscow thought it had located every Chinese nuclear weapon, it could not be certain. This uncertainty prevented the Soviet Union from attacking for fear of retaliation. Even the possibility of missing one nuclear weapon makes it impossible to launch a preventative strike. Waltz offers another example, which relates specifically to North Korea:

About one-half of South Korean population lives in or near Seoul. North Korea can deter South Korea and the United States from invading if it can lead the South to believe that it has a few well-hidden and deliverable weapons. The requirements of second-strike deterrence have been widely and wildly exaggerated.41

Waltz purports that uncertainty regarding the location of nuclear weapons creates invulnerable second-strike forces.

Another requirement of stable nuclear proliferation is that states’ nuclear weapons not be prone to accidental or unauthorized use. Waltz states that all nuclear weapons programs go through an early development phase where their weapons are “unbalanced,
crude, and presumably hard to control.” He then goes onto ask why new nuclear states would not be able to cope with the problems that the original nuclear states were able to cope with: “We do not have to wonder whether they will take good care of their weapons. They have every incentive to do so. They will not want to risk retaliation because one or more of their warheads accidentally struck another country.”42 These states will keep strict control over their nuclear weapons because it is in their best interest to do so. Since these arsenals are likely to be small, they will be much easier to control as well, and, like the original nuclear powers before them, these states will learn overtime how to make their arsenals safer. It is not likely that nuclear accidents or unauthorized use will occur in new nuclear states.43

Waltz asserts that new nuclear proliferation also meets the final requirement of stable proliferation. He states that nuclear proliferation by additional states will have no impact on the ability of terrorists to acquire nuclear weapons. Waltz argues that there are already plentiful sources from which nuclear weapons could have been bought or sold. He cites the fact that Russia and Pakistan have somewhat shaky control over their materials, and that the United States lost track of some nuclear materials in 1994: “One can hardly believe that nuclear weapons spreading to another country or two every now and then adds much to the chances that terrorists will be able to buy or steal nuclear materials.”44 Waltz does believe that certain types of terrorists do pose a nuclear threat, but he does not believe that the spread of nuclear weapons increases that risk.

Karl Sagan takes quite a different view of nuclear proliferation than Kenneth Waltz. The nuclear proliferation pessimists, the school of thought of which Sagan is apart, believe that nuclear proliferation will lead to an increased likelihood of nuclear
accidents, war, and terrorism. Sagan bases this contention on organizational theory. Organizational theory has two central arguments. First, professional military organizations “display organizational behaviors that are likely to lead to deterrence failures and deliberate or accidental war.” Second, new nuclear states are likely to lack the necessary system of checks-and-balances that provide strong civilian control of the military. This system prevents military biases from influencing the “objective” interests of the state:

An alternative set of assumptions views government leaders as intending to behave rationally, yet sees their beliefs, the options available to them, and the final implementation of their decisions as being influenced by powerful forces within the country […] such an organizational perspective challenges the central assumption that states behave in a self-interested manner.

These organizations are likely to develop “major impediments to pure rationality” in their behavior for two reasons. First, organizations view the world in an oversimplified and parochial manner: “The world tends to be perceived by the organization members in terms of the particular concepts that are reflected in the organization’s vocabulary.” Second, these organizations tend to have multiple conflicting goals. The objectives that are pursued are often chosen politically, rather than in the states best interests. It is, thus, evident that if military organizations have influence over the government, they can push the government away from the “objective” interests of the state.

This theory suggests several effects in terms of the three requirements for stable nuclear proliferation listed above. In terms of preventative war, Sagan argues that military officers are more inclined to see war as inevitable in the long run due to their professional focus on warfare. This makes military organizations likely to adopt a “better now than later” logic, which makes them apt to be advocates of preventative war.
Additionally, military officers tend to have strong biases in favor of “offensive doctrines and decisive operations.” They focus on gaining military victory, not on the political implications of war and post-war responsibilities. This means that in states where the military is influential, governments will be more inclined to take preventative action. Sagan sites multiple U.S. cases during the Cold War when the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Pentagon were advocating preventative strikes against nuclear facilities, but the civilian government overruled them.\(^4\) The influence of military officers, thus, makes it impossible to rule out that states will engage in preventative war:

This evidence does strongly suggest, however, that military officers have strong proclivities in favor of preventative war and that proliferation optimists are therefore wrong to assume that any leader of a state will automatically be deterred by an adversary’s ‘rudimentary’ arsenal, or even by a significantly larger one.\(^4\)

In new nuclear states with weak civilian checks on the military, this military logic may translate into preventative war.

Sagan also disputes Waltz’s claim that second-strike forces are easily developed. Sagan notes that both the United States and the Soviet Union felt it necessary to develop extensive nuclear arsenals during the Cold War to maintain an adequate second-strike force. Waltz attributes these large arsenals to “decades of fuzzy thinking.” Sagan points out, however, that if “fuzzy thinking” caused the two superpowers to spend billions of dollars more than necessary, “couldn’t similar ‘fuzzy thinking’ at the organizational level of analysis also lead a state to build inadequate forces?”\(^5\) Sagan suggests that this kind of thinking is a likely consequence of organizational structure. He suggests that military bureaucracies want more resources, such as more weapons and funding, but tend to shy away from expensive programs that make nuclear arsenals less vulnerable to attack because these programs decrease the amount of money that they can spend elsewhere.
In addition, organizations tend only to learn from failure. Why should the military invest their resources in making their arsenals less vulnerable if their arsenals have proved invulnerable to date? This line of thinking Sagan argues accounts for why organizations fall into patterns that are easily identifiable. For instance, the Egyptian Air Force had a pattern of patrolling the skies in the early morning during 1967, when Israel and Egypt were on the brink of war because Egypt considered the early morning to be the most likely time of attack. All the planes would land for refueling at 730AM, and the pilots would eat breakfast. Israel identified this pattern and attacked at 745AM, completely destroying the Egyptian Air Force. This is the type of thinking that can typify organizations and may make nuclear weapons arsenals easily identifiable. Unless something has been proven ineffective, organizations will not change.51

In regards to nuclear accidents, Sagan points to the many near accidents that the United States had with nuclear weapons during the Cold War that have recently come to light.52 He suggests that if “the safety difficulties [of new nuclear states] were ‘only’ as great as those experienced by old nuclear powers”53 that would be enough to worry about. The safety concerns, he states, are actually much greater for five reasons. First, new nuclear states may not have adequate resources to produce safe nuclear weapons and develop mechanical safety devices. He sites a United Nations’ weapons inspector’s report concerning Iraq’s nuclear weapons program after the first Persian Gulf War, which stated, “The design calls for cramming so much weapon-grade uranium into core, they say, that the bomb would inevitably be on the verge of going off – even while sitting on the workbench.”54 Second, the secrecy of many of these new programs makes rigorous
safety monitoring impossible. If few people have access to the weapons and the weapons are hidden and untested, it becomes very difficult to develop adequate safety protocol.

Third, the recent trend of nuclear coupling, where rivals in close proximity have been seeking to develop nuclear weapons, will leave very little room for error in their warning systems. They will have only minutes to determine if warnings are accurate and how to respond. Fourth, the risk of accidental war will be higher in these new nations if the central leadership feels threatened by a “decapitation attack” (an attack on the central leadership to leave the rest of the government in disarray). Such a fear may lead states to delegate nuclear authority to lower levels of power so that the state still has the power to respond. Misinformation could potentially convince a lower level leader to launch a nuclear weapon during a tense crisis. Fifth, there is great potential for future political and social unrest in many future nuclear states. This unrest could lead to the seizure and use of weapons by rebels or accidental detonation if a poorly made nuclear weapon is hit with conventional weapons. According to Sagan, these five reasons offer reason for great concern over the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons in new nuclear states.

In response to the issue of nuclear proliferation increasing terrorist accessibility to nuclear weapons, Sagan again sees cause for apprehension. Sagan agrees with Waltz that there are certain groups of terrorists that will not hesitate to use nuclear weapons. He points to al Qaeda and other extremist Islamic groups that seem intent on “punishing” with their attacks. Terrorist groups are the only potential users of nuclear weapons that could detonate them without fear of nuclear reprisal. Terrorist groups can covertly detonate nuclear weapons without leaving an indication where the bomb came from.
Similarly, terrorist groups are normally international and well hidden. There would be no specific state or place to retaliate against.

Terrorist groups, Sagan purports, will have a much greater chance of attaining nuclear weapons from unstable states, especially unstable Islamic states. For instance, the Pakistan government does not maintain extremely stringent control over its arsenal. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, it rooted out suspected al Qaeda sympathizers in its weapons programs under pressure from the United States. If Saudi Arabia were to develop nuclear weapons and an extremist government were to eventually rise to power, there would be little the United States could do to prevent those weapons from reaching terrorists: “The spread of nuclear weapons to new states in the Islamic world will place tools of indiscriminate destruction closer and closer to the hands of terrorists, who will use them without fear of retaliation.” Sagan argues that not all states are equally as likely to increase terrorist accessibility to nuclear weapons. It depends on the type of the state. Some states are more likely to support terrorists, though. In this sense, nuclear proliferation matters a great deal.

Based on this overview of the debate regarding nuclear proliferation, it seems wise to develop a policy to deal with the North Korean situation from a pessimistic viewpoint. It is true that the empirical evidence to date seems to support the optimistic school of thought, insofar as there has never been a hostile or accidental detonation of a nuclear weapon in a world in which more than one state has possessed them. However, empirical evidence supports many things until it is proved wrong. For example, empirical evidence once supported the notion that terrorists were not interested in creating mass fatalities. International security specialists claimed, “Terrorists want a lot
of people watching and a lot of people listening, but not a lot of people dead.” 57 September 11th proved that evidence wrong. It will only take one event to prove all the empirical evidence of the last half-century regarding nuclear weapons wrong.

It would be nice to take the optimistic view of nuclear proliferation and believe that the spread of nuclear weapons will spread peace, not destruction. Scott Sagan, however, has offered arguments regarding the dangers of the further spread of nuclear weapons that cannot be ignored. Sagan agrees with Waltz that in an ideal world states would act as Waltz suggests. In the real world, however, Sagan argues that they do not: “Waltz’s optimism is fueled by a strong belief that the constraints of the international system, and the potential costs of any nuclear war, will produce similar, and essentially rational, decisions in all states.” 58 One cannot definitively state that this assertion is or is not true, but Sagan offers a significant amount of evidence to the contrary. This analysis has investigated nuclear pessimism and optimism to see which school of thought is “right.” It turns out, however, that neither is right. There isn’t enough empirical evidence to support one theory over the other. The decision of what view U.S. policy should adopt has to be a judgment call. Waltz alleges that nuclear proliferation will not increase the danger of a deadly nuclear explosion; Sagan argues that it might. In doing so, Sagan creates a reasonable doubt in Waltz’s argument.

In the business of nuclear weapons, it seems that a reasonable doubt should be enough rationale to err on the side of caution when making policy decisions: “As nuclear proliferation scholar John Mearsheimer has written, ‘Mismanaged proliferation could produce disaster, while well-managed proliferation could produce an order nearly as stable as the current order. Unfortunately, however, any proliferation is likely to be
mismanaged.’” What harm does it do to oppose nuclear proliferation? If states act as
Waltz claims and proliferation proceeds in a stable manner, then that is great. However,
should the United States be willing to take the risk that proliferation will be mismanaged
when the benefits of stable nuclear proliferation seem only to be maintenance of the
status quo at the international level? Such a policy does not seem practical.

From a strictly U.S. policy standpoint, the comments of proliferation scholar
David Karl seem relevant: “Under every condition, nuclear proliferation complicates the
ability of the United States to project power abroad and in many cases may embolden
other states to resist U.S. efforts to impose its will.” Referring back to North Korean
example that Waltz uses to illustrate the ease in which states can develop a second-strike
capability, it seems that this is precisely what the U.S. should try to avoid. It is true that
there may be little danger of nuclear war on the Korean peninsula if North Korea gains
such a second-strike capability (the risks posed by North Korean proliferation will be
discussed in further detail in the next chapter), but the mere fact that the U.S. would lose
leverage on the peninsula and other places where proliferation occurs would seem cause
enough for the U.S. to oppose nuclear proliferation regardless of its other implications.

For these reasons, the rest of this analysis will be undertaken in a framework of
nuclear pessimism. Once again, recognizing the limits of applying general theories to
specific cases, organizational theory and rational deterrence theory, like the models of the
previous section of this chapter, will be used as guidelines by which to investigate the
likely consequences of nuclear proliferation by North Korea. It is important to note that
this analysis is adopting the framework of nuclear pessimism, not of organizational
theory. Organizational theory points out potential problems in the notion of stable
nuclear proliferation that warrant the conclusion that the U.S. should pursue a policy based on nuclear pessimism. There are valid points in both theories, however, and aspects of both theories will be useful in examining the specifics of North Korea. They will be used as a means to assess what actions North Korea will likely take if it does acquire nuclear weapons and what these actions would mean for U.S. policy. As previously stated, this analysis will not be constrained by the models and theories. Where specifics warrant derivation, this analysis will break from the models and theories. The framework for the rest of this thesis has, thus, been established. The analysis in the next chapter will, among other things, examine the causes and consequences of nuclear proliferation in North Korea using the preceding models and theories as guidelines and nuclear pessimism as its grounding.
Notes

2 The economic liberalization model is based on the work of Etel Solingen. Although she does not refer to her work using this title, her work has been classified under this heading for the purposes of this analysis. See the following article: Solingen, Etel. “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint.” International Security Autumn 1994: 126-169.
3 Sagan, pp. 54
4 Ibid, pp. 57
5 Ibid, pp. 58
6 Ibid, pp. 58
7 Ibid, pp. 63
8 Ibid, pp. 63-65
9 Ibid, pp. 64
10 Ibid, pp. 65
11 Ibid, pp. 138
12 Solingen, pp. 136
13 Ibid, pp. 139
14 Ibid, pp. 137
15 Ibid, pp. 139
16 Ibid, pp. 140
17 Ibid, pp. 140
18 Sagan, pp. 74
19 Ibid, pp. 74
21 Ibid, pp. 27
22 Sagan, pp. 83
23 Long, pp. 37
24 Sagan, pp. 60
25 Ibid, pp. 69
26 Ibid, pp. 70
27 Long, pp. 28
28 Sagan, pp. 71
29 Long, pp. 31
30 Ibid, pp. 30-32
31 Sagan, pp. 85-86
32 Sagan, pp. 86
34 Ibid, pp. 7
35 Ibid, pp. 6-8
36 The fourth requirement has been added to the original three defined by Sagan because of its relevance to North Korea. Sagan and Waltz both discuss terrorism in the later chapters of the book, but do not explicitly state that terrorists must not be able to acquire nuclear weapons from new nuclear states for stable proliferation to occur. For Sagan’s discussion of the requirements of stable proliferation see: Waltz, pp. 50.
37 Waltz, pp. 19
38 Ibid, pp. 19
39 Ibid, pp. 133
40 Ibid, pp. 63
41 Ibid, pp. 143
42 Ibid, pp. 73
43 The above summary of Waltz’s argument is based largely on Sagan’s summary of his argument in throughout Chapter 2.
44 Waltz, pp. 130
45 Ibid, pp. 47
46 Ibid, pp. 51
47 Ibid, pp. 51
48 To examine these examples in detail see: Waltz, pp. 55-59
49 Waltz, pp. 60
50 Ibid, pp. 64
51 Ibid, pp. 70-71
52 For specific examples see: Waltz, pp. 75-77
53 Waltz, pp. 77
54 Ibid, pp. 78
55 Ibid, pp. 164-165
56 Ibid, pp. 166
57 Ibid, pp. 159
58 Ibid, pp. 158
60pp. 80
Chapter Two

North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program: Context, Motives, Capabilities, and Risks

As suggested in the title, this chapter has four purposes, all of which are aimed at attaining a wide-ranging understanding of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. This is an essential investigation in the task of crafting a foreign policy towards North Korea. Understanding the context, motives, capabilities, and risks associated must be a precondition for the development of this policy. A policy developed without this understanding could not be expected to be successful because it would lack the ability to correctly address the fundamental concerns of North Korea:

An effective U.S. Korea policy needs to understand [Korea’s] worldview, the political and security environment within which decisions are made, and North Korean leadership’s decision calculus. Without such an understanding, foreign policy actions by other states – including the United States – are likely to have unexpected or counterproductive results.¹

In order to make sure that these fundamental concerns are addressed, this chapter will first seek to establish the context in which North Korea decided to pursue its nuclear weapons program. This context will be explained by examining the historical relations between the United States and North Korea during the North’s pursuit of nuclear weapons.

On the basis of this context, this chapter will then put forth possible motives for North Korea’s decision to pursue nuclear weapons. This discussion will be followed by an assessment of North Korea’s current and potential nuclear weapons capabilities. Based on the context, motives, and capabilities, the risks of North Korean nuclear proliferation will be presented. In these analyses, the frameworks developed in the
preceding chapter will prove useful in attaining a deeper understanding of North Korea. Following these analyses, the policy implications of this chapter’s conclusions will be suggested based on an examination of the North Korean governments possible intentions regarding its nuclear weapons program.

**Context: A Historical Overview**

It appears that the origins of North Korean nuclear weapons program stem from the 1950s when “during the Korean War, the United States made a number of pointed threats of nuclear use, and after the war, Washington deployed a sizeable number of tactical nuclear weapons to Korea.”\(^2\) During the Cold War, however, North Korea was under the nuclear umbrella of the Soviet Union and, later, the Chinese. The state, therefore, did not feel the need to vigorously pursue its own development of nuclear weapons in response to the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons. North Korea received its first nuclear reactor (a primitive style) in 1965 from the Chinese for the purpose of developing nuclear energy.

North Korea’s security situation began to change shortly thereafter: “By the 1970s, South Korea was engaged in a highly public flirtation with a nuclear weapons program of its own, while Kim Il Sung confronted repeated shifts and eddies in the stance of his patrons, the Soviet Union and China.”\(^3\) Faced with the prospect of South Korea surpassing it in weapons capabilities and the unreliability of its allies, North Korea began the active pursuit of nuclear weapons in the 1970s: “It appears that by the end of the 1970s, Kim Il Sung had initiated efforts to build the infrastructure needed for a nuclear weapons program.”\(^4\) This pursuit seemed to be further influenced by the growing tension
between the United States/South Korea and North Korea during this decade and the beginning of the 1980s.

Early in the 1970s, prospects for a peaceful relationship between the two Koreas seemed good. The states established regular communications and agreed to work towards peaceful unification in July of 1972. These efforts, however, fell apart in 1973 after the Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-Jong was kidnapped by North Koreans from Tokyo, and South Korea President Park announced that South Korea planned to enter the United Nations as a separate country from the North.⁵ Talks between the two states did not resume until 1984. The intervening period from 1973-1984 was filled with conflict. In August of 1974, South Korean President Park’s wife was killed in an attempt on his life in Japan. During the same month in 1976, two U.S. army officers were killed and four wounded (along with five wounded South Korean soldiers) by North Korean soldiers wielding axes and metal spikes as the two soldiers attempted to prune a poplar tree inside the demilitarized zone (DMZ). The entire incident was caught on camera. President Ford issued a statement calling North Koreans guilty of murder and the three nations appeared closer to war than they had been at any time since the end of the Korean War. The situation was diffused, however, because it was an election year in the United States, and President Ford did not want to alienate voters still weary from war in Vietnam.⁶ Finally, in 1983, an assassination attempt was made on South Korea President Chun’s life in Burma. A bomb exploded minutes before he was due to arrive at an official ceremony, which killed 17 senior South Korea officials.⁷

Natural disaster in South Korea spurned renewed talks between the North and South in 1984. After severe flooding, the South accepted the North’s offer for aid to the
victims. The North backed out of these talks in January of 1986, though, stating that the annual U.S.-South Korea *Team Spirit* joint military exercises were inconsistent with the talks. There were brief negotiations over co-hosting the Seoul Olympics in 1988 later that year, but these quickly ended in failure. This failure led to the mid-air bombing of a South Korean commercial airliner in November of 1987 that killed 115 people. Talks were suspended again until 1989 following this tragedy.

There were several other key developments during the 1980s that had a heavy impact on the relationships between these three states. The beginning of unification talks in 1984 coincided with the detection by U.S. satellites of a Soviet-style nuclear reactor being constructed in the North Korean city of Yongbyon. This was a reactor much larger than the one they had received from the Soviet Union for power in the 1960s and had the potential to generate enough nuclear material to produce one to two nuclear weapons per year. The international communities response to the potential of North Korea becoming a nuclear state was one of great concern.

The Soviet Union pressured North Korea into joining the NPT in 1985 at the urging of the United States by offering to build North Korea four nuclear reactors for energy purposes. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) paperwork mistakes and other North Korean excuses, however, prevented IAEA safeguards from being put into place. This gave the North freedom to ignore the NPT, which it did not hesitate in doing. By 1988, the North had begun building a plutonium reprocessing plant, conducting high-explosives tests, and building a third, even-larger nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, capable of producing multiple nuclear weapons each year. North Korea clearly felt, for one reason or another, that it needed to attain nuclear weapons.
Another key development during the 1980s was the virtual collapse of North Korean economy. Beginning in the 1970s, the economic growth of North Korea had begun to decline as a result of the OPEC increases in oil prices and the growing technology gap. In 1980, the nation defaulted on all of its loans except those from Japan. By 1989, the GDP of North Korea had begun falling at an annual rate of 4-5%.10 Realizing that the command economy was not viable over the long run, communist nations, including North Korea’s traditional allies China and Russia, had begun experimenting with economic reform by this point. Kim Il Sung, however, refused to consider opening the country to foreign investment or private enterprise. The result was extreme economic stagnation. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 placed additional stress on the already fragile economy: “With the collapse of the Soviets as a world superpower, however, North Korean government lost not only an important aid source, but also its main trading partner.”11 Even with continued aid from China, North Korea could not maintain an acceptable standard of living with its economy in disarray and its main source of revenue evaporated. It was isolated from the international community, and it could not rely solely on China.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was clear that the 1990s would mark a significant shift in the conflict between the three nations. With food shortages becoming prevalent in North Korea, Kim Il Sung attempted to establish new relations with the United States and South Korea. At first these attempts took on a peaceful nature, but when these methods failed, Pyongyang used its pursuit of nuclear weapons and continued violation of the NPT to entice the U.S. and South Korea to talk. South Korean President Roh Tae Woo took a conciliatory approach with the North and agreed to hold talks that
would “promote North-South exchanges, family reunification, inter-Korean trade, and contact in international forums.” The two Koreas began prime minister-level talks in September of 1990 and reached two agreements: *The Basic Agreement* and *The Joint Declaration*. The Basic Agreement called for reconciliation and non-aggression between the two nations. The Joint Declaration was an agreement that neither nation would test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy, or use nuclear weapons. Uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing facilities were also forbidden.

Seemingly satisfied with this agreement the North went onto sign the IAEA nuclear safeguards agreement on January 30, 1992. This allowed the IAEA to conduct inspections of the North’s nuclear facilities beginning in June 1992 to make certain that they were not being used to produce nuclear weapons. It seemed that the two sides were on the path to legitimate denuclearization and warmer relations. The two sides could not reach an agreement on the establishment of an inter-Korean inspection government, though, and the Joint Declaration began to fall apart. As a result of this breakdown, the *Team Spirit* military exercises were put back into place in 1993 after being cancelled the previous year to promote the North-South talks. This prompted the North to refuse IAEA inspections of two nuclear waste sites in January of 1993 and its announcement to withdraw from the NPT in March of the same year.

This announcement prompted two responses from the Clinton administration. It agreed to engage in bilateral negotiations with North Korea, and it planned for a preventative strike against North Korean nuclear facilities should these negotiations fail. The negotiations at Geneva lasted a year and a half. During one particularly tense stand off, North Korea threatened to reprocess the fuel from its Yongbyon reactor, which
would give the state enough fuel for five or six nuclear weapons. The Clinton administration considered a strike of against the Yongbyon facility. Ultimately, the U.S. opted to pursue U.N. economic sanctions before taking any military action would be taken. This action prompted North Korea to proclaim that it would turn Seoul into a “sea of flames” if a war occurred. In June 1994, former President Jimmy Carter traveled to Pyongyang to meet with Kim Il Sung. He convinced Kim to return to the negotiations. On the day that negotiations were to begin, Kim Il Sung died of a sudden heart attack, and his son Kim Jong Il succeeded him. Kim Jong Il had been linked to past terrorist attacks including the commercial airline bombing of 1987 and the 1983 Burma bombing.¹⁵

Despite the political disorder in North Korea, the negotiations continued and an agreement was reached in October of 1994 known as the Agreed Framework (see Appendix A for complete text). The Agreed Framework laid out a plan for North Korean nuclear disarmament that involved concessions from both states. The plan had four main components: First, the United States agreed to provide North Korea with two light-water nuclear reactors to replace its graphite-moderated reactors. These reactors are more difficult to use in producing nuclear weapons, but are effective for civilian energy purposes. The U.S. agreed to lead an international coalition to supply the North with 500,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil annually to use as an alternative energy source during the construction of the reactors. Second, the U.S. agreed to normalize its political and economic relations with the North overtime. This would grant the government long sought after legitimacy. Third, the United States promised not to use nuclear weapons against the North. Finally, in return for these concessions North Korea would dismantle
its nuclear weapons program, including the removal of its 8,000 spent fuel rods from the country, as the last step once the reactors were complete. All this was to be accomplished by 2003.16

The Agreed Framework faced challenges from the very beginning. In December of 1994, just two months after the completion of the Agreed Framework, North Korea shot down a U.S. helicopter, killing one soldier and holding another hostage for 13 days. The helicopter was accused of spying by North Korean government. The mistrust that the Agreed Framework had sought to remove was immediately reestablished. The U.S. was slow to remove its embargo from North Korea and to secure adequate funding and developers for the proposed nuclear plants and heavy oil subsidies. The Korean Energy and Development Organization (KEDO) was established to implement the Agreed Framework, but North Korea insisted that South Korea not be allowed to take part in the building process. North Korea also covertly attempted to continue its nuclear program after the Agreed Framework was established. To make matters more complicated, North Korea’s food shortages turned into famine in the mid-late 1990s, tempting the North to pursue further misbehavior in hopes of attaining more foreign aid.

Kim Jong Il solidified his ascension to power in 1997 by being appointed head of the Korean Workers Party in 1997. Meanwhile, an estimated 2 million people were dying or had died from famine. Kim Jong Il began to indicate that he favored economic reforms to help his ailing nation. As a result, South Korean President Kim Dae Jong, who was elected in 1998, initiated the “Sunshine Policy” based on the assumption that Kim Jong Il would undertake economic reform. The policy advocated openness and engagement with North Korea. Japan followed South Korea’s lead by lifting sanctions
against North in August of 1998. At the end of that month, however, North Korea made a surprise move by firing a Taepo Dong I missile into the Sea of Japan, proving that North Korea could launch an attack on Japan. This had the immediate effect of suspending all aid, trade, and diplomatic ties between Japan and North Korea. The incident also embarrassed President Clinton, who supported South Korea’s Sunshine Policy and believed that North Korea would adhere to the Agreed Framework despite its difficulties.\(^{17}\) This action led to the perception among some U.S. policy makers that the Agreed Framework was not an adequate policy for dealing with North Korea. North Korea seemed to be taking advantage of the U.S. by receiving oil subsidies while not living up to its pledge to cease development of its weapons program. Mandated by Congress, President Clinton appointed Defense Secretary William Perry to conduct a review of U.S. policy.

The Perry report, based on an eight-month review of American foreign policy, suggested that the United States must adhere to the Agreed Framework and must put a halt to North Korea’s continued pursuit of nuclear weapons and missile programs through negotiation. In May 1999, Perry became the first Presidential envoy to visit North Korea. His goal was to try to convince Pyongyang to adhere to the Agreed Framework in return for improved diplomatic and economic relations between the two nations. Perry hand delivered a letter from President Clinton to Kim Jong II proposing this negotiation.\(^{18}\) In September of 1999, Pyongyang responded positively to the Clinton administration’s diplomatic efforts when Kim Jong II pledged to freeze all tests of long-range missiles. In response, Clinton eased some of the economic sanctions on North Korea that had been in effect since the start of the Korean War.
Relations continued to improve during 1999 when President Kim Dae Jong traveled to Pyongyang in June. This was followed by family reunions held in Seoul and Pyongyang during August for families split by the Korean War. In addition, athletes at the Olympic games in Sydney, Australia from both states marched together in a symbolic show of hope for the future. The warm relations momentarily staggered in July of 2000 when North Korea expressed anger over the delays in the Agreed Framework. North Korea was facing severe power shortages while ground had not yet been broken on the promised light-water reactors. Troubles with funding along with continuous conflicts during the previous eight years had prevented KEDO from beginning the project. North Korea threatened to restart its nuclear program if progress was not made.

