

North Korea's Nuclear Program and Negotiation: How nuclear negotiation during the Clinton years produced lessons for current international relations

Brian Hilliker

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Dr. David Snead, PhD
Thesis Chair

Dr. Robert Robertson, Doctorate
Committee Member

Dr. Michael Davis, PhD
Committee Member

Dr. Cynthia Goodrich, EhD
Assistant Honors Director

Date

Abstract

North Korea's road of survival began in the aftermath of World War II, when the United States and the Soviet Union sparred over rival ideologies. Ultimately, Korea split into a free south and an authoritarian north. Over seventy years later, North Korea remains a bastion of communism. Nuclear weaponry is a factor behind North Korea's survival, and the history of their program can offer insight for American policy makers today. This paper offers a history of North Korea's nuclear weapons program during the Clinton presidency, along with recommendations for present day policy makers. Without an understanding of history decision-makers tend to make mistakes and act rashly. It is imperative America understands its diplomatic issues with North Korea, and provide diplomatic, strategic, and military solutions for future negotiations.

Introduction

Nations pursue the acquisition of nuclear weapons for various reasons. Some acquire them to gain a military advantage; others want to counter the intentions of rival nations; and many seek them to guarantee national sovereignty. North Korea's (DPRK) road to acquiring nuclear weapons coincides with its desire to maintain national sovereignty. The DPRK's leadership under the Kim family (Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il, and Kim Jong Un) used nuclear weapons as a tool to balance stronger powers and prevent outside powers from toppling their regime. Pursuit of nuclear weapons began shortly after North Korea's emergence during the 1950s, and accelerated throughout the latter half of the 20th century.¹ North Korea had numerous motivations for attempting to gain nuclear weapons including: assisting the Soviet Union with countering American power, combating the economic influence of South Korea, and hedging against American nuclear technology.²

In conjunction with motivation, historians and policy-makers should ask, how could North Korea have obtained nuclear weapons under international community's watch? There any indicators pointing towards North Korea's tactics? In order to answer these questions, one must look at the history of North Korea's path towards achieving nuclear weapons, assess the U.S. perspective, and provide recommendations for countering the nuclear ambitions of other state actors. The nuclear situation with North

¹ Ramesh C, Thakur, *Nuclear Weapons and International Security*, (London: Routledge. 2015), 143.

² Ibid.

Korea is a nuanced topic; full of pitfalls, media landmines, and misunderstandings. Each administration handling the Kim regime understood the complexity of the North Korea situation. Unfortunately, there are not sure-fire answers to such problems, but there can be solutions which may deliver adequate results.

This paper explores U.S. efforts in Bill Clinton's presidency to prevent North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons; while providing recommendations in three distinct sections. The first section outlines the history of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, briefly examining North Korea's motivations since 1951, and then focusing on 1991-2000. Presidential statements, newspaper articles, and foreign policy actions provide the basis for assessing America's conception of the crisis. The second section evaluates the Clinton administrations negotiation tactics. Finally, the third section will offer policy recommendations for foreign policy analysts dealing with North Korea in future meetings.

North Korea's Nuclear Story

North Korea's decision to use nuclear weapons as a way to preserve its national sovereignty began soon after the Korean War. North Korea required large amounts of assistance from the Communist states of Russia and China throughout its nuclear journey. However, North Korean ingenuity, military focus, and self-reliance were also critical factors influencing its nuclear weapons program.³ Beginning in the mid-1950s North Korea's leader, Kim Il Sung, initiated his nation's nuclear program for a few reasons.

³ Walter C., Clemens, Jr, "North Korea's Quest for Nuclear Weapons: New Historical Evidence," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2010): 127.

Primarily, he wanted to counter United States nuclear threats while also gaining international collaboration.

In 1964, Kim approached Communist China for information on how to create a nuclear weapon.⁴ Unfortunately for Kim, Chinese leader, Mao Zedong, declined his request. Without Chinese assistance, Kim approached Russian officials for nuclear technology. Kim believed Russia could provide the necessary resources to assist in his nuclear ambitions, and Russian officials also had deep ties to the North Korean government. As far back as 1948, Joseph Stalin communicated with Kim Il Sung to open up diplomatic relations with North Korea.⁵ Russian-DPRK ties continued to improve in the 1950s, and economic cooperation grew. In the late 1950s, USSR-DPRK trade involved economic agreements and resource distribution.⁶ In 1965, Russia sold a research reactor to Pyongyang. Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko described how the USSR would be willing to further assist North Korea with its nuclear ambitions.⁷ This would be accomplished through scientific education programs including “on-the-spot training.”⁸ This training would provide North Korean nuclear scientists with hands on

⁴ Ford, Glyn, and Soyoung Kwon, *North Korea On the Brink: Struggle For Survival*, (London; Ann Arbor, Mich: Pluto Press, 2008), 149.

⁵ "Telegram from Stalin to Kim Il Sung," October 12, 1948, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, CWIHP archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119377>

⁶ "Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 24 July 1957," July 24, 1957, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 13, P. 72, Delo 5, Listy 146-164. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115637>; and "Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 1 October 1957," October 01, 1957, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 13, Delo 5, Listy 257-307. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115933>

⁷ "From the Journal of Gromyko, Record of a Conversation with Ambassador Ri Sin-Pal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," April 28, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF fond 0102, opis 14, delo 4, p. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116019>

⁸ Ford, *North Korea on the Brink*, 149-151.

experience in how to use nuclear reactor and refine nuclear material. The next decade witnessed North Korea expanding beyond Russian assistance, by moving scientists into education programs throughout Japan, the United States, and Germany.⁹

Over the next twenty years, North Korea reached numerous nuclear milestones through strategy and deception. In 1985, Kim strategically joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to receive additional nuclear power stations for peaceful purposes from the Soviet Union.¹⁰ These power stations would provide Kim with nuclear power while also avoiding international scrutiny. 1986 was a crucial turning-point in North Korea's nuclear weapons program, when it built a reactor capable of producing weapons grade plutonium.¹¹ Even though Russian influence provided North Korea with the material necessary to produce reactor's of military capability, the DPRK also capitalized on investing its educational resources. Such investment included establishing scientific research in countries with nuclear knowledge and gaining training from Russian scientists.

