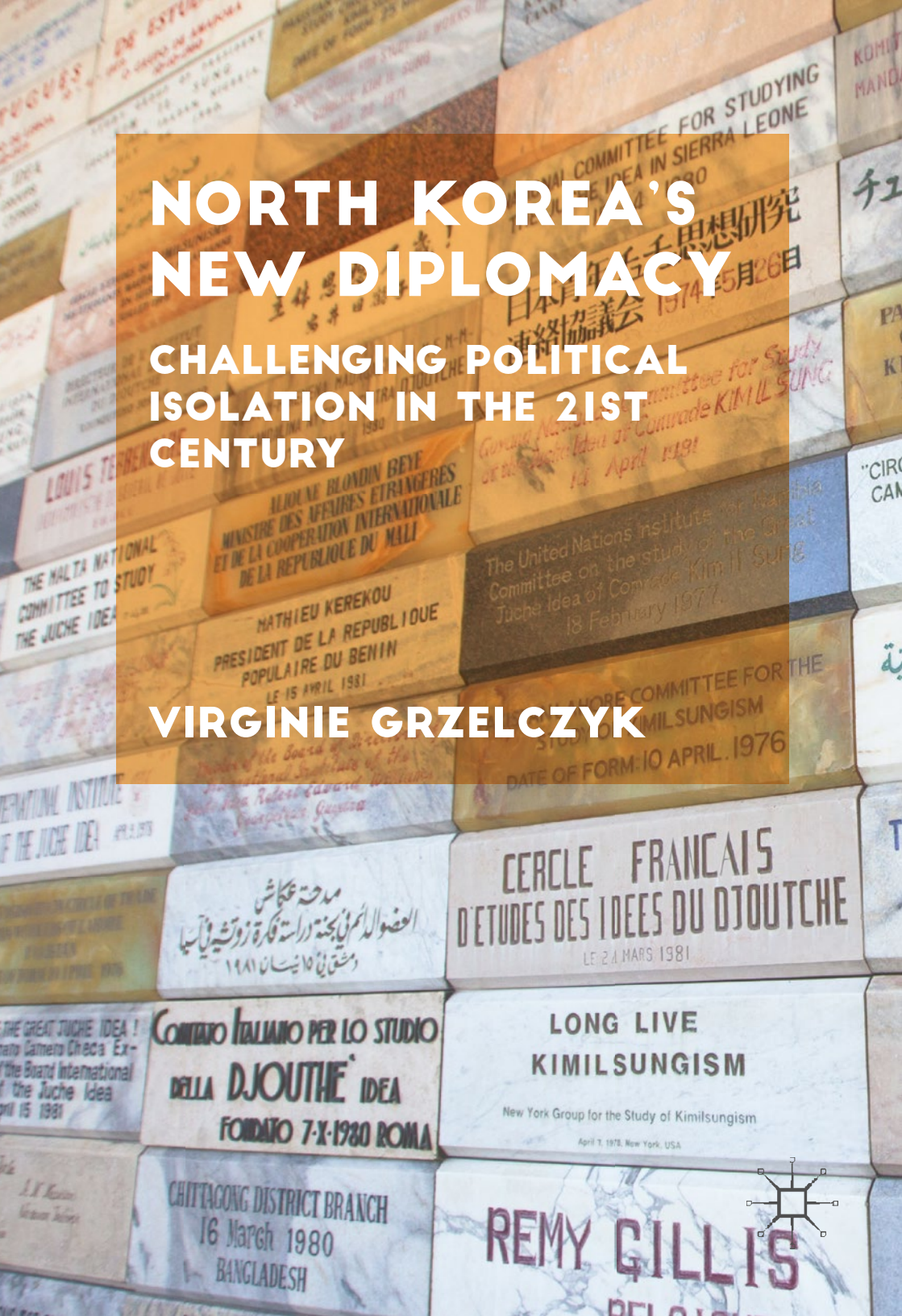

NORTH KOREA'S NEW DIPLOMACY

CHALLENGING POLITICAL ISOLATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

VIRGINIE GRZELCZYK

North Korea's New Diplomacy

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Abbreviations

AF	Agreed Framework
ASEAN ARF	Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum
CAAC	Civil Aviation Administration of China
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
INKSNA	Iran, North Korea, and Syrian Nonproliferation Act
JSA	Joint Security Area
KCNA	Korean Central News Agency
KOMID	Korean Mining and Development Corporation
KOTRA	South Korean Trade Investment Promotion Agency
KPA	Korean People's Army
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
POCPA	Palm Oil Credit and Payment Arrangement
PRC	People's Republic of China
PUST	Pyongyang University of Science and Technology
ROK	Republic of Korea
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund

UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WPK	Worker's Party of Korea

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Why the Need to Reevaluate North Korea?

On 7 June 1951, French philosopher and dramatist Jean Paul Sartre's play *The Devil and the Good Lord* opened in the Parisian Antoine Theater. The play tells the story of Goetz, a vicious and tyrannical warlord who decides to become a good Samaritan in an effort to redeem himself. The tipping point in the story is the Siege of Worms. Then, Sartre writes that 'when the rich make war, it's the poor that die.' Challenged by a priest who tells him that doing good is harder than doing bad, Goetz decides to prove him wrong and embarks on a crusade to do good. Little does Goetz know that most of its attempts to do so will lead to suffering, disasters, and death. The existentialist Sartre makes the reader wonder about the nature of political power, the relationship between leaders and their people, and how striving to achieve good, if it is ever truly possible, might require suffering and harsh discipline. Ultimately, even the best intentions can turn into tragedy if they are entangled with the world's complexities. Though Sartre was writing in a European post-war context, political power-play and conflicts were far from over despite peace treaties and creation of the United Nations. For one, righting wrongs was at the heart of North Korea's invasion of the South, on 25 June 1950. With the proclamation on 7 September 1945 by General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief of the United States Army Forces for the Pacific region (USARPAC), that every people and territory south of the 38th parallel on the Korean peninsula would be under his military authority, the stage was initially set for a conflict that would span decades. Just like Goetz' political choices, this announcement was made for the greater good, or at least for the greater

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good of powerful parties involved. The aim, then, was to remove Japanese colonial structures in Northeast Asia and to reorganize and reconfigure military troops in the region to establish a lasting peaceful order after World War II. But sometimes, best intentions do not lead to optimum outcomes. More than seven decades after the Koreas' partition, which was only ever intended as a temporary measure, the Koreas have established separate governments, discrete economies, independent foreign relations, and different identities. They have also, at times, fought bitterly against one another to regain control and unity over the peninsula. While the division was initially one of a territory, it has become one of a people. But the Koreas did not exist in a vacuum, and much of their separation was framed by the tug of Cold War between the Soviet Union on the one hand and the United States on the other. Despite the fall of the Soviet system and the apparent triumph of capital and neoliberal world order, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have both developed but as separate countries.