Washington seemed to recognize the need for making progress on the Agreed Framework, and it began to work with North Korea to create a condition of trust that would make steps forward possible. It became apparent that North Korea shared this notion following a visit to Washington by a high-level North Korean envoy in which North Korea extended an invitation to President Clinton to visit Pyongyang. In October of 2000, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright became the highest-level U.S. official to visit North Korea since the Korean War. Albright engaged Kim Jong II in talks over ending the long-range ballistic missile program and their exportation to other nations and allowing the inspection of suspected nuclear sites. It also appeared that Albright was laying the groundwork for a possible visit by President Clinton to Pyongyang. Clinton, however, never had time before the end of his presidency. The conditions, even so, seemed right for newly elected President Bush to pressure North Korea to carry out its full obligations under the Agreed Framework.
At first it seemed that President Bush would pick up where the Clinton administration left off. Indeed, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated this intention in January 2001: “We do plan to engage with North Korea and pick up where President Clinton and his administration left off. Some promising elements were left on the table.” President Bush quickly moved away from Clinton’s policies, however, during a summit in Washington with President Kim Dae Jong. Bush stunned the South Korean President by privately telling him that the U.S. would not continue talks with North Korea and would conduct a policy review of North Korea. In June 2001, Pyongyang began warning Washington that it would restart its missile tests if talks were not resumed regarding the normalization of diplomatic relations. Upon the completion of its policy review, the Bush administration agreed to talk with North Korea as long as the talks addressed a broad array of issues and Pyongyang cooperated completely with the IAEA.

The September 11th terrorist attacks were the beginning of the end to civil relations between the Bush administration and the Kim Jong Il government. Although North Korea was not involved with the attacks, the events marked a shift in Bush administration policy. The administration became increasingly intolerant of “rogue states” that were perceived as a threat to the United States and supporters of terrorists. On January 29, 2002, President Bush declared North Korea as part of the “axis of evil” along with Iran and Iraq during his State of the Union Address. Bush made it clear that these nations were a “grave and growing danger,” and that the United States was willing to take preventative action to protect U.S. security. North Korea, subsequently, admonished that these statements were “little short of declaring war.” (It is worth noting
that during 2002, after being branded as part of the “axis of evil,” North Korea undertook its first economic reforms. It allowed its currency to devalue, introduced price and wage reforms, and began to tolerate small markets and a small private sector.)

In October of 2002, the CIA determined that North Korea was operating a secret uranium enrichment program. When Assistant Secretary of State Kelly traveled to Pyongyang to confront North Korea with this evidence, the government admitted to having the program, but refused to end it. The Bush administration affirmed that this was a violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework. The administration, subsequently, convinced the international community to suspend the heavy fuel oil shipments that North Korea had been receiving under the agreement. Following this, the administration began a policy of diplomatic and economic pressure to force North Korea to end its nuclear program. The U.S. refused to negotiate with North Korea until it put an end to its uranium-enrichment program. North Korea responded to the administration’s actions by doing the opposite of what it desired. In December, it announced that it would restart its 5-megawatt reactor in Yongbyon. It claimed that it needed the plant to generate electricity to replace the oil shipments. Experts, conversely, said that plant could not generate much electricity, but could generate enough plutonium for about one nuclear bomb per year. North Korea then proceeded to remove IAEA monitoring equipment from its nuclear facilities, expel IAEA inspectors from North Korea, and withdraw from the NPT. The administration continued to take a hard line approach with North Korea, refusing to negotiate, until North Korea ceased its nuclear program.

During March, North Korea began to further test the administration by test firing two short-range missiles in the Sea of Japan within a matter of weeks. North Korea
demanded a security guarantee in the form of treaty and bilateral negotiations from the United States to end its program. The Bush administration softened its policy somewhat under pressure from China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia to address the problem through negotiations. The Bush administration agreed to engage in multilateral talks, terms that Pyongyang accepted as a result of pressure from China. The talks began on April 23 in Beijing between the U.S., North Korea, and China, but ended on April 25 after North Korea made its first admission of possessing nuclear weapons. On May 12, North Korea withdrew from the Joint Declaration with South Korea, which committed the two states to a nuclear free peninsula. On July 9, the U.S. discovered that North Korea had begun reprocessing its spent fuel rods. Early the next month, North Korea agreed to six-nation talks with South Korea, the U.S., China, Russia, and Japan regarding its nuclear program. The talks took place from August 27-29, but failed to yield anything, but an agreement to meet again. The parties met again in February with the same result. Most recently, the Bush administration has said that it would be willing to offer security guarantees to Pyongyang, but not in the form of a treaty.

The history of the conflict between the United States/South Korea and North Korea reveals the context in which North Korea has developed its nuclear weapons program. It is a context of mistrust, threats, deceit, and failed attempts at resolve between the three nations. Specifically for North Korea, it is a context of lost security, economic stagnation, and international isolation. The next section will investigate the motives of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program based on this context.
Possible Motives for North Korean Nuclear Proliferation

The overview of this history of the relations between the United States/South Korea and North Korea during its pursuit of nuclear weapons and the subsequent context established, offer various possible motives for North Korean pursuit of nuclear weapons. It appears that there are three possible motives for North Korean nuclear proliferation: (1) North Korea feels that its security is threatened by the United States and South Korea. The state feels it must develop nuclear weapons to “level the playing field” and deter the U.S.; (2) North Korea desires nuclear weapons as a means to gain attention and as a means to attain concessions from the United States and the international community by strengthening its weak bargaining position; and (3) North Korea views nuclear weapons as a means to attain legitimacy from the international community and to maintain stability in its population and establishments. This section will investigate these motives based on the models put forth regarding the causes of nuclear proliferation in the previous chapter and the analysis of experts on North Korea. Additionally, this section will make the case that there is more than one motive for North Korean nuclear proliferation.

It is necessary to note prior to the analysis of these motives that this discussion is highly deductive and speculative. As Philip Saunders states, “two preconditions for effective policy are accurate information about the politics, economics and society of foreign countries, and a clear understanding of the interests, perceptions and objectives of their governments.”24 The closed nature of North Korea makes it nearly impossible to meet these preconditions. Saunders points to two specific problems with assessing the true intentions of North Korea’s nuclear program:

One problem is that reliable information about the internal dynamics of North Korean decision-making is scarce. A second problem is that North Korean
leaders have strong incentives to conceal their true intentions in order to maximize their bargaining power and to minimize international reactions to their nuclear weapons program.\textsuperscript{25} These motives are, thus, to be viewed as hypotheses based on the best available information. The nature of North Korea makes it extremely difficult to develop an accurate foreign policy, especially since North Korea seems intent upon maintaining ambiguity about its nuclear weapons program. Given the constrictions of this situation, though, these hypotheses will be the most reliable way to craft a policy.

The first hypothesis regarding North Korean motives for proliferation follows the security model closely. This hypothesis proposes that North Korea decided to pursue nuclear weapons in response to a growing threat: “The early North Korean nuclear program appears to have been a response to a security challenge: dealing with U.S. and, potentially, South Korean nuclear threats without counting on the support of either China or the Soviet Union.”\textsuperscript{26} The context in which North Korea developed its nuclear weapons certainly seems to support this notion. Considering the constant conflict between the U.S./South Korea and North Korea throughout the past fifty years and the build up of U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea in past decades (nuclear weapons were removed from South Korea in 1991), it seems logical to assume that North Korea initially began developing its program in response to a perceived security threat. Following this logic, North Korea seems to have maintained a nuclear weapons program to deter U.S. nuclear forces and “level the playing field” between U.S./South Korean conventional forces and North Korean forces.

This hypothesis seems to be very relative to the current situation. Certainly, the decisions of the North Korean government to withdraw from the NPT and restart its
nuclear program, eight years after freezing it, seem to be in response, at least in part, to
the Bush administration’s doctrine of preventative war and its hostile stance toward the
state. The North Korean government has stated as much through its state controlled news
agency the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA):

It is too natural for peace and security of the Korean peninsula that we have
requested the U.S. to make a switchover of its hostile policy toward the DPRK. For the U.S. to make a switchover of its Korea policy is a basic guarantee and key
to the settlement of the nuclear issue […] It is entirely thanks to the deterrent
force that peace could be kept in the Korean peninsula and the region.27

The sequence of events and statements by North Korean officials seem to implicate
security issues as an important factor in the North’s current nuclear pursuit. It is certain
that North Korean security issues have played a key role in the North’s decision to
develop nuclear weapons.

Although North Korea may have originally intended to develop its nuclear
weapons program solely for security purposes, it appears that the state developed other
motives as it realized the potential benefits of its nuclear weapons programs. Michael
Mazaar lays out this argument:

Beginning in the late 1980s, officials in Pyongyang learned how useful an
ambiguous nuclear capability could be in getting attention, wringing security
concessions out of Seoul and Washington, and acquiring pledges of economic
assistance and expanded diplomatic relations.28

He goes onto argue that in the 1970s, the U.S. could have likely gotten North Korea to
dismantle its nuclear weapons program for the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from
the South, the end of the South’s nuclear pursuits, and a non-aggression pledge by the
United States. In the early 1990s, the U.S. offered all of those things and did not even
begin to sway North Korea.29 Mazaar offers this as a “nonproliferation lesson” stating:
“Once a nuclear program becomes established, it will act as a magnet for new
justifications and motives [...].” 30 The United States attempted to address North Korean security issues in the early 1990s, but by this time it was too late because North Korea had already developed additional motives.

To understand the second motive, it is important to remember that North Korean economy virtually collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. North Korea was (and is) in serious economic trouble. The combination of the flawed command economy and the enormous drain on the economy of huge military spending (25% of GDP), had begun to takes its toll. The goals of North Korean security and economic stability, thus, became intertwined. To fix its economy, the state needed to be able to reduce its military spending. To reduce military spending, it needed security assurances. From the state’s perspective, the best way to achieve these goals was through nuclear weapons. By threatening to develop nuclear weapons, the North could gain attention from the international community, and use that attention to negotiate from a position of strength to leverage economic assistance and security guarantees from the international community, especially the U.S. This was precisely what happened in 1993 when North Korea threatened to withdraw from the NPT. It created a crisis to draw attention and then demanded economic assistance and security guarantees during the Agreed Framework negotiations. This seems to be the approach it has taken in the current situation.

The economic liberalization model points out that this was a likely course of action for North Korea. Solingen states, “The North Korean case approaches the inward-looking, nationalist coalition ideal-type as closely as any real case can.” 31 She highlights the fact that North Korea made feeble attempts at economic liberalization after it joined the NPT in 1985. Based on this fact, she purports that coalitions within North Korean
government favoring economic liberalization attempted to influence the government to engage the international community and undertake economic reform, but, when international commitments were not upheld, this coalition lost influence within the government:

What compelled North Korean leadership to drag its feet on the nuclear issue was the fact that the U.S., South Korean, Japanese, and multilateral promises of improved economic ties did not materialize. With this, the government’s expectation of preventing its own collapse, by relying on economic reforms, evaporated. In the absence of tangible international commitments to provide economic aid to North Korea, the incipient liberalizing forces in North Korea lost out to the hard-liners in the military and nuclear establishment.32

North Korea could not embrace the international community to fix the economic problems undermining its government, thus, it attempted to fix them using nuclear weapons. Once the economic liberalization coalition had been “proven wrong,” it was the logical next step for this government to pursue nuclear weapons to leverage economic assistance and security concessions out of the international community to fix its problems.

Another motive that North Korea seemed to develop for its nuclear weapons program by the early 1990s was gaining international legitimacy and quelling domestic discontent. The Cold War norm, which stated that attaining nuclear weapons make a state part of an exclusive “club,” had faded by this time. The norm that replaced it suggested that the development of nuclear weapons should be shunned as a hostile action against the wishes of the international community. As the norms model points out, though, not all states will react the same way to changing international norms. They will react by developing strategies to meet their goals in accordance with their preferences. North Korea exemplifies this notion. The North Korean government viewed defiance of
this new international norm as a way to raise its prestige and power within the international community and amongst its people.

It seems likely that many in Pyongyang believed that “the international recognition resulting from the nuclear program would bolster the government’s legitimacy [...]” North Korea appeared to view the symbolism associated with the attainment of nuclear weapons as advantageous for its goals:

Nuclear weapons (or ambiguity about their possession) became the ultimate expression of national independence (juche) and technical achievement that the government could wield as evidence of its own viability [...] An independent and ambiguous stand on nuclear matters was thus an important ingredient in the North’s political-economic grand strategy of self-reliance, and one with high payoffs for soothing restive military and nuclear establishment and its nationalist allies in the bureaucracy.33

By showing that it had the potential to develop nuclear weapons, North Korea was attempting to demonstrate to the international community that it was an independent state with the strength to defy norms and take its own course.

Similarly, North Korean leaders were trying to demonstrate to its people and its bureaucracies that their traditional doctrine of self-reliance worked. Nuclear weapons proved that North Korea could do what the powerful United Stated could do. The North Korean leadership viewed nuclear weapons as a way to offset the obvious flaws with their system. Nuclear weapons provided a way for the government to keep the population’s faith in itself and its self-reliance philosophy. Moreover, nuclear weapons were a way to keep the military and nuclear establishment under control. The development of nuclear weapons not only “kept them busy,” but also gave them faith in the leadership, preventing discontent leading to uprisings.
This section demonstrates that, although the North Korean nuclear weapons program may have originally been developed to address security concerns, other motives developed over time. These motives, a strengthened bargaining position and international prestige, are now key reasons that North Korea is holding onto its nuclear weapons program. All of these motives are aimed at ensuring the survival of the current North Korean government. This seems to be the fundamental motive that influences all three of these motives. It feels threatened externally by other states and internally by the problems its stagnating economy is creating. The North Korean government believes that nuclear weapons can be used to ensure its survival by offsetting both of these major problems. For this reason, it is certain that security assurances will no longer be enough to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program. Any United States policy will have to address all three of the above motives in order to get North Korea to disarm.

**Current and Prospective Nuclear Capabilities**

This section is designed to give a succinct overview of North Korean nuclear weapons capabilities. Knowledge of these capabilities will be useful in assessing the scope of North Korean nuclear dilemma that is, exactly what North Korea will be able to accomplish if U.S. policy is unsuccessful in preventing the North’s development of nuclear weapons. This analysis will be helpful in understanding the potential risks of North Korean nuclear proliferation. This section will provide an overview of current North Korean nuclear capabilities, prospective North Korean capabilities, and the North Korean missile program.

Most experts on North Korea assume that the nation was able to produce between one to three nuclear weapons before the 1994 Agreed Framework froze its nuclear
weapons program. This assumption is based on estimates of the amount of fissile material that the government would have been able to reprocess from the reactor at Yongbyon prior to this time. It is not certain that North Korea has developed nuclear weapons, but it seems likely, especially since, as discussed above, North Korea has stated to the Bush administration that it has nuclear weapons. Given the secretive nature of the state, it will likely be very difficult to know for sure whether or not North Korea has nuclear weapons until it tests one or begins their production on a large scale. It is unlikely that North Korea will test a nuclear weapon, though, because the state perceives nuclear ambiguity as advantageous. Becoming a declared nuclear state, on the other hand, could draw harsh international ramifications.

If, as its most recent actions seem to indicate, North Korea chooses to begin active production of nuclear weapons, it could produce a substantial arsenal overtime. Based on estimates of North Korean nuclear weapons program prior to 1994, it seems that when its program is fully operational, it will be able to produce enough fissile material for a large number of weapons:

North Korea, before the decision to freeze its nuclear program in 1994, was on the verge of becoming a major producer of weapons-grade plutonium outside the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Left unchecked, North Korea could have operated reactors, fuel-fabrication, and spent-fuel reprocessing facilities able to produce 200 kilograms of plutonium a year, enough for 50 weapons every year.34

By this estimate, if the Agreed Framework had not been successful in freezing North Korean nuclear program, the state could potentially have produced 250 or more nuclear weapons.35 Most likely, it would not have produced this many nuclear weapons, though, especially considering its economic constraints. A more accurate estimate would probably be 25-50 nuclear weapons over the last ten years. This is still a substantial
number of nuclear weapons. It is a number that the United States should keep in mind as an estimate of North Korea’s potential over the next ten years if United States policy is not successful.

In addition to its nuclear weapons program, North Korea also has a relatively advanced missile development program. The country has already tested and deployed several types of missiles. These missiles include the Scud-Mod B missile with a range of 320-340 kilometers, the Scud-Mod C with a 500-kilometer range, and the No Dong missile with range of 1,000 kilometers. These missiles are more than capable of reaching South Korea (including South Korea’s nuclear reactors, which if hit could bring about massive destruction) and Japan. These states are North Korea’s main targets in the event of war. As noted above, North Korea also tested the Taepo Dong I missile on August 31, 1998 over the Sea of Japan. North Korea stated that this missile was a failed attempt to launch a satellite into space. The test was more likely an attempt by North Korea to demonstrate its “accelerating ability to launch a multi-stage missile and to develop a system with the potential for intercontinental range.”

United States intelligence also reports that North Korea is working on the Taepo Dong II missile, which would have the ability to carry a nuclear payload to the continental United States. North Korea operated under a self-imposed test ban on all missiles for five-years after the August 1998 launch as a show of good faith towards the Clinton administration. North Korea began its tests again on February 24, 2003 firing a short-range missile into the Sea of Japan a few hours before the inauguration of the Republic of Korea’s new President, Roh Moo-Hyun. It then tested another missile two weeks later on March 10, 2003. Given the current and potential capabilities of the
North Korean weapons and missile programs, it is evident that these programs must be
taken seriously. The United States and the international community are right to be
legitimate concerned about their development.

**Potential Risks Associated with North Korean Nuclear Proliferation**

Based on the analyses in the preceding sections and chapter, there appear to be
five important risks associated with North Korean nuclear proliferation: (1) Although the
risk of a hostile nuclear attack against the U.S. or South Korea by North Korea is very
low, it is still a risk in certain situations; (2) North Korean proliferation may result in
accidental or unauthorized use; (3) The possibility of a nuclear arms race in Southeast
Asia; (4) The reduction of United States power and influence in Southeast Asia; and (5)
The sale of nuclear weapons or fissile material to terrorists. This section will explore
these risks.

Regarding the prospect of hostile nuclear action by North Korea, this thesis must
adopt the stance of the proliferation optimists because it just does not seem plausible that
North Korea will use its nuclear weapons to attack South Korea, Japan, or, once it gains
the capability, the United States. “Most Korea specialists believe North Korean
government is neither irrational nor crazy, but rather has a distorted worldview and
warped expectations about how other countries will respond to its actions.”39 Despite
North Korea’s aggressive rhetoric, such as threatening to turn Seoul into a “sea of fire,”
the leaders would have to be insane to use its nuclear weapons. Most experts who have
studied North Korea believe that the leadership is not insane. Kim Jong Il and the rest of
North Korean leadership want to ensure they remain in power: “Even the most hawkish
American observers believe that rulers in Pyongyang, however ruthless, are not interested
in taking steps that jeopardize their survival. They are not religious fanatics; they are dictators whose top priority is ensuring their grip on power.” To engage in a nuclear attack is would not only bring about massive destruction on North Korea in the form of retaliation from the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and other nations, but also assures that the government in North Korea would be toppled.

The nuclear pessimists seem to agree with this assessment. Scott Sagan and other pessimists focus much more on the likelihood that nuclear proliferation will bring about a preventative war than a hostile nuclear attack. There is a scenario, however, in which North Korean nuclear use may occur. If the North Korean government launched an offensive war against South Korea, and began losing that war to the point where its defeat and removal from power seemed imminent, the government could potentially use a nuclear weapon in a last ditch effort to save itself. From its perspective, the government may have nothing to lose from using a nuclear weapon in this scenario. Considering that this government has shown an utter disregard for its population, the North may gamble and use a nuclear weapon, hoping that U.S. and South Korean forces back off and negotiate, rather than retaliate. This scenario, although a remote possibility, is still a risk. Since, as will be discussed below, North Korean nuclear weapons make a conventional attack by North Korea on the South more likely, this risk must be considered.

The next major risk associated with North Korean nuclear proliferation is one of the risks highlighted by the proliferation pessimists; namely, that further proliferation will increase the likelihood of a nuclear accident or unauthorized use. There is little information regarding North Korea’s nuclear chain of command, and it is not clear whether or not Kim Jong Il has delegated nuclear authority. Evidence suggests that he
takes a very active role in the nuclear program. This was exemplified when the United States gave Kim Jong Il a list of technical questions regarding the program and instead of handing the questions to advisors to research and answer, he answered them immediately without assistance. Evidence also suggests that Kim Jong Il likes to maintain tight control over the government, trusting only his closest advisors, and making almost every decision himself. For these reasons, it does not seem likely that there is much chance of unauthorized use. Kim Jong Il is likely to be the only one who can set the chain of events necessary for a nuclear attack in motion.

There is substantial concern about accidental use, though. It seems likely that the concerns expressed by the U.N. weapons inspector earlier in this thesis about the safety of Iraqi nuclear weapons will also be relevant for North Korea. The U.N. weapons inspector stated that he was concerned that the nuclear weapon could go off at any time because of the weapons poor design. Bearing in mind the dire economic circumstances of North Korea, it is reasonable to assume that North Korea has (or will) cut corners in its nuclear weapons development. Sagan suggests this is likely to happen in his analysis. Safety concerns are likely to be neglected as the North Korean nuclear weapons establishment faces pressure from the government to produce these weapons as cheaply as possible. Additionally, “the secrecy and tight compartmentalization of such programs suggests that there will not be thorough monitoring or safety efforts.”40 This secrecy also precludes North Korea from conducting tests and “hinders the development of effective safety designs.”41 Accidental detonation of a nuclear weapon in North Korea seems to be a real risk.
Following the logic of the security model, North Korea’s nuclear proliferation could also potentially set off an arms race throughout Northeast Asia. Despite falling under the nuclear umbrella of the United States, both Japan and South Korea may not stand by idly while North Korea develops nuclear weapons: “In response to budgetary constraints […] Washington has begun a gradual reduction of its forces in South Korea, a step that could increase security anxieties there and intensify pressures for a South Korean nuclear option.” A North Korean nuclear capability may convince the South Korean government and people that nuclear weapons are necessary for its security.

Japan is more difficult to predict, since public opinion has historically been against the development of nuclear weapons. The attainment of nuclear weapons by a belligerent and unpredictable nation that has the ability to strike Japan could change that opinion, though:

Even if a reversal of Japanese nuclear policy did not ensue, a nuclear-armed North Korea could prompt Japan to increase its defense expenditures and military developments dramatically […]. The reemergence of Japan as a major military power would trigger anxieties throughout Asia. It might also lead to a dangerous Japan-China arms race and could ultimately lead to a major alteration in the global balance of power.

It is clear that there are dangerous implications in the region if the North acquires nuclear weapons. The addition of South Korea and Japan as nuclear weapons could have further implications for nuclear proliferation in other states. China, for instance, may increase its arsenal and change its doctrine of no first-use if these states developed nuclear weapons. The international implications of an arms raise in Northeast Asia are unknown, but it is certain that this arms race would be detrimental to U.S. interests.

The main reason that an arms race and North Korean proliferation itself are detrimental to U.S. interests is because they reduce U.S. power and influence abroad. As
stated in the previous chapter one of the major goals of United States policy is to maintain its ability to project power and influence abroad. A nuclear arms race would certainly undermine this ability. The U.S. has been able to influence states, such as Japan and South Korea, for an extended amount of time precisely because it has been in such close security alliances with them. By offering other states benefits, the U.S. is able to gain compliance with many of its wishes in return. If these states were to develop nuclear weapons, the United States would lose substantial influence.

Specifically regarding North Korea, the development of nuclear weapons by the state would significantly reduce the ability of the United States to use its military power as leverage in negotiations and as a deterrent to North Korean conventional aggression. Concerning negotiations, the U.S. desires to maintain the ability to put pressure on North Korea during negotiations, that is it desires the ability to back up its negotiations with the legitimate threat of force. The U.S. may lose this ability if North Korea develops nuclear weapons. The U.S. may no longer be willing to take military action against North Korea if it attains nuclear weapons. Moreover, although the U.S. would likely maintain the rhetoric of possible military force to back up its negotiations with the use of force, a nuclear North Korea may not believe that the U.S. would be willing to attack it, no matter what the rhetoric of the United States is. This will strengthen North Korea’s bargaining position and weaken that of the United States.

Regarding deterrence, if North Korea has nuclear weapons it may attack South Korea believing that it has deterred the use of nuclear weapons by the United States and that it can achieve victory in a conventional conflict:

The ability of North Korea to threaten Southern cities with nuclear devastation could impose unacceptable costs on the use of nuclear weapons by the United
States or South Korea, raising the prospect that the North could prevail in a future conflict by gaining a preponderance of conventional forces. 44

This situation refers back to the risk discussed previously in this section. It is unlikely that North Korea would defeat the United States and South Korea in a conventional war. The U.S. may, however, be deterred by North Korean nuclear weapons from using its own nuclear weapons. This not only reduces U.S. power, but it may cause North Korea to believe that it can invade South Korea, using a surprise attack or another strategy, and win. This belief could lead the U.S./South Korea into a war with North Korea that the North may eventually lose, leading Kim Jong Il to consider the use of nuclear weapons in an act of desperation. Nuclear proliferation by North Korea poses serious problems for the ability of the U.S. to project its power in Northeast Asia and abroad in general.

The final and possibly most dangerous risk associated with nuclear proliferation by North Korea is the fact that it may sell nuclear weapons or fissile material to terrorists:

The greatest danger from North Korean nuclear weapons is not the risk that Pyongyang will decide to use them, that it will transfer them to [other states], or that responsible states in the region will react by developing their own arsenals […] The greatest danger is that an unregulated North Korean nuclear program will increase that availability of materials that terrorist organizations interested in weapons of mass destruction now seek. 45

As discussed in the previous chapter, both nuclear pessimists and optimists view terrorists as a nuclear threat because they have “no return address” and because they are not averse to inflicting mass death and destruction. Waltz argues, however, that further proliferation will not increase the likelihood that terrorists will be able to get nuclear weapons. Sagan, on the other hand, argues that nuclear weapons in the hands of some states are more dangerous than others. Domestic factors in some states, he argues, make
certain states more likely to sell nuclear weapons and materials. This analysis adopts Sagan’s view.

It may be unlikely that North Korea will sell nuclear weapons to terrorists in their completed form, but it is likely that North Korea will sell nuclear materials:

Even if the financial reward might be great, the risks for the supplier create daunting obstacles to such a transaction. State leaders face the possibility that the sale of whole weapons to terrorists would be detected or later traced to them. If the link is established, perhaps even if it is only suspected, the supplier knows it would become a target of retaliation [...].

By selling a whole nuclear weapon to a terrorist group, North Korea would be allowing that terrorist group to use the weapon at its discretion to attack any state at any time. Additionally, North Korea would be trusting that the group would be careful enough to cover its tracks, so that the weapon could not be traced to North Korea. This seems to be giving terrorists a lot of power and a lot of trust while putting North Korea at great risk. Furthermore, since the group would be using the weapon at its discretion, it is likely that the nuclear weapon could be used to attack a country North Korea has no grudge against. North Korea is unlikely to engage in such a transaction.