1991: A Turning Point in the Nuclear Chess Game

North Korea lost a few crucial benefits with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, including its technological support. The Soviet Union's fall also prevented Russia from providing the nuclear power center's promised with the DPRK's compliance with the NPT. This made the DPRK begin to re-consider the NPT agreement which gave it access to Russian assistance. Kim also may have questioned the survival of his regime, after

⁹ Ibid, 149-151.

¹⁰ Tim Beal, *North Korea: The Struggle Against American Power*, (London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005), 67.

¹¹ Ford, *North Korea on the Brink*, 149.

dozens of other communist nations began to fall around him.¹² As uncertainty mounted, Kim again looked to China for economic and technological assistance. Instead of denying North Korea's requests, China decided to provide aid to the DPRK in order to establish a buffer against American influence. Throughout the 1990s, 70% of the DPRK's food and oil came from China, and trade would only increase going into the 21st century.¹³ Increased trade with China allowed North Korea to avoid the impact of American economic pressure throughout the 1990s, and it also provided a way for Kim Jong Il to invest into military spending. Without Chinese assistance, American sanctions and resource embargos would have created increased hardship for Kim. Economic uncertainty was not the only problem facing the Kim regime in the 1990s. Kim Il Sung was also preoccupied with training an heir in his son, Kim Jong Il.¹⁴

In the early 1990s, North Korea experienced a period of national uncertainty, increased American expansion, and a transition of power. 1991 not only signaled the fall of the Soviet Union, but it also coincided with North Korea accepting nuclear weapons inspectors. For years the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) wanted North Korea to comply with its nuclear safeguards.¹⁵ Kim Il Sung repeatedly avoided the IAEA's calls for inspection until 1991, when South Korean president, Roh Tae Wooh, declared the non-existence of nuclear warheads in South Korea.¹⁶ With the knowledge that nuclear weapons were not present in South Korea Kim shifted his policy and opened

¹² Joel S. Wit, Daniel Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 5.

¹³ Mark Haichin, "Pragmatic, Not Mad: The Rationality of North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," *Journal Of Military & Strategic Studies* 18, no. 1 (April 2017): 153.

¹⁴ Wit, *Going Critical*, 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

the door for weapons inspectors. The George H.W. Bush administration also promised North Korean diplomats a meeting with a high-level American diplomat if IAEA inspection standards were met.¹⁷ With this knowledge, Kim Il Sung decided to accept inspection standards in order to, “drive a wedge between the United States and South Korea” through a bilateral meeting with an American diplomat.¹⁸ A bilateral meeting would push South Korean diplomats out of the negotiation proceedings, and hopefully (for the DPRK) gain influence with America. He also agreed to sign a denuclearization agreement with the South Korea in an attempt to delay international suspicion.¹⁹ The agreement required a commitment by both sides to remove any nuclear weaponry from the peninsula and promote “conditions favorable for peace.”²⁰ Key components of the agreement included: using nuclear material for peaceful purposes, not establishing nuclear enrichment facilities, and not possessing or storing nuclear weapons.²¹ It also called for North Korea to accept inspections of its nuclear facilities. Initially, the agreement was seen as a beneficial step towards de-escalation; however, the DPRK would shortly change its mind.

1992-1995: Frameworks, Ambiguity, and Deception

North Korea’s desire for nuclear weapons fully began at the end of 1992.

Throughout the last half of the 20th century, North Korea gained nuclear knowledge from all across the world; however, finding global alliances remained difficult. Kim Il Sung

¹⁷ Ibid, 10-11.

¹⁸ Ibid, 11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Shik, Chong W., and Yon Hyong-Muk. "Joint Declaration of South And North Korea On The Denuclearization Of The Korean Peninsula." Center for Nonproliferation Studies. Accessed November 6, 2018. https://www.nti.org/media/documents/korea_denuclearization.pdf.

²¹ Ibid.

found a necessary partner in Pakistan moving into 1993. A meeting between the premier of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, and Kim resulted in missile designs changing hands.²²

Ultimately, this partnership would evolve into a nuclear deal providing North Korea uranium enrichment capabilities in exchange for missile technology to Pakistan in 1996.²³

George H. W. Bush attempted to pursue productive dialogue late in his administration; however, the North Korea situation was becoming much more complex than originally anticipated. Throughout 1991, Bush would focus on a “dual-track” approach to negotiations, where military action was “taken off the table.” Bush attempted to bring North Korea towards productive negotiations, while also attempting to “tighten the noose” on Kim through sanctions.²⁴ The State Department also prioritized North Korea and called for “maximum diplomatic effort” to halt the North’s nuclear advancement.²⁵ These efforts included finding a way to administer IAEA inspections, calling on allies to limit economic aid, and preventing nuclear proliferation.²⁶ As a prerequisite for talks, the Bush administration also pulled all its tactical warheads out of the Korean Peninsula.²⁷ Numerous other talks with Japan, South Korea, and China would attempt to establish momentum going forward.

²² Niv Farago, "Washington's Failure to Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Conundrum: Examining Two Decades of US policy." *International Affairs* 92, no. 5 (September 2016): 1130-1131.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Robert Wambler, “Engaging North Korea: Evidence from the Bush I Administration,” National Security Archive, November 8, 2017, accessed on November 6, 2018, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/korea-nuclear-vault/2017-11-08/bush-43-chose-diplomacy-over-military-force-north-korea>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ David E. Rosenbaum, "Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 24 July 1957," *New York Times*, October 20, 1994.