South of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the ROK could very well be the poster child for the proponents of capitalism's marriage to democratization and how they can, together, produce steady modernization. Seoul has indeed a lot to show for: it has graduated into the Group of Twenty (G20) and is a competitive player in a number of industries including shipping and high-end electronics. It has developed enough clout within the international system to be hosting prestigious and world-class sporting events. While the Seoul Summer Olympic Games in 1988 showcased the ROK as a new democracy, the FIFA World Cup organized with Japan in 2002 consolidated its broad appeal, and it is gearing up to host the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. Beyond its own development, the ROK has become a middle power concerned with, and active within, global governance. A long-time recipient of military aid and support, Seoul is now able to participate in a number of multilateral coalitions. It has offered logistical and medical support to Operation Enduring Freedom as early as its inception in 2001 and has joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee in 2009(OECD DAC). So, the Korean Wave is not tidal, but it should also be reckoned with: Seoul is becoming an attractive destination for international students and travelers alike who are seduced by its culture, food, dynamism, and the values popularized by Korean television drama and pop songs.

North of the DMZ, there are few foreigners, little pop music but plenty of drama. With Chinese and Soviet support, the DPRK has developed

a communist-style political leadership. The system has now graduated from its initial influences, and the DPRK has developed via the Chuch'e its own brand of ideology, mostly calling for independence and sovereignty and complete with a de-facto hereditary political succession. North Korea's post-war development has been arduous and has tested the limits of planned economy. But its economic struggles have also been overshadowed by its efforts to develop a nuclear program. Numerous missile and nuclear weapons tests have led to political alienation, economic sanctions, and development despair. It also means that the North has very few friends prepared to lend a hand to such a decrepit and brutal political system.

Is North Korea on the brink of economic collapse? Looking at economic figures could provide the beginning of an answer but should be taken with a grain of salt, or at least with the understanding that there always is a degree of uncertainty when researching the DPRK, since it does not publish official trade figures. Second-best options, such as figures released in September 2015 by the South Korean Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), stress the central role that China has maintained for decades in North Korea's trade balance.[1] This is not surprising, as China's influence has been well documented in the literature, from Beijing's border management to its investment and active role in the development of special economic zones in Rason and Hwanggumpyong.[2] But guessing what the People's Republic of China's (PRC) endgame might be is a more challenging task, and a simple desire to avoid a North Korean collapse and thus the destabilization of the entire region might just be the most watertight explanation one will find. What is interesting in recent DPRK trade data, be they coming from KOTRA, the World Bank, or the Bank of Korea, is that they lend credence to what could be termed the 'North Korean Ghost Economy.' Essentially, the DPRK's overall trade volume has expanded in recent years, but North Korea operates a perpetual trade deficit. What it means is that the DPRK essentially imports a lot more than it exports, or at least what we think it officially imports and exports. How can the DPRK survive, then, in this constant race against a perennial and essentially fundamental lack of revenue? Though the DPRK has been accused in the past of forging currency and especially producing millions of fake US notes,[3] there are just not enough 'superdollars' to fill up Pyongyang's coffers and run the state machinery.

At the dawn of the new millennium, Hazel Smith argued in her Bad/ Mad/Sad/ Rational Actor article that a paradigm shift in North Korean studies was needed. Her suggestion was to dispense with outdated Cold

War perspectives that constricted the DPRK into specific roles and that did not allow for a frank discussion about constructive engagement.[4] Smith further claimed that North Korea had developed a new relationship with the rest of the world, one which had already led to 'openness and trust between the DPRK government and representatives of the West,' and one that amounted to 'a policy of large-scale involvement with the international community.'[5] Unfortunately, Smith's important work came about at a very inopportune time: the 9/11 terrorist attacks on American soil. Suddenly, North Korea was not just mad and bad, it was also evil, and in a political climate where preemption had become the talk of the town, North Korea was in the rather short queue to be 'dealt with.' Failed Six-Party Talks and a successful nuclear test in 2006 added the 'highly dangerous' status to North Korea's already hefty name-calling roster.

The decade and a half that has passed since Smith's article cannot negate the potency of her argument: the DPRK is still surviving, and most likely doing so by cultivating economic and political relationships with a number of countries, individuals, organizations, and companies. This book builds on Smith's argument by reviving its central thesis, the one that calls for considering the DPRK beyond a securitization approach, and by looking at the DPRK via the prism of rational actor theory. It goes further though, by looking back in time to understand Pyongyang's current and future behavior constraints. This is done by bringing path dependence theory and especially the concept of 'imprinting' in its relations to actors to analyze the DPRK's international relations. Arthur Stinchcombe's imprinting idea originated in the 1960s.[6] It was initially applied to consider how conditions surrounding the birth of an industry determined and further constrained how a specific organization would meet a demand.[7] Hence, the DPRK is constrained by its past, and has developed specific behaviors that have led to its difficult survival. Some of these behaviors relate to the dichotomous nature of the state, essentially its need to develop next to, yet against the ROK. Some of these behaviors relate to political choices enshrined within Chuch'e, and the limits imposed by the need to sustain an all-encompassing ideology when most of the world changes and modernizes. Some of these behaviors relate to the need to survive in light of past conflicts, past enemies, and past mistrusts, real or imagined. But though these behaviors are inferred by the past, it does not mean they are forever repeated, recycled, and reused.