Terrorists, however, are not only in the market for whole nuclear weapons. They also may seek to acquire the necessary materials to build a nuclear weapon covertly from many sources around the world. If terrorists build their own nuclear weapon, the possibility of tracing a whole nuclear weapon back to a state is eliminated. Transferring fissile material is also much less noticeable than transferring nuclear weapons:

A North Korea cranking out weapons grade plutonium or enriching uranium that is harder to ‘count’ and easier to smuggle or sell than whole weapons, would become one source for the nuclear material terrorists seek. Whatever their precise blueprint, terrorists will try to fly under the radar for as long as possible and only late in the game organize the more detectable efforts [...]. The chief danger from North Korea’s nuclear program is the prospect that it might yield a large enough
surplus of radioactive materials that terrorists would see it as a place where they find individuals willing to engage in small scale transfers others are unlikely to detect.\(^{47}\)

Considering the dire economic problems of North Korea and the willingness North Korea has shown in the past to sell ballistic missiles to raise revenues (North Korea is the world’s leading ballistic missile exporter), it seems likely that North Korea would be receptive to the idea of selling fissile material. If the transaction is unlikely to be detected and North Korea could gain some much needed revenue, there seems to be little for North Korea to lose. The transfer of nuclear materials to terrorists, thus, appears to be a significant risk of North Korean proliferation.

All of the abovementioned risks point out the importance of the United States crafting an effective foreign policy towards North Korea. All of the risks are detrimental to U.S. interests, and although none of these things are certain to happen if North Korea further develops its weapons program, they are all possible and must be taken seriously. When developing a policy towards North Korea, these risks must be kept in mind and addressed. Specifically, methods of dealing with these risks and curtailing their effects must be worked out in case the strategy developed fails. The U.S. must work as hard as possible to realize that the potential risks are not realized, but it must also prepare for the fact that they may become reality.

**Policy Implications**

There are two main policy implications to be inferred from the above analysis. First, since the intentions of the North Korean leadership regarding its nuclear program are so unclear, the U.S. is going to have to adopt a test-and-respond strategy. Second, the U.S. policy towards North Korea is going to have to be broad based, addressing the many
motives of North Korean nuclear program while being cognizant of the risks associated with it. This section will briefly discuss these two policy implications.

The likely motives for the North Korean nuclear program have been made clear, but what is not clear is how the North Korean government intends to use its nuclear weapons to achieve its goals. Nuclear proliferation scholar Philip Saunders lays out four possibilities: (1) North Korean leaders have decided that nuclear weapons are essential; (2) North Korean leaders are willing to negotiate their nuclear weapons and missile programs away; (3) North Korean leaders want both nuclear weapons and better relations with the U.S., Japan, and South Korea; (4) There is internal dissent about what should be done with the nuclear weapons program. Each of these four possibilities has different implications for U.S. policy. In order to accurately address the motives of North Korean program, the U.S. needs to have some kind of notion of the intentions of the North Korean leadership.48

If North Korea has decided that nuclear weapons are essential to the achievement of its goals, then “there is probably no peaceful settlement that can stop or roll back the North Korean nuclear weapons program unless North Korean leaders change their minds.” The U.S. must “either take military action to destroy North Korean nuclear facilities and stockpiles, or learn to live with North Korean nuclear weapons by relying on deterrence and missile defenses to prevent their use.” 49 Conversely, if North Korean leaders are willing to negotiate away their program, then, Saunders argues, the United States should engage that option with caution. He argues that North Korea may pursue further developments in its nuclear program with the intent that they be discovered, so that it can bargain them away: “North Korea’s demonstrated willingness to cheat on
international agreements makes a future deal very difficult to negotiate. Stringent verification measures would be required because there is no trust on the U.S. side. Security threats from the U.S. would undermine this option, pushing North Korea towards the notion that it needs nuclear weapons.

The third possibility, suggesting that North Korean leaders want both nuclear weapons and better relations, makes the case that North Korea is hedging its bets. North Korea will pursue a deal with the United States, but will probably not be willing to ever fully dismantle its program, regardless of what the deal calls for. North Korea will only limit the size of its arsenal while it gains concession from the U.S. In this scenario, full North Korean disarmament cannot be realized. Finally, Saunders suggests that their may be conflicts in North Korean government over whether nuclear weapons are necessary or whether they should be negotiated away: “This scenario views inconsistent North Korean behavior as the product of shifting strength of domestic political factions.” This argument is comparable to the economic liberalization model’s suggestions of North Korean motives. The U.S. must take actions that lend strength to the faction that supports negotiations by living up to its end of the deal in agreements.

The four possibilities of the North Korean government’s intentions laid out by Saunders illustrate how difficult it will be for the U.S. to figure out how to address North Korean motives. It is hard to develop a strategy for dealing with a government when the government’s intentions are not known. Since it is impossible to say with any certainty what the intentions of the North Korean government are, the U.S. must adopt a test-and-respond attitude towards North Korea: “The strategy is […] to test whether such regular, rational negotiations are possible.” This strategy must adopt the view that it is possible
to negotiate with North Korea, and that North Korea is willing to give up its nuclear weapons program (Saunders’ second possibility). This will allow the U.S. to test North Korea to see if it is really willing to negotiate, or if it is simply trying to gain concessions from the U.S.

The second policy implication follows from this test-and-respond policy. The U.S. must seek to negotiate a comprehensive package deal with North Korea that addresses U.S. concerns and is cognizant of the potential risks of North Korean nuclear proliferation. As was shown by the discussion of North Korean motives, the U.S. must address more than just the nuclear weapons program and North Korean security guarantees. It must deal with the underlying motive of government survival, which includes the economic and international legitimacy issues. By offering North Korea a comprehensive package deal that deals with these concerns, the U.S. may be able to work out a plan to end North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. The U.S. cannot expect North Korea to trade away its nuclear weapons program for nothing. This package should offer realistic concessions to North Korea to get it to give up its program.

If North Korea refuses such a comprehensive deal, the U.S. will be able to pursue other options with greater ease:

With the state’s real intentions “unambiguously” exposed, it would be easier to muster support, at home and abroad, that will be politically necessary to take the tougher steps, involving sanctions, and perhaps even force, that may be necessary to solve the problem. 53

By developing a comprehensive package deal based on the assumption that North Korea is willing to negotiate away its nuclear weapons program, the U.S. will be able to test the state’s mindset and find out for sure what its intentions are. If North Korea rejects a package deal that addresses its motives, verifies it actions, and that the U.S. pursues with
vigor, then the U.S. will know that the intentions of North Korea’s leaders are to maintain its nuclear weapons program indefinitely. The U.S. can then figure out what policy is best to respond to that mindset. Based on the analysis in this chapter, it seems that testing North Korea with a comprehensive package deal and responding to its subsequent actions is the best policy to pursue.
Notes

3 Ibid, pp. 93
8 “Profile of North Korea,” pp. 9
9 Ibid, pp. 9
11 “Suspicous Minds Face Off…”
12 “Profile of North Korea,” pp. 9
13 Ibid, pp. 9-10
14 Ibid, pp. 10
16 U.S.- North Korea Agreed Framework, August 1994, text
17 “Kim’s Nuclear Gamble: Chronology.”
18 Ibid
19 Ibid
20 Ibid
21 Ibid
22 Ibid
24 Pinkston, pp. 79
25 Saunders, pp. 1
26 Mazarr, pp. 100
28 Mazaar, pp. 100
29 Ibid, pp. 101
30 Ibid
32 Ibid, pp. 145
33 Ibid, pp. 144
36 Cirincione, pp. 251
37 Ibid
38 Nanto, pp. 26
39 Pinkston, pp. 80
40 Waltz, pp. 79
41 Ibid
42 Spector, pp. 136
43 Ibid
44 Ibid, pp. 124
46 Ibid, pp. 7
47 Ibid, pp. 8
48 Saunders, pp. 1-5
49 Ibid, pp. 2
50 Ibid, pp. 3
51 Ibid, pp. 4
52 Mazarr, pp. 116
53 Mazarr, pp. 117
Chapter Three
The United States: Goals, Successes, and Failures

The U.S. first addressed the North Korean nuclear weapons program during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations. These administrations set some precedent for dealing with the nation. Most of their attention was set on the more imminent threat of the U.S.SR, though. North Korea was treated as part of the communist bloc. Thus, a significant foreign policy for dealing specifically with North Korea was not developed until the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration developed a foreign policy in reaction to the North Korean nuclear crisis during 1993-1994, and this foreign policy centered around the deal struck to resolve the crisis: the Agreed Framework. Following the Clinton administration, the Bush administration moved in a different foreign policy direction regarding North Korea. The events of September 11th, 2001 along with the admission by North Korea to a uranium-enrichment program prompted the administration to develop a hard line stance of non-negotiation, which it has softened to some extent recently.

In order to develop a craft an effective foreign policy, the foreign policies of the Clinton and Bush administrations must be assessed to determine what they did right and what they did wrong. There are two important ways to assess these policies. First, they must be assessed in terms of the goals they were meant to accomplish. Second, they must be assessed in terms of their success in resolving the conflict with North Korea. These are two different assessments because as will be shown, the goals of these foreign policies have not necessarily been aimed at resolving the conflict. After these foreign policies have been evaluated, an examination of what the foreign policy goals of the
United States should be made. The goals of the U.S. must be clearly laid out before the development of a new strategy can be begun. These examinations are intended to give direction to U.S. foreign policy by developing an understanding of what the U.S. needs to accomplish to resolve the North Korean issue.

**The Clinton administration**

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the Agreed Framework was developed in 1994 as a result of North Korea’s announcement that it would withdraw from the NPT. The Clinton administration came very close to preventatively striking the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, but ultimately decided against the strikes. Thanks in no small part to the efforts of former President Jimmy Carter, the Agreed Framework (see Appendix A for full text) was reached in 1994 after a year and a half of tense negotiation in Geneva, negotiations that were backed by the legitimate threat of force by the United States if they failed.

The agreement had four main components: First, the United States agreed to provide North Korea with two light-water nuclear reactors to replace its graphite-moderated reactors. These reactors are much more difficult to use in producing nuclear weapons, but are effective for civilian energy purposes. The U.S. agreed to lead an international coalition to supply the North with 500,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil annually to use as an alternative energy source during the construction of the reactors. Second, the U.S. agreed to normalize its political and economic relations with the North, granting the government long sought after legitimacy. Third, the United States promised not to use nuclear weapons against the North. Finally, in return for these concessions North Korea would dismantle its nuclear weapons program, with its 8,000 spent fuel rods
being removed the country as the last step once the reactors were complete. All this was to be accomplished by 2003.¹

In terms of the goal that the Clinton administration was trying to achieve, the Agreed Framework was a great success. Although the goal of the administration may have initially been to implement the Agreed Framework to its full extent, this goal quickly changed (the administration’s goal during the negotiations will be discussed in length below). The goal of the Clinton administration became putting off the attainment of nuclear weapons long enough for the North Korean government to collapse. Former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Stephen Bosworth asserts this:

> In my judgment, the administration was not prepared to expend very much political capital on behalf of implementation of the Agreed Framework. No, they had other priorities. It would not have been easy – I don’t have any illusions about that. But basically, the Agreed Framework was an orphan. And to the extent that we had a policy toward North Korea from ’94 to ’98, the policy in effect consisted of waiting for North Korea to collapse.²

By all accounts in the U.S. intelligence community, Kim Jong Il would not be able to hold the government together once his father died. It was expected that he would either lose the power struggle and reform would follow or that the country would collapse under his inadequate rule. If the country collapsed, absorption by the South would most likely follow. Thus, after Kim Il Sung died, the Clinton administration had every reason to believe that the collapse of the government was imminent. The Clinton administration, therefore, did not actively pursue the implementation of Agreed Framework’s more distant payoffs, such as the construction of two light-water reactors, because it did not expect North Korea to be around in the distant future. After the administration negotiated the Agreed Framework, it began pursuing a policy of “buying time.” This entailed
convincing North Korea not to pursue nuclear weapons while the U.S. waited for its collapse.

The U.S., thus, met its minimum requirements for the Agreed Framework, enough to keep North Korean nuclear weapons program frozen, but did not pursue the rest of the deal with any great vigor. As Robert Galluci, the chief negotiator for the U.S. in 1994 states:

My own view here is – and there are disagreements about this – that in the Clinton administration, there wasn’t the enthusiasm for everything North Koreans wanted, in terms of the political payoff from the deal. So North Koreans were somewhat disappointed. But let’s be clear about this. There are hard and soft portions to the deal. A hard portion was they needed to have their program frozen, and under inspection, and they needed to re-can the spent fuel so it wasn’t reprocessed. That was done.3

The administration from 1994-1998 made its shipments of heavy fuel oil to North Korea and established KEDO to build the nuclear facilities. It did not attain adequate funding for KEDO, though. There were discrepancies about who was actually supposed to pay for the reactors. KEDO was made up of the U.S., South Korea, Japan, and the European Union. The United States maintained that South Korea would pay for and build the reactors, but South Korea stated that it needed help from the U.S. to accomplish this.

The administration knew that when the Republicans took control of Congress in 1994 it would have to work very hard to fund KEDO and to get other parts of the Agreed Framework passed. As former Defense Secretary William Perry states,

The prospect of being able to proceed on other aspects of the Agreed Framework were nil. That is, we would not be able to, for example, to go to a peace agreement, to go to opening diplomatic representation with North Korea. That never would have gotten through Congress […] I don’t believe that there would have been any chance of success in confronting Congress on the issue. So I think that the judgment was made by the President and by the Secretary of State, to not confront the Congress on this […].4
Although the North Korean government did create problems with the implementation of the Agreed Framework, such as objecting to the construction of the light-water reactors by a South Korean firm, one of the main reasons for the agreement’s stagnation was Clinton administration shifted its goals. As a result of the difficulties the administration faced with Congress, there was a shift in the goals of the administration, and the Agreed Framework was half-implemented as the Clinton administration waited for the government to collapse. The administration chose only to vigorously pursue what it perceived to be the necessary aspects of the Agreed Framework, not the entire deal.

Regardless of the half-implementation, the government was successful in meeting its goal. It succeeded in freezing North Korea’s nuclear program from 1994-1998. Robert Galluci confirms this: “If we hadn’t done the deal, North Korea would have, without question, more than 100 nuclear weapons, and more than 100 is a soft number. It might be much more than 100 nuclear weapons. So that deal was worth making, in terms of our security, and our allies’ security.”\textsuperscript{5} The Clinton administration succeeded in ending North Korea’s main nuclear development. The plutonium reprocessing program that could have made North Korea a nuclear power was put on hold. If North Korea had collapsed, this would have been the perfect policy.

The problem is that North Korea didn’t collapse, and the state began getting restless with the lack of progress on the deal. This is where the second analysis of the Clinton administration’s policies must begin. Did the foreign policy of the Clinton administration contribute to the resolution of the situation? As it became evident to North Korea that the United States would not complete the Light-water reactors by the scheduled date in 2003, they began to use the time the Agreed Framework had bought
them. North Korea began to hedge its bet regarding the U.S.’s adherence to the Agreed Framework. It developed a uranium-enrichment program, which is a much slower method of producing nuclear weapons, but, nonetheless, gave North Korea a backup plan. It also used the time the U.S. had bought itself to its own advantage by further developing its ballistic missile program. In 1998, it test launched a Taepo Dong I missile into the Sea of Japan, reminding the U.S. of its obligations. This launch had the effect that North Korea desired. Concerned that North Korea had not collapsed, the Clinton administration initiated a policy review to be conducted by former Defense Secretary William Perry.

The Perry report (see Appendix B for full text), submitted in 1999, critiqued the policy of the Clinton administration during the previous four years. The Perry Report put forth the overarching goal regarding North Korea as establishing relative stability so that a condition could exist on the peninsula to “provide the time and conditions for all sides to pursue a permanent peace on the peninsula, ending at last the Korean War and perhaps ultimately leading to the peaceful reunification of the Korean people.”

It laid out three important constraints that a U.S. foreign policy towards North Korea must be formulated in. First, government change in North Korea was not imminent, and a foreign policy must be pursued assuming that the government will last indefinitely. Second, the risk of a devastating second Korean War “dictates that the United States pursue its objectives with prudence and patience.” Third, the Agreed Framework had led to the freezing of the plutonium sites, and in that respect was a success; thus, it should be built upon, not replaced.

The report then laid out six key findings regarding North Korea. First, the pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by North Korea undermined the stability of the
peninsula, and it should, thus, be the goal of the U.S. to end these activities. Second, the U.S. would win a second Korean War, but the “destruction of life and property would far surpass anything in the recent American experience.” Third, if North Korea agreed to end its missile and nuclear program the U.S. should be willing to establish normal diplomatic relations and develop a peaceful coexistence with North Korea. Fourth, the Agreed Framework had limitations in that it does not freeze all nuclear weapons-related activities, nor does it address ballistic missiles, but these issues should be addressed through agreements that build on the Agreed Framework, not replace it. Fifth, any successful U.S. policy would have to have participation and support from South Korea and Japan. Finally, a successful U.S. policy must be persistent and unwavering in the face of continued provocation from North Korea because given the history of North Korea’s actions it was inevitable that further provocations would occur.

The Perry Report then gave an overview of strategies that it had rejected. The first was maintaining the status quo that is, the current policy of the Clinton administration of “strong deterrence through ready forces and solid alliances and limited engagement with North Korea beyond existing missile negotiations on missiles, POW/MIA, and implementation of the nuclear-related provisions of the Agreed Framework.” This was rejected by the report because it appeared as though this policy would not be sustainable. Additionally, it was easy to envision circumstances that would quickly bring the status quo to crisis. The second was the policy of undermining North Korea to bring about its collapse. This policy was rejected because it was seen as too difficult in the environment of such strict ideological control, and taking too long to accomplish. It also risked destructive war, and would not be supported by U.S. allies.
The third policy was reforming North Korea, which suggests promoting accelerated political and economic reform. Unfortunately, such a policy would require substantial policy reform by North Korea, cooperation that North Korea had indicated it would not give. Such a policy would also take a long time, more than the U.S. had to address its nuclear concerns. Lastly, the report stated that the U.S. must not buy its objectives. Buying its objectives would only encourage North Korea to further blackmail the U.S. along with other proliferates around the world.12

Based on the above analysis, the Perry Report then offered a “two-path strategy” for dealing with North Korea. The first path would seek new negotiations with North Korea. The U.S. would seek verifiable assurances that the North has ended its nuclear and missiles program in order to create a stable situation on the peninsula. The United States would also seek to reduce pressures on North Korea that it perceived as threatening in order to give North Korean government “confidence that it could coexist peacefully with us and its neighbors and pursue its own economic and social development.”13 To create an environment for these negotiations to take place, the report recommended that North Korea refrain from further tests of ballistic missiles and that the U.S. ease the trade embargo with the North. The second path offered by the report is a contingency plan if the first path fails. The second path would entail the U.S. and its allies acting to contain the threat that it could not eliminate through negotiation. The U.S. would seek to keep the current Agreed Framework intact, but also contain the continued threat that could destabilize the region through a number of means.14

The Perry report has been summarized in detail above because it offers such a comprehensive assessment of the Clinton administration’s foreign policy during the years
1994-1998. It addresses many of the fundamental problems of the administration’s policies. The most fundamental problem was that the administration did not develop a long-term foreign policy and did not establish long-term goals. It relied on the assumption that the government would collapse and that it would be able to develop a new policy towards North Korea after that. It assumed that its dealings with the current government would be short-lived. This was the main reason that the administration’s foreign policy was destined to be a failure in resolving the conflict.

This report establishes a long-term goal for the United States (to create a situation on the peninsula conducive to the development of a permanent peace between and eventual unification of North and South Korea) and a long-term direction for the foreign policy, which involves the development of new relations with North Korea. At the end of the Clinton administration, the Perry Report was adopted as policy and showed some early signs of progress. The U.S. and North Korea took the first steps recommended in the report: the U.S. unilaterally eased its trade embargo and North Korea unilaterally froze its missile testing. This laid the path for Secretary of State Madeline Albright’s visit to Pyongyang in 2000. She became the highest-ranking U.S. diplomat to visit North Korea in 50 years. The North Koreans also invited President Clinton to visit their nation. The adoption of the Perry Report as policy certainly showed some progress.

There is, however, a basic problem with the recommendations of the Perry Report that undermines its prospects for success: it relies on the Agreed Framework, which is flawed at its foundation. The Agreed Framework is a comprehensive package deal. It is aimed at addressing a wide variety of North Korean motives. This is what the policy implications of the preceding chapter suggest will be necessary for an effective foreign
policy. The Agreed Framework, however, must be understood within the context it was negotiated. As was highlighted above, when the Agreed Framework was negotiated:

The Clinton administration expected that a famine-struck and economically weak North Korea would collapse within a few years. So even though there were reservations about building nuclear power plants in North Korea, the Clinton administration won bipartisan support.\textsuperscript{15}

Furthermore,

Galluci and other officials emphasized that the key policy objective of the Clinton administration was to secure a freeze of North Korea's nuclear program in order to prevent North Korea from producing large quantities of nuclear weapons grade plutonium.\textsuperscript{16}

These two points have been reiterated in order to emphasize how important they are to understanding the Agreed Framework.

Based on these notions of the Clinton administration, it seems likely that when the administration negotiated the Agreed Framework it was willing to promise large payoffs to North Korea in the future because it believed that it was never going to have to meet these obligations. These payoffs, specifically the construction of the two light-water reactors, would likely have not been offered to North Korea had the United States believed that it was going to have to meet these obligations. By the time these reactors were to be built in 2003, the U.S. believed that North Korea would have long ago collapsed. Also, considering the reaction of Congress (described above) to the Agreement, the administration had to realize that it was going to be impossible for the United States to meet its full obligations, especially its funding obligations for the development of the light-water reactors.

It is, thus, the contention of this analysis that the Clinton administration negotiated this agreement with the specific intention of offering North Korea what it
needed in order to freeze its nuclear program in the short-run. The Agreed Framework was designed to avert war and “buy time.” It was not designed for full-implementation. North Korea demanded nuclear reactors in order to freeze its nuclear weapons program, so the Clinton administration promised the state these reactors. The Clinton administration never believed that they would be built. This is a hypothesis of this analysis based on the available information about the Clinton administration’s beliefs regarding North Korea. The Agreed Framework was successful in meeting the goals the Clinton administration intended it to meet. After averting war in 1994, it created eight years of stability on the peninsula. It will not, however, be successful in meeting the long-term goals laid out by the Perry Report because of several important flaws.

Viewed from the perspective of the discussion above, the flaws of the Agreed Framework make sense. To begin with, as mentioned above, there is substantial disagreement over who will fund KEDO. This problem stems from the fact that the Agreed Framework is a bilateral agreement between North Korea and the U.S., but assumes that a multilateral organization will pay for the implementation of the agreement. This resulted in a great deal of debate regarding who would actually pay for what and who would actually build what. There have been substantial problems in securing necessary Japanese funding, funding from the U.S., and funding from South Korea. This funding discrepancy is only the minor compared to the major fundamental flaw that plagues the light-water reactor project, which is the task for KEDO to complete.

According to a Nautilus Institute study, the light-water reactor project is flawed for two main reasons. First, light-water reactors will still allow North Korea to pursue nuclear weapons. Light-water reactors produce plutonium and would still enable North
Korea to build nuclear weapons. This is the reason North Korea demands nuclear reactors because it knows that it will still have the nuclear weapons option with these reactors: “This proposed transfer of [light-water reactor] technology is sought by [North Korea] as a means to maintain a civilian nuclear program and the threat of a military nuclear program.”17 These reactors will not solve the problem of nuclear weapons development by North Korea.

Second, the construction of the light-water reactors will not solve the energy problems of North Korea. The major problems with North Korean energy production are the poor condition of the states power grid, thermal power plants and hydroelectric power plants: “The key fuel/energy resources for generation of electric power in [North Korea] are fuels for thermal power plants – principally coal – and hydraulic resources to power hydroelectric plants.”18 North Korea has an abundance of coal and hydraulic resources. The state has power plants in place to harness this energy, but the poor condition of the thermal power plants coupled with the extensive damage done to the hydroelectric plants during the floods of 1996 and 1997 has resulted in North Korea producing no where near its potential energy output. North Korea’s staggering economy has prevented modernization of the thermal plants and repair of the hydroelectric plants. Additionally, the inefficiency of North Korea’s power grid has contributed to substantial energy loss: “The system of electricity dispatching is inefficient, minimally or not at all automated, and prone to failure. Estimates of transmission and distribution losses vary from an official 16 percent up to more than 50 percent […].”19 These are very serious problems with North Korea’s energy production system that nuclear power plants will not meet.
The main reason that the light-water reactors will not solve these problems is because the North Korean power grid cannot support the two nuclear power plants without substantial improvements:

The [North Korean] grid in its current configuration is likely not stable enough to allow safe operation of the [light-water reactors] to be supplied by KEDO. First, the size of the grid (at about 8,000 MW) is only marginally large enough to support 2 GW of generation capacity at one site. Crudely, no generating unit should exceed more than about 10-20 percent of the total system capability – or the available system reserve – or the operation of the whole system may be threatened due to unexpected outages. Since the [North Korean] grid at present often reportedly operates as a set of isolated (or semi-isolated) grids rather than as a single unified grid, the issue of grid size relative to the size of the [light-water reactors] becomes even more important […] The status of the current power system does not inspire confidence that safety and operation objectives would be achieved in a [North Korean] nuclear power program.20

Furthermore, if the improvements necessary to operate these power plants in North Korea were undertaken, these improvements would erase the need for the nuclear power plants to begin with.

This led the Nautilus Institute study to conclude:

The importance of the [light-water reactors] to the energy sector in [North Korea] is, in our view, a secondary matter, as the same generation capacity (or effective capacity) could very likely be supplied for far less money if investments in upgrading and refurbishing the energy supply and demand infrastructure in [North Korea], plus investments in selected cost-effective new generation, were pursued instead. Paradoxically, the use of the KEDO-supplied reactors within the [North Korean] grid will likely require a substantial rehabilitation of the transmission and distribution system, and likely other related energy and transport infrastructure as well. These required “spin-off” improvements may ultimately prove more useful to [North Korea] than the nuclear reactors themselves.21

The best way to meet North Korean energy needs is, thus, through investment in and modernization of its current energy production sector. Some new generating facilities may be necessary, but no facilities that produce nearly as much energy as the light-water reactors. Indeed, because these reactors produce so much energy, the current North
Korean system cannot handle them. The modifications to North Korea’s energy infrastructure necessary for handling the nuclear reactors would solve North Korea’s energy needs without actually building the nuclear reactors.

Based on similar conclusions that it reached in its own study, Green Korea United, a leading South Korean non-governmental environmental agency, developed a plan for improving North Korea’s energy situation. It suggested that along with the grid and power plant modifications and repairs that are needed, North Korea is in need of many smaller non-nuclear reactors since its energy needs are highly decentralized. The organization suggested that it would be prudent to build LNG cogeneration plants for combined heat and power plants to solve the heating and power problems at the same time. The organization also states that North Korea has a great potential for renewable energy. Specifically, the organization came up with a list of 5 proposals to replace the light-water reactor project. First, conduct further research on how to best meet the energy needs of North Korea and assist with the repairs of the power grid, which would cost much less then building a new grid. Second, build several LNG cogeneration power plants, which are an economical alternative to the nuclear plants. Third, connect North and South power grids to assist with North Korean power needs. Fourth, help North Korea develop nuclear energy. Fifth, allow North Korea to truly demonstrate that it is not seeking nuclear weapons by accepting non-nuclear power alternatives. 22

The discussion of the Nautilus Institute’s critique of the light-water reactor project and Green Korea United’s plan to replace has been undertaken because it reveals the fundamental flaws in the light-water reactor project. Namely, the North Korean power grid cannot handle the amount of energy that the light-water reactors will produce, North
Korea does not need centralized reactors, and light-water reactors can still be used to produce nuclear weapons. For these reasons, North Korea’s intentions in demanding nuclear power must be questioned. These reactors will still produce enough plutonium to allow North Korea to produce nuclear weapons. North Korea is aware of this, and North Korea is also aware of its power grid problems. This is evidenced by its repeated demand that KEDO fund the grid’s modernization, a demand KEDO has repeatedly refused. The cost of this grid repair is estimated around one billion dollars, a sum that North Korea can by no means afford. So, what exactly does North Korea intend to do with two nuclear power plants that cannot meet its energy needs?