From an outsider's perspective talks seemed to be making progress. However, newly elected President Bill Clinton would be given a situation which was headed towards tension. By the end of 1992, talks with North Korean officials became difficult, and were characterized as "painful, lengthy, and arduous."²⁸ Even with the rising threat of North Korea's nuclear capabilities, the Clinton administration's nuclear policy appeared uninterested in a few ways. President Clinton inherited many foreign policy fires with, "Bosnia and Russia howling the loudest."²⁹ In this context, North Korea was not as important as dealing with the Soviet Union breaking apart, or with Bosnia's ethnic conflict. The American people were also uninterested in foreign policy, and the Clinton administration decided not to outline the importance of foreign policy to the public.³⁰ Meetings to discuss nuclear diplomacy only occurred three times for the entirety of 1993.³¹ The Clinton administration assigned the Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Gallucci, to begin diplomatic talks towards limiting North Korea's nuclear program.³²

Initial re-engagement began poorly. A spy scandal and an announcement to resume US-ROK military exercises, code named Team Spirit, in 1993 iced any cooperation between North and South Korea.³³ In fact, newly transitioned leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Il, declared a state of war readiness after the exercises commenced on

²⁸ Robert Cain and John W. Lewis, "Negotiating with North Korea," *Center for International Security and Cooperation* (January 2008), 4.

²⁹ Bill, Clinton, *My Life*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 502.

³⁰ Riley, Russell L. Riley, *Inside the Clinton White House*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) 77.

³¹ Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea*, (Princeton University Press, 1998) 53.

³² *Ibid*, 53.

³³ *Ibid*.

March 8, 1993.³⁴ This transition became cemented before Kim Il Sung's death in 1994; however, Kim Il Sung decided to slowly transition power over to Kim Jong Il for national stability purposes. Clinton also had to deal with war hawks and proponents of economic sanctions. When faced with all the options, Clinton had to choose between diplomatic probes, sanctions, war, or air-strikes.³⁵ Clinton chose a diplomatic probe, due to the lack of popularity war would have with an American people weary from military conflict in the Baltic states and the Middle East.³⁶ Increased military tension also coincided with increased IAEA pressure. Demands for special inspections to determine the extent of North Korea's nuclear program were increasing, and Kim did not want to abide by the special procedures outlined under the IAEA.³⁷ Therefore, Kim Jong Il decided to pull North Korea out of the NPT on March 12, 1993. Global criticism ensued, with American, South Korean, and Chinese officials calling for North Korea to back down and use diplomacy.³⁸ Ultimately, international condemnation and American pressure prevented North Korea from leaving the NPT; however, North Korea's actions were foreshadows of what was to come.³⁹

In order to prevent North Korea from leaving the NPT in the future, U.S. officials decided to pursue increased negotiations. A series of bilateral talks were implemented

³⁴ Narushige Michishita, *North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1966-2008*, (London: Routledge, 2010) 94.

³⁵ Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea*, 53.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, 94.

³⁹ Kelsey, Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy," Arms Control Association, Accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>, accessed November 15, 2018.

between 1993 and early 1994, setting the precedent for talks towards agreed framework negotiations in late 1994. By the time the United States realized the extent of North Korea's nuclear ambitions, Kim Jong Il had already acquired the necessary scientific information and nuclear material needed to create a bomb. In early 1994, American officials continued to believe North Korea's nuclear weapons capability could be blunted. President Clinton declared that his goal was to, "'help achieve a longstanding and vital American objective -- an end to the threat of nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula."⁴⁰ Kim's plan did not coincide with Clinton's hopes, and behind closed doors Secretary of Defense William Perry provided information of Korea's plans to re-process its reactor fuel to create plutonium.⁴¹

Perry was worried North Korea could possess enough plutonium to create "six or seven nuclear bombs," and he wanted Clinton to understand the gravity of a nuclear North Korea.⁴² Armed conflict became more of a possibility, as Clinton had to balance threatening North Korea while avoiding being overly aggressive. In light of this balance, Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, developed a plan to implement more sanctions, and increase American troop presence in South Korea by 20-30,000 troops.⁴³ It appeared as if America was headed in the direction of war rather than peace. However, there was a potential solution through the interaction between former President Jimmy Carter and a dying Kim Il Sung in June of 1994. Over the last few months, Kim wanted a

⁴⁰Sanger, David E. "Clinton Approves a Plan to Give Aid to North Koreans." *New York Times*, October 19, 1994.

⁴¹ Russell, "*Inside the Clinton White House*," 258.

⁴²Sanger, "Clinton Approves a Plan to Give Aid to North Koreans."; Russell, "*Inside the Clinton White House*," 259.

⁴³ Ibid

meeting with an American politician, and Carter decided to make the trip to North Korea in order to find room for compromise.⁴⁴ Carter's visit provided Clinton with the knowledge Pyongyang was willing to give up its reactor in Yongbyon in exchange for light water reactors.⁴⁵ Additionally, Carter's impact on Kim Il Sung before his death changed North Korea's decision to not resume operations of its nuclear reactors.⁴⁶ Without a relational interaction with Pyongyang diplomats, Clinton and Kim Jong Il may have traveled down the path of war instead of diplomacy, as sanctions and an increased troop presence created a higher risk of conflict. Instead, Clinton agreed to talk with Kim Jong Il at the Geneva summit in late 1994 and, as a gesture of goodwill, the United States dropped sanctions until the meeting.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, Kim Il Sung passed away in July of 1994 throwing the future of negotiations in doubt.⁴⁸ Without his father's influence, Kim Jong Il's ascension to power in 1993 caused fear for American negotiators, due to their lack of understanding of how Kim Jong Il would pursue nuclear weapons. A more nuclear North Korea could cause other nations (Japan and South Korea) to follow suit.⁴⁹ Japan and the United States would resolve the issue at the 1994 G7 Summit in Naples, when Japan's prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama, agreed to maintain solidarity with America in regards to the North Korean situation. However, the main question of North Korea's position would still remain, moving into the latter half of 1994 and 1995.