Thus, this book investigates how the DPRK has attempted to survive by developing strategies to combat political and economic isolation. It

considers as a starting point the DPRK's orthodox relationships, those developed with neighboring countries and fueled by antagonism toward the United States, and those relationships developed within the Cold War prism. It then focuses on emerging partnerships that Pyongyang has develop with other so-called rogue states, and underdeveloped and developing nations, arguing that the DPRK is, against all odds and especially its best efforts, engaging in various forms of interdependence. Whether or not this means that the DPRK is part of the globalized world is an ontological debate of little value in light of the epistemological contributions that understanding the nature, methods, and limitation that such an engagement provides for the DPRK and the international community. Yet, engagement with the international community does not necessarily mean agreeing with its norms and following great powers' requests. Thus, the book argues that there is no groundbreaking paradigm shift needed to understand Pyongyang. Instead, it is the hope that there is enough of a political space, more than two decades after the end of the Cold War, and a few years into a third North Korean hereditary succession to consider how the DPRK, as both a rather small state and a rational actor, has started to mainstream parts of its behavior in order to ensure its survival. Looming ahead is the personal hope that there can be a place where the DPRK can develop and North Korean citizens find a measure of security and happiness.

A Strengthening State? Revisiting the Past

Calling the DPRK a mainstream actor might seem at odds with how Pyongyang is represented on a fairly regular basis in the media. The DPRK and its leadership offer many fascinating stories to fuel popular cravings for a mortal enemy, a desolate place in need of saving, or the last frontier of the political unknown. Arguments presented in the mainstream media offer little to analyze precise behavior. They have also had, at times, damaging consequences: they have popularized myths about the DPRK that perpetuate the image of a unique and impossible country to know, and to deal with. A subtler and more educated brand of journalism has specialized in caustic and sarcastic political representations of North Korea and especially the Kim family. Political cartoons, a widely and universally used tool in the printed and now electronic media, have perpetuated some of the DPRK's more enduring, albeit far from endearing features such as the DPRK's negotiating strategy, and especially its approach to missile and

nuclear testing. Those are more recent trends, however, as the DPRK was considered a state on the brink of collapse for a number of years, a position that does not call for much sarcasm in light of North Korean people's plight.

At the end of the Cold War, it was hoped that the DPRK would either collapse or succumb to foreign pressures, and become part of the capitalist and democratic world, likely under South Korea's stewardship. Hence, research has been extensive in considering the potential of a DPRK collapse. Long before World War II, Korean activist Shin Chae Ho had concerns about the Korean state, its unity, and how it could withstand foreign influence, be it because of Japanese imperialism, or a long tradition of developing in China's shadow.[8] Just a year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Barry Gills suggested that economic and technological lags could not by themselves change the nature of socialism and cause an ideology to collapse. Instead, he had already traced the central component of the DPRK's survival to the maintenance of its political system which essentially means the maintenance of the Kim circle's supremacy over the DPRK's every sectors.[9] Yet, the collapse thesis has been pervasive in many political circles. It was also quickly labeled by the academic community as a central problem. Richard Armitage warned in his 1999 report that a North Korean collapse was largely unsubstantiated, suggesting instead that the regime might well 'stagger on indefinitely.'[10] Similarly, theses were also put forward by Oh Kongdan, who noted that if there was a collapse in the DPRK, it was the collapse of the primary economy, not of the leadership. This would, however, pave the way for many years of muddling through.[11] Slowly, explaining non-collapse which is in essence about explaining how the DPRK regime has survived has replaced arguments calling for biding one's time until the DPRK would be no more. Explanations about non-collapse are numerous and luck is no variable in international relations, though accidents do happen. In the North Korean case, regime survival has been plausibly linked to authoritarian control and the Kim circle's ability to manipulate ideas, information, and agencies, and to some extent foreign countries.[12] The PRC's economic support has been noted as one of the regime's saving graces as well, though the nature of its support has gradually changed from economic and energy assistance to foreign investment and joint-ventures.[13] Despite years of clinging to the hope that the Agreed Framework or the Six-Party Talks could give birth to a denuclearized peninsula, experts are slowly accepting that the DPRK has developed nuclear weapons which partly act as a deterrent.[14]

So, the DPRK has not collapsed. Was it just lucky? Is it special? Does it possess specific abilities that allow it to defy most predictions about collapse and most of all, wishful thinking? With a number of isolated, dangerous political figureheads and leaders such as Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Hugo Chavez, Osama Bin Laden, and of course Kim Jong Il having all met their demise in the past decade, could it just be a question of time for the new kid on the block Kim Jong Un to take a bow? It is the basic argument in this book that the DPRK has been constrained by its own need to sustain its political legitimacy. This is all fairly standard in the realm of political analysis, yet this research seeks to add another layer, by suggesting that the sources of the DPRK survival, namely diversifying economic, security, and political patterns, all of course within the standard deviation afforded by Chuch'e principles, are more deeply rooted than apparently meets the eye. Thus, far from being exceptional and certainly not impossibility successful, North Korea crafts foreign policy decisions to support its national interest and its survival, and has done so all the way back to its creation. Similar arguments have sprouted all throughout the past decades, essentially since the creation of the DPRK and the ROK. They have been unable to crystalize into one focused picture, however, because of the primacy of realpolitik and realist principles during the Cold War, the concentration on the notion of collapse in the 1990s, and a near all-consuming effort to denuclearize North Korea. Here, a brief historical survey of facts and their relevance within the political field is helpful to frame the arguments developed in this book.