From a U.S. policy standpoint, it makes no sense to include these light-water reactors as part of a package deal that is seeking to resolve the nuclear crisis in the long-term. North Korea has demanded that the United States help it develop energy to replace the energy lost by freezing its nuclear program. The U.S. can and should meet this demand, but it should not meet it by supplying the North with nuclear energy. There is no reason that North Korea should prefer nuclear energy to the LNG reactors coupled with investment in and modification of its energy infrastructure; especially, since these actions would better and more cost-efficiently meet North Korea’s energy needs. The U.S. should make this notion plain in its proposal to North Korea. If North Korea continues to demand nuclear power, the U.S. will know for sure that North Korea is not sincere in its stated willingness to trade away its nuclear weapons program. This follows the test-and-respond strategy laid out in the previous chapter.

If North Korea is not willing to accept a non-nuclear energy resolution, then it will be evident that the North wants to hold onto the option of developing nuclear
weapons again in the future. Light-water reactors give them this option and simply defer the nuclear crisis, not solve it. If the light-water reactors are built, North Korea may be assuaged for some time, but eventually it will get restless again, and it will restart its nuclear program using these reactors in order to gain further concessions. Any U.S. package deal should not be aimed at deferring the North Korean program, but rather ending it. Any U.S. package deal should, therefore, not include light-water reactors.

The assessment by the Nautilus Institute and Green Korea United shows that the Perry Report did not meet its stated goal of promoting stability on the peninsula, so that long-term peace can be achieved. By basing the foreign policy on the Agreed Framework, the Perry Report, like the Clinton administration foreign policy prior to it, placed a timeframe on its effectiveness for two reasons. First, the light-water reactors were unlikely to be built. The funding problems assured this. South Korea could not foot the bill for the entire project, and there was no way that the U.S. government would be able to secure adequate funding from Congress to build nuclear reactors in North Korea. Once North Korea realized that the reactors were not going to be built, it would likely return to its brinkmanship tactics (as has happened). Second, if the light-water reactors were built, there would be no way to be certain that North Korea would not use these reactors to pursue nuclear weapons sometime in the future. The Perry Report policy was, thus, only deferring the North Korean nuclear problem to a later point, not permanently solving it.

The foreign policy of the Clinton administration from 1994-1998 (the Agreed Framework) was successful because it met the goal the administration laid out during that time period. In terms of the broader goal of ending the conflict, this policy was a failure.
The attempt by the Perry Report to revise this policy established a good plan (the two-path strategy) for dealing with North Korea and came up with many worthwhile recommendations, but it failed to fix one of the most fundamental problem in the Clinton foreign policy during the previous four years: the inadequacy of the Agreed Framework. The Agreed Framework was inadequate because the Clinton administration negotiated the light-water reactor project based on the belief that it would never have to fulfill this obligation to North Korea. For this reason, if the Agreed Framework had been pursued as policy past the Clinton administration it would have eventually failed.

**The Bush administration**

The Clinton administration’s policies toward North Korea, though flawed, understood that in order get North Korea to give up its nuclear program, the United States was going to have to address a wide range of motives through a comprehensive deal. This understanding coincides with the policy implications developed in the previous chapter based on an investigation into North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. At least during the first half of its term, it seemed that the Bush administration developed quite a different view of how to bring about an end to North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. The Bush administration developed a view that the best way to deal with North Korea was by refusing to deal with them. It refused to address any of North Korea’s concerns until North Korea gave up its nuclear weapons program. It felt that the best way to prevent North Korea’s proliferation was to pressure it, rather than engage it. As will be discussed below, this method did not have the intended effect. The Bush administration has, subsequently, begun leaning towards the Clinton administration’s understanding of
how to deal with North Korean proliferation, the view that this analysis has put forth as the best way to deal with the North Korean dilemma.

Originally, it appeared that the Bush administration was going to build on the apparent success that the Clinton administration had with North Korea at the end of its administration. Secretary of State Colin Powell had stated that the U.S. was going to continue to engage the North publicly on a few occasions. It became apparent that this would not be the policy of the Bush administration, however, when the South Korean President Kim Dae Jong met with President Bush in March of 2000. President Bush expressed concerns about dealing with the North Korean government at all, and essentially rejected the engagement policy of South Korea (known as the Sunshine policy). Bush told Kim Dae Jong that his administration would make a complete review of the foreign policy towards North Korea. The review dragged on for about a year and a half, and ended with the same conclusion that the Clinton administration had reached: North Korea would have to be dealt with by some kind of dialogue and engagement.

This policy recommendation was never followed, though, largely because of the events of September 11, 2001. September 11, 2001 changed the entire foreign policy strategy of the administration. The Bush administration’s primary concern became the “War on Terror,” and this had significant implications for North Korea. The foreign policy of the Bush administration became hard line towards the state. This new approach was made clear in the State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, when Bush declared that North Korea was part of the “axis of evil” along with Iran and Iraq. These were states that Bush declared were pursuing weapons of mass destruction while supporting terrorism. This stance towards North Korea was reiterated in the 2002
National Security Strategy of the United States and the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, both of which stated that the United States has the right to preventatively strike any nation that is perceived as a threat:

Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today’s threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries’ choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first. 23

These statements were aimed directly at North Korea, which the U.S. deemed a “rogue state.” It seems that the goal of this new foreign policy was to send a message to the world that the United States was willing to do anything to prevent another September 11th. The United States wanted to intimidate any would-be attacker with the threat of the full force of the United States military being used against it at any moment.

Needless to say, North Korea did not respond well to its new designation as part of the “axis of evil.” The direct response from the KCNA on January 31, 2002 was:

U.S. President Bush in a “State of the Union Address” made at the joint session of Congress on Wednesday groundlessly linked those countries that go against the grain with the U.S. with terrorism, openly revealing his dangerous attempt to stifle them by force of arms […] Herein lie answers to questions as to why the modern terrorism is focused on the U.S. alone and why it has become serious while Bush is in office. The reality goes to clearly prove that the root cause of all misfortune is the reckless strong-arm policy of the Bush administration […] There has been no precedent in the modern history of North Korea-U.S. relations that in his policy speech the U.S. President made undisguised threatening remarks on aggression and threat against North Korea, an independent and sovereign state. This is, in fact, little short of declaring war against North Korea. 24

The North Korea immediately stated that it felt threatened by the United States and President Bush’s hard line approach. It stated that it felt the U.S. was acting aggressively towards the nation without a justifiable reason.
Following the State of the Union, relations between the U.S. and North Korea remained icy, but there appeared to be some hope of negotiations when a meeting was set between Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and his North Korea counterparts in Pyongyang. Kelly used this occasion, however, to press North Korea about its suspected uranium-enrichment program. The admission of the uranium-enrichment program by North Korea in October of 2002, and the subsequent suspension of heavy oil shipments to North Korea by the U.S., prompted the Bush administration to develop a policy consistent with its goal of taking a hard stance against threats to deter another attack on the U.S..

This policy contained five elements. First, the Bush administration terminated the Agreed Framework, citing North Korea’s non-compliance. Second, there would be no negotiations with North Korea until it dismantled its nuclear program. Third, the administration would seek to assemble an international coalition to apply economic pressure on North Korea. Fourth, the U.S. would plan for future sanctions and military action against the North. Fifth, the administration warned North Korea not to reprocess its weapons grade plutonium, citing that all options, including military action were open, if it took that step. In addition to these elements, the administration has also sought to develop a missile defense system to prevent any possible ICBM threat against the U.S. from North Korea. Using this approach, the Bush administration hoped to force North Korea to concede to the U.S. under its pressure and pressure from the international community. Ideally, North Korea would dismantle its uranium-enrichment program in order to move towards negotiations with the U.S.. This would prove that the United
States could put down any threat by exerting pressure, and further deter other “rogue states” from challenging the U.S.

In terms of the above stated goal of the Bush administration of sending a hard line message to the rest of the world, this policy did have the desired effect. The Bush administration demonstrated that it would give no leeway to these “rogue states,” despite contrary advice by the other states relevant to the North Korean situation. Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea all encouraged engagement, but the Bush administration stuck to its approach (these states will be discussed in depth in the next chapter). Indeed, North Korea took this hard line message to heart, but did not act as the Bush administration hoped it would. Rather than cave to the U.S. pressure, North Korea called the bluff of the United States.

Stating that the U.S. had threatened it, North Korea withdrew from the NPT and systematically began to restart its nuclear weapons program. It first removed IAEA monitoring equipment, it then expelled IAEA inspectors from the country, restarted its reactor at Yongbyon, ended its self-imposed moratorium on missile tests, and, in April 2003, declared that it had nuclear weapons and would begin reprocessing its 8,000 nuclear fuel rods: “It escalated this by accusing the Bush administration of using the U.S. position on the nuclear issue as a mask for a U.S. Iraq-like strategy to attack North Korea.”26 In order to end this program, North Korea demanded bi-lateral talks with the United States and a non-aggression pact, which was a new demand.

This was a direct challenge to the U.S., a challenge that the Bush administration met indecisively. The Bush administration did not attack or succeed in forming an international coalition to pressure Pyongyang. After repeated defiance, all the Bush
administration managed to put forth in response was rhetoric warning North Korea not to take another step in the nuclear direction. In this respect, the Bush administration’s approach backfired in meeting the goal of sending a message to the international community. North Korea called the U.S. bluff, and the U.S. backed down.

In terms of second analysis, it is clear that the Bush administration approach did not succeed in moving towards a resolution of the conflict with North Korea. In fact it moved in the opposite direction. It heightened the conflict by returning the situation to the 1994 crisis. As a result of this, the international community, much of which had already quietly expressed its disapproval of the Bush approach, began to demand that Bush change his strategy. The disapproval of the international community, especially South Korea, Japan, Russia and China, was crippling to Bush’s strategy since one of its key elements was establishing international economic pressure:

China, South Korea, and Russia have withheld full support from the U.S. position, causing frustration within the administration. Their governments criticize the Bush administration for not conducting a diplomatic dialogue with North Korea. They all advocate that the United States offer North Korea a security guarantee and economic assistance in any agreement on nuclear weapons.27

Only Japan has agreed to apply economic pressure. The South Korea will consider it if North Korea continues its provocations, but China and Russia will not apply sanctions. Bush’s policy had the effect of enticing North Korea to restart its nuclear program and withdraw from the NPT, while driving a wedge in between the U.S. and its allies in terms of policy relating towards North Korea. This hard line policy was clearly a failure when measuring its ability to resolve the Korean-U.S. conflict.

During this time there had been significant debate within the administration about what kind of policy should be pursued. One faction consists of a coalition of Pentagon
officials and advisers led by Donald Rumsfeld, officials from Vice President Cheney’s office, and proliferation experts in the State Department and White House led by Undersecretary of State John Bolton.

They reportedly oppose negotiations with North Korea, favor the issuance of demands for unilateral North Korean concessions on nuclear and other military issues, and advocate an overall U.S. strategy of isolating North Korea diplomatically and through economic sanction and bringing about a collapse of North Korean government.28

The second faction, which is mainly in the State Department, is led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and is made up of officials with experience on East Asian and Korean issues. This faction believes the administration should pursue negotiations before pursuing coercion, and they do not think that the administration will be able to bring about a North Korean collapse through international pressure.29

Both of these factions have had influence on U.S. foreign policy. It is obvious that the President sided with the Rumsfeld coalition in the beginning. After the failure of this strategy to resolve the situation, however, the President began leaning towards the Powell coalition. This switch has significantly altered its policy. The administration has seemingly supplemented its goal of sending a hard line message to a goal of resolving the crisis. Despite a year of claiming that the U.S. would not negotiate, the administration stated that it would engage in multilateral talks with North Korea in January of 2003:

On January 7, 2003 the administration proposed a dialogue with North Korea that would not be the negotiation of a new agreement. In a communiqué of January 7, 2003, with Japan and South Korea, the proposal stated that ‘the United States is willing to talk to North Korea about how it will meet its obligations to the international community’ but that ‘the United States will not provide quid pro quos to North Korea to live up to its existing obligations’ […] In February 2003, the administration began to promote a multilateral forum.30
Originally North Korea demanded that the U.S. engage in bilateral talks to address the issue. As a means of enticing North Korea, President Bush publicly stated that he had not intention of invading North Korea. It seemed, though, that North Korea would not talk with the U.S. unless it was bilateral. After the U.S. attempted to have UN Security Council take up the issue (an action that China blocked) and China pressured North Korea to negotiate with the U.S. in multilateral talks, however, the nation finally agreed to the multilateral setting stating: “If the U.S. is ready to make a bold switchover in its Korea policy for a settlement of the nuclear issue, [North Korea] will not stick to any particular dialogue format.” The first round of talks was scheduled in Beijing on April 23, 2003 and included China, the U.S., and North Korea. The U.S. conceded involving South Korea and Russia in the first round of talks.

The April talks in Beijing had several interesting development. To begin with, the Rumsfeld coalition was opposed to the talks with North Korea, and this influenced President Bush to restricting “what the chief U.S. official at Beijing could say to only re-stating the administration’s public position that North Korea must dismantle its nuclear program before the United States would discuss with it ways to improve U.S.-North Korean relations.” Despite agreeing to negotiations, the U.S. still wanted to maintain its hard line approach towards North Korea, refusing to give concessions until the nation gave up its program. North Korea for its part came to Beijing meeting with a proposal setting out the terms under which it would give up its weapons program.

This proposal was based on restoring much of the 1994 Agreed Framework, but it also included new demands from the DRPK. The proposal called for a first step of North Korea declaring it will end its nuclear weapons program in exchange for the U.S.
resuming its heavy fuel oil supply. Following this, North Korea would allow IAEA inspectors back into the nation, but only in Yongbyon. It would also continue its moratorium on ballistic missile tests and halt its exports of missiles and missile technology. In return for all of this, the U.S. would supply North Korea with energy, organize the completion of the light-water reactors, remove North Korea from the U.S. list of terrorist countries, normalize diplomatic relations with North Korea, and issue a written security guarantee stating that the U.S. would not launch a conventional or nuclear attack against North Korea. In the final step, the North would dismantle its nuclear program. The U.S. said it would study this proposal.33

After giving this proposal to the U.S., though, North Korean negotiators admitted having nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the negotiators suggested that North Korea had not ruled out testing the weapons. This admission halted the negotiations, and the nations left the negotiating table a day early, agreeing to meet again. On May 5, North Korea demanded that the U.S. respond to its “bold proposal” in the Beijing talks. The U.S. made no response and a week later, on May 12, North Korea withdrew from its final international commitment regarding nuclear weapons: the North-South Joint Declaration of Denuclearization.34 As the summer progressed, the administration maintained its hopes for further multilateral talks while pressing the UN Security Council for action and preparing for the possibility of the North becoming a nuclear state by working with the Proliferation Security Initiative to find ways to intercept nuclear weapons if the North attempts to sell them.

North Korea agreed to participate in six-party talks on August 1, 2003 with the United States, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and China. These talks were held from
August 27-29, and they marked a further shift in Bush administration policy towards the Powell coalition. Indeed, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage proposed the new strategy:

President Bush […] authorized American negotiators to say last week that he is prepared to take a range of steps to aid the starving nation – from gradually easing sanctions to an eventual peace treaty […] But, officials emphasized, these inducements would be phased in slowly only as North Korea starts surrendering its nuclear weapons, dismantling facilities used to develop them and permitting inspectors free run of the country.35

The Bush administration laid out a broad vision of what could happen if North Korea gave up its weapons. The administration did not, however, have a concrete proposal for North Koreans, which drew criticism from the Chinese, and it was not clear that North Koreans understood the shift in policy. North Korea, as is typical, exploded with angry rhetoric after the talks:

Betraying our expectation, the talks turned out to be no more than armchair arguments and degenerated into a stage show to force us to disarm […] We are now more convinced then before that we have no other alternatives but to continue strengthening our nuclear deterrence as a self-defensive measure to protect our sovereignty.36

The U.S. dismissed the angry response saying that North Korea had not listened to the U.S. presentation. One official said: “Sometimes their script seemed to be couched in assumptions about what we were going to say, not what we did say.”37 Little substantive progress was made at the meetings, but the nations did agree to meet again.

North Korea has not yet agreed to further talks, but the U.S. has been pushing for six-party talks in 2004. At the end of 2003, the administration began working on a proposal for North Koreans that involved issuing the state a multilateral security agreement. President Bush indicated that he would sign a non-aggression pact if it involved the other states involved in the talks. If North Korea broke the agreement, the
state would be dismissive of not only the U.S., but of all the states. Such an agreement would make it much easier to take action against North Korea in an international context if North Korea did not live up to its end of the deal. The U.S. hopes to put forth this proposal at the next round of talks.

The current goal of the Bush administration policy seems to coincide with resolving the conflict. The analysis of the current foreign policy does, thus, not need to be two-fold. The new policy of the administration has not accomplished anything yet except getting North Korea to return to the negotiating table. It has, however, showed promise. The administration has moved from engaging in talks with North Korea to actually seeking a negotiated settlement of the issue. The major flaw in the current tactics of the administration is its unwillingness to put forth a comprehensive proposal to get North Korea to disarm. The administration has begun to realize that some concessions are going to need to be made, but it has not offered North Korea a deal.

The administration has seemed overly preoccupied with the structure of negotiations, insisting that all six nations be involved. This focus raises the question of whether the administration is committed to a settlement or to building international support for its economic pressure if the negotiations fail, as the administration may expect they will. The administration may be seeking to include all of these nations in the talks because it will be easier to get them to commit to international support if they participate in the failed negotiations. The administration has demonstrated that it is more serious about the talks in recent months, but if it really wants to reach the settlement, it needs to present North Korea with a deal as a starting point and work from there. The U.S. must be committed to resolving this issue diplomatically if the negotiations are to
succeed, and it does not seem that the administration has demonstrated that commitment yet.

This indecisiveness is likely due to the competing factions that still exist within the administration. Many inside the administration would prefer that the U.S. return to policy during the first half of Bush’s term. President Bush has seen results with this strategy thus far, but his commitment to the Powell faction could easily disappear if North Korea engages in further provocation. At the moment, the administration still seems to be testing the water, so to speak, regarding its new foreign policy of engagement. The speculation that Colin Powell will not return to administration if the President is elected for another term also raises questions about the sustainability of this policy once its greatest advocate is no longer a presence.

It is also worth noting that the Bush administration has remained committed to the notion that it will not offer any major concessions to North Korea until North Korea disarms. This is not necessarily a flaw, but it might be. It is too soon to tell if these negotiations can be completed with the precondition that nuclear disarmament be the first step for North Korea. The Agreed Framework and the April proposal by North Korea made this the final step because it gave assurances to North Korea that the U.S. would live up to its end of the deal. Considering the history of distrust between these two nations, it is doubtful that North Korea would simply trust the U.S. to live up to its end of the deal, especially after the stance the Bush administration took towards North Korea early on. It is too early to tell how committed the administration will remain to this stance or the implications that this stance will have on future negotiations. Based on past North Korean behavior, though, it seems likely that the nation will not give up its
program and lose the only assurance it has, in its eyes, that the U.S. will follow through on a deal.

The foreign policy of the Bush administration has been erratic and indecisive during its first term. This is for the most part due to the competing visions within the administration on how to deal with North Korea. After September 11, 2001, President Bush clearly had the desire to send a message to the world that the U.S. would not tolerate the possibility of another attack. In terms of North Korean foreign policy, this meant that the U.S. would not deal with the nation until it no longer posed a threat. This was the advice of the Rumsfeld coalition within the administration. This policy was a tremendous failure if looked at in terms of its effectiveness of resolving the conflict. This policy impelled North Korea to start a nuclear crisis much worse than the one faced by the Clinton administration in 1994. The North Korea has now had almost two years to actively produce nuclear weapons. There is no telling how many weapons it may be in the possession of now. This policy of the Bush administration has had the effect of bringing everything to reality that U.S. foreign policy has sought to avoid for two decades. This foreign policy was poorly thought out and has had a terrible impact. It must be viewed as a tremendous failure.

The success of the policy that the administration is currently pursuing, following the suggestions of Secretary of State Colin Powell, cannot yet be ascertained because it is too early to tell what the results will be. The administration is pursuing negotiations backed up with the credible threat of force. The success of this policy will depend greatly on the administration’s willingness to adhere to it and pursue it vigorously. It will also depend on the behavior of North Korea. At this point, North Korea may have decided
that it wants nuclear weapons no matter what. In which case, this policy (as would be most policies) is doomed to fail and will likely crumble quickly as North Korea continues to build up its weapons program. If this is not the case, though, this policy may be successful if North Korea does not provoke the administration too much.

U.S. Policy Goals

Based on the above analysis, it is clear that the main foreign policy goal of the United States should be aimed at resolving the conflict with North Korea permanently. Goals not aimed in this direction have created nothing but problems. With this understanding, it seems that the goal put forth in the Perry Report is the best goal for the United States to pursue. The intent of the United States foreign policy should be to establish relative stability so that a condition can exist on the peninsula to “provide the time and conditions for all sides to pursue a permanent peace on the peninsula, ending at last the Korean War and perhaps ultimately leading to the peaceful reunification of the Korean people.”38 This goal makes the most sense and provides the best direction for the United States, especially in terms of resolving the current crisis.

There are several subsequent goals that the United States should pursue to achieve this overarching goal. First, the U.S. must verifiably end the nuclear weapons program of North Korea. Second, the U.S. must maintain its military presence in South Korea during the short-run. Third, the U.S. must maintain regional influence to monitor the success of any agreement and ensure that its goals are reached. Fourth, the U.S. must address the humanitarian crisis in North Korea, which inherently destabilizes the region. Fifth, the U.S. should not pursue government change in North Korea as a policy of choice.
Several of these goals require further explanation. The first goal has been discussed in depth throughout the last several chapters. The second goal may not be as clear. Since the end of the Korean War, North Korea has been seeking the expulsion of U.S. troops from South Korea. North Korea sees these forces as a threat and has often used their presence and activities as a reason for staging attacks, making threats, or undermining negotiations. Since 1977, North Korea has been seeking a formal peace treaty with the United States to end the Korean War, and a major condition of this peace treaty has been the withdrawal of the U.S.F.K.

There are some schools of thought within the United States that believe that if these troops were withdrawn North Korea would feel less pressure to develop nuclear weapons to deter a U.S. attack. This easing of pressure, they believe, would enable the U.S. to negotiate a settlement with North Korea much easier. In addition, there has been a lot of anti-American sentiment within South Korea recently. Public support for the maintaining the presence of the U.S. troops has declined substantially during the Bush administration. This is in no small part due to the attempt of North Korea to drive a wedge between the U.S. and South Korea. For instance, when two U.S. soldiers accidentally ran over two Korean girls and killed them with a mine removal truck, North Korean spies spread rumors throughout South Korea that it was not an accident, causing a huge public outcry when the soldiers were acquitted. This is typical practice of the North, and it has worked to some extent.

The South Korea government does, however, want the U.S. to maintain its troop presence, for now at least, because they, like many people, believe that if the 37,000 troops were removed North Korea would attack the South and attempt to forcefully unify
the peninsula. This is a very likely prospect, and is probably the ulterior motive for the North’s long quest to have the troops removed. This is especially likely since North Korea government still officially states that the unification of Korea under its government is one of its main goals. The U.S. troop presence also allows the United States to legitimately back up its threat of force against North Korea if negotiations fail and it attains nuclear weapons. The U.S. would enter negotiations from a much weaker position if it did not have troops in South Korea. For these reasons, the troop presence should be maintained.

The third goal requires only moderate explanation. The United States must take an active role in making sure that any agreement that is reached is upheld and making sure that the security it establishes is maintained. The U.S. must work closely and have a strong connection with South Korea and Japan to do this. Any U.S. foreign policy cannot succeed without working closely with these two nations. If the U.S. foreign policy differs substantially from the views of these two nations, then the U.S. will not be able to maintain its influence and, thus, will not be able to meet its goal of ensuring the security of the region. The views of these nations must be taken into account, and if their views differ from those of the U.S., the U.S. must either convince them to follow it or modify its goals. Upholding U.S. influence must be a foreign policy goal.

The fourth goal of addressing the humanitarian goal is not strictly speaking an American foreign policy concern. Indeed, there are certain people in the Bush administration, such as National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice, that believe that “U.S. intervention in these ‘humanitarian’ crises should, at best, exceedingly rare.” Others in the administration, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, however, do
believe it is the duty of the United States to address this issue because as the most powerful and wealthiest nation in the world it has an obligation to help alleviate the suffering of people around the world when it has the ability to do so. This thesis adopts the latter view.

Additionally, the continued suffering of North Korean people will create further instability in the region. The number of refugees fleeing the terrible conditions in North Korea has increased substantially during the last decade. These people flee despite the tremendous risk of being imprisoned that comes with such an attempt. The number of refugees will continue to grow as the economy begins to deteriorate. Another flood or drought in the region could induce large numbers of refugees to flee into South Korea, China, and Russia. All three nations have expressed grave concerns about the impact this will have on their nations. This worsening crisis could also cause North Korea to lash out to get aid as its grip on its citizens deteriorates. It would make negotiations much harder because of the increased pressure on North Korea it would seek greater concessions from the U.S.. If the U.S. did not meet these concessions North Korea would seek further provocation until the U.S. conceded or declared war.

The fifth goal of the United States is rather contentious. There is a school of thought that believes that the United States should adopt a policy of undermining the Kim Jong Il government either through economic pressure, by creating fissures in the population and upper levels of the government, or by preventatively militarily striking the government. By undermining the government, the U.S. would hope to force its collapse, at which time the South would absorb the North. By striking the government, the U.S. would topple the government and occupy North Korea, similar to its method used in Iraq.
in 2003. The Rumsfeld coalition in the Bush administration believes that undermining or toppling the government is the policy of choice in dealing with North Korea. This policy has major downfalls, however.

The discussion of the downfalls of preventatively striking North Korea will take place at length in Chapter Five. For the purpose of the analysis now, it will sufficient to say that it will pose numerous problems along the lines that Waltz’s argument suggests in Chapter One, such as the uncertainty of retaliation and the necessity of occupying the nation. A detailed discussion of the effectiveness of undermining the North Korean government will take place in the next chapter. There is much evidence that this method will be ineffective. If the U.S. were effective in undermining the government, however, there would likely be detrimental consequences. North Korea is likely to lash out to prevent its collapse. This could involve the launch of a nuclear weapon or the invasion of South Korea. If the North did collapse, there is no guarantee that the South would be able to peacefully absorb it. A devastating civil war and power struggle in the North is equally likely to occur. The sudden collapse of North Korea would also pose huge problems for South Korea in economic, social, and political terms. Also, as has been previously discussed, the prospect of war with North Korea is terrifying. The U.S. would most likely win, but the war would be catastrophic. The U.S. for these reasons must not actively pursue government change. North Korea may self-implode, but the U.S. should not have a hand in it.

These goals, based on the analysis of the Clinton and Bush administrations, clarify what the United States must do to bring about peace and stability in North Korea, and meet its long-term goal of resolving the long-standing dilemma on the North Korean
peninsula. The next chapter will discuss several other important U.S. policy considerations regarding North Korea that have not been considered until this point. The discussion of these policy considerations will be the final step before a comprehensive plan for dealing with North Korea is laid out.
Notes

1 U.S.- North Korea Agreed Framework, Aug. 1994, text
4 “Interview: Stephen Bosworth,” pp. 2
5 “Interview: Robert Gallucci,” pp. 6
7 Ibid, pp. 4
8 Ibid, pp. 4
9 Ibid, pp. 6
10 Ibid, pp. 6
11 Ibid, pp. 7
12 Ibid, pp. 7-8
13 Ibid, pp. 8
14 Ibid, pp. 8
18 Ibid
19 Ibid, pp. 10
20 Ibid, pp. 12
21 Ibid, pp. 18
25 Niksch, pp. 2
26 Ibid, pp. 2
27 Ibid, pp. 5
28 Ibid, pp. 3
29 Ibid, pp. 3
30 Ibid, pp. 4
32 Niksch, pp. 4
33 Ibid, pp. 3
34 “Timeline: North Korea Nuclear Crisis.”
37 Ibid
38 Perry, pp. 2
Chapter Four

Other United States Policy Considerations

This chapter is designed to give a succinct overview of several important U.S. policy considerations that are pertinent to the North Korean situation, but have not yet been discussed. First, this chapter will discuss the views of the four nations besides the U.S. and North Korea that have an interest in the resolution of the North Korean dilemma. These nations are South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia. Second, this chapter will undertake an investigation of the merits of missile defense. A national missile defense system for the United States has been offered as a way to potentially offset the gains North Korea may attain from developing nuclear weapons. The feasibility and effectiveness of such a strategy will be assessed in this chapter. Finally, an examination of the unique stability of the North Korean government will be conducted. It is rare that a dictatorship can maintain such tight social and political control during times of extreme duress. The ability of the North Korean government to do this will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the policy options available to the U.S. These three considerations must be taken into account when developing a policy towards North Korea because they influence the options available to the United States.