⁴⁴ Russell, *"Inside the Clinton White House,"* 259.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Clinton, *"My Life,"* 603.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 608.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

1994 marked the initiation of an agreed framework to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons program. This framework would be repeatedly broken, and it was partially due to North Korea achieving its diplomatic agenda. A key component of North Korea's nuclear weapons diplomacy involves its ambiguous definition of terms. Ambiguous definitions became more prevalent as negotiations continued in 1994. The United States and North Korea agreed to bilateral discussions; however, the United States included a few caveats. First, North Korea would need to accept "ad-hoc inspections" of key nuclear facilities. Second, North Korea would also need to resume negotiations with ROK officials.⁵⁰ U.S. officials also agreed to compromise as well. Talks would begin to relieve sanctions on North Korea and get rid of military exercises.⁵¹ Negotiations initially showed promise but went downhill after North Korea defined "ad hoc inspections" differently than U.S. officials.⁵² North Korea's inspections would involve nuclear testing facilities which did not contain the capacity to enrich military grade uranium. Kim defined denuclearization differently as well. North Korea only agreed to move back into the NPT if the United States promised to de-nuclearize completely.⁵³ A lack of universal definitions clogged down the diplomatic process, and allowed Kim to continue production of weapons grade plutonium.

Another aspect of North Korean negotiation policy was the use of pacing to hold meetings on their terms.⁵⁴ Kim's regime would make strategic decisions on issues which

⁵⁰ Michishita, *North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns*, 98.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Cain, "Negotiating with North Korea."

did not require critical U.S. involvement. Once the U.S. bogged itself down attempting to debate military drills, economic issues, or alliance structures, North Korea would prolong negotiations to buy time. One reason for the tactics effectiveness revolved around the U.S. perception of the Kim regime. The U.S. treated North Korea primarily as a strategic concern rather than attempting to listen to Kim's domestic and economic concerns (i.e. food, money, and energy).⁵⁵ Strategically North Korea was seen as a nuclear threat and nothing more; however, Kim desired to engage in negotiations as an equal and leader in need of revenue. The DPRK would also delay negotiations, over excuses of bureaucratic transition which would bog down any hope of productive dialogue.⁵⁶

Even with ambiguous definitions and delay tactics, the United States and the DPRK signed a framework in October 1994. The DPRK would open its borders for IAEA inspections to occur.⁵⁷ In return, the United States agreed to provide 500,000 tons of fuel oil shipments to the DPRK every year. The DPRK would also receive two light-water nuclear reactors, which would not be able to produce weapons grade material.⁵⁸ The signing of the framework excited policy officials, who spent years fighting to gain the opportunity to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.⁵⁹ Clinton called the agreement, "a good deal," and the U.N. declared that the deal ended the North Korean nuclear problem.⁶⁰ President Bill Clinton declared the agreement would be a major step towards

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Wit, *Going Critical*, 275.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 332.

⁶⁰ Alan Riding, "U.S. and North Korea Sign Pact to End Nuclear Dispute," *New York Times*, October 22, 1994; "U.N. Says North Korea Halted Nuclear Program." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, Nov 29, 1994.

ending the threat of nuclear proliferation on the peninsula.⁶¹ He also believed the agreement to be, “a tribute” to past administrations who were unable to fully gain North Korean compliance. Clinton would maintain the effectiveness of the agreement even after it was broken in 1998, highlighting how North Korea would have developed even more nuclear material if the agreement was not in place.⁶²

The agreement revolved around a few key components. First, the United States agreed to provide the DPRK with a light water reactor (LWR), which could promote the use of peaceful nuclear energy.⁶³ In return, the DPRK would halt the usage of its graphite reactors, thereby preventing weapons-grade plutonium production.⁶⁴ If both parties abided by their stipulations, each nation would upgrade its diplomatic status to negotiations on a bilateral level.⁶⁵ However, 1995 saw increasing moves by North Korea to continue its pursuit of nuclear material. A divided international arena, slippery definitions, and a torn American political climate allowed Kim Jong Il to avoid many of the stipulations the framework outlined. The framework formulated by the United States and North Korea involved more than nonproliferation. North Korea desired diplomatic, economic, and relational ties with the US government in order to attain resources and security.⁶⁶ North Korea wanted to use talks as a precursor for increased political relationships, and the framework eventually became the foundational element of North

⁶¹ William J Clinton, "Remarks on North Korea with Reporters," Speech, Government Publishing Office, 1993, “

⁶² Clinton, “My Life,” 625.

⁶³ Bureau of Arms Control, "Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," October 22, 1994.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cain, “Negotiating with North Korea.”

Korea's diplomatic negotiation strategy moving into the 21st century.⁶⁷ However, understanding North Korea's true intentions has been difficult for other American governments, and the Clinton administration was no different. A lack of understanding ultimately led to both sides reversing key promises of the agreement in 1994.

Unfortunately, the 1994 agreement did not come to fruition in good faith.⁶⁸ Instead, America signed the agreement with the hope North Korea would collapse similarly to the Soviet Union in 1991.⁶⁹ When North Korea survived famine, economic instability, and external pressure, and remained a key presence in the region, American officials were surprised.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, American surprise led to a lack of follow-through in regards to the 1994 agreement. Sanctions were not lifted, and the light water reactor projects proceeded behind schedule and without motivation.⁷¹ President Clinton did come out and declare the light-water reactors would be provided through South Korean channels; however, US officials dragged their feet to provide the reactors to the DPRK.⁷² Additionally, Clinton lost the House of Representatives in the 1994 mid-term elections, and Republicans cut funding for the projects outlined in the framework.⁷³ For US-DPRK relations, the late 1990s produced a series of difficult unproductive talking points leading to dilemmas in the 21st century.

1996-2000: Worsening Ties and Failed Negotiations

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ford, *North Korea on the Brink*, 152.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 152-155.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² William J. Clinton, "Remarks on the Situation in North Korea and an Exchange With Reporters," Speech, Government Publishing Organization, 1993.

⁷³ Ford, *North Korea on the Brink*, 153.