1950s–1970s: The Construction of a New System

Secessions and partition were far from being novel political concepts when the DPRK and the ROK were established in 1948 following the division of Korea in 1945. Cases of partition abound pre-World War II, with notable examples of Albania, Bulgaria, and Yemen seceding from the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the twentieth century, Mongolia detaching from China in 1921, or Ireland leaving the United Kingdom in 1922.[15] In the Korean case, however, the partition was not internally motivated but aimed to solve international relations balance problems. As such, for superpowers and war victors like the United States and Russia, change was needed and needed rapidly. Japanese colonial structures were removed from Korean soil, and a young guerilla fighter, Kim Il Sung, was appointed as leader in Pyongyang. Soviet backing provided a specific

brand of Marxist-Leninist state socialism, while Kim Il Sung's years as a card-carrying Chinese Communist Party member added a tinge of Chinese-style leadership to the mix.[16] The goal then was to achieve economic development, and the DPRK quickly succumbed to the concepts of Collectivization and the Soviet Plan mentality.[17] Given the Kingdom of Korea's rural past prior to the Japanese invasion,[18] and especially the large cleavage within the Korean society between the rich Yangban class and the poor peasants markup, many welcomed collectivization.[19] This also means that initial political decisions made in the DPRK were widely supported by North Korean people. Those not in favor, largely members of the landlord class, left for the South. Though the DPRK was initially classless, many have noted the ambiguous character of the North Korean developing elite, and Bradley Martin in his *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* has perhaps categorized it best. For him, the Kim family and its surrounding elite were a new form of 'Yangbanism.'[20] But back in the early 1950s, Kim Il Sung had not yet developed his cult of personality, and North Korea's everyday challenge was to fight for its relevance. The Korean War, which started in 1950 and ended with an Armistice in 1953, opened up many inquiry paths in the study of the Korean peninsula, ranging from domestic politics to international power-balance arguments. Bruce Cumings, for example, has argued that the Korean War was, at its heart, a civil conflict, presenting the story of nationalist Koreans who had refused to submit to the Japanese and who did not want to further submit to foreign powers in the establishment of a republic.[21] After the opening of Soviet archives though, this thesis has been weakened, since many documents show the degree of connection that existed between Mao Zedong, Joseph Stalin and Kim Il Sung prior to the initial June 1950 attack. But the DPRK was far from alone in this war. Support came from the PRC, though Charles Armstrong suggests that Beijing was more pragmatic and rational than sentimental in lending a hand, with the DPRK providing a potentially adequate buffer zone against American forces based in the ROK.[22] The international politics, beyond the USSR and PRC as actors, has also been much written about, especially because of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's decision to exclude the Korean peninsula from the United States' defense perimeter in 1950. Here, opinions are split. Ronald McGlothlen suggests domestic American politics led Acheson to give a speech that aimed to silence potential Republican opponents to Washington's China policy and the apparent 'loss' of China to the communist orbit.[23] Collins considers the Korean peninsula angle, and especially South Korea's strongman Rhee

Syngman's increasing boldness: in an attempt to cool Rhee off, Acheson's intention could have been to not offer de-facto military support to the ROK in the event Seoul attacked the North first.[24] There can almost be no divergence, especially with the benefit of the Soviet archives, on the relationship between the speech and the decision from the North to invade: there is little care in Soviet documents for Acheson's speech, but plenty of evidence about the Kim-Stalin-Mao collusion and decision to go to war.[25] The Korean War as a historical event is also helpful to the political scene far away from the peninsula. While Soviet and Chinese help following the war is well-documented, the DPRK also received assistance from partners further afield and especially in Europe.[26] The German Democratic Republic provided massive support to help with the reconstruction of a number of cities, most notably the town of Hamhung in the late 1950s. Other partners also included Poland as well as Hungary.[27]

The DPRK was, in the 1950s, part of a group of countries that had freed themselves from colonial pasts and that were attempting, often through socialist means, to carve themselves a piece of freedom and independence in between the two crushing weights of the Communist world and the Free World. The DPRK was a young country, with no past embarrassing legacy apart from its colonial youth. Ji You suggests that in these early days, its economy developed faster than that of Seoul,[28] thanks to a solid industrial base inherited from its pre-partition days and with the support from two socialist heavyweights. Others, like Kim Chong Won call the 1950s a period of transitional consolidation for the DPRK, Pyongyang slowly managing to rid itself of Soviet influence within its domestic political system.[29] Charles Armstrong notes how the DPRK became an interesting model for other small countries, especially those in the Third World, which were also grappling with economic development.[30] It is thus in the 1950s and the 1960s that North Korea developed a vast array of diplomatic relationships, of course within the PRC and the Soviet Union's own satellite network but also much further afield with nascent post-colonial powers. Diplomatic relationships with African countries, starting with Guinea in 1958, were thus nurtured[31] and dozens of other partnerships followed with countries all throughout the continent. Repaying the favor that had once been offered by Eastern European powers, Pyongyang provided economic assistance to other nations as well. Support was given to Gamal Abdel Nasser during the Suez Crisis of 1956.[32] Construction know-how and materials were provided to the Derg to rebuild Addis Ababa when Ethiopia came under Marxist influence.[33] During this period,

Kim Il Sung articulated an internationalization policy that was based on North Korea's duty to support countries in their struggle against imperialism and Pyongyang also lent political support to a number of freedom movements such as the Algerian National Liberation Front.[34] This has been noted by Gay Reed as a deliberate move to transform Chuch'e, a tool to strengthen Kim Il Sung's personality cult by focusing on self-help and self-study, into Kimilsungism, an ideology to be used by oppressed countries to state their national identity and right to sovereignty.[35] There are limits to Kimilsungism's soft power qualities though, as stated by Chung Chong Wook in Scalapino and Lee's edited volume on North Korea's place within a regional and global context. Chung suggests that Third World countries are more likely to be pursing economic changes and targets, or 'eco-political orientation' rather than purely ideological stances that would unite them with one another, but certainly not put food on the table.[36] Essentially, the DPRK would need to feed more than the Third World's soul, and would see its clout diminish if it was unable to provide economic solutions as well. This is a rather crucial point if one fast-forwards four decades and considers that the DPRK has now become the only relatively poor Third World country with a credible nuclear program.