The Four Other Nations

This section will discuss the goals of the four other relevant nations in the North Korean dilemma. While this analysis is designed to develop an American foreign policy for dealing with North Korea, it seems essential to examine the goals of these nations as well. The goals of these nations must influence the policy that the U.S. crafts because the U.S. cannot resolve the current situation without the support of these nations. While
undertaking this discussion, it will be necessary to realize that the U.S. does not necessarily need to have a policy that meets all the goals of these nations. Rather, the U.S. must be aware of all the goals, decide which ones coincide with its interests, and figure out which goals are expendable, so to speak.

Since Kim Jong Il’s admission that North Korea abducted Japanese citizens during the 1970s, Japanese public opinion has necessitated that Japan’s foreign policy be dominated by this issue. The issue has forced the Japanese government to focus almost exclusively on the abduction issue despite the government’s growing concern over North Korean nuclear threat and its more than 100 Nodong missile, which are apparently aimed at Japan. The main goal of the Japanese government is, thus, to maintain stability on the Korean peninsula, so that the Japanese abduction issue can be resolved along with an eventual resolution of the nuclear crisis. According to the Center for Non-proliferation Studies (CNS), there are several subsequent goals in accordance with the above stated objective. In the short- and mid-term, Japan wants to, among other things, avoid military conflict on the Peninsula, terminate and/or freeze North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and missile program, resolve the 40-120 cases of suspected abduction by North Korea, ensure that the families of abductees are able to visit Japan, and prevent any possible nuclear accident in the North that would impact Japan. Its long-term objectives include the disarmament of North Korea, strengthening international non-proliferation governments, preventing future Japanese vulnerability to North Korea attacks, and preventing China and Russia from being the dominant influences on the peninsula.

Japan has stated its desire to avoid military conflict with North Korea as a means to achieve its above goals. Japanese experts do not expect North Korean government to
collapse; thus, “Japan’s objective is not to overturn the government in North Korea but to gradually change the nature of its political and economic systems.” Japan supports the current multilateral approach of the Bush administration, and it realizes that the Agreed Framework may need to be scrapped for a new comprehensive deal. Japan is concerned, however, that its interests may be left behind if North Korea makes concessions to the other nations at the negotiating table that do not include its interests. The government understands that any settlement will likely involve a great deal of funding from Japan, and, thus, wants to make sure that the missile and abduction issues are addressed in any deal it supports. Japan is prepared to offer a package deal in coordination with the U.S. and South Korea that would address U.S. concerns about nuclear weapons, missile programs and exports, and conventional forces. This package deal would also freeze North Korean missile development and dismantle North Korea’s Nodong missiles aimed at Japan. In exchange, the U.S. would provide North Korea with security assurances in a written legal document, which is not a treaty, and energy assistance.

If North Korea agreed to this deal, energy assistance would be provided in three steps. First, a new international organization would be established to replace KEDO that would include China and Russia. Second, the light-water project would be abandoned in favor of thermal power generation facilities. Third, the shipments of heavy fuel oil would be resumed. Any deal would of course be contingent on the North’s agreement to end its nuclear weapons program and submit to strict verification. Additionally, the deal would require North Korea to ship all spent nuclear material to a third country (North Korea rejected this in 1994). Based on its goals, Japan thinks that following this course of action would be the best way to resolve the current North Korean situation.
Like Japan, it was initially not expected that China would take an active role in dealing with the North Korean crisis. China has, however, become key in influencing North Korea to accept the current multilateral approach to resolving the North Korean conflict. China, by far, has the most influence over the North Korean government of any state. It was, thus, a relief to the United States that China decided to support the U.S. effort to end the North Korean nuclear program. China has three central goals: (1) peace and stability on the Korean peninsula should be maintained; (2) the peninsula should be nuclear free; and (3) the dilemma should be resolved through political and diplomatic methods.6

China’s main concerns regarding the North Korean nuclear program stem from the potential ramifications a nuclear North Korea could have on China’s security interests. China worries that the North Korean nuclear weapons program could cause South Korea, Japan, and possibly Taiwan to develop nuclear weapons, or that the North Korean missile program could cause the U.S. to deploy theater missile defense. Additionally, China worries that the hard-line approaches by both North Korea and the U.S. could lead to military confrontation. This confrontation could lead to massive amounts of refugees fleeing to China, which would undoubtedly disrupt its economic development. This conflict could also precipitate the fall of the North Korean government, and the loss of a strategic buffer for China. These ramifications are seen as a serious threat to Chinese interests.7

The Chinese government is, thus, determined to maintain the status quo on the Korean peninsula. China holds the U.S. and North Korea equally responsible for the
current situation because of the inability of the United States to meet its obligations under the Agreed Framework:

China nevertheless regards the Agreed Framework as a stabilizing factor in helping defuse nuclear tension; providing the energy supplies Pyongyang desperately needs for generating electricity; and maintaining contact between the United States and the DPRK that could eventually lead to the normalization of bilateral relations. Instead of blaming North Korea for the collapse of the 1994 Agreed Framework, Beijing has been calling for both Pyongyang and Washington to return to the agreement and resolve their dispute through dialogue.8

China views its main role in this situation as providing stability. It will, therefore, oppose moves by either side likely to escalate the problem. It desires neither the imposition of further economic sanctions on North Korea nor the use of force, especially since it believes that these actions could prompt desperate action by North Korea. China’s preferred path for a resolution of this crisis would be to find a face-saving method for both the U.S. and North Korea to return to the Agreed Framework.

Russia, like China, has a strong historical relationship with North Korea. Russia was, thus, slow to get decisively involved in the current dilemma, wavering back and forth between fully supporting U.S. efforts and showing sympathy for North Korea. After the North’s withdrawal from the NPT, Russia became much more involved and supportive of U.S. efforts. Russia does still, however, understand the North’s security anxieties, stating that the presence of “third countries” in North Korea may pose obstacles for the settlement of the nuclear issue. The Russian government also believes that the Bush administration’s initial hard-line stance significantly escalated the crisis. The government believes that negotiations are the best way to resolve the situation. The state is against taking any action that could bring about the collapse of the North Korean government. Although the states are no longer ideologically tied and Russia does not
view North Korea as a strategic buffer like China, the state opposes attempting to bring about the collapse of the state because it will likely lead to an influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees to Russia. Russia has also noted that “a frightened cat becomes a tiger,” and is afraid that North Korea will lash out if it is pressured.9

Russia’s supports the notion of returning to the Agreed Framework and has offered North Korea its own package deal to resolve the situation. This package deal included returning to the Agreed Framework, engaging in new multilateral negotiations, maintaining the nuclear-free status of the peninsula, strictly observing the NPT, and resuming economic and humanitarian aid programs. Russia is adamantly opposed to having the UN Security Council take up the issue, fearing that the U.S. will try to force economic sanctions. This is a view China shares. One of Russia’s main objectives in taking an active role in the North Korean issue is to “show Russia’s relevance in a major international crisis, and increase its involvement in Northeast Asia.”10 Russia desires to show that it is still a global power and, thus, would like to play a key role in settling this issue. Russia will likely be eager to play a mediating role, investigating ways for both the United States and North Korea to return to the negotiating table with dignity. Russia may also be willing to play a key role in any settlement. It has suggested that it would be willing to help with the construction of the light-water reactors. It may also be willing to contribute to economic and humanitarian aid. Russia’s two main goals are, therefore, to peacefully resolve the nuclear crisis and to take an active role in the solution.

South Korea’s concerns are probably the most important to take into account from a U.S. policy standpoint. The North Korean nuclear program most immediately affects South Korea, considering that the majority of North Korean weapons would likely be
launched against the South in the event of conflict. South Korea is also the most strategically important ally for the U.S. in any policy regarding North Korea, since the U.S. will need South Korean support for any strategy from economic sanctions to military force to negotiations to be successful. The predominant view in South Korea is that “North Korea would never use nuclear weapons against fellow Koreans, and that the geographic proximity makes nuclear weapons impractical.”¹¹ Most of the South Korean concerns about the North Korean nuclear program center on the potential effects that it may have on the South’s economy.

The South is steadfastly opposed to the use of military force against North Korea, especially since it believes that North Korea will not use nuclear weapons against it:

Roh has labeled his policy towards Pyongyang as ‘the policy for peace and prosperity,’ based on the following principles: dialogue; trust and reciprocity; international cooperation based upon Korean initiatives; public participation; and supra-partisan cooperation. In regard to North Korea’s nuclear program, the Roh government has stressed that Pyongyang’s acquisition of nuclear weapons is unacceptable, but that the problem must be resolved through peaceful dialogue.¹²

The South desires to achieve its goals by working closely with the United States, but it has been frustrated by some of the actions by the U.S. It objects to the hard line approach that the Bush administration took early on in its administration, and it also objected to being left out of the initial trilateral talks between North Korea, the U.S., and China. South Korea thinks that its goals may be subjugated by those of the United States, and is, thus, very concerned that it be included in any talks that take place. South Korea is not opposed to enticing North Korea with economic assistance and security assurances. The state views boosting the North Korean economy and pushing for reform as beneficial to the whole peninsula. South Korea is opposed to any action that might bring about the collapse of the North Korean government because of the potential impact on the stability
of the peninsula. The sudden collapse of North Korea and its absorption by the South would pose enormous problems for the Southern economy, society, and political system. South Korea, thus, seeks a peaceful resolution of the nuclear crisis that will take its interests into account.

All of these nations have a different view regarding the North Korean situation. All of their views share several important similarities, however, that the U.S. must take into account when crafting its foreign policy. First, all of these nations are opposed to action that will precipitate the fall of the North Korean regime, including military strikes and economic sanctions. Second, all of these nations believe that U.S. and North Korea can resolve this situation peacefully through diplomatic means. This is the U.S. policy that they prefer. Third, all of these nations believe that the U.S. must offer North Korea a package deal to get North Korea to end its nuclear program. These are views that the U.S. must take into account.

**Missile Defense**

The Bush administration withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty on December 14, 2001, stating that it had the intention of developing a National Missile Defense (NMD) System. This system would be designed to intercept and destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) carrying nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons, if they were launched against the United States. Considering North Korea’s current development of the Taepo Dong II missile, which could reach Alaska, it seems that the United States planned on developing this system, in part, to address the potential North Korean nuclear threat. Proponents of an NMD system state that it has three advantages: (1) It will preserve freedom of U.S. action; (2) It may deter the development and
deployment of ICBMs; and (3) It will limit the damage of an ICBM attack. Opponents of the NMD system, however, argue that it has none of these advantages. Specifically dealing with North Korea, it appears that a NMD system will have few benefits based on the arguments presented by the proponents and opponents of the NMD system. The NMD system does not seem to reduce the risks associated with North Korean nuclear development, in fact, it may enhance some of the risks.

It is argued that a state such as North Korea may try to blackmail the United States with nuclear weapons into refraining from military action that it would normally take. NMD would be a way for the United States to preserve its freedom of action. Proponents of a NMD system argue that the United States could not be blackmailed if it had this system because if North Korea launched its nuclear weapons against the United States, they would simply be shot down. The U.S. would, therefore, be able to make its decisions without fearing that North Korea could strike the U.S. with a nuclear weapon as a consequence.

There is a fundamental problem with this argument, though: “Any country capable of producing or obtaining both ICBMs and weapons of mass destruction would be able to produce or obtain effective countermeasures.” The only way that the above argument could be plausible is if the NMD system were accurate enough to ensure a one hundred percent success rate. As has been discussed throughout this analysis, the damage done by one nuclear weapon would be catastrophic. If the U.S. can guarantee that 95 out of 100 missiles will be shot down, that is not enough to give the U.S. freedom of action. This kind of success, however, is not technically feasible:

Consider that 95 percent effectiveness is unrealistically optimistic, because such performance is not achievable in a world with countermeasures. Confidence in
the effectiveness of the planned NMD system would not be high enough to increase U.S. freedom of action beyond the level already achieved through deterrence. In fact, deploying an NMD system to preserve U.S. freedom of action might induce the United States to undertake riskier ventures than it otherwise would, thus increasing the risk of nuclear attack.  

Missile defense may lead the U.S. to believe that it has more freedom of action, but it will really not because missile defense systems are relatively easy to deceive with countermeasures. This belief, however, could lead the U.S. to take actions it should not, putting American interests in danger. From this perspective, it does not appear that NMD will do much to improve American freedom of action.

The second advantage that proponents advocate is that a NMD system would deter states from developing and deploying ICBMs because these countries would think it would be futile to do so in the face of the NMD system. If all their missiles are going to be shot down, why should they bother to spend the money to develop ICBMs? Taking into consideration that most developing nuclear states view their nuclear weapons arsenals as deterrent forces rather than offensive forces, it does not seem likely that they will be deterred from developing and deploying ICBMs:

Thus, an emerging missile state is unlikely to impose stringent requirements on the effectiveness of its ICBMs, because deterrence would not require the certainty of a successful attack – only the real possibility […] The deployment of countermeasures, either developed indigenously or purchased abroad, would introduce enough uncertainty about the effectiveness of the defense to accomplish this objective.  

Indeed, in order to maintain their deterrent force, developing nuclear states are likely to develop a larger arsenal of ICBMs in the face of a NMD system. By developing more ICBMs, these countries would increase U.S. uncertainty about its ability to shoot down all of the state’s missiles. It is, thus, more likely that states will increase their production of ICBMs if the U.S. develops missile defense.
Finally, proponents of a NMD system propose that, even if the system were not successful in shooting down all of the missiles launched against the United States, it would at least shoot down some of the missiles launched against the U.S. This would limit the potential damage that any nuclear attack could inflict on the U.S.: “This benefit would likely be more than offset by the increased risk of an ICBM attack that an NMD deployment may produce.”18 In addition to the increased likelihood that states would develop larger ICBM arsenals, consider the other potential impacts of a NMD system. This system is likely to put pressure on China to increase its nuclear arsenal for fear that its small arsenal will be offset:

The Chinese are likely to react to U.S. missile defense deployments by expanding a number of their already existing nuclear modernization programs: building more ICBMs, deploying multiple warheads and decoys on new MIRVed [...] missiles, and considering alternative covert means of delivery if all else fails. The United States is, thus, likely to remain vulnerable to a Chinese nuclear strike whether or not it builds a national missile defense.19

Along with facing a more capable Chinese nuclear arsenal, the increased Chinese nuclear threat will also induce India to change the size of its arsenal and the alert status, possibly ending its practice of keeping nuclear weapons off alert and stored disassembled.

This change in Indian nuclear practices is liable to provoke Pakistan to take similar steps. This would substantially raise the nuclear tension in this region and increase the possibility of an accidental or unauthorized launch. A NMD system will also entice states to develop alternative means of delivery:

National missile defense could not stop [states] from developing capabilities to deliver nuclear weapons against the United States by means other than ICBMs, such as in the holds of ships steaming into U.S. ports, or inside commercial airliners, or by cruise missiles. Indeed, if it encouraged plans to deliver nuclear weapons in this manner, the national missile defense would actually weaken deterrence and make a nuclear attack more likely.20
These alternative means of delivery would also make it more difficult to retaliate against a state staging a nuclear attack against the U.S. because covert means make it difficult to identify a “return address.” This may also give these states more confidence that they can attack the U.S. without retaliation. These increased risks of nuclear attack to the United States that come with a NMD system more than offset the potential benefits of limiting damage of an attack.

Based on this analysis, it appears that missile defense will do little to reduce the five risks posed by North Korean nuclear proliferation. First, a NMD system may increase the risk of a hostile North Korean nuclear attack because it may encourage North Korea to develop alternative means of delivery that it believes can be used to launch an anonymous attack. A NMD system may also entice North Korea to develop a larger arsenal of nuclear weapons and ICBMs, once it develops these capabilities. Second, because of the incentive to develop a larger arsenal of nuclear weapons and ICBMs, the risk of accidental or unauthorized use would increase in North Korea. Third, since a NMD system is likely to lead many states to develop larger arsenals than they normally would, this will put additional pressure on non-nuclear states, such as South Korea, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, to develop nuclear weapons. A NMD system could lead to an arms race, not prevent one.

Fourth, U.S. power and influence would be reduced in Southeast Asia just as much as if the U.S. did not have a NMD system precisely because of the argument above regarding U.S. freedom of action. Finally, a NMD system would do nothing to thwart terrorists from attacking the U.S. with nuclear weapons because terrorists are unlikely to have access to ICBMs and will use alternative means of delivery. Since it appears that a
terrorist group is more likely to stage a nuclear attack than any state (due to their anonymity and affinity for death and destruction), it appears that a NMD system does not address the most fundamental nuclear threat. Terrorists would, therefore, not be deterred from seeking nuclear weapons and fissile material from states such as North Korea. A NMD system is not likely to be of any use in solving the North Korean nuclear dilemma and should not be considered as a policy choice for the U.S.

The Unique Stability of the North Korean Government

Most North Korean experts believed that the death of Kim Il Sung would precipitate the fall of the fledgling North Korean government. Few believed that Kim Jong Il would be able to hold onto power after the death of the architect of the North Korean form of government. This is the view that the Clinton administration adopted early in its administration. The North Korean government has not collapsed, though, and it does not appear that it will collapse. The situation consistently worsened in the state, but Kim Jong Il still maintains tight control. This section will examine why Kim Jong Il has been able to preserve his government in the face of domestic troubles that have brought down many governments in the past (the Soviet Union and Eastern European communist bloc). There seem to be three reasons that Kim Jong Il has been able to sustain a stable hold on his power: (1) The extreme cult of personality that exists in North Korea; (2) The lack of dissent among the population and the elite; and (3) Kim Jong Il’s willingness to put his government’s survival before the welfare of the North Korean people. This unique ability to survive will have substantial implications for the policy options that the United States will be able to pursue.
The cult of personality that exists in North Korea was developed by Kim Il Sung, and passed onto Kim Jong Il as a means to keep tight control over the population. Based on the Juche ideology (self-reliance), Kim Sung Il developed his own modification of the Marxist/Stalinist/Maoist communist philosophy. This modification suggested that only a great leader could direct the nation to its ultimate goals of a self-reliant communist state. Kim Il Sung believed that he was this great leader, but he had to make the people of North Korea believe it in order to hold onto control. The first step the government took to solidify control over the people was to rewrite history in a way that granted Kim Il Sung legitimacy to lead North Korea. The official history now states that Kim Il Sung led a revolt against the Japanese during World War II to take back the country, rather than stating that he was installed by the Soviet government after spending most of World War II in the Soviet Union. The official history also states that Kim Jong Il was born on a sacred mountain in North Korea, rather than in the Soviet Union during World War II.

After altering history to ensure that it reflected Kim family’s legitimate ascension to power, the government then had to ensure that the North Korean people believed the myths. This was accomplished through two methods: Indoctrination from birth and an absolute control of information. Mandating that the study of Kim Sung Il, Kim Jong Il, and the Juche philosophy dominate the life of both students and workers ensures the indoctrination of the population. Other studies are greatly neglected to ensure that the children are focusing on the “great” activities of the two Kims. Along with the teachings at school, the worship of the leaders in reinforced at almost every turn in North Korea through the enormous number of statues, the mandated wearing of patches bearing the
leaders’ likenesses, extravagant national holidays, and countless books and newspapers that are published by the two Kims or in of praise of them.\textsuperscript{21}

Along with being taught about the amazing deeds of the two Kims, the North Korean people are taught to hate the United States early. Teachers are instructed to tell students that “Americans are ‘two-legged wolves’ and the United States is a ‘hotbed of all evils swarming with beggars.’ ”\textsuperscript{22} In all jet cockpits, sailor’s cabins, and army guard posts there are signs that read: “Let’s exterminate our sworn enemy U.S. imperialists.”\textsuperscript{23} The people swear to fight American imperialism and the “lackeys” in Seoul on a daily basis as well. It is no wonder that the armed forces in North Korea are so energized. They are legitimately afraid of an American attack, and so indoctrinated with hate that they are prepared to fight at any moment. The entire society is always ready for a war with the U.S. and South Korea. This indoctrination has produced a state filled with people who worship their leaders as gods and condemn the United States.

This level of indoctrination may seem absurd and impossible to people outside North Korea, but it is important to remember that this information is the only thing that the people of North Korea are exposed to. The information flow in and out of the country is tightly monitored. There are no foreign radios, books, television, movies, or newspapers. Everything that North Koreans see and hear is produced by the state. Only people with special access at the highest levels of the government may see and hear things that are foreign. It appears that the North Korean government has succeeded in brainwashing the majority of the North Korean population by controlling information so tightly. The large majority of citizens truly believe in the myths the Kim governments have put forth. This is evidenced by the tremendous outpour of emotion by the
population at the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994. The public display of emotion was uncontrollable. People wept openly in the streets. People still mourn his death, and honor him as if he were a god.

In this culture, many people truly loved Kim Il Sung and love Kim Jong Il. This is something that people are born into. It is reminiscent of how where a person in the United States is born will often determine what sports team they route for or what school they go to. If one is born in North Korea, he is born into a culture that teaches him to worship the Kim government. It is fair to say that the North Korean government has impaired the ability of millions of people to objectively view the world. Their perceptions have been skewed from birth, and the cycle will be impossible to break without outside intervention.

Despite this extreme level of indoctrination, there is still some dissent in the country. This is evident by the number of people that defect from the country. This dissent, however, is squashed quickly and decisively in North Korea, so as to prevent dissent from ever gaining momentum:

> There is no criticism allowed of any officials in the North Korean press. Newspapers do not even publish readers’ letters with criticism of shortcomings, complaints, and requests. As representatives of the ruling government explain (in private), ‘any criticism of the socialist system is dangerous due to the presence of enemies in the south of Korea.’ […] Criticism of even low-ranking bureaucrats could be construed as veiled denunciation of the great leader, since he is in charge of everything and everybody.24

Even though dissent is tightly controlled, the government is aware that some people are in need of “reeducation.” In fact, the government itself estimates that there are some three million “hostile elements” in need of “intensive reeducation.” This is why the government has reeducation (concentration) camps. There are an estimated 100,000-
150,000 people living in these camps. 25 This is why those in the population who do not believe the indoctrination must act as if they do. Out of fear, they must act as if they live in paradise, or they will not survive. Anyone who is thought to be disloyal to the government is immediately sent to a reeducation camp. Even an unreported conversation with a foreigner can lead to imprisonment. Kim Jong Il will not take any chances.

Even if these dissenters were not “reeducated,” it is hard to imagine an uprising gaining any kind of support among the general population:

The North Korean government has largely succeeded in its propaganda efforts to brainwash its population and to create a special brand of people; who will give their maximum effort to work for a minimum of rewards; who will labor because of their love for their motherland, rather than for money; and who love their leaders and are convinced that Korean history is a story of heroic acts by Kim Il Sung and his son. 26

Some of the people in North Korea may not even mind the harsh conditions in which they live. They are willing to suffer because they suffer for their motherland and the “great” Korean people. They suffer for their leaders, and the success of their nation against the imperialist United States. There is no doubt that hunger and poverty have created some dissent. It is reported that “quite a few [North Korean] citizens have lost interest in work and no longer pay attention to propaganda” and that the “black market is growing in the North, and even such ‘sacred’ objects as Kim Il Sung badges are sold to foreigners.” 27

There is, however, no open dissent against the government in the general population. Even for those who are unhappy that is too dangerous. They would either be imprisoned or killed.

The lack of the dissent in the general population is understandable given the situation, but what about the elite of the nation? What about all the people in the government and the upper levels of the military that have access to knowledge of the
outside world? How do they tolerate the conditions in North Korea? The answer is as simple as it is sad: bribery and fear. The North Korean elite is given access to a life that few in North Korea will ever get to see. They get to live in the luxurious court of Kim Jong Il. They get enough to eat. They sleep in warm beds. They are privileged, and their privilege depends on being in the favor of Kim Jong Il:

Kim’s hold on power depends not only on his willingness to impose misery upon his own people but also on the willingness of the North Korean elite to accept their privileges and say nothing. Many North Koreans are well aware of the repressed and backward state of their homeland and with it were otherwise […] The problem is that none of them are prepared to force or even nudge their wishes upon Kim Jong Il.28

Indoctrination and tight control of dissent has created a system in which Kim Jong Il is totally unchecked. There is no public dissent in the population or in the elite. No one will stand up to Kim Jong Il. His government will not be overthrown or collapse as a result of discontent if Kim keeps up this level of control.

Kim Jong Il understands that his rule rests on his ability to maintain this control over his people. He has no illusions that his government would survive an opening to the outside world. He knows that if the people of North Korea were allowed to see the way the rest of the world lived, he would not hold onto power. He has, hence, made the decision to place his government’s survival above the welfare of his people. This is the main reason that he will not open the economy in North Korea. He fears that an open economy will lead to foreign influence on the population, which would lead to a loss of control.

Additionally, reforms would undermine his legitimacy, which is based on the great leadership of his father. Acknowledging that there is a need for reform would be acknowledging that the there was something wrong with Kim Il Sung’s policies. Why
then would Kim Il Sung’s son be the right person to lead? At the same time, Kim knows that it will be increasingly difficult to uphold his strict ideological control if the state continues on its downward economic spiral. People will stop believing the propaganda, as some already have, on a larger scale. He is faced with a difficult decision. Does he attempt to open his economy and fix the economic problems, but risk the erosion of his control? Or, does he attempt to maintain his control in the face of this economic crisis, hoping that, with foreign aid, he is able to keep the economy viable?

Kim Jong Il, under the influence of China, seems to have begun leaning towards moderate economic opening. He hopes to be able to maintain his strict ideological control, while opening the economy. This path relies heavily on the idea that with this economic opening, people’s lives will get better and they will start buying into the propaganda once again, offsetting any increased foreign influence. Kim has been very careful in this opening; however, because he wants to make sure he doesn’t move to quickly and lose control. Kim has steadily increased trade with South Korea over the last decade. Additionally, in 2002 Kim instituted economic reform, formally abandoning the command economy and allowing prices to be set by the market for the first time. “The government has also created three special economic zones to exploit tourism and investment and amended its laws on foreign ownership, land leases, and taxes and tariffs.” So far, these economic reforms have had little impact. They are not broad and far-reaching enough, but the reforms do signal some willingness to experiment. What is sure, though, is that Kim Jong Il is looking for alternative methods to fix North Korea’s problems. He wants alternatives that will ensure his survival.
This is the fundamental nature of Kim Jong Il. He is concerned with his
government’s survival at all costs. He places this notion above all else. He does not
make his decisions based on what is good for the people of North Korea, but what is good
for his government. Before he ascended to power, the international community viewed
him as a playboy, who was hardly able to run a country, but since then, he has proved
himself a shrewd and capable leader, able to skillfully negotiate with the United States
and maintain his government in an economic crisis:

Dictators do not survive without sophisticated political skills. Kim has
maintained power despite intelligence assessments that his leadership would not
survive the death of his father in July 1994. And he has endured despite famine,
floods, economic collapse, nuclear crises, the loss of two major patrons in Russia
and China, and U.S. pressure. There has been no palace or military coup, no
extensive social unrest, no obvious chaos in the military, and wholesale purge of
various officials. Moreover, Kim’s decision to proceed with North Korea’s
tentative and measured economic reforms is further proof that, however morally
repugnant he may be, he is also quite capable of assessing costs and benefits.30

Kim Jong Il works 20 hours a day, and sleeps no more than four hours a night. He is
aware of the outside world and watches the foreign press. He is well aware of the
uprising he has caused in the international community.31 He is not delusional. He simply
bases all his decisions on the intense paranoia that his government is in danger. He feels
threatened by the South Korea and the U.S., especially. He may be somewhat a victim of
his own indoctrination, believing that the U.S. and South Korea are really out to get him,
and also believing that he has a divine right to lead North Korea. (It is after all hard not to
be influenced by the 24 hour a day worshipping.)