The next step in North Korea's nuclear journey began with a series of negotiation attempts in the late 1990s. 1996 produced a series of dialogues involving China, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States.⁷⁴ This series of "four party talks" also coincided with US-North Korea missile talks.⁷⁵ The four party talks began with the intent to discuss a replacement for the armistice ending the Korean War in 1953. Further, Clinton also wanted to see if North Korea's calls for peace were serious.⁷⁶ U.S. officials desired an ability to talk to North Korean officials about "peace-related issues."⁷⁷ Peace-related issues involved discussions concerning weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the placement of military forces on the peninsula. Kim's regime understood the importance of holding talks with powers capable of providing strategic resources and agreed to the talks on the precondition the DPRK would receive food aid and eased economic sanctions. South Korean President, Kim Young-sam responded in a conciliatory manner. Chinese, Japanese, and American perspectives were all positive towards the talks; unfortunately, six rounds of talks between 1996-1999 produced little progress towards achieving denuclearization of the peninsula.⁷⁸

Key problems plagued the four party talks from the beginning. First, Kim Jong Il's regime did not budge from its two objectives: US troop removal from the peninsula and obtaining a peace treaty between North and South Korea.⁷⁹ When these objectives were not met, North Korea backed out of the negotiations. However, North Korea was

⁷⁴ S.H. Joo, *Peace Regime Building on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian Security Cooperation*, (London: Routledge. 2010) 18-20.

⁷⁵ Cain, "Negotiating with North Korea."

⁷⁶ Clinton, "My Life," 707.

⁷⁷ Joo, *Peace Regime Building*, 18-20.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 18-20.

not be able to break down the solidarity South Korea, Japan, and China maintained with the United States. Clinton supported South Korean president, Kim Dae Jung, in his attempt to prevent North Korean nuclear proliferation. Clinton also found common ground with Japan's new prime minister, Keizo Obuchi.⁸⁰ When the first talk convened in August 5-7, 1997 China, America, South Korea did not want to move from their stated objectives of denuclearization; however, the DPRK did not budge from their conditions either. This resulted in deadlock and limited success.

Five future meetings took place under the four party model. Each produced the same level of deadlock and limited success. Each talk was disjointed, hard to manage, and difficult to sustain for a long period of time. These failures were not a result of American failure, but rather an unwillingness on North Korea's part to negotiate. With each set of talks, Kim Jong Il continued to push away cooperation, and called for China to be removed from the negotiations.⁸¹ North Korea also went to each negotiation hoping to gain economic and diplomatic benefits. Four party negotiations stunted Kim's policy goals of placing negotiations between only the United States and the DPRK.⁸² With bilateral negotiations, Kim hoped to gain economic concessions from America, which would not be attainable in a four-party setting.⁸³ In a time of deteriorating attitudes between South and North Korea, the four party talks were a way to promote diplomatic

⁸⁰ Clinton, "My Life," 827-828.

⁸¹ Cain, "Negotiating with North Korea."

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

over military options, and they “proved to be a training ground...to avoid crisis over the North Korea nuclear issue.”⁸⁴

The other series of talks taking place in the late 1990s were the bilateral missile discussions between the U.S. and DPRK.⁸⁵ In April 1996, U.S. and DPRK officials met to discuss missile diplomacy. DPRK officials went into the discussion with a serious desire to make America compromise on allowing missile testing.⁸⁶ However, the United States entered the negotiations with a lax timeline and little desire to entertain the DPRK’s proposals.⁸⁷ Two events during the end of the 1990s changed this attitude. In the fall of 1996, America forced North Korea to comply with the agreed framework of 1994, and effectively stopped North Korea from initiating a missile test. It would take two years before Kim effectively tested a missile at the Taepodong reactor.⁸⁸ This test sparked a flurry of activity in the U.S. government. In order to talk back North Korean missile activity, the U.S. initiated bilateral negotiations in Berlin during the Summer of 1999.⁸⁹

These talks resulted in North Korea forgoing long-range missile testing in exchange for a relaxation of sanctions. Initially, this appeared to solve a few problems for the U.S. Not only would North Korea halt long-range missile testing, but it would also be provided much needed economic assistance. Other promising events occurred in early 2000, which made it appear as if Kim Jong Il would comply with U.S. requests. One such

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

event was the first ever North-South Korean summit. During the summit Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae-Jung agreed to re-unite Korean family members and work towards re-unification.⁹⁰ For the United States this appeared to cement their idea that North Korea was working towards peace rather than tension. With the North-South Korea summit an apparent success, Clinton attempted to initiate additional bilateral talks at the end of 2000. Unfortunately, these talks fell apart after a series of disjointed negotiations and a repeated lack of DPRK compliance. North Korea came to the 2000 negotiations with a request of \$1 billion and a relaxation of economic sanctions in exchange for halting its missile exports to rogue nations states like Iran.⁹¹ U.S. officials rejected this proposal but did not re-enact sanctions or decry human rights abuses.⁹²

There were numerous issues which plagued the talks from their initiation. First, both the DPRK and the United States experienced problems over the significance of the situation. Many leaders of the DPRK foreign ministry did not conclude missile talks to be a productive objective of Korean foreign policy. On the other hand, U.S. officials did not view the DPRK's missile program as a high strategic concern; therefore, bilateral talks usually resulted in repeated talking points, and similar patterns of development.⁹³ Secondly, defining the terms of negotiation remained a key problem reminiscent of past conversations with the DPRK's diplomatic team.⁹⁴ Finally, the United States brought different teams of experts to each new series of talks; whereas the North Korean

⁹⁰ "Historic Deal at North-South Korea Summit," *The Guardian*, June 14, 2000, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/jun/14/northkorea3>, accessed November 14, 2018.

⁹¹ Cain, "Negotiating with North Korea."

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Cain, "Negotiating with North Korea."