1970s–1980s: Defiant Politics

Though the DPRK kept on engaging with the international realm, it is the latent conflict between the two Koreas that took most of the spotlight during the 1970s and the 1980s. Initial peace-making arrangements were conducted in 1953 when the armistice was signed between North Korea, China, and the United Nations Command. Yet the armistice also incorporated 21 countries who brought military and logistical support to the table. This meant that the two Koreas were largely unable to settle their own affairs, let alone talk about potential unity, without the scrutiny of many other powers, and essentially other competing interests. Eric Lee, in his discussion of the legal and economic impact of the armistice, highlights several distinct and important periods.[37] According to him, the 1950s and 1960s were periods of hostile politics between the two Koreas, when they each regarded the other as illegitimate. The 1970s brought attempt at reconciliation, especially with the 1972 Joint Communiqué but ultimately divisions could not be bridged and a new period of tension erupted thereafter, leading all the way to the 1990s. The presence of a large contingent of military, mostly American, around the De-Militarized

Zone could be seen as either a blessing or a curse. On the one hand, it meant that both South and North Korea had very little opportunities for armed clashes. On the other end, a state of tension can only last so long before some form of release is needed and thus found. North Korean frustration was often directed at the United States, and translated into a series of accidents and incidents. The 1968 seizing by North Korean forces of the US intelligence-gathering vessel USS Pueblo led to a yearlong negotiation process to secure the release of the 82 crews held captive in the North.[38] The crisis provided the DPRK with a sense of power and victory, and anyone visiting the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum in Pyongyang will undoubtedly be treated to a visit onboard the Pueblo, docked aside on the Pothong River. But the Pueblo seizure is also part of what has been labeled by Chung Jae Ho and Choi Myung Hae North Korea's 'adventuristic provocations.'[39] For them, Pyongyang was signaling widely for the PRC to take an active role against the United States. But the PRC, embroiled in its own cultural revolution problems, was starting to distance itself from the DPRK and the separation was consummated further with Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to China. Other incidents, such as the 1976 Hatchet clash, saw two American military personnel killed by North Korean soldiers while trimming trees in the Joint Security Area.[40] Detailed account of the incident which had always been blurry was recounted for the first time in 1980 by Wayne Kirkbride, who had been stationed in Panmunjom at the time.[41]

The 1980s were a decade of tension. Catching up with the South was of prime importance for the DPRK, given that Seoul was gaining a clear economic edge over Pyongyang. This development success was due to the combined effects of American support, and General Park Chung Hee's strict rule and sustained foreign direct investment into South Korea's economy. Thus, Seoul slowly started to emerge as the more modern of the two Koreas,[42] which only heightened Pyongyang's quest to undermine the South. In *Asian Survey*'s yearly North Korean report, Khil Young Whan talks about Pyongyang's intensive focus in 1983 on extending its diplomatic reach to curtail Seoul's own foreign policy.[43] This was far from being a peaceful pursuit, however: the early 1980s marked the ascent of Kim Jong Il as the likely mastermind of a number of terrorist acts targeting the ROK, but taking place well-beyond the Korean peninsula borders. For Khil, the Hermit Kingdom was now going global, under Kim Jong Il's growing leadership: the younger Kim had slowly become a central figure of the North Korean political scene in the past decade as an elected standing

member of the Politburo, and then becoming secretary for the Secretariat, and gaining membership to the Military Affairs Committee of the Central Committee.[44] Was Kim really at the heart of North Korea's aggressive engagement with the rest of the world, so early on already? For Glyn Ford and Kwon So Young, it's a resounding 'yes,' and they bring credible evidence that Kim Jong Il was heavily involved in both the 1983 Rangoon bombing aimed to assassinate South Korean president Chun Doo Hwan and the downing of the Korean Air flight 858 by two North Korean agents in 1987.[45] Long-time friends and allies were not necessarily willing to support or defend all of the DPRK's actions, however. For Kim Sung Chull, this disentanglement is clear and rational: the Soviet Union's own internal tensions, and China's concerns with its own development and implementation of Deng Xiaoping's vision for a modern state led to distance.[46] So the strategy aimed to weaken the ROK and strengthen its own circle of friends not only backfired, but it brought new problems to the DPRK, on top of suddenly feeling very lonely. Unwilling to let more provocations go by, the United States drew the line, and added the DPRK to its unofficial hit list as a state sponsor of terrorism under the 1979 Export Administration Act. North Korea was also listed as a pursuant to Section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act.[47] Were sanctions the only worthwhile answer, though? More recent literatures have considered sanctions, especially in light of United Nations' involvement in the stick game. As a general consensus though, sanctions do not seem to have much say in how the DPRK sways even though the sanction regime is much older than usually thought. Indeed, the DPRK did not come under heavy sanctioning only in 2006, after its first nuclear test. Likewise, the Korean Airlines flight KAL 858 bombing, though it was a turning point in the DPRK's sanction history, was not the beginning or the sanction story either. North Korea was first sanctioned on 28 June 1950 following its attack on the South with the United States calling upon its Export Control Act of 1949 to establish a total embargo on exports to the North.[48]

1990s: Transition and Famine

The end of the Cold War hardly spared the DPRK. While it was not a direct Soviet satellite, changes in its alliance with Moscow meant the end to most preferential treatment status and economic assistance. It also meant that Pyongyang needed hard currency to purchase goods from its former Soviet partners, a reality that forced North Korea to develop strategies to earn

real Wons.[49] While it often is difficult to establish causality when looking at the DPRK, notable economic changes occurred within the country shortly after the end of the Cold War. For Yoon Dae Kyu, some of these changes found their origin in fundamental legal revisions the DPRK made in 1992.[50] For one, the North Korean constitution was altered to specifically encourage joint-ventures and cooperation with foreign enterprises. More importantly, references to Marxism were removed, and the Korean stance over South Korea mellowed as well, opening the way for potential economic exchanges with Seoul. While these strategic changes could be crystallized because of the end of the Cold War, they were not suddenly born out of thin Soviet air. For Alexander Zhebin, the DPRK–Russia partnership, as uneasy at it was at times, already involved a range of Korean actors at the governmental level, but many other actors in technical and training fields on the Russian and especially Eastern European socialist countries side: Pyongyang was thus far from being a novice at international interactions.[51]