Kim Jong Il is the driving force behind all North Korean actions, and it is
important to understand that his number one goal is his survival, even if that means
allowing his people to starve rather than opening his economy. For this reason, Kim Jong
Il has maintained an unprecedented amount of control in his nation. He controls the economy, he controls the population, and he controls the elite all with the goal of survival in mind. It is because of this control that the United States must realize that it is not sensible from a foreign policy standpoint to hope for the government’s collapse. Despite all the signs of weakness, barring a significant mistake from Kim Jong Il, the government will not collapse from within.

**Concluding Remarks**

These three policy considerations have been discussed in this chapter because it is necessary to understand them in order to craft an effective foreign policy. The discussion of the four other relevant nations in the North Korean situation was undertaken because the opinions of these nations are likely to constrain some of the options available to the U.S. Additionally, the U.S. will need to address some of the concerns of these nations in its policy. The development of a NMD system was put forth principally because the Bush administration has been seeking to develop it as means to offset nuclear threats to the U.S. In the first half of the administration, this was seen as a major initiative and a preferred policy option. The unique stability of Kim Jong Il regime in the face of such dire domestic circumstances was discussed because it will lend a new perspective in which to view several of the policy options to be investigated in the next chapter. These three policy considerations each play a key part in shaping an effective American foreign policy towards North Korea.
Notes

2 Ibid, pp. 2
3 Ibid, pp. 3
4 Ibid, pp. 4
5 Ibid, pp. 4
7 Ibid, pp. 2
8 Ibid, pp. 3
10 Ibid, pp. 1
12 Ibid, pp. 3
15 Lewis, pp. 128
16 Ibid, pp. 129-130
17 Ibid
18 Ibid, pp. 130
20 Ibid
23 Ibid
25 Ibid, pp. 3
26 Ibid, pp. 4
27 Ibid, pp. 4
30 Ibid, pp. 1
31 Maas, pp. 7
Chapter Five
A Comprehensive Plan for the Future of American Foreign Policy Towards North Korea

This chapter is the culmination of the investigation that has taken place throughout the last four chapters. It is intended to put forth an American foreign policy plan for dealing with the current North Korean dilemma facing the United States. This plan is based on the conclusions that have been made throughout the analysis, and will, thus, begin with a summary of these conclusions. Following this summary, a discussion of the policy options that the United States should not pursue in order to reach its goals will be undertaken. After this discussion, the comprehensive plan for dealing with North Korea will be laid out and explained in depth. A contingency plan will then be put forth to give the United States direction should the U.S. and North Korea not be able to reach a negotiated agreement based on this plan. This analysis is intended to offer the United States a direction for definitively resolving the North Korean situation.

Summary of Analytic Conclusions

This analysis has made many conclusions throughout the last four chapters that have contributed to the development of the ensuing foreign policy plan. In order to better convey an understanding of how this plan was developed, these conclusions will be summarized here, so that the connection between the comprehensive plan and the conclusions that have been made can more easily be recognized. This summary will be succinct, focusing mainly only the conclusions, with only brief mention of the discussions that led to them.
The first chapter examined the dynamics of nuclear proliferation by discussing the debate among policymakers and nuclear proliferation scholars about the motives of nuclear proliferation and whether or not nuclear proliferation should be opposed in general. This chapter was intended to establish the framework in which the subsequent analysis would take place. This analysis effected two important conclusions: (1) The motives of a state regarding nuclear proliferation are diverse and cannot be assessed within a single theoretical model; and (2) Although there is merit to both the nuclear proliferation pessimist and optimist arguments, the United States should adopt a view of nuclear proliferation pessimism for its policy.

Chapter two builds on this framework by examining the context in which the North Korean government has pursued its nuclear weapons program and assessing likely motives of the government based on this context. There appear to be three motives for the North Korean nuclear weapons program: (1) North Korea feels that its security is threatened by the United States and South Korea, and it must develop nuclear weapons to “level the playing field” and to deter; (2) North Korea desires nuclear weapons as a means to gain attention and as a means to attain concessions from the United States and the international community by strengthening its weak bargaining position; and (3) North Korea views nuclear weapons as a means to gain legitimacy from the international community and to maintain stability amongst its people and establishments.

The chapter then goes onto give an overview of the North Korean current and potential nuclear weapons capabilities. Based on the three previous sections, the risks associated with North Korean nuclear proliferation were then stated. Five potential risks were identified: (1) Although the risk of a hostile nuclear attack against the U.S. or South
Korea by North Korea is very low, it is still a risk in certain situations; (2) North Korean proliferation may result in accidental or unauthorized use; (3) A nuclear arms race developing in Southeast Asia; (4) The reduction of United States power and influence in Southeast Asia; and (5) The sale of nuclear weapons or fissile material to terrorists. Two important policy implications were drawn from the analysis in this chapter: (1) The United States should develop a test-and-respond strategy regarding North Korean policy; and (2) The United States must offer North Korea a comprehensive package deal in order to get the state to end its nuclear program.

The third chapter assesses the effectiveness of the Clinton and Bush administrations’ policies towards North Korea. Policies in both administrations were flawed, although for different reasons. The analysis of the Clinton administration brought about three important conclusions: (1) Any policy dealing with North Korea must be long-term; (2) Any U.S. policy towards North Korea should follow the two-path strategy of the Perry Report; and (3) The light-water reactor aspect of the Agreed Framework should be abandoned. The analysis of the Bush administration, on the other hand, concluded that a hard-line approach does not work with North Korea.

This chapter also presented the goals that the United States should pursue based on the analysis of the two administrations. It found that the overarching goal of the United States should be to “provide the time and conditions for all sides to pursue a permanent peace on the peninsula, ending at last the Korean War and perhaps ultimately leading to the peaceful reunification of the Korean people.” The analysis put forth five subsequent goals to reach this end: (1) The U.S. must verifiably end the nuclear weapons program of North Korea; (2) The U.S. must maintain its military presence in South
Korea during the short-run; (3) The U.S. must maintain regional influence to monitor the success of any agreement and ensure that its goals are reached; (4) The U.S. must address the humanitarian crisis in North Korea, which inherently destabilizes the region; and (5) The U.S. should not pursue government change in North Korea as a policy of choice.

The discussion of the four other nations in Chapter Four was based on the conclusion in the previous chapter that any policy towards North Korea must be multilateral. The analysis of these nations found three common views among these nations that the U.S. must consider: (1) All of these nations are opposed to action that will precipitate the fall of the North Korean regime, including military strikes and economic sanctions; (2) All of these nations believe that U.S. and North Korea can resolve this situation peacefully through diplomatic means; and (3) All of these nations believe that the U.S. must offer North Korea a package deal to get North Korea to end its nuclear program. The analysis of the proposed national missile defense system by the Bush administration that followed concluded that a NMD system is not an adequate policy choice for reducing the risks associated with North Korea’s nuclear proliferation. The final examination concerning North Korea’s unique stability during dire domestic circumstances asserted that the U.S. should not hope for nor should it pursue a collapse of the North Korean government.

These are the conclusions that the discussions in the following sections are based on. The discussions of what the U.S. should not do, the comprehensive foreign policy, and the contingency plan will rely largely on these conclusions, but will also offer additional explanation of their assertions as is warranted.
Policy Options that the United States Should Not Pursue

Prior to laying out the foreign policy plan for resolving the North Korean situation, it is necessary to point out and discuss policy options that will be noticeably absent from the plan. On the basis of the above analytic conclusions, it is clear that there are certain policy options for dealing with North Korea that the United States should not pursue in attempting to reach the goals that have been stated above. This section will provide a concise overview of the policy options that the United States should not pursue. These options will be listed below. This list will be followed by an explanation of those policy options that have not been previously discussed.

In an attempt to attain its goals regarding the current North Korean situation, the United States should not:

- Hope that the North Korean government will collapse from within
- Take a hard line approach towards the North Korean government
- Develop a national missile defense system
- Include the light-water reactor aspect of the Agreed Framework as part of a negotiated settlement
- Seek United Nations or other international economic sanctions against North Korea as a policy of choice
- Take preventative military action against North Korea

The first four points have been explained in detail during other sections of this analysis. These explanations will, thus, not be reiterated here. The last two points, however, require some further explanation.

There are three main reasons that the United States should not seek U.N. or other international economic sanctions against North Korea as a policy of choice. First, these
sanctions will not force the regime to collapse nor are they likely to bring about compliance. As previously asserted, the North Korean government is extremely stable considering the domestic problems that it faces. If the United States were successful in applying economic sanctions against the North Korean government, the government would simply divert resources from its population to support itself and the North Korean armed forces. This is evidenced by the fact that the North Korean government has consistently diverted foreign aid from its citizens for these purposes. ²

Furthermore, the North Korean people are not likely to rebel in the face of this increased hardship. The level of indoctrination in the state along with the extremely tight control of the population almost ensures that. As they have demonstrated during the last decade, the people of North Korea are willing (or forced) to endure hardship for their leader, and the elite are afraid to challenge Kim Jong Il. Those who are not willing to endure will flee to China or Russia as refugees, but they will not rise against the government. Absent that kind of internal unrest, the government will divert enough resources to survive, and will not be pressured into complying or collapsing. Economic sanctions will, therefore, only have the effect of increasing the plight of the North Korean people.

Second, the four other key nations involved in the North Korean dilemma do not want the United States to pursue economic sanctions. All of these nations have stated their desire for the U.S. not to pursue policies that may bring about the collapse of the North Korean government or cause the government to take desperate action. They view these policies as ineffective and destabilizing. Since China, and, to a lesser degree, South Korea are North Korea’s main trading partners, any effective economic sanctions would
necessarily involve their participation. Their unwillingness to participate ensures that this
policy option will not be successful.

If the U.S. tries to force these states to apply economic sanctions by bringing the
North Korean case before the U.N. Security Council, it will be putting these nations,
especially China in a very awkward situation:

[China] could not afford being seen as indifferent to continued North Korean
intransigence and open defiance of the international nonproliferation regime. That
rules out a veto [...] Endorsing a U.N. Security Council resolution calling
for economic sanctions against North Korea could seriously damage ties between
Beijing and Pyongyang, force China to cut off the energy and good supplies it
now provides to North Korea, and require China to face the grim prospect of
dealing with massive numbers of North Korean refugees. Even abstaining from
voting would tarnish China’s image as an emerging, responsible power.³

If China did not veto a U.N. resolution calling for economic sanctions and was forced by
the U.N. to apply sanctions, it is likely that the U.S. would find China much less
cooperative in helping to resolve the North Korean situation on U.S. terms than it is now.
China does not want to be forced to apply sanctions and deal with the ramifications that
come with those sanctions. Indeed, if the U.S. forced such action, Japan, and South
Korea may back off supporting the U.S. method of resolving this case. (Russia indicated
some support for bringing the issue before the Security Council, although not necessarily
for economic sanctions.) As will be discussed below in a moment, this lack of
multilateral support would pose serious problems for the U.S. in effecting and
implementing a deal with North Korea.

Lastly, economic sanctions imposed by the U.N. are still technically an act of war
against North Korea. The Korean War ended in an armistice between the United
Nations/South Korea and North Korea/China. No formal peace treaty was ever reached,
and the United States was not a signatory on the armistice. Should the United Nations
impose economic sanctions against North Korea, it is still technically an act of war under an armistice because it is a hostile action. North Korea has asserted as much. When the United States was pressing for the issue to be put before the Security Council in January of 2003, the North Korean ambassador to the United Nations Pak Gil Yon stated: "Any kind of sanctions to be taken by the Security Council or anywhere we will consider it a declaration of war against the DPRK." This is probably just rhetoric by North Korea, but considering the likely ineffectiveness of sanctions against North Korea and the possible international ramifications, it does not seem worth provoking North Korea. If the United States imposes international economic sanctions on North Korea, they will not halt North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and they may escalate the situation further.

The second point that requires explanation is that the U.S. should not engage in preventative strikes against North Korea. Although this analysis has adopted the view that the United States should develop a policy based on nuclear pessimism, this argument is largely drawn from Kenneth Waltz’s argument supporting nuclear optimism. Waltz, however, uses this argument to suggest that the spread of nuclear weapons does not make preventative strikes more likely. This analysis rejects this notion based on Sagan’s critique of Waltz’s argument. In an ideal world, Waltz is correct. The spread of nuclear weapons should not make preventative war more likely because of the possibility that the state developing nuclear weapons may already have a second-strike capability.

This is not an ideal world, though, and the spread of nuclear weapons may increase the possibility of preventative action: “What matters for stable deterrence, of course, is not what Kenneth Waltz, or Scott Sagan, or any other scholar thinks is a sufficient retaliatory force. What matters is what an adversary state’s decision makers
think.” So, although states should be deterred by the possibility of a second-strike, if the decision makers of a state believe that its target state does not have that ability, then they may still take preventative action. This notion is supported by the Clinton administration’s willingness to take preventative action against North Korea in 1994, action that was fortunately made unnecessary by former President Jimmy Carter’s intervention.

Whether or not the Clinton administration almost launched a preventative strike due to the influence of military leaders, as Sagan suggests is probable, or for some other reason is irrelevant for the purpose of this analysis. What is significant is that it appears that the administration was on the verge of taking this action. As former Defense Secretary William Perry stated: “We seriously considered solving the problem directly by simply striking the reactor and processor and Yongbyon.” In 1994, North Korea was in its “early stage” of nuclear development, but it was not certain that it did not have nuclear weapons. It seems that decision makers do not rule out preventative war simply because of the possibility of a retaliatory attack.

Waltz’s argument is, hence, not offered here to suggest that the United States will not preventatively strike North Korea in response to its proliferation. Rather, it is presented here to highlight why the United States should not be willing to preventatively strike North Korea. For one, North Korea’s nuclear weapons program seems to be much more developed than it was in 1994. North Korea has asserted that it has a “nuclear deterrent.” If the U.S. did strike North Korea, there is the danger that it would not know where all the nuclear weapons are. Sagan argues that certain patterns could be identified to reveal the locations of these nuclear weapons. Even if a pattern were found, though,
there would be no way to be certain that all of the weapons could be destroyed. As Waltz suggests, “North Korea can deter South Korea and the United States from invading if it can lead the South to believe that it has a few well-hidden and deliverable weapons.”

This may not deter the U.S. from preventatively attacking, but considering that North Korea is known to have built hundreds of tunnels to protect its military forces, it should prevent the United States from preventatively attacking.

Waltz also states that if a preventative attack were successful, a state would have to be prepared to either repeat the strike again and again in the future or occupy the state to put an end to the nuclear weapons program. This prediction is quite applicable to the North Korean case. North Korea has shown an unwavering commitment to the development of its nuclear program as a means of meeting its goals. If the U.S. were successful in launching a strike without North Korean retaliation, North Korea would almost certainly begin a nuclear program again in the future. The U.S. would then have to repeat the strike, possibly over and over again. This is a risky approach to dealing with North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. The U.S. would never know when North Korea might decide to retaliate, or other nations (most likely China) may decide to intervene on the North’s behalf diplomatically or militarily (the chances of military intervention by China are slim and would likely require unforeseen developments in the current situation).

The other option would be to topple the North Korean government and occupy the state. Taking into consideration current U.S. military commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan and the fact that Japan, South Korea, Russia, and China are unlikely to support U.S. military action (All four nations have stated their opposition to the use of
force. U.S. action would have to be undertaken unilaterally or with limited support.), does the U.S. really want to attempt to occupy North Korea at this point in time? That’s assuming that it is even possible to occupy an intensely indoctrinated state with a million-man army. Preemptively striking North Korea does not appear to be a preferable option for the U.S.

The six policy options listed in this section will not be useful in helping the United States achieve its policy goals. None of them will contribute to the overarching goal of providing stability on the Korean peninsula or the main subsequent goal of verifiably ending North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. For these reasons, although others have suggested these policies, these options will not be included in the proposal set forth by this analysis for a U.S. foreign policy towards North Korea.

**A Step-by-Step Comprehensive Plan**

This section will set out a comprehensive plan for the future of American foreign policy towards North Korea in a series of steps. These steps will be presented first, and each step will subsequently be explained as is necessary. This plan is intended to serve as an initial offering to North Korea in negotiations. It is subject to negotiation, and the U.S. should be willing to make further concessions or make further demands from North Korea as it sees fit. The plan follows the two-path strategy set forth in the Perry Report. The plan is intended to offer North Korea a clear way by which it can become an accepted member of the international community. If North Korea chooses not to accept this plan, the U.S. will follow a contingency plan (which will be laid out in the next section) in order to contain the North Korean threat.
This plan is a “package deal,” the virtues of which were discussed in chapter two and is intended to address North Korean motives while meeting U.S. goals. The deal is also a means to test North Korea’s intentions. This plan is very broad and, if North Korea is truly willing to give up its nuclear weapons program, then the state should be, at least, willing to use this plan as a basis to work towards an agreement. If North Korea flat out rejects the plan or makes no real effort to pursue it, then the U.S. will have a better understanding of North Korean intentions, that is that they may not be willing to give up their program. Several aspects of the Agreed Framework have also been included in this proposal. The fundamental flaw of the Agreed Framework was the light-water reactor project. Other aspects of the deal, however, had merit and were effective. Since the U.S. already knows North Korea will accept these terms, it makes sense to keep them as part of this plan. It is hoped that this plan will have many advantages in moving towards a resolution of the current situation.

The Comprehensive Plan

Step 1: Announce to North Korea, Japan, Russia, China, and South Korea that the U.S. has developed a plan for resolving the situation. Set a date and location for the plan to be considered and negotiated in a multilateral context (preferably among all six states). These negotiations should mid- to high-level. The plan should be submitted to each country at least one month before the negotiations are to take place for their review.

Step 2: Simultaneously with the announcement of this plan, the U.S. will make a proposal to North Korea that, in order to set the condition for negotiations, the U.S. will restart the KEDO heavy fuel oil shipments (HFO) and offer a multilateral security agreement to North Korea in exchange for the verifiable freezing of all North Korean nuclear weapons activities, including ballistic missile programs (verification is defined in step 8). The security agreement will have two conditions. First, North Korea must stay engaged in negotiations and make a legitimate effort to reach a resolution. Second, North Korea must make no further provocations (launching of a missile, further nuclear developments, etc.).

Step 3: The actual plan to be considered at the negotiations will begin with the U.S. proposal that a new international organization be created to replace KEDO. This
organization will be made up of Russia, China, South Korea, Japan, the United States and, potentially, the European Union. In addition to taking over KEDO’s HFO responsibilities, its task will be to construct four LNG combined heat and power generation plants and to assist North Korea in the modernization of its power grid and energy infrastructure. An estimate of the price of this project will be made and, based on this estimate, expected funding levels of each state will be negotiated and clearly defined. Russian firms will complete these tasks, but will be funded by the new organization. Its timeframe to complete these objectives will be 10-15 years.

Step 4: The plan will then establish bilateral negotiations between Japan and North Korea to deal with the abduction issue and the missiles aimed at Japan. Bilateral negotiations will also be established between North Korea and South Korea in order to deal with inter-Korean issues such as continued economic integration and unification of families.

Step 5: The U.S. will then offer North Korea two incentives to pursue economic reform. The U.S. and the international community will provide North Korea with aid (food, money, energy, etc.) provided that within five years North Korea develop and begin implementation of a plan to fix the major structural flaws of its economy. If this plan is not developed and implementation begun within five years, aid will be suspended until it is. During this same five-year period, if North Korea actively pursues these economic reforms and shows no signs of supporting terrorism (including but not limited to the exportation of ballistic missiles and nuclear materials or technology to terrorist groups or other states that support terrorism), the U.S. will remove North Korea from its list of states that sponsor terrorism.

Step 6: The normalization of diplomatic relations and the reduction of U.S. sanctions against North Korea (such as the trade embargo) will also be phased in over five years. This step will be conditioned on North Korean adherence to the agreement as assessed by the groups listed in step 8.

Step 7: This offer will be followed by a proposal for a phased in comparable reduction of North Korean and U.S. conventional forces over the next 10-15 years. The aim of this reduction will be to reduce both conventional forces by 50-75%. This involves the North Korean army reducing its 1.2 million soldiers to 300,000 – 600,000 soldiers, and the U.S. reducing its number of soldiers from 37,000 to 9,250 - 18,500. No complete withdrawal of U.S. troops will be pondered in the short-term.

Step 8: In order for the above parts of the agreement to remain intact, North Korean compliance with the freeze of its nuclear weapons will be strictly verified by the IAEA. This will include giving weapons inspectors full access to all North Korean nuclear facilities and all suspected facilities to ensure actual compliance. Yearly certification of North Korean compliance must be given by the IAEA and all nations belonging to the organization replacing KEDO for the above agreement to remain intact.
Step 9: In exchange for the above U.S. concessions, North Korea will dismantle its nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missile (specifically ICBMs, short-range missiles can be kept as conventional arms) programs upon the completion of steps 1-7. The time frame for this is 10-15 years. Once the weapons and facilities are dismantled (including but not limited to the reprocessing plant Yongbyon and all other nuclear facilities), all fissile material, weapons parts, actual weapons, and any other relevant material will be sent to a neutral third country under U.N. control.

Step 10: Upon the completion of step 9, the U.S. will consider a formal non-aggression and peace treaty between the United States/South Korea and North Korea. Bilateral negotiations will be established between North and South Korea to work towards unification.

It will now be useful to explain certain parts of each step in order to further clarify why these ten steps have been chosen. Although the first step is really only “setting the stage” for the negotiations, there are several key parts of the step. The announcement by the United States is designed to show that the U.S. is making a legitimate effort to solve this situation diplomatically. This will immediately win the U.S. support from the other key states, which have long sought for the U.S. to take the initiative and make a bold proposal. The fact that the negotiations will be multilateral is also significant. The U.S. expects Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea to pay for a large portion of whatever agreement is reached with North Korea. If the U.S. wants the states to contribute a significant amount, their interests are going to have to be taken into account. The best way to do this is to make sure that these states take part in the negotiation of the agreement. This way all of their concerns can be voiced.

Additionally (and maybe more importantly), if these states take part in the negotiations, they will be able to witness first hand how the negotiations play out. If North Korea rejects the proposal, although the U.S. pursued an agreement in good faith, these states will be much more likely to support a U.S. contingent plan if they are at the negotiations to see this. It is also worth-noting here that this analysis did question the
Bush administration’s insistence on a multilateral setting in chapter three. This questioning was not based on the Bush administration’s contention that this situation should be resolved in a multilateral setting. It was based on the Bush administration’s unwillingness to engage North Korea at all outside a multilateral setting. The administration would not even speak with North Korea until it agreed to this. It was this hard line stance that forced this analysis to call into question the administration’s commitment to resolving this situation. This analysis did not question the validity of a multilateral setting.

This step also suggests that negotiations must be mid- to high- level such as being conducted by an Undersecretary of State, the Secretary of State, or another relatively high-level envoy. This is because in these types of negotiations, it will be useful for the U.S. if its negotiator can make quick decisions about what the U.S. will and will not do without having to check with people with more power. North Korea has also traditionally been more amiable when approached by U.S. representatives with power, such as Jimmy Carter or Madeleine Albright. It is important to remember that one of North Korea’s motives for its nuclear weapons program is to gain legitimacy from the U.S. By conducting high-level negotiations with North Korea it conveys a certain amount of respect towards the government. It is a sign of respect that is likely to go a long way with this government. The plan will be submitted to each state a month early, so that all parties will have time to consider their reservations to the plan. This will give the states a good starting point for negotiations.

The second step is intended to ease the tension of the current situation, so that negotiations can take place in a relatively relaxed atmosphere. It can be considered a
kind of “cease-fire.” Both sides agree to avoid taking hostile action while negotiations are taking place, so that there is a legitimate chance at resolving the situation. The U.S. will, thus, instruct KEDO to resume its shipments of HFO. This was one of the basic parts of the Agreed Framework. The halting of these shipments was one of the main provocations for the North to restart its nuclear program. Restarting these shipments is a good first step in getting North Korea to refreeze its program. Considering how far the situation has progressed in the last two years, though, it is unlikely that this offer will be enough. The U.S. will, therefore, also offer a multilateral security agreement, promising that none of the key states will attack North Korea as long as it keeps its nuclear program frozen and as long as negotiations progress. This agreement should be multilateral in order to give North Korea further incentive to abide by it. If North Korea breaks a multilateral agreement it is dismissive of all the states involved, not just the U.S. Considering that China and Russia would be a part of this treaty, it seems likely that North Korea would be more willing to abide by it. The resumption of HFO shipments and the multilateral agreement will likely be enough to get North Korea to return to the negotiating table, freeze its nuclear program during the negotiations, and consider the U.S. proposal. By freezing its program, North Korea will be prevented from escalating the situation during negotiations to put pressure on the U.S. to reach an agreement.

The reasons behind the third step were discussed at length in chapter three. The U.S. will not build North Korea light-water reactors because they can still be used to pursue nuclear weapons and because, in themselves, they will not be useful in solving North Korea’s energy problems. This plan offers North Korea a non-nuclear means to end its energy crisis in the form of power grid and infrastructure modernization along
with the construction of four LNG combination heat and power generation plants. This is a more effective and cost-efficient approach to solving the problem. Since, Russia and China have taken an active interest in the North Korean situation, they will be asked to join the new organization along with the original member states of KEDO to help complete this task.

As stated earlier, Russia has indicated willingness to help North Korea build its nuclear reactors. It seems likely that Russia would also desire that its firms do a majority of the work on this new project. This will also solve another problem of the light-water reactor project; namely, the North’s resistance to South Korean firms building the reactors. Many of North Korea’s current power facilities are Russian constructed or of Russian design. It, thus, seems that North Korea would not have a problem with Russia building these new plants. Including funding agreements in the negotiations will solve the funding discrepancies that plagued the light-water reactor project. Each state should leave these negotiations with a good sense of what it must contribute to the agreement. The most recent estimate of the light-water reactor project was 4.6 billion U.S. dollars. This was not including the billion-dollar cost of North Korea’s power grid modernization. The new deal will include this grid modernization, the modernization of the infrastructure, and the building of four new LNG plants. This plan will likely cost roughly the same as the light-water reactor project, or somewhat less. It will, however, be much more effective in meeting North Korea’s needs and U.S. goals.

The fourth step is designed to avoid obstacles in the multilateral negotiations. Issues as contentious as the Japanese abduction issue are likely to stall negotiations and divert attention from the nuclear issue, which the U.S. wants to be the sole focus of the
negotiations. By offering Japan and South Korea an alternative forum to address their peripheral issues with North Korea, the U.S. can maintain Japanese and South Korean support and funding for their proposal while setting up a method for issues that are important to them, but not necessarily important to the U.S. from a policy standpoint.

The incentives in the fifth step attempt to direct North Korea towards the path of economic reform. There are two main reasons that the U.S. desires this. First, from a humanitarian standpoint, the people of North Korea are in poverty. International aid can only do so much. If North Korea truly wants to raise its standard of living, it has to undertake reforms. Second, economic reforms can lead to political reform. It is believed that by opening up the economy of North Korea, the North Korean people will be exposed to other cultures through increased foreign trade, consumption of foreign goods, and increased contact with foreign people. This influence is bound to erode the indoctrination of the North Korean people. For instance, once they realize how much better off the people of South Korea are, they will no longer be able to believe that North Korea is “paradise” nor will they be able to retain faith in a government that has perpetuated that lie. This is what Kim Jong Il fears the most. He has already expressed his willingness to experiment in economic reforms, though, because he knows that a higher standard of living will strengthen his government. He wants to survive and, therefore, he wants to fix the economy. Economic stability means political stability from his vantage point. There have been hints that he is considering following the Chinese model. The U.S. wants to encourage this reform for the abovementioned reasons.