⁹⁴ Ibid.

delegation provided consistency in who they sent to negotiate.⁹⁵ Without the benefit of similar faces, American officials would sometimes be unfamiliar with the over-arching theme of the negotiation proceedings.⁹⁶

President Clinton left office with the potential for a serious crisis. North Korea's missile program continued to push the limits of international norms. The agreed framework, though initially praised, began to fall apart as North Korea avoided inspections, and the United States did not fulfill the promises of lifted sanctions. By 2002, the agreed framework was declared dead by both America and North Korean diplomats. In 2003, North Korea pulled out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.⁹⁷ A greater travesty occurred in 2006, when North Korea detonated two nuclear devices, along with another in 2009.⁹⁸ The Clinton administration is not wholly to blame for the difficulty they faced in negotiating with North Korea. The administration used the diplomatic tools which had worked for past administrations in dealing with other rogue nation-states. Unfortunately, it is hard to negotiate with a nation willing to sacrifice resources in exchange for access onto the nuclear arena. Therefore, when one looks at the beginnings of the first North Korean nuclear crisis, lessons can be learned from a diplomatic, strategic, and political standpoint in order to obtain a better understanding of the present Kim regime.

Diplomatic, Political, and Strategic Lessons

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Siegfried S. Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises," *Daedalus* 139, no. 1 (2010): 138.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 138.

Diplomatic Lessons

Diplomatically, the United States made many errors in negotiating with the North Korean government between 1989-2000. When negotiating with North Korea, the United States bowed to the desires of the North Korean regime to host bilateral talks in addition to multi-lateral ones.⁹⁹ The bilateral agreed framework, the missile talks, and the shift away from the Four-Party talks, point towards a North Korean strategy of separating the United States from its Asian partners. North Korean officials accomplished separation in ways other than negotiations. When the U.S. restarted military exercises in 1993 North Korea backed away from the negotiation table, in an attempt to break apart a renewed South Korean-U.S. relationship.¹⁰⁰ When North Korea works with China, Japan, or the United States in separate corners it promotes confusion, and it prolongs negotiations. Each nation does have differing strategic interests; however, the U.S.'s goal should be to enact universal sanctions. Universal sanctions would entail getting nation-states to maintain continuous pressure on the DPRK economically. In order to do so, the U.S. needs to negotiate with actors who have a history of providing assistance to North Korea (Russia and China). If either of these nations circumvent enacting sanctions in private one-on-one meetings, effective diplomacy will be blunted.

North Korea also went into each negotiation promoting their agenda and forced concessions before the talks began.¹⁰¹ Kim would do this by, "conditioning [his] return

⁹⁹ Bruce Klingner, "Deny, Deceive, And Delay-North Korea's Nuclear Negotiating Strategy," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2012): 5.

¹⁰⁰ Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, 56.

¹⁰¹ Klingner, "Deny, deceive, and Delay," 5.

on receiving preliminary concessions from [his] opponents.”¹⁰² When viewing negotiation proceedings through this lens, the 1990s promoted getting North Korea to the table, even if that meant giving gifts before the talks began. The Four-Party talks offered promises of reduced sanctions, increased trade, and gifts of natural resources.¹⁰³ North Korea would then use those gifts as leverage to attempt to ask for more gifts. Unfortunately, pre-conditions set up a system which pro-longed a regime surviving on foreign resources to maintain its military and economics.

Western diplomacy and Korean diplomacy are a object lesson in differing cultures. America has had trouble understanding Korea’s style of diplomacy even into the 21st century. For Korean negotiators, “a negotiated deal is impossible without personal bonds between the negotiators.”¹⁰⁴ In contrast, Americans tend to, “focus on the bottom line and on abstract rules and laws, with little regard for cultural sensitivities and diplomatic niceties.”¹⁰⁵ Negotiations will result in failure if no change of perspective is made. In the face of the constantly changing teams of American negotiators, Asian style diplomacy would suffer in attempting to build relationships with new faces at every meeting. Additionally, American diplomacy is more inclined towards quick resolution, whereas Asian style diplomacy caters towards prolonged discussion.

In the 1990s, America and Korea established a precedent of diplomatic misunderstanding. DPRK negotiators also borrowed negotiation tactics from Russia.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Walter C. Clemens Jr., "Negotiating to Control Weapons of Mass Destruction in North Korea," *International Negotiation* 10, no. 3 (September 2005): 453-486.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

These tactics involved, “wear[ing] down their opponents by bidding high, persevering, backtracking, repeating, and making only token concessions. At Pan-munjom and elsewhere. North Korean diplomats have often practiced brinksmanship.”¹⁰⁶. Therefore, the United States made numerous errors throughout its negotiations with North Korea throughout the 1990s. These errors included: allowing North Korea to spilt multilateral discussion into bilateral talks, and delay negotiations for prolonged periods of time.

Political Lessons

Political lessons can be learned from the negotiations of the 1990s. After the agreed framework in 1994, Congress and the president produced differing attitudes towards the relationship with North Korea.¹⁰⁷ On the Congressional level, many representatives did not want to fall in line with Clinton’s policy on North Korea due to the fiscal costs involved. Congressional funding for the framework did not meet the obligations promised by the administration. A Republican House continually avoided providing the oil shipments promised to Kim.¹⁰⁸ When oil resources did not arrive as anticipated it harmed the integrity of Clinton’s promises, by causing North Korea to doubt the U.S.’s commitment. In reaction to Congress, Clinton had to explain that the DPRK’s promises would be fulfilled, even when the promises implementation was behind schedule.¹⁰⁹ An example of this can be found in the construction of North Korean light-water reactors. The framework indicated that the U.S. would provide the funding

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Farago, “Washington's Failure to Resolve The North Korean Nuclear Conundrum.”