But while the world political chessboard was being reshuffled, the DPRK was dealing with more prosaic concerns. Energy, and its lack thereof, was becoming a rather large thorn in North Korea's side. The end of the USSR meant that it had lost a large part of its crude oil supply, as well as a destination market for its own manufactured goods.[52] Pyongyang was thus in dire need of a renewed energy strategy, and one that would go beyond just constructing more and more of the same power stations. The hunt for new technology was real and while coal gasification was under North Korean radar, nuclear energy was seen as a privileged option because of the potential of dual use.[53] Much of the 1990s' DPRK's relationship with energy was directed by the 21 October 1994 Agreed Framework, an agreement negotiated between former American President Jimmy Carter and a transitioning North Korea following Kim Il Sung's death on 8 July 1994. The Agreed Framework was set under the principles of reciprocity and confidence-building. Under the agreement, North Korea would gradually eliminate its conventional nuclear energy reactors and receive compensatory oil shipments. Two new light-water reactors would also be built by an international consortium.[54] A thorough monitoring process regulated by the International Atomic Energy Agency would check North Korea's compliance. Even though International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors were allowed to visit North Korea's main nuclear complex in November 1994,[55] things very quickly went downhill: for better or for worse, a

series of events, some calculated and some just accidental, led to the slow disintegration of the Agreed Framework process. Crisis diplomacy was used to parlay through the shooting on 17 December 1994 of an American helicopter that had allegedly strayed beyond the North Korean border.[56] But confidence-building started to erode throughout 1995 and evidence of North Korea's commitment to developing missile technology programs sent a very clear message to the world that Pyongyang would conduct foreign policy on its own terms.[57]

The Agreed Framework is central to the study of decision-making and cooperation between Pyongyang and the rest of the world and has provided plenty of data for researchers to sink their teeth in. By 1999, Richard Armitage was challenging the assumption that the Agreed Framework would induce North Korea to open up to the world, and conveniently land softly to reunite with the South.[58] A number of heavyweight analysts quickly followed with similar assessments. Scott Snyder's 2000 book on North Korea's survival suggested that 'collapsist' theories had swayed decision-making and policy development, especially within the Agreed Framework, with parties clinging to the ideas that the DPRK would collapse and that the two light-water reactors would not be built anyway.[59] Debates surrounding the Agreed Framework constitute a large part of the literature on how to negotiate with North Korea. This is essentially a debate about engagement, whether to do it or not, and if so, what type can be appropriate and eventually useful. So, Victor Cha and David Kang talked about Hawk versus Dove.[60] Leon Sigal considered the merits of choosing cooperative security or coercive diplomacy.[61] Joel Wit et al. looked at the juxtaposition of diplomatic and bureaucratic processes in the first North Korean nuclear crisis.[62]

Even though there were plenty of interaction opportunities, United States, the ROK, and the DPRK danced around one another all throughout the late 1990s in an uncoordinated choreography going one step forward and two in every other direction. Small crises and episodes of intense negotiations followed one another. From the 20 lives lost when a North Korea submarine ended up off the cost of South Korea in 1996 to Pyongyang's missile test in October that same year,[63] diplomacy ran its course, leading to fresh American sanctions in the summer of 1997.[64] In late 1998, the United States accused North Korea of developing a secret underground plant on the Kumchang Ri site and requested for IAEA inspectors to check for evidence and ensure compliance as part of the 1994 Agreed Framework.[65] It took six months for North Korea to go

from initially refusing inspections to finally accepting the IAEA. There was mixed enthusiasm in the North Korean watch community: Marcus Noland noted that on the one hand, North Korea had complied, but on the other hand the inspections had been undertaken so late that evidence of construction and nuclear activities could have been removed long before the first inspectors put foot on the site.[66] Perhaps a new strategy was needed? United States Defense Secretary William Perry's report on the DPRK called for further engagement instead of alienation.[67]

Though the end of the Cold War had an undeniable effect on its economy, Pyongyang was also slowly getting caught up by planning decisions made decades before. Demographic gaps in the male population meant an eventual lack of farming hands.[68] This, compounded by floods and drought, led to a large-scale famine that claimed millions of lives, and pushed an increasing number of North Koreans to seek solace outside of the Korean borders by defecting to China and eventually South Korea.[69] The World Food Program provided aid and relief to North Korea as early as 1995,[70] and a large amount of aid also came from the European Commission. Over the next eight years, more than 400 million euros of aid, mostly food and agricultural products, would be sent,[71] along with clothes, medicines, and sanitation devices.[72] These interactions also provided fresh data, and a large amount of the literature has focused on the NGO experience in the DPRK and contributed to the growth of North Korean studies. But this has been an arduous road as well: Gordon Flakes and Scott Snyder's *Paved with Good Intentions* book has showed the difficulty for organizations to 'enter' the DPRK aid market. More importantly, it has strengthened the thesis that wishful thinking regarding how providing aid and help can soften the core of North Korean behavior was largely futile by that point.[73]

2000s: Nuclear Weapons Crisis and Bargaining

The election of long-time political veteran Kim Dae Jung as South Korean president on 19 December 1997 ignited a timid strand of reconciliation.[74] His Sunshine Policy was clearly outlined in his inaugural speech[75] and brought about many changes, including a different strategic outlook between the two Koreas. For Roland Bleiker, this was positive: decoupling politics from economics allowed for a shift away from coercion, and more emphasis on dialogue and Korean agency.[76] In 2000, the world saw on television the tearful reunion of long-lost family members for the first

time in many decades, and the Kim Dae Jung–Kim Jong Il June meeting opened up ways to think about reconciliation, and perhaps ultimately reunification.[77] For Samuel Kim, the peripheral role Washington had in the Sunshine Policy was an important factor in its tentative success: for once, United States was no longer an omnipresent 'impeder' in Korean relations.[78] This was refreshing.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath short-circuited, in many aspects, prospects for Korean engagement and dialogue. North Korea immediately denounced the attacks on the Korean Central News Agency website.[79] Yet President George W. Bush's Axis of Evil speech given during the State of the Union Address on 29 January 2002 eradicated much of the fragile reconciliation and earlier trust-building measures that had been put in place during the latter part of the Clinton Administration. Suddenly, preemption was the talk of the town. With the United States' prime focus on the Middle East and the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, North Korea adopted a more defensive military posture. How to engage North Korean in denuclearization via the Six-Party Talks became a perilous exercise involving crafty mediation and weighted incentives. Over the next few years, nuclear diplomacy was largely outsourced from Washington to Beijing.