By making aid conditional on developing a reform plan and by offering to take North Korea off the list of states that sponsor terrorism if those reforms are implemented,
the U.S. will create large incentives to reform. North Korea needs international aid to survive, and the removal of the state from the U.S. terrorism list would offer the North much needed investment capital in the form of loans from institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These are two things North Korea desperately wants. Moreover, offering to take North Korea off the list of state’s that sponsor terrorism will dissuade North Korea from selling missiles and nuclear weapons materials and technology to other states that sponsor terrorism or terrorist groups. The monetary gains from being taken off the U.S. list will far outweigh the monetary gains from the aforementioned sales to these groups and states the U.S. considers dangerous.

The incentives in the sixth step are offered to give North Korea reason to adhere to the agreement. One of North Korea’s motives for developing nuclear weapons was to attain legitimacy and be recognized by the international community. This step offers North Korea what it wants. It normalizes relations with North Korea and lifts the U.S. trade embargo against the state. This step gives North Korea a clear path to joining the international community. It has the opportunity to remove itself from isolation. These opportunities are conditional on the North’s adherence to the agreement in a verifiable way for the first five years. If the North wants benefits, it is going to have to live up to its word.

The seventh step is aimed at easing North Korea’s security concerns and stabilizing the North Korean economy. North Korea has long maintained that the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea is a threat to its security. This is part of the reason that the North maintains such a large standing army. It wants to deter any
potential U.S. or South Korean attack. The maintenance of these forces has had a
detrimental effect on North Korea, though. Currently the military consumes a
confounding 25% of North Korea’s GDP. This is an enormous drain on the economy,
and in order to fix the economy in the North, this percentage is going to have to be reduced: “North Korea may actually be planning secretly to make cuts in its
conventional forces anyway. A combination of cuts in [North Korean] forces and
economic reforms in the country stands the best chance of producing stabilizing and
desirable results.” Kim Jong Il most likely wants to cut these forces because of the
economic situation. A reduction in U.S. forces will make it easier for him to do so. It
will reduce the perceived threat, and give the government justification for its action to its
people and military establishment. A reduction in North Korean forces will also decrease
the threat to South Korea from the North and enable the U.S. to reduce the size of its
forces without undermining its security commitment to South Korea. This reduction in
conventional forces will have positive implications for the North Korean economy and
the security of the whole peninsula. The U.S. should be willing to withdraw some of its
troops if North Korea is willing to make a comparable reduction in its conventional
forces.

It does not seem politically viable, however, for the U.S. to pull out all of its
troops from South Korea. The United States will need to maintain some kind of military
presence in South Korea for the foreseeable future, if for no other reason than to show
South Korea that the U.S. remains committed to its security. The South Korean
government has asserted its desire to maintain a U.S. troop presence, although there is
some popular resentment towards American troops. The South Korean government is,
hence, not likely to offer support to any plan that would involve the U.S. “abandoning” the South. Additionally, the maintenance of U.S. troops in the South will also serve as a reminder to North Korea that any attack on South Korea will automatically involve the United States. There appear, nonetheless, to be several benefits to a mutual reduction in conventional forces over time.

The eighth step is fairly straightforward. North Korea has demonstrated its willingness to cheat on past agreements with both the NPT and the 1994 Agreed Framework. For the U.S. to achieve its goals, this agreement will have to be strictly monitored. It will do the U.S. no good to make all these concessions only to find out in five or ten years that North Korea has been cheating all along and taking advantage of the United States and other states. The eighth step is key to the success of this agreement. This argument is similar to the argument for the abandonment of the light-water reactor project. If the U.S. undertakes an agreement that is not strictly verified, it will not be effective because all this agreement will do is defer the problem. The goal of the U.S. is not to defer this problem for ten years until North Korea decides it wants something else, and decides to unveil that it has had a secret nuclear program during that time. This agreement is designed to put an end to this problem. The only way that this can be assured is through strict verification. The IAEA inspectors must have “free run” of North Korean nuclear sites and suspected sites. The U.S. can and should attempt to negotiate with North Korea, but this willingness to negotiate should not be mistaken for trust. The United States cannot afford to trust North Korea if it wishes for this agreement to be successful. The U.S. must always be suspicious, and it must always verify. The required yearly certification makes sure that the IAEA, the U.S., and the other nations will do this.
The main objective of the United States in these negotiations will be achieved in the ninth step. North Korea cannot be expected to dismantle its nuclear weapons and missile programs until the conditions of the rest of the deal have been met. Just as the U.S. will not trust North Korea, North Korea will not trust the U.S. The only guarantee that the U.S. will live up to its end of the deal, rather than back out or opt for the use of force or economic sanctions, is that North Korea has its nuclear weapons program. The nuclear weapons program gives North Korea bargaining strength and leverage that it would not have without it. It will not give that up until it is assured that it will no longer need it. This is why the Bush administration’s initial refusal to negotiate with North Korea until it dismantled its nuclear weapons seems somewhat counterproductive. The U.S. would have no reason to pay attention to North Korea let alone make concessions to it if North Korea did not potentially have nuclear weapons. North Korea knows this, and that is why the dismantlement of the program must be one of the final steps of any deal. The shipping of all nuclear materials to a neutral state ensures that North Korea will not be able to restart its nuclear program without great difficulty and an ample amount of time.

If North Korea completes the first nine steps, it will likely look like a much different state than the one this analysis is based on. It will be a state no longer isolated, no longer a nuclear threat, no longer in dire economic circumstances, no longer under such strict ideological control (in this respect it would probably be similar to China), and no longer a hostile state. It may still be a dictatorship under Kim Jong Il, but it would be a completely different state. Under these circumstances, it would not be out of the question for the United States and South Korea to consider signing a formal non-
aggression and peace treaty with North Korea, ending the Korean War. The North desires this for its security. Under these hypothetical circumstances, the U.S. would no longer have any foreseeable cause to attack North Korea. Such a treaty would be a way to ensure the long-term stability on the peninsula that would set the condition for North and South Korea to work towards eventual unification or, at least, towards a friendly partnership.

This comprehensive plan meets all of the goals of the United States. This plan does not pursue government change in North Korea. It addresses the humanitarian crisis through conditional economic aid and other incentives that will hopefully lead to economic reform and an increase in the standard of living. The U.S. will retain regional influence under this plan, having an active role in the implementation and monitoring of this plan. The U.S. will maintain its military presence. Most importantly, this plan will provide for the long-term stability on the peninsula by attempting to address the tense security condition, stabilize the North’s economy, solve the North’s energy crisis, and bring North Korea out of international isolation. These aims address all three of North Korea’s motives for pursuing nuclear weapons. This broad-based package deal is, consequently, intended to not only take away North Korea’s ability to develop nuclear weapons, but also its desire to. The removal of this desire is the most important potential impact of this plan. This potential impact is why this plan may be the path to permanently resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and finally uniting North and South Korea. This unification may not be in the form of a single nation, but it will at least be in the form of friendship if this plan succeeds.
A Step-by-Step Contingency Plan

Admittedly, the potential benefits of the comprehensive plan that were laid out in the last section are ideal and optimistic. Who is to say that North Korea will even accept this deal? This is after all a test-and-respond strategy. What if North Korea fails the test? The U.S. may hope that North Korea has developed its nuclear weapons program only to bargain it away, but the U.S. does not know North Korea’s intentions for sure. What if North Korea reacts to the plan by stating that it must have nuclear power or that it will not agree to freeze its nuclear weapon development? As Philip Saunders suggested in chapter two, this North Korean intention is just as likely as any other. North Korea may pretend that it is willing to negotiate its program away, and it may be willing to even halt it for a while. Ultimately, however, these actions may just be a façade. The North may never return to what it perceives as a position of weakness. How should the U.S. respond to a North Korean rejection of the above proposal, especially if the U.S. comes to the conclusion that North Korea is determined to attain nuclear weapons?

This section will put forth a contingency plan to be followed in the event that North Korea rejects the above proposal (after a vigorous attempt at negotiating an acceptable agreement based on this proposal) and continues its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Following the two-path strategy of the Perry Report, this plan will be designed to contain the risks posed by North Korean proliferation. This process will also be step-by-step, although it will not be as comprehensive because there are fewer options available in this situation, and the options that are available are not as good. The steps will be laid out and, subsequently, explained.
The Contingency Plan

Step 1: The U.S. must garner international support against North Korean action. The U.S. should then seek a U.N. resolution condemning the actions of the state and calling for it to return to negotiations or risk further action against it. The language of this statement should imply the possibility of economic and military action against the North. The U.S. will then make further diplomatic efforts to engage the state. The U.S. should adhere to its original demands if North Korea returns to negotiations at this point.

Step 2: Simultaneously with Step 1, the U.S. should seek a U.N. resolution granting security to South Korea and Japan against North Korea, and calling on the two states to refrain from the pursuit of nuclear weapons in the face of North Korean proliferation.

Step 3: Upon further North Korean noncompliance, the U.S. should push for U.N. economic sanctions, while maintaining the rhetoric of a possible military strike against North Korea. Efforts to return North Korea to the negotiating table will be made again. A partial deal will be offered to North Korea.

Step 4: If economic sanctions and a partial plan do not entice North Korea, then the U.S. should build up its forces in South Korea, develop plans for a preventative strike against North Korea, and maintain economic sanctions. The U.S. should offer to lift the economic sanctions if North Korea enters the NPT as a nuclear state and is willing to sign a treaty limiting the size of its nuclear arsenal and restricting its development of ICBMs. Negotiations should be pursued for these purposes. No military action will be taken unless it appears that North Korea is intent on attacking South Korea or the U.S.

The first step is intended to get North Korea to return to the negotiating table and reconsider the package deal proposed in the last section. If negotiations fail because North Korea seems intent on pursuing a nuclear weapons program, then the U.S. should have the support of Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan in attaining this U.N. resolution. A U.N. resolution will show that the international community will not tolerate North Korea’s acquisition of nuclear weapons and will warn North Korea of further action against it if it does not return to negotiations. This step is meant to send a strong message to North Korea in the hopes that it will realize that its best course of action would be to reach a negotiated settlement with the U.S. that meets its concerns in exchange for the verifiable end of its nuclear program. The United States does not want
to rush into harsh action against North Korea because further action may push North Korea beyond the nuclear threshold for good. Initially, the U.S. should make a concerted effort to get North Korea to return to the negotiating table on U.S. terms, keeping in mind that North Korea could have left the original negotiations to put pressure on the U.S. and seek further concessions. Instead of conceding, the U.S. will put pressure on North Korea that will show North Korea the clear benefits of returning to the original negotiations.

The second step is intended to specifically address the risk of a possible nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia and beyond as a result of North Korean proliferation. This step will seek to stop the arms race before it starts by passing a U.N. resolution guaranteeing the security of South Korea and Japan in the face of a North Korean attack. The resolution will go onto call on the two states to refrain from pursuing nuclear weapons in order to put international pressure on the states to remain non-nuclear. This resolution should offset the security concerns of the states sufficiently and put enough international pressure on them to steer them away from nuclear weapons. This step should be done simultaneously with the first step in order to deal with this risk right away.

If North Korea continues to defy the wishes of the U.S. and the international community, the U.S. should pursue U.N. economic sanctions against the state. In a preceding section, it was argued that economic sanctions should not be pursued as a policy of choice because they may be ineffective and they may have negative consequences, such as escalating the situation by backing Kim Jong Il into a corner. These sanctions are clearly one of the last resorts for the U.S. for these reasons.
Economic sanctions may, however, be more effective in this situation than in the situation described above.

One of the main reasons for not pursuing economic sanctions as a policy of choice was that South Korea, Japan, Russia, and China would not support these sanctions as a first course of action. If North Korea rejects U.S. proposals, though, and these states are at the negotiations to see that the U.S. made a concerted effort, then these states are much more likely to support economic sanctions, especially if North Korea rejects the U.S. offer of a second chance in the first step. Economic sanctions have a much better chance of being effective if these other states, especially China and South Korea, are willing to participate. Economic sanctions without the participation of these states would not be effective because the North Korean government would still be able to get access to a great deal of resources to support itself, even if its population was left with nothing. With the cooperation of these states, the government may not be able to gain enough resources and economic sanctions will, thus, apply much more pressure.

This step will also attempt to avoid backing North Korea into a corner by once again offering the North a clear path away from sanctions. North Korea declared that economic sanctions would be an act of war. This seems likely to just be hostile rhetoric on the part of the North aimed at preventing the imposition of economic sanctions. North Korea will not start a war if it has other options available, if for no other reason than because Kim Jong Il wants to ensure his survival, and war is the most likely way he will lose power. The U.S. will, thus, offer North Korea a way out. It will offer North Korea a partial deal with the specific intention of freezing North Korea’s nuclear program and setting conditions under which further negotiations regarding the future of the North’s
nuclear program can take place. The U.S. will begin by reiterating the second step of the first plan, and use this as a basis to work towards an agreement that would successfully freeze the North’s nuclear program.

The intent here is to stop the North’s development of nuclear weapons while a plan different from the “unacceptable” plan in the last section is negotiated. Economic sanctions will be backed up with U.S. rhetoric suggesting that force may be used if North Korea does not choose to return to negotiations. This rhetoric is designed to put increased pressure on North Korea to take the clear path away from sanctions. It is anticipated that this pressure will convince North Korea to return to negotiations in a timely manner, so that the humanitarian crisis in North Korea is not further exasperated by the sanctions. As has been stated, this is not a policy of choice because of the potential ramifications, but the U.S. has few options in this situation.

The fourth step is the last resort for the United States, and it can be defined as containment of the North Korean nuclear threat. If the first and third steps cannot convince North Korea to return to the negotiating table, then the United States will have to assume North Korea is going to become a declared nuclear state. Despite the rhetoric of a possible preventative strike against North Korea to end its nuclear program, the United States will not undertake such action because of the possible ramifications described earlier in this chapter. Rather, the United States will seek to contain the risks associated with North Korean nuclear development. This will be done by first developing a strong deterrent against possible North Korean attack on South Korea. The U.S. will build up its forces in South Korea to send a signal to North Korea that, nuclear weapons or not, the U.S. will defend South Korea. The U.S. will then develop a plan for
a preventative strike against North Korea to be implemented only if North Korean attack is imminent. The U.S. should let North Korea know that it has such a plan and will not hesitate to use it if North Korea becomes hostile. This build up of forces and plan for defense should help the United States offset the risk of reduced power and influence on the Korean peninsula.

An important part of this step calls for the U.S. to offer to lift economic sanctions against North Korea if it joins the NPT as a nuclear state and signs an agreement limiting the size of its nuclear arsenal. This requires some explanation. The decision to attempt to persuade North Korea to submit to these agreements as a last resort is based on an analysis of the risks associated with North Korean nuclear proliferation. As previously discussed, nuclear attack by North Korea is the least likely of these risks to occur. North Korea will not launch a nuclear attack unless it is backed into a corner with no way out. This contingency plan has given North Korea a clear and reasonable path away from sanctions and back towards compliance at every step. In the final step, this way out is the NPT and a negotiated agreement in the form of a treaty limiting the size and capabilities of the North Korean arsenal (referred to for the remainder of this section as the “negotiated agreement”).

As a nuclear member of the NPT, North Korea would agree not to transfer nuclear materials or technology to non-nuclear states or parties. As a member of the negotiated agreement, North Korea would agree not to expand its nuclear arsenal beyond the weapons that it has already acquired (this is assumed to be no more than five or six weapons) and not to develop any further nuclear technology (ICBM nuclear warheads). In exchange for the signing of these agreements, the U.S. would lift economic sanctions.
North Korea would get to have nuclear weapons and have a chance to rebuild its economy. This option seems much more attractive for Kim Jong Il than launching a nuclear weapon or staging an attack on North Korea in retaliation to the build up of nuclear forces and continued economic sanctions. North Korea will most likely choose this option over conflict. What about the U.S., though? Doesn’t this option mean conceding defeat to North Korea?

The answer is no. In this situation where it is evident that North Korea is going to develop nuclear weapons, the greatest concern of the U.S. must be containing the risks posed by this inevitability. The best way to do this is not by exerting further pressure on North Korea with continued economic sanctions and rhetoric of preventative strikes. These methods have already failed and will only back North Korea into a corner, increasing the possibility of a deadly attack. The best way to contain the risks is by limiting the size and capabilities of the North Korean arsenal and North Korea’s ability to transfer nuclear weapons. In addition to reducing the possibility of a desperate North Korea staging a nuclear attack, these agreements will also address the other risks posed by North Korean proliferation. First of all, the smaller the size of the arsenal, the easier it will be to tightly control and safely monitor the nuclear weapons. This will decrease the likelihood of accidental or unauthorized use. Second, the smaller the size of the arsenal, the less the pressure will be on Japan and South Korea to develop their own arsenals, setting off a nuclear arms race (the pressure from a large arsenal could offset the U.N. security guarantee in step two).

Third, if North Korea does not pursue the development of ICBMs with nuclear warheads, the U.S. may be able to offset its reduction in power and influence in Northeast
Asia brought about by North Korean nuclear weapons with a large build up of its conventional forces in South Korea. In other words, if North Korea does not have missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons to the U.S., then the U.S. will have greater freedom to respond to North Korean aggressiveness on the peninsula. Lastly, the larger the arsenal, the more likely it is that North Korea will be willing to sell nuclear weapons or materials to terrorist groups or other states that support terrorism. Furthermore, the NPT explicitly states that North Korea may not undertake such actions. This treaty would subject the North Korean program to IAEA inspection to ensure that North Korea is complying with this agreement. Allowing North Korea to have nuclear weapons under these treaties would address all of the major risks associated with North Korean nuclear proliferation.

It would be ideal if a settlement could be made with North Korea based on the agreement proposed in the last section. In developing a U.S. policy, though, it is important to realize that ideals are not always met. This contingency plan puts forth options that are much less attractive than the options suggested in the previous section. These options must be undertaken carefully because they can have dangerous ramifications and may be ineffective if not pursued in the correct manner. These options are meant to coerce North Korea to return to negotiations. This coercion is done in a way that is designed to avoid backing North Korea into a corner, though. The coercive measures in the first and third steps are coupled with clear and reasonable options that would lift the sanctions and allow North Korea to return to negotiations. The last step, which assumes that North Korea is determined to acquire nuclear weapons at all costs,
offers North Korea a way to acquire nuclear weapons without being sanctioned by the international community.

This last option is clearly the least attractive, but in that situation, after everything else has been attempted, it is the best option available. Why should the U.S. risk a catastrophic war against North Korea when it can contain the risks of the North Korean weapons program peacefully? If North Korea is determined to have nuclear weapons, it may be best for all parties involved (as counter-intuitive as this plan sounds) if the U.S. let’s North Korea have them and attempts to contain the risks associated with the program. This option has the advantage of lifting the economic sanctions as well, so that North Korea can take initiatives aimed at fixing its ailing economy and feeding its starving people.

In the end, the U.S. may not be able to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by North Korea nor restrict North Korea’s arsenal and capabilities. In this case, the U.S. will have no other choice but to rely on deterrence coupled with coercion in the form of economic sanctions aimed at bringing about negotiations to halt and possibly reverse the North Korean program. Deterrence worked for the Soviet Union and the United States for fifty-years. It could work in the North Korean situation, or it could fail. There is no decisive way to tell. What is nearly certain, however, is that if the United States launches a preventative strike against the North, a deadly and catastrophic war will likely follow. The U.S. must, therefore, not preventatively strike North Korea unless it is absolutely certain that North Korea is going to attack the U.S. or South Korea. Rather, the U.S. should rely on the comprehensive and contingency plans laid out above and, if all else fails, deterrence to resolve the North Korean situation.
Concluding Remarks

This analysis has examined the North Korean situation in great length in an attempt to develop the best possible U.S. foreign policy strategy for permanently resolving the North Korean situation. After examining the dynamics of the nuclear proliferation debate, the North Korean nuclear weapons program, the Clinton and Bush administrations’ policies towards North Korea, and several other policy considerations, a plan was put forth based on the conclusions drawn throughout the analysis. This plan is a starting point for negotiations and could likely be used to craft an agreement to permanently settle this situation.

If an agreement is reached based on this plan the U.S. must vigorously pursue it if it is to be successful. Part of the problem with the 1994 Agreed Framework, which was the original package deal offered to North Korea by the U.S., was that the U.S. stopped meeting its commitments on time. The United States, in the eyes of the world, shares the blame for the failure of the Agreed Framework. As Michael Mazaar stated when assessing the Agreed Framework, “The lesson is clear: for package deals to work, they must be implemented energetically and continuously to convince the proliferant that it has something at stake, and to deprive it of excuses for abandoning the nonproliferation process.” For the package deal laid out in this analysis to be successful, the U.S. must vigorously implement it.

The U.S. cannot give North Korea reason to doubt its commitment because, if it does, the U.S. will be giving North Korea excuses to back out of the deal. To avoid giving North Korea excuses, the U.S. must meet all of its obligations in a timely manner and secure domestic support for the agreement so that attaining funding from Congress
does not become an issue. This agreement must be a top priority. If it is not, the comprehensive plan presented will fail. The contingency plan will also fail because the U.S. will not be able to secure adequate international support if other nations believe that U.S. did not live up to its commitments. If this deal is not vigorously pursued, the United States will return to the current situation with fewer options and less tolerance from all the states involved. This analysis has laid out a plan to potentially solve the North Korean crisis. This plan relies on the assumption of stalwart U.S. commitment to its success. If the U.S. is not committed to permanently resolving this situation, then no package deal can succeed. U.S. commitment is a necessary and imperative precondition for this plan.

It seems that the North Korean situation can be resolved peacefully and for the benefit of the entire Korean peninsula. This situation does not need to end in a deadly conventional conflict or a catastrophic nuclear conflict. The U.S. and North Korea can reach an agreement through a package deal. If this agreement is pursued with vigor, the U.S. can meet its goals and North Korea’s concerns can be addressed. It is hoped that policymakers will consider the suggestions of this analysis when crafting their foreign policy towards North Korea.

A Look to the Future

The outcome of the November Presidential elections in the United States between incumbent President George W. Bush and Democratic nominee Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts will likely play a significant role in determining the future of American foreign policy towards North Korea. As discussed at length in chapter three, the Bush administration has taken a hard line approach throughout its administration. Although
this approach has softened somewhat, the administration has still maintained that North Korea must dismantle its nuclear weapons program before any significant progress can be made in the situation. The administration has also stated that it sees little merit in adhering to the Agreed Framework. Conversely, Senator Kerry has stated his unqualified support for the Agreed Framework: “It is important that the Bush administration not allow the Congress to undermine the 1994 Agreed Framework, which holds real promise for verifiably freezing and eliminating the North Korean nuclear program […]”\textsuperscript{10} These are two diametrically opposed views.

Although this analysis has pointed out several flaws in the Agreed Framework, Senator Kerry’s commitment to the agreement shows his view of the necessity for a comprehensive package deal to resolve the situation. This is a view that the Bush administration does not seem to share. This analysis has concluded that a package deal \textit{must} be offered to North Korea if a peaceful resolution to the current situation is to be hoped for. For this reason, it seems that the election of Senator Kerry to the presidency would be conducive to permanently resolving the situation. If reelected, the Bush administration may change its views. It may realize that a package deal is necessary to end North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. It may, however, not realize this. It may never offer North Korea a package deal. With no hope of reaching a resolution that addresses it concerns during the next four years, North Korea may escalate the current situation to the point of war. It, thus, seems preferable, based on this analysis, that Senator Kerry be elected, rather than hoping that the Bush administration will change its views and offer North Korea a package deal. It is almost certain that the Bush administration will not change its views by the July round of multilateral negotiations.
The election of Senator Kerry to the presidency in November, thus, seems to offer the
greatest hope for a peaceful resolution on the Korean peninsula.
Notes

2 North Korean Advisory Group 2
7 Waltz, pp.143
Appendices
Appendix A

Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
October 21, 1994

Delegations of the Governments of the United States of America (U.S.) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) held talks in Geneva from September 23 to October 17, 1994, to negotiate an overall resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula.

Both sides reaffirmed the importance of attaining the objectives contained in the August 12, 1994 Agreed Statement between the U.S. and the DPRK and upholding the principles of the June 11, 1993 Joint Statement of the U.S. and the DPRK to achieve peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. The U.S. and the DPRK decided to take the following actions for the resolution of the nuclear issue:

I. Both sides will cooperate to replace the DPRK’s graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities with light-water reactor (LWR) power plants.

1) In accordance with the October 20, 1994 letter of assurance from the U.S. President, the U.S. will undertake to make arrangements for the provision to the DPRK of a LWR project with a total generating capacity of approximately 2,000 MW(e) by a target date of 2003.

-- The U.S. will organize under its leadership an international consortium to finance and supply the LWR project to be provided to the DPRK. The U.S., representing the international consortium, will serve as the principal point of contact with the DPRK for the LWR project.

-- The U.S., representing the consortium, will make best efforts to secure the conclusion of a supply contract with the DPRK within six months of the date of this Document for the provision of the LWR project. Contract talks will begin as soon as possible after the date of this Document.

-- As necessary, the U.S. and the DPRK will conclude a bilateral agreement for cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2) In accordance with the October 20, 1994 letter of assurance from the U.S. President, the U.S., representing the consortium, will make arrangements to offset the energy foregone due to the freeze of the DPRK’s graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities, pending completion of the first LWR unit.
-- Alternative energy will be provided in the form of heavy oil for heating and electricity production.

-- Deliveries of heavy oil will begin within three months of the date of this Document and will reach a rate of 500,000 tons annually, in accordance with an agreed schedule of deliveries.

3) Upon receipt of U.S. assurances for the provision of LWR's and for arrangements for interim energy alternatives, the DPRK will freeze its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities and will eventually dismantle these reactors and related facilities.

-- The freeze on the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities will be fully implemented within one month of the date of this Document. During this one-month period, and throughout the freeze, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be allowed to monitor this freeze, and the DPRK will provide full cooperation to the IAEA for this purpose.

-- Dismantlement of the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities will be completed when the LWR project is completed.

-- The U.S. and DPRK will cooperated in finding a method to store safely the spent fuel from the 5 MW(e) experimental reactor during the construction of the LWR project, and to dispose of the fuel in a safe manner that does not involve reprocessing in the DPRK.

4) As soon as possible after the date of this document, U.S. and DPRK experts will hold two sets of experts talks.

-- At one set of talks, experts will discuss issues related to alternative energy and the replacement of the graphite-moderated reactor program with the LWR project.

-- At the other set of talks, experts will discuss specific arrangements for spent fuel storage and ultimate disposition.

II. The two sides will move toward full normalization of political and economic relations.

1) Within three months of the date of this Document, both sides will reduce barriers to trade and investment, including restrictions on telecommunications services and financial transactions.

2) Each side will open a liaison office in the other's capital following resolution of consular and other technical issues through expert level discussions.

3) As progress is made on issues of concern to each side, the U.S. and DPRK will upgrade bilateral relations to the Ambassadorial level.
III. Both sides will work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

1) The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the U.S.

2) The DPRK will consistently take steps to implement the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

3) The DPRK will engage in North-South dialogue, as this Agreed Framework will help create an atmosphere that promotes such dialogue.

IV. Both sides will work together to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

1) The DPRK will remain a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will allow implementation of its safeguards agreement under the Treaty.

2) Upon conclusion of the supply contract for the provision of the LWR project, ad hoc and routine inspections will resume under the DPRK's safeguards agreement with the IAEA with respect to the facilities not subject to the freeze. Pending conclusion of the supply contract, inspections required by the IAEA for the continuity of safeguards will continue at the facilities not subject to the freeze.

3) When a significant portion of the LWR project is completed, but before delivery of key nuclear components, the DPRK will come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA (INFCIRC/403), including taking all steps that may be deemed necessary by the IAEA, following consultations with the Agency with regard to verifying the accuracy and completeness of the DPRK's initial report on all nuclear material in the DPRK.

Kang Sok Ju- Head of the Delegation for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Robert L. Gallucci- Head of the Delegation of United States of America, Ambassador at Large of the United States of America
Appendix B

The Perry Report

1999-10-13
Review of United States Policy
Toward North Korea:

Findings and Recommendations

Dr. William J. Perry
Special Advisor to the President
and the Secretary of State

October 12, 1999

UNCLASSIFIED REPORT
NORTH KOREA POLICY REVIEW

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A North Korea policy review team, led by Dr. William J. Perry and working with an interagency group headed by the Counselor of the Department of State Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman, was tasked in November 1998 by President Clinton and his national security advisors to conduct an extensive review of U.S. policy toward the DPRK. This review of U.S. policy lasted approximately eight months, and was supported by a number of senior officials from the U.S. government and by Dr. Ashton B. Carter of Harvard University. The policy review team was also very fortunate to have received regular and extensive guidance from the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Advisor and senior policy advisors.