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Wertz, “The U.S., North Korea, and Nuclear Diplomacy,” *The National Committee on North Korea*, October 2018, <https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/history-u.s.-dprk-relations>, accessed November, 14, 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Farago, “Washington’s Failure to Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Conundrum.”

and resources for two light-water reactors in North Korea. However, it would take years of delay, and Clinton was unable to construct them during his term.¹¹⁰ In fact, the light water reactor project authorized by the agreement ended up being five years behind schedule.¹¹¹ Unfulfilled promises led to North Korea finding a reason to re-start uranium enrichment.¹¹² The blame for the delay does not fall on Clinton's administration, but on the lack of funding provided to give oil resources in fulfillment of the agreed framework. Not providing oil and hindering funding for the construction of the LWR's did not promote American integrity in the eyes of North Korean diplomats. Instead, it would have been better to progress with achievable goals, rather than make unfulfillable promises.

Politically, North Korea appears to follow a policy of harsh language, combined with charm offensives when diplomats overstep their bounds.¹¹³ America maintained sanctions throughout most of the 1990s; however, they sometimes limited sanctions in favor of a settlement. The Agreed Framework of 1994 is a prime example of this. Instead of continually placing pressure on North Korea, America diminished its previously harsh negotiation policy, and exchanged it for a more diplomatic one.¹¹⁴ American sanction policy after the Agreed Framework did not seem to limit North Korean expansion, because of North Korea maintained a conciliatory policy; therefore, two lessons can be gleaned from the United States interactions with North Korea throughout the 1990s and

¹¹⁰ Davenport, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."

¹¹¹ Farago, "Washington's Failure to Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Conundrum."

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Klingner, "Deny, deceive, and Delay," 22.

¹¹⁴ Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime: Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

early 2000s. First, an atmosphere of trust must be built in order to progress towards successful foreign policy. Trust could possibly be gained by developing interpersonal relationships with North Korean diplomats. Instead of sending different diplomatic teams during each series of talks, America should treat diplomacy with North Korea as a relationship and not a business transaction. This can be difficult; however, small steps towards rebuilding trust need to be made in order to witness genuine change. Second, America should be wary of North Korea's continually shifting foreign policy, by maintaining an attitude of consistency.

Consistency could be drawn in two directions. First, the U.S. could embrace an attitude of continued pressure, and vie for international sanctions to remain in place, even while negotiations are taking place. Sanctions would only be lifted if North Korea complies with nuclear non-proliferation guidelines. By maintaining consistent pressure, the United States would cause North Korea to suffocate economically. Economic suffocation would then lead to concessions at the negotiation table. There are a few caveats to this approach. First, China and Russia need to be on board with the U.S. policy. America could approach this situation by catering to Russia and China's desire for power, by revealing how a nuclear armed North Korea equates to a uncontrollable nation-state. A second approach would be the opposite. America could work with international actors to provide economic support to Kim's regime, relax sanctions, and attempt to physically negotiate with North Korean officials. A de-escalatory approach would hopefully open North Korea to outside influence, and cause regime change from the

inside. However, if the United States flip-flops between these two scenarios it creates confusion at the negotiation table, and prevents effective steps towards progress.

Strategic Lessons

Strategically, American policy officials can see the initial rationale for North Korea's nuclear program, by looking to Korean policy from 1955-2000. North Korea uses its nuclear program primarily to counter American influence, survive American pressure, and shape negotiations. In order to counter America's influence, Kim Jong Il promoted the establishment of a "military-first ideology as a primary banner for describing the revised institutional, political, and social order within North Korea."¹¹⁵ North Korea's nuclear ambitions are founded in order to maintain this order, and to keep Korea's domestic population submissive.¹¹⁶ From its creation, North Korea experienced numerous points of conflict with the United States in terms of ideology and economics.¹¹⁷ North Korea promoted terrorism against South Korean civilians, antagonized American policy-makers, and attempted to pit Japan and South Korea against each other.¹¹⁸ One may look at these actions, and conclude North Korea was advocating for provocation over survival. One sees a different story when looking at the bigger picture. North Korea's neighbors hold significant economic, technological, and military advantages, which Kim's regime could not overcome.¹¹⁹ In the 1970s, Kim Il Sung promoted a policy of focusing on a nuclear deterrent as a primary policy goal in

¹¹⁵ Hymans, Jacques E.C. Hymans, "Assessing North Korean nuclear intentions and capacities: a new approach," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2008): 259.

¹¹⁶ Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises."

¹¹⁷ Haichin, "Pragmatic, Not Mad."

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

order to promote regime survival.¹²⁰ A military first approach allowed North Korea to ward off external threats and gain a seat at the table of larger powers. The Soviet Union became the initial donor to promoting North Korean survival; however, after the USSR's fall, American, and Chinese, aid helped fill the hole which was left behind.¹²¹ When one looks at the relationship North Korea has with outside nations they can see North Korea's strategy is about survival over provocation. The Kim regime has historically done anything possible to maintain survival, even if that means developing a nuclear warhead.

History seemed to point Kim Jong Il towards a nuclear deterrent in the face of American power. Rogue nations without weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) experienced regime change by American military force including nations like Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It is almost a certainty that Kim's regime looked to the First Gulf War in 1991, as an example of what happens to an enemy of the United States when a WMDs are not present.¹²² Iraq's regime was taken out in a matter of weeks when a nuclear deterrent was not present. Ultimately, maintaining possession of nuclear weapons prevents external threats America has imposed upon other nations. When deterrents are present, military action is not as easily deployed, and the United States can resort to other measures.¹²³

Policy Implications for the Current Administration

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Becker, *Rogue Regime*.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

History is an important instructor for policy analysis in the modern day. President Donald Trump's administration should implement key diplomatic, and strategic recommendations in order to effectively promote freedom in a globalizing world.

One of the primary issues discovered in negotiating with North Korea is the attempt to establish pre-conditions to a meeting. Many times, preconditions promote hardline stances, without any desire for peace when talks begin; therefore, both the United States and the DPRK must throw away their initial objectives and enter into diplomacy with an open mind.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, this recommendation is easier written than accomplished. But if the United States wants to rectify decades of sown distrust it must take the lead and establish that any attempt to establish pre-conditions will cancel negotiation proceedings. When America avoids promising relaxed sanctions, reunification, or an end to military exercises, North Korea will not leave negotiations with benefits. When North Korea understands that it is unable to achieve concessions, it will then only have the option of making real changes in order to survive.