Just like the Agreed Framework a decade before, the Six-Party Talks have provided new insights on how North Korea negotiates, but very little success in achieving denuclearization. What is has done, though, is to launch a new conversation about nuclear norms and nuclear deterrence. Some have dismissed the DPRK's deterrent card though, and Victor Cha has argued that North Korea's conventional missile capabilities were threatening-enough to stop any potential American preemptive strike[80]: in essence, a nuclear deterrent might not even be needed. Nothing seemed very stable though. There was drama on the peninsula with deadly clashes between the South Korean and the North Korean navies on 29 June 2002,[81] but also drama on the international stage when North Korea withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty on 10 January[82] The reactivation of the Yongbyon nuclear reactor[83] contributed to the development of what has often been called a 'Korean Nuclear Crisis.'[84] In the midst of instabilities, attempts were made to cool heads, and the 19 September 2005 agreement between North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States paved the way once again for Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear weapons program.[85] Yet, only a day after the signature, parties argued over when the international community

was to provide North Korea with light-water reactors and the deal was called off.[86] The coup de grace finally came on 9 October 2006, when North Korea tested its first nuclear.[87] A second test followed on 25 May 2009, confirming the North's original intent.[88] With the sinking of the South Korean vessel Cheonan in the Spring of 2010,[89] and the later shelling of Yeonpyeong islands in the Fall,[90] there seemed to be little hope for peace to return on the peninsula. Kwak Tae Hwan argued for the necessity of peace regime building[91] while Park Sun clung to the idea that a roadmap for denuclearization was possible.[92] It is my view, equally expressed in previous works as well as in this book, that any new conversation with the DPRK needs to acknowledge the reality of its nuclear capabilities.[93] This will allow for a new conversation to start, one in which Pyongyang's strategic fears are taken into considerations, but one which, by recognizing North Korea's nuclear statute, also asks Pyongyang to be responsible about being a nuclear power: in the world we live in, non-first use is the cornerstone of nuclear deterrence, and should be respected.

2010s: Kim Jong Un's North Korea

Late 2011, Kim Jong Il, North Korea's Dear Leader, passed away. With Kim Jong Il noticeably absent from any new footage from 2008 on,[94] there had already been many interrogations and questions regarding his health and, invariably, North Korea's future. Could the regime pull yet again another hereditary succession? This was hardly discussion and Jo Yung Hwan had, since the mid-1980s called attention to the fact that succession was a crucial matter to DPRK's survival. After all, Kim Il Sung had started to talk about the succession issue himself at the Fifth Party Congress in 1970.[95] For many years, it was assumed that the North Korean population would resist a potential monarchical succession; it was also more likely that upon the leader's death, inner-elite competition would shake up the system and eventually lead to its destruction.[96] But this was wishful thinking again as in reality, both the 1994 and the 2011 power transitions were prepared ahead of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il's deaths. The one glaring difference might be, according to Park Yong So, that Kim Jong Un had considerably less time than his own father to be groomed into his future role.[97] But this was counterbalanced by retrofitting into the DPRK's history and traditions a narrative that would make Kim Jong Un the de-factor successor. At the same time, the North Korean political chessboard was swiftly manipulated to elevate the younger Kim to prime

positions within most important agencies. With no other individual in a position to checkmate him, the DPRK could perhaps contemplate a stable political future.[98] A few years on, the young Kim has apparently managed to quench internal instabilities that had arisen from his uncle Jang Sung Taek's purge in December 2013 and his own disappearance from the media in September 2014 for what is now known was ankle problems.[99] Not only has Kim Jong Un managed to stay in power, he has also followed on his predecessors' footsteps by at times engaging and at other times alienating the international community. Tentative steps were made in February 2012 toward the resumption of the defunct Six-Party Talks, and a few meetings between Washington and Pyongyang appeared promising.[100] Yet, since Kim Jong Un's accession to power, North Korea has launched several satellites and tested nuclear weapons in 2013 and 2016, violating United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874.

North Korea's Foreign Relations: New Trajectories

In an article published in *Asian Survey* in 2016, Kim Bomi called North Korea a besieged consciousness, inherited from its inability to decide its own fate: it was torn between foreign powers, and later hijacked by the Kim family.[101] This besieged consciousness is itself based on the concept of siege mentality: under external pressures, a state would need to swiftly decide who is a friend and who is an enemy. This can also provide an elite a true purpose to establish their own legitimacy. The elite would then build a popular narrative: they would be the only one who could lead the country toward victory, and would need the undying support of the population to do so. This is, in essence, a form of securitization, which has been described by Ole Waever's as the mechanics by which a political group seeks to legitimize extraordinary means in order to take on something it has labeled as a threat.[102] Through its inner-political mobilization, the DPRK has, for better or worse, managed to transform from a fragile neocolonial country with little economic clout to a nuclear weapons state. This transformation is well-documented in the literature despite recurrent claims in popular media that little information about the country is available. Because research surrounding the DPRK and its behavior fall under a wide variety of themes, a succinct categorization is given in this introduction, though ample engagement with the literature will follow in subsequent chapters. In essence, scholarship has focused on North Korean leading figures and inner-political workings,[103] North Korea's socialist

policies and its economic development,[104] and propaganda and political instruments of control.[105] Historical and geopolitical concerns have been analyzed via the prism of politics of divisions and reconciliation,[106] and how to manage the past, war, and foreign military influences.[107] In the past two decades, scholars have especially focused on North Korea's nuclear weapons development and strategic interactions,[108] its engagement and the potential fostering of bilateral and multilateral cooperation,[109] human rights and human condition,[110] and more recently new foreign relations and partnerships.[111]