Throughout the review the team consulted with experts, both in and out of the U.S. government. Dr. Perry made a special point to travel to the Capitol to give regular status reports to Members of Congress on the progress of this review, and he benefited from comments received from Members on concepts being developed by the North Korea policy review team. The team also exchanged views with officials from many countries with interests in Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula, including our allies, the ROK and Japan. The team also met with prominent members of the humanitarian aid community and received a wealth of written material, solicited and unsolicited. Members of the policy review team met with many other individuals and organizations as well. In addition, the team traveled to North Korea this past May, led by Dr. Perry as President Clinton's Special Envoy, to obtain a first-hand understanding of the views of the DPRK Government.

The findings and recommendations of the North Korea Policy Review set forth below
reflect the consensus that emerged from the team's countless hours of work and study.

The Need for a Fundamental Review of U.S. Policy

The policy review team determined that a fundamental review of U.S. policy was indeed needed, since much has changed in the security situation on the Korean Peninsula since the 1994 crisis.

Most important and the focus of this North Korea policy review - are developments in the DPRK's nuclear and long-range missile activities.

The Agreed Framework of 1994 succeeded in verifiably freezing North Korean plutonium production at Yongbyon - it stopped plutonium production at that facility so that North Korea currently has at most a small amount of fissile material it may have secreted away from operations prior to 1994; without the Agreed Framework, North Korea could have produced enough additional plutonium by now for a significant number of nuclear weapons. Yet, despite the critical achievement of a verified freeze on plutonium production at Yongbyon under the Agreed Framework, the policy review team has serious concerns about possible continuing nuclear weapons-related work in the DPRK. Some of these concerns have been addressed through our access and visit to Kumchang-ni.

The years since 1994 have also witnessed development, testing, deployment, and export by the DPRK of ballistic missiles of increasing range, including those potentially capable of reaching the territory of the United States.

There have been other significant changes as well. Since the negotiations over the Agreed Framework began in the summer of 1994, formal leadership of the DPRK has passed from President Kim Il Sung to his son, General Kim Jong Il, and General Kim has gradually assumed supreme authority in title as well as fact. North Korea is thus governed by a different leadership from that with which we embarked on the Agreed Framework. During this same period, the DPRK economy has deteriorated significantly, with industrial and food production sinking to a fraction of their 1994 levels. The result is a humanitarian tragedy which, while not the focus of the review, both compels the sympathy of the American people and doubtless affects some of the actions of the North Korean regime.

An unrelated change has come to the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) with the Presidency of Kim Dae Jung. President Kim has embarked upon a policy of engagement with the North. As a leader of great international authority, as our ally, and as the host to 37,000 American troops, the views and insights of President Kim are central to accomplishing U.S. security objectives on the Korean Peninsula. No U.S. policy can succeed unless it is coordinated with the ROK's policy. Today's ROK policy of engagement creates conditions and opportunities for U.S. policy very different from those in 1994.
Another close U.S. ally in the region, Japan, has become more concerned about North Korea in recent years. This concern was heightened by the launch, in August 1998, of a Taepo Dong missile over Japanese territory. Although the Diet has passed funding for the Light Water Reactor project being undertaken by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) pursuant to the Agreed Framework, and the government wants to preserve the Agreed Framework, a second missile launch is likely to have a serious impact on domestic political support for the Agreed Framework and have wider ramifications within Japan about its security policy.

Finally, while the U.S. relationship with China sometimes reflects different perspectives on security policy in the region, the policy review team learned through extensive dialogue between the U.S. and the PRC, including President Clinton's meetings with President Jiang Zemin, that China understands many of the U.S. concerns about the deleterious effects that North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile activities could have for regional and global security.

All these factors combine to create a profoundly different landscape than existed in 1994. The review team concurred strongly with President Clinton's judgment that these changed circumstances required a comprehensive review such as the one that the President and his team of national security advisors asked the team to conduct. The policy review team also recognized the concerns of Members of Congress that a clear path be charted for dealing with North Korea, and that there be closer cooperation between the executive and legislative branches on this issue of great importance to our security. The review team shared these concerns and has tried hard to be responsive to them.

Assessment of the Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula

In the course of the review, the policy team conferred with U.S. military leaders and allies, and concluded that, as in 1994, U.S. forces and alliances in the region are strong and ready. Indeed, since 1994, the U.S. has strengthened both its own forces and its plans and procedures for combining forces with allies. We are confident that allied forces could and would successfully defend ROK territory. We believe the DPRK's military leaders know this and thus are deterred from launching an attack.

However, in sharp contrast to the Desert Storm campaign in Kuwait and Iraq, war on the Korean Peninsula would take place in densely populated areas. Considering the million-man DPRK army arrayed near the DMZ, the intensity of combat in another war on the Peninsula would be unparalleled in U.S. experience since the Korean War of 1950-53. It is likely that hundreds of thousands of persons - U.S., ROK, and DPRK - military and civilian - would perish, and millions of refugees would be created. While the U.S. and ROK of course have no intention of provoking war, there are those in the DPRK who believe the opposite is true. But even they must know that the prospect of such a destructive war is a powerful deterrent to precipitous U.S. or allied action.

Under present circumstances, therefore, deterrence of war on the Korean Peninsula is stable on both sides, in military terms. While always subject to miscalculation by the
isolated North Korean government, there is no military calculus that would suggest to the North Koreans anything but catastrophe from armed conflict. This relative stability, if it is not disturbed, can provide the time and conditions for all sides to pursue a permanent peace on the Peninsula, ending at last the Korean War and perhaps ultimately leading to the peaceful reunification of the Korean people. This is the lasting goal of U.S. policy.

However, acquisition by the DPRK of nuclear weapons or long-range missiles, and especially the combination of the two (a nuclear weapons device mounted on a long-range missile), could undermine this relative stability. Such weapons in the hands of the DPRK military might weaken deterrence as well as increase the damage if deterrence failed. Their effect would, therefore, be to undermine the conditions for pursuing a relaxation of tensions, improved relations, and lasting peace. Acquisition of such weapons by North Korea could also spark an arms race in the region and would surely do grave damage to the global nonproliferation regimes covering nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. A continuation of the DPRK's pattern of selling its missiles for hard currency could also spread destabilizing effects to other regions, such as the Middle East.

The review team, therefore, concluded that the urgent focus of U.S. policy toward the DPRK must be to end its nuclear weapons and long-range missile-related activities. This focus does not signal a narrow preoccupation with nonproliferation over other dimensions of the problem of security on the Korean Peninsula, but rather reflects the fact that control of weapons of mass destruction is essential to the pursuit of a wider form of security so badly needed in that region.

As the United States faces the task of ending these weapons activities, any U.S. policy toward North Korea must be formulated within three constraining facts:

First, while logic would suggest that the DPRK's evident problems would ultimately lead its regime to change, there is no evidence that change is imminent. United States policy must, therefore, deal with the North Korean government as it is, not as we might wish it to be.

Second, the risk of a destructive war to the 37,000 American service personnel in Korea and the many more that would reinforce them, to the inhabitants of the Korean Peninsula both South and North, and to U.S. allies and friends in the region dictate that the United States pursue its objectives with prudence and patience.

Third, while the Agreed Framework has critics in the United States, the ROK, and Japan and indeed in the DPRK the framework has verifiably frozen plutonium production at Yongbyon. It also served as the basis for successful discussions we had with the North earlier this year on an underground site at Kumchang-ni - one that the U.S. feared might have been designed as a substitute plutonium production facility. Unfreezing Yongbyon remains the North's quickest and surest path to nuclear weapons. U.S. security objectives may therefore require the U.S. to supplement the Agreed Framework, but we must not undermine or supplant it.
Perspectives of Countries in the Region

The policy review team consulted extensively with people outside of the Administration to better understand the perspectives of countries in the region. These perspectives are summarized below.

Republic of Korea. The ROK's interests are not identical to those of the U.S., but they overlap in significant ways. While the ROK is not a global power like the United States and, therefore, is less active in promoting nonproliferation worldwide, the ROK recognizes that nuclear weapons in the DPRK would destabilize deterrence on the Peninsula. And while South Koreans have long lived within range of North Korean SCUD ballistic missiles, they recognize that North Korea's new, longer-range ballistic missiles present a new type of threat to the United States and Japan. The ROK thus shares U.S. goals with respect to DPRK nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The South also has concerns, such as the reunion of families separated by the Korean War and implementation of the North-South Basic Agreement (including reactivation of North-South Joint Committees). The U.S. strongly supports these concerns.

President Kim Dae Jung’s North Korea policy, known as the "engagement" policy, marked a fundamental shift toward the North. Under the Kim formulation, the ROK has forswn any intent to undermine or absorb the North and has pursued increased official and unofficial North-South contact. The ROK supports the Agreed Framework and the ROK's role in KEDO, but the ROK National Assembly, like our Congress, is carefully scrutinizing DPRK behavior as it considers funding for KEDO.

Japan. Like the ROK, Japan's interests are not identical to those of the U.S., but they overlap strongly. The DPRK's August 1998 Taepo Dong missile launch over the Japanese islands abruptly increased the already high priority Japan attaches to the North Korea issue. The Japanese regard DPRK missile activities as a direct threat. In bilateral talks with Japan, the DPRK representatives exacerbate historic animosities by repeatedly referring to Japan's occupation of Korea earlier in this century. For these reasons, support for Japan's role in KEDO is at risk in the Diet. The government's ability to sustain the Agreed Framework in the face of further DPRK missile launches is not assured, even though a collapse of the Agreed Framework could lead to nuclear warheads on DPRK missiles, dramatically increasing the threat they pose. Japan also has deep-seated concerns, such as the fate of missing persons suspected of being abducted by the DPRK. The U.S. strongly supports these concerns.

China. China has a strong interest in peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and is aware of the implications of increased tension on the peninsula. China also realizes that DPRK ballistic missiles are an important impetus to U.S. national missile defense and theater missile defenses, neither of which is desired by China. Finally, China realizes that DPRK nuclear weapons could provoke an arms race in the region and undermine the nonproliferation regime which Beijing, as a nuclear power, has an interest in preserving. For all these reasons the PRC concerns with North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs are in many ways comparable to U.S. concerns. While China will not
coordinate its policies with the U.S., ROK, and Japan, it is in China's interest to use its own channels of communication to discourage the DPRK from pursuing these programs.

The DPRK. Based on extensive consultation with the intelligence community and experts around the world, a review of recent DPRK conduct, and our discussions with North Korean leaders, the policy review team formed some views of this enigmatic country. But in many ways the unknowns continue to outweigh the knowns. Therefore, we want to emphasize here that no U.S. policy should be based solely on conjectures about the perceptions and future behavior of the DPRK.

Wrapped in an overriding sense of vulnerability, the DPRK regime has promoted an intense devotion to self-sufficiency, sovereignty, and self-defense as the touchstones for all rhetoric and policy. The DPRK views efforts by outsiders to promote democratic and market reforms in its country as an attempt to undermine the regime. It strongly controls foreign influence and contact, even when they offer relief from the regime's severe economic problems. The DPRK appears to value improved relations with US, especially including relief from the extensive economic sanctions the U.S. has long imposed.

Key Findings

The policy review team made the following key findings, which have formed the basis for our recommendations:

1. DPRK acquisition of nuclear weapons and continued development, testing, deployment, and export of long-range missiles would undermine the relative stability of deterrence on the Korean Peninsula, a precondition for ending the Cold War and pursuing a lasting peace in the longer run. These activities by the DPRK also have serious regional and global consequences adverse to vital U.S. interests. The United States must, therefore, have as its objective ending these activities.

2. The United States and its allies would swiftly and surely win a second war on the Korean Peninsula, but the destruction of life and property would far surpass anything in recent American experience. The U.S. must pursue its objectives with respect to nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in the DPRK without taking actions that would weaken deterrence or increase the probability of DPRK miscalculation.

3. If stability can be preserved through the cooperative ending of DPRK nuclear weapons- and long-range missile-related activities, the U.S. should be prepared to establish more normal diplomatic relations with the DPRK and join in the ROK's policy of engagement and peaceful coexistence.

4. Unfreezing Yongbyon is North Korea's quickest and surest path to acquisition of nuclear weapons. The Agreed Framework, therefore, should be preserved and implemented by the United States and its allies. With the Agreed Framework, the DPRK's ability to produce plutonium at Yongbyon is verifiably frozen. Without the Agreed Framework, however, it is estimated that the North could reprocess enough
plutonium to produce a significant number of nuclear weapons per year. The Agreed Framework's limitations, such as the fact that it does not verifiably freeze all nuclear weapons-related activities and does not cover ballistic missiles, are best addressed by supplementing rather than replacing the Agreed Framework.

5. No U.S. policy toward the DPRK will succeed if the ROK and Japan do not actively support it and cooperate in its implementation. Securing such trilateral coordination should be possible, since the interests of the three parties, while not identical, overlap in significant and definable ways.

6. Considering the risks inherent in the situation and the isolation, suspicion, and negotiating style of the DPRK, a successful U.S. policy will require steadiness and persistence even in the face of provocations. The approach adopted now must be sustained into the future, beyond the term of this Administration. It is, therefore, essential that the policy and its ongoing implementation have the broadest possible support and the continuing involvement of the Congress.

Alternative Policies Considered and Rejected

In the course of the review, the policy team received a great deal of valuable advice, including a variety of proposals for alternative strategies with respect to the security problems presented by the DPRK. The principal alternatives considered by the review team, and the team's reasons for rejecting them in favor of the recommended approach, are set forth below.

Status Quo. A number of policy experts outside the Administration counseled continuation of the approach the U.S. had taken to the DPRK over the past decade: strong deterrence through ready forces and solid alliances and limited engagement with the DPRK beyond existing negotiations on missiles, POW/MIA, and implementation of the nuclear-related provisions of the Agreed Framework. These experts counseled that with the Agreed Framework being verifiably implemented at Yongbyon, North Korea could be kept years away from obtaining additional fissile material for nuclear weapons. Without nuclear weapons, the DPRK's missile program could safely be addressed within the existing (albeit to date inconclusive) bilateral missile talks. Thus, as this argument ran, core U.S. security objectives were being pursued on a timetable appropriate to the development of the threat, and no change in U.S. policy was required.

While there are advantages to continuing the status quo since to this point it has served U.S. security interests the policy review team rejected the status quo. It was rejected not because it has been unacceptable from the point of view of U.S. security interests, but rather because the policy team feared it was not sustainable. Aside from a failure to address U.S. concerns directly, it is easy to imagine circumstances that would bring the status quo rapidly to a crisis. For example, a DPRK long-range missile launch, whether or not in the form of an attempt to place a satellite in orbit, would have an impact on political support for the Agreed Framework in the United States, Japan, and even in the ROK. In this circumstance, the DPRK could suspend its own compliance with the Agreed
Framework, unfreezing Yongbyon and plunging the Peninsula into a nuclear crisis like that in 1994. Such a scenario illustrates the instability of the status quo. Thus, the U.S. may not be able to maintain the status quo, even if we wanted to.

Undermining the DPRK. Others recommend a policy of undermining the DPRK, seeking to hasten the demise of the regime of Kim Jong Il. The policy review team likewise studied this possibility carefully and, in the end, rejected it for several reasons. Given the strict controls on its society imposed by the North Korean regime and the apparent absence of any organized internal resistance to the regime, such a strategy would at best require a long time to realize, even assuming it could succeed. The timescale of this strategy is, therefore, inconsistent with the timescale on which the DPRK could proceed with nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. In addition, such a policy would risk destructive war and would not win the support of U.S. allies in the region upon whom success in deterring such a war would depend. Finally, a policy of pressure might harm the people of North Korea more than its government.

Reforming the DPRK. Many other analysts suggest that the United States should promote the accelerated political and economic reform of the DPRK along the lines of established international practice, hastening the advent of democracy and market reform that will better the lot of the North's people and provide the basis for the DPRK's integration into the international community in a peaceful fashion. However much we might wish such an outcome, success of the policy clearly would require DPRK cooperation. But, the policy team believed that the North Korean regime would strongly resist such reform, viewing it as indistinguishable from a policy of undermining. A policy of reforming, like a policy of undermining, would also take time - more time than it would take the DPRK to proceed with its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

"Buying" our objectives. In its current circumstance of industrial and agricultural decline, the DPRK has on occasion indicated a willingness to "trade" addressing U.S. concerns about its nuclear weapons activities and ballistic missile exports for hard currency. For example, the DPRK offered to cease its missile exports if the U.S. agreed to compensate it for the foregone earnings from missile exports. The policy review team firmly believed that such a policy of trading material compensation for security would only encourage the DPRK to further blackmail, and would encourage proliferators worldwide to engage in similar blackmail. Such a strategy would not, and should not, be supported by the Congress, which controls the U.S. government's purse strings.

A Comprehensive and Integrated Approach: A Two-Path Strategy

A better alternative, and the one the review has recommended, is a two-path strategy focused on our priority concerns over the DPRK's nuclear weapons- and missile-related activities. We have devised this strategy in close consultation with the governments of the ROK and Japan, and it has their full support. Indeed, it is a joint strategy in which all three of our countries play coordinated and mutually reinforcing roles in pursuit of the same objectives. Both paths aim to protect our key security interests; the first path is clearly preferable for the United States and its allies and, we firmly believe, for the
The first path involves a new, comprehensive and integrated approach to our negotiations with the DPRK. We would seek complete and verifiable assurances that the DPRK does not have a nuclear weapons program. We would also seek the complete and verifiable cessation of testing, production and deployment of missiles exceeding the parameters of the Missile Technology Control Regime, and the complete cessation of export sales of such missiles and the equipment and technology associated with them. By negotiating the complete cessation of the DPRK's destabilizing nuclear weapons and long-range missile programs, this path would lead to a stable security situation on the Korean Peninsula, creating the conditions for a more durable and lasting peace in the long run and ending the Cold War in East Asia.

On this path the United States and its allies would, in a step-by-step and reciprocal fashion, move to reduce pressures on the DPRK that it perceives as threatening. The reduction of perceived threat would in turn give the DPRK regime the confidence that it could coexist peacefully with us and its neighbors and pursue its own economic and social development. If the DPRK moved to eliminate its nuclear and long-range missile threats, the United States would normalize relations with the DPRK, relax sanctions that have long constrained trade with the DPRK and take other positive steps that would provide opportunities for the DPRK.

If the DPRK were prepared to move down this path, the ROK and Japan have indicated that they would also be prepared, in coordinated but parallel tracks, to improve relations with the DPRK.

It is important that all sides make contributions to creating an environment conducive to success in such far-ranging talks. The most important step by the DPRK is to give assurances that it will refrain from further test firings of long-range missiles as we undertake negotiations on the first path. In the context of the DPRK suspending such tests, the review team recommended that the United States ease, in a reversible manner, Presidentially-mandated trade embargo measures against the DPRK. The ROK and Japan have also indicated a willingness to take positive steps in these circumstances.

When the review team, led by Dr. Perry as a Presidential Envoy, visited Pyongyang in May, the team had discussions with DPRK officials and listened to their views. We also discussed these initial steps that would create a favorable environment for conducting comprehensive and integrated negotiations. Based on talks between with Ambassador Charles Kaltman and DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan in early September, the U.S. understood and expected that the DPRK would suspend long-range missile testing to include both No Dong and Taepo Dong missiles - for as long as U.S.-DPRK discussions to improve relations continued. The DPRK subsequently announced a unilateral suspension of such tests while talks between the two countries continued. Accordingly, the Administration has taken steps to ease sanctions. This fall a senior DPRK official will likely visit Washington to reciprocate the Perry visit and continue discussions on improving relations. Both sides have taken a bold and meaningful step
along the first path. While it is only an initial step, and both sides can easily reverse this first step, we are hopeful that it begins to take us down the long but important path to reducing threat on the Korean Peninsula.

While the first path devised by the review holds great promise for U.S. security and for stability in East Asia, and while the initial steps taken in recent weeks give us great hope, the first path depends on the willingness of the DPRK to traverse it with us. The review team is hopeful it will agree to do so, but on the basis of discussions to date we cannot be sure the DPRK will. Prudence therefore dictated that we devise a second path, once again in consultation with our allies and with their full support. On the second path, we would need to act to contain the threat that we have been unable to eliminate through negotiation. By incorporating two paths, the strategy devised in the review avoids any dependence on conjectures regarding DPRK intentions or behavior and neither seeks, nor depends upon for its success, a transformation of the DPRK's internal system.

If North Korea rejects the first path, it will not be possible for the United-States to pursue a new relationship with the DPRK. In that case, the United States and its allies would have to take other steps to assure their security and contain the threat. The U.S. and allied steps should seek to keep the Agreed Framework intact and avoid, if possible, direct conflict. But they would also have to take firm but measured steps to persuade the DPRK that it should return to the first path and avoid destabilizing the security situation in the region.

Our recommended strategy does not immediately address a number of issues outside the scope of direct U.S.-DPRK negotiations, such as ROK family reunification, implementation of the North-South Basic Agreement (including reactivation of North-South Joint Committees) and Japanese kidnapping cases, as well as other key issues of concern, including drug trafficking. However, the policy review team believed that all of these issues should be, and would be, seriously addressed as relations between the DPRK and the U.S. improve.

Similarly, the review team believed the issue of chemical and biological weapons is best addressed multilaterally. Many recommendations have also been made with respect to Korean unification; but, ultimately, the question of unification is something for the Korean people to decide. Finally, the policy review team strongly believed that the U.S. must not withdraw any of its forces from Korea - a withdrawal would not contribute to peace and stability, but rather undermine the strong deterrence currently in place.

Advantages of the Proposed Strategy

The proposed strategy has the following advantages:

1. Has the full support of our allies. No U.S. policy can be successful if it does not enjoy the support of our allies in the region. The overall approach builds upon the South's policy of engagement with North Korea, as the ROK leadership suggested to Dr. Perry directly and to the President. It also puts the U.S. effort to end the DPRK missile program
on the same footing with U.S. efforts to end its nuclear weapons program, as the
Government of Japan recommended.

2. Draws on U.S. negotiating strengths. Pursuant to the recommended approach, the
United States will be offering the DPRK a comprehensive relaxation of political and
economic pressures which the DPRK perceives as threatening to it and which are applied,
in its view, principally by the United States. This approach complements the positive
steps the ROK and Japan are prepared to take. On the other hand, the United States will
not offer the DPRK tangible "rewards" for appropriate security behavior; doing so would
both transgress principles that the United States values and open us up to further
blackmail.

3. Leaves stable deterrence of war unchanged. No changes are recommended in our
strong deterrent posture on the Korean Peninsula, and the U.S. should not put its force
posture on the negotiating table. Deterrence is strong in both directions on the Korean
Peninsula today. It is the North's nuclear weapons- and long-range missile-related
activities that threaten stability. Likewise, the approach recommended by the review will
not constrain U.S. Theater Missile Defense programs or the opportunities of the ROK and
Japan to share in these programs; indeed, we explicitly recommended that no such
linkage should be made.

4. Builds on the Agreed Framework. The approach recommended seeks more than the
Agreed Framework provides. Specifically, under the recommended approach the U.S.
will seek a total and verifiable end to all nuclear weapons-related activities in the DPRK,
and the U.S. will be addressing the DPRK's long-range missile programs, which are not
covered by the Agreed Framework. In addition, the U.S. will seek to traverse the broader
path to peaceful relations foreseen by both the U.S. and the DPRK in the Agreed
Framework, and incorporated in its text.

5. Aligns U.S. and allied near-term objectives with respect to the DPRK's nuclear and
missile activities with our long-term objectives for lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.
The recommended approach focuses on the near-term dangers to stability posed by the
DPRK's nuclear weapons- and missile-related activities, but it aims to create the
conditions for lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula in the longer run, as the U.S. seeks
through the Four Party Talks. As noted above, the recommended approach also seeks to
realize long-term objectives of the Agreed Framework, which are to move beyond
cooperation in the nuclear field to broader, more normal U.S.-DPRK relations.

6. Does not depend on specific North Korean behavior or intent. The proposed strategy is
flexible and avoids any dependence on conjectures or assumptions regarding DPRK
intentions or behavior benign or provocative. Again, it neither seeks, nor depends upon,
either such intentions or a transformation of the DPRK's internal system for success.
Appropriate contingencies are built into the recommended framework.

Key Policy Recommendations
In the context of the recommendations above, the review team offered the following five key policy recommendations:

1. Adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to the DPRK's nuclear weapons- and ballistic missile-related programs, as recommended by the review team and supported by our allies in the region. Specifically, initiate negotiations with the DPRK based on the concept of mutually reducing threat; if the DPRK is not receptive, we will need to take appropriate measures to protect our security and those of our allies.

2. Create a strengthened mechanism within the U.S. Government for carrying out North Korea policy. Operating under the direction of the Principals Committee and Deputies Committee, a small, senior-level interagency North Korea working group should be maintained, chaired by a senior official of ambassadorial rank, located in the Department of State, to coordinate policy with respect to North Korea.

3. Continue the new mechanism established last March to ensure close coordination with the ROK and Japan. The Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) established during this policy review and consisting of senior officials of the three governments - is charged with managing policy toward the DPRK. This group should meet regularly to coordinate negotiating strategy and overall policy toward the DPRK and to prepare frequent consultations on this issue between the President and the ROK President and Japanese Prime Minister. The U.S. delegation should be headed by the senior official coordinating North Korea policy.

4. Take steps to create a sustainable, bipartisan, long-term outlook toward the problem of North Korea. The President should explore with the majority and minority leaders of both houses of Congress ways for the Hill, on a bipartisan basis, to consult on this and future Administrations' policy toward the DPRK. Just as no policy toward the DPRK can succeed unless it is a combined strategy of the United States and its allies, the policy review team believes no strategy can be sustained over time without the input and support of Congress.

5. Approve a plan of action prepared for dealing with the contingency of DPRK provocations in the near term, including the launch of a long-range missile. The policy review team notes that its proposed responses to negative DPRK actions could have profound consequences for the Peninsula, the U.S. and our allies. These responses should make it clear to the DPRK that provocative actions carry a heavy penalty. Unless the DPRK's acts transgress provisions of the Agreed Framework, however, U.S. and allied actions should not themselves undermine the Agreed Framework. To do so would put the U.S. in the position of violating the Agreed Framework, opening the path for the DPRK to unfreeze Yongbyon and return us to the crisis of the summer of 1994.

Concluding Thoughts

The team's recommended approach is based on a realistic view of the DPRK, a
hardheaded understanding of military realities and a firm determination to protect U.S.
interests and those of our allies.

We should recognize that North Korea may send mixed signals concerning its response to
our recommended proposal for a comprehensive framework and that many aspects of its
behavior will remain reprehensible to us even if we embark on this negotiating process.
We therefore should prepare for provocative contingencies but stay the policy course
with measured actions pursuant to the overall framework recommended. The North needs
to understand that there are certain forms of provocative behavior that represent a direct
threat to the U.S. and its allies and that we will respond appropriately.

In this regard, it is with mixed feelings that we recognize certain provocative behavior of
the DPRK may force the U.S. to reevaluate current aid levels.

Finally, and to close this review, we need to point but that a confluence of events this past
year has opened what we strongly feel is a unique window of opportunity for the U.S.
with respect to North Korea. There is a clear and common understanding among Seoul,
Tokyo, and Washington on how to deal with Pyongyang. The PRC’s strategic goals -
especially on the issue of North Korean nuclear weapons and related missile delivery
systems overlap with those of the U.S. Pyongyang appears committed to the Agreed
Framework and for the time being is convinced of the value of improving relations with
the U.S. However, there are always pressures on these positive elements. Underlying
tensions and suspicions have led to intermittent armed clashes and incidents and affect
the political environment. Efforts to establish the diplomatic momentum necessary to
withstand decades of hostility become increasingly difficult and eventually stall.
Nevertheless, the year 1999 may represent, historically, one of our best opportunities to
deal with key U.S. security concerns on the Korean Peninsula for some time to come.