The second thing America can do is promote negotiations with multiple parties; rather than through bilateral talks. When the United States involves its allies the chance of miscommunication or misperception dramatically decreases. There are a few ways this can be accomplished. First, Russia and China must be convinced to not provide North Korea the necessary resources to survive. Throughout the 1990s China picked up the Soviet Union's slack, and limited the United States efforts to suffocate North Korea's

¹²⁴ Tae-Hwan Kwak, "The Korean Peninsula Peace Regime Building Through The Four-Party Peace Talks: Re-Evaluation And Policy Recommendations," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2003): 1-32.

regime by providing aid to Kim Jong Il. America did provide assistance to North Korea from time-to-time; however, when negotiations were not taking place, America significantly ramped up sanctions against North Korea. America should pressure the Chinese and Russian governments to not repeat these steps, for they indirectly supported North Korea's nuclear development.

Finally, America needs to understand the diplomacy of North Korea, and how it differs from American style of diplomacy. North Korea emphasizes relationship building and respect as key components of negotiation. For North Korea, "concepts of national autonomy and sovereignty play a key role" in establishing solid relations.¹²⁵ In contrast, American negotiations throughout the 1990s were disjointed, involved multiple parties, and provided a lack of consistency. America must understand that North Korea's diplomatic tactics are culturally different than its own. Within that realm of understanding America should primarily send consistent teams of diplomats, rather than sending different individuals each time. Additionally, America should not focus on the end result of the negotiations, but instead pursue steps to de-escalate any crisis which may arise.

Strategic Recommendations

Strategically, America should implement recommendations which can lower crisis levels, and build international cooperation. A few key policies should be pursued to achieve these goals. Firstly, America should promote a policy which avoids nuclear

¹²⁵ Christoph, Bluth, "The Paradox of North Korea's Nuclear Diplomacy: Insights from Conflict Transformation Theory," *North Korean Review* 13, no. 1 (Spring, 2017): 45-62.

conflict while also promoting regime change from the inside.¹²⁶ America will, most likely, be unable to convince North Korea of completely denuclearizing, due to the importance nuclear weapons play in North Korea's economic, social, and diplomatic survival. Instead of pursuing external change, America should promote NGOs smuggling information into North Korea, and provide economic assistance, along with diplomatic immunity, to North Korean refugees fleeing the regime. External Information is already falling into the hands of the North Korean population. Smugglers have sent 10-20,000 USB drives into North Korea in 2016 alone, and banned literature is entering at a similar pace.¹²⁷ These USB's provide movies with democratic messages, Bible verses, and democratic documents. Information is the key to promoting internal change, and financial, social, or political support should be a priority for the administration.

Second, America, while containing the North Korean threat, should work with Beijing to prevent nuclear information from spreading past China's borders. For Beijing, a nuclear North Korea is a threat to its interests, and China will, "likely...restrain North Korea from expanding its nuclear program, and, most importantly, to stop it from exporting its nuclear materials."¹²⁸ The Trump Administration should look towards China, and find common ground on the North Korean issue through nuclear non-proliferation abroad. Interacting with China is not an easy task; however, America can

¹²⁶ Hecker, "Lessons Learned from the North Korean Nuclear Crises."

¹²⁷ Kelly Kasulis, "Inside the Dangerous Operation to Smuggle Free Information into North Korea," *MIC*, July 19, 2018.

¹²⁸ Kasulis, "Inside the Dangerous Operation to Smuggle Free Information Into North Korea."

promote collective attempts at denuclearization primary because China does not want to be responsible for unpredictable alliances.¹²⁹

Finally, America should focus on human rights abuses when attending talks with North Korean leaders. Ronald Reagan met with Russian leaders to discuss nuclear proliferation. However, he also railed against Russia's human rights abuses, calling the USSR an "evil empire"¹³⁰. In the same way, the Trump administration should negotiate with North Korea, but they should also use each public opportunity to highlight the many atrocities North Korea has committed. President Trump has not done so on an effective scale, and has missed opportunities to draw attention to human rights at the Trump-Kim summit in Singapore along with other opportunities when he has interacted with Japanese and South Korean officials.¹³¹ Not only will this promote human rights abuses to become more widely understood, but it will also set a precedent for North Korea to solve its internal issues or face greater international opposition. With the understanding that North Korea has 2.6 million slaves within its borders, President Trump should pursue internal change and prevent negotiations which do not call attention to human rights.¹³²

Conclusion

North Korea is a nation-state which pursued, and eventually attained, nuclear warheads. American reactions throughout the Clinton administration did not provide the necessary steps in order to counter North Korea's threat effectively. Instead,

¹²⁹ Brian Hilliker, "Threat to Chinese Hegemony," Liberty University, April 20, 2017, pg. 9.

¹³⁰ Ronald, Reagan, "Evil Empire Speech," Speech, Voices of Democracy, July 19, 2018.

¹³¹ Olivia Enos, "Don't Let Kim Jong-Un Ignore Human Rights," *The Heritage Foundation*, June 27th, 2018, <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/dont-let-kim-jong-un-ignore-human-rights>, accessed November 14, 2018.

¹³² Adam, Taylor, "North Korea has 2.6 million 'modern slaves,' new report estimates," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2018.

misunderstood diplomatic interests, misperceived motives, and a disinterested government pushed North Korea away from the United States. This can be seen through the Agreed Framework of 1994, the Four-Party Talks of the late 1990s, and the missile talks leading into 2000. Each of these talks led to the unfortunate results of gridlock, idealistic thinking, and failure only overcome through future negotiations. Ultimately, the North Korean nuclear crisis will need to be resolved from within, and with external assistance in order for change to occur. In the meantime, it is in America's best interest to contain the North Korean nuclear threat, and to work with neighboring allies to maintain stability in the region.

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