Is there a need, then, to reevaluate the DPRK? Social science is a perpetual quest to understand the world. If one subscribes to this view, then there is little doubt that investigating North Korea is never a waste of time. We know much more now, thanks to newly declassified Cold War documents, North Korea's own speeches and documents, refugee testimonies, or via travels and engagement on the ground with the DPRK. Yet, many questions remain, from the changing role and impact the PRC has on the peninsula to the direction taken by the Kim Jong Un regime, or from the slow realization that sanctions appear ineffective in curbing the DPRK's nuclear program, to the ethical dilemma of whether to isolate the DPRK or generate opportunities through development and investment. As stated earlier, this book investigates how the DPRK has attempted to survive by developing strategies to combat apparent political and economic isolation. Some of these strategies are, however, more deeply rooted than meets the eye. In order to avoid repeating what we already know about the DPRK, two approaches will be combined here: Pyongyang's efforts to survive will be looked at via two lenses: the small state literature, and considering the DPRK's use of rational decision-making. While rationality has been used before to consider the DPRK, the use of small state theory is novel, yet can only function if the DPRK fits the small state parameter. So, does it? If one goes back to the small state literatures' founding and seminal pieces during the 1960s and the 1970s where small meant quantitatively small, David Vital suggests a small state would have a population of about 10–15 million inhabitants.[112] Maurice East added to Vital's work with the idea that small states were also characterized by limited resources and a small economy.[113] The World Bank estimated the DPRK's population at just over 10 million in 1960. With figures only reaching about 25 million 50 years later, the DPRK surely fit the literature's criteria during the Cold War, if not now as well. A quick look at further quantitative data confirms the DPRK's place near a number of minima: its GDP per capita is one

of the lowest in the world, and has developed with a trade deficit and nearly negative growth rate for many years.[114] The DPRK also operates in a seemingly restricted political and economic environment because of sanctions, diplomatic embargos, and countries turning their back in light of human rights and political reasons.

It is thus far from incongruous to consider the DPRK as a small state and in fact, the small states literature is particularly helpful to the Korean case. Seminal works such as Robert Keohane's 1969 Lilliputian article have questioned the role and impact that small states can have in the system, which is a burning question today in light of North Korea's nuclear weapons development.[115] Hans Mouritzen tells us that for small states, such a role is often one of a state that has little option but is dependent on the great power du jour, and this resonate with the DPRK's fight against the American hegemony in Asia.[116] For Alyson Bailes and Baldur Thorhallsson, small states are also potentially helpless and thus seek alliance shelter, a protection that allows them to survive but one that always has a political cost: within the North Korean context, it is easy to see its relationship with the PRC and the USSR as an attempt, though sometimes reluctant, to gain shelter.[117] But it is Olav Knudsen's work that provides a new way to look at the DPRK: he suggests that the small state experience goes through a number of stages.[118] These range from an initial attempt at forming a collective identity that can then morph into a formal state. Then, this new state strives to achieve security and survival. At a later point, it might be encountering decline or absorption into a more powerful orbit such as another state or an economic arrangement such as the European Union. In other cases, states cease to exist. Biafra, South Vietnam, and the German Democratic Republic come to mind.

In order to evaluate the DPRK's path to engagement, this book is organized along Knudsen's stages. With Chap. 1 questioning the need to reevaluate North Korea, Chap. 2 'Friends and Foes: An Orthodox Story' and Chap. 3 'Nothing but Words? Rhetoric and Beyond' address state creation and behavior. Chapter 2 introduces the dyadic nature of the DPRK's foreign relations, organizing state-to-state partnerships on a spectrum ranging from antagonism to closeness. Chapter 3 builds on this historical approach and considers the DPRK's involvement in post-Cold War diplomacy, especially how past relationships have constrained engagement.

Knudsen's concept of the survival of the state is central to Chap. 4 'Securing Freedom' and the relationships between nuclear weapons, missile programs, and development, while Chap. 5 'Navigating Interdependence'

considers the DPRK's engagement with economic forces, from its own export/import efforts to the reality of developing within a web of sanctions.

The last two chapters question the DPRK's resilience and what might lay beyond. Chapter 6 'The DPRK and the Politics of Mainstreaming' traces the development of a sustained parallel and alternative economic track that places Pyongyang at the heart of a renewed anti-hegemonic movement. It argues that the DPRK has yet to collapse but is far from joining a coordinated economic and political sub-unit. Instead, it is increasingly becoming part of the current financial market by slowly espousing mainstream behaviors. Lastly, Chap. 7 'Conclusion: Fostering Cooperation in a Multipolar World' considers the DPRK's future and especially what alternatives exist not only for Pyongyang's survival, but for its sustained development.

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CHAPTER 2

Friends and Foes: An Orthodox Story

Korea's history is long, spanning millennia since Dangun founded Gojoseon, the first ever Korean kingdom, in what is now North Korea. But when so many countries experienced the tumultuous rise and fall of empires, sometimes because of inner conflicts, or sometimes because of external aggression, Korean dynasties are peculiar because there have been very few of them, and they have lasted a long time. For Gari Ledyard, this is explained by China and its moderating influence in the region.[1] But Korea's uniqueness in self-preservation has also more recently been attributed to Korea's apparent lack of importance, a misnomer given today's Korean conundrum. So, James Palais suggests a repeated pattern, in which invaders' main target in the Far East was only China[2]: centuries after centuries saw Khitans, Mongols, and Manchus side-stepping Korea and letting it exist in its tributary state to the Chinese empire, never considering it worthwhile to conquer and conquest. What this means is that Korea, and by default, North Korea's own experience in dealing with diplomacy and handling foreign influence, is not as historically extensive and therefore constrained as many other countries in the region. The Choson Dynasty fell in 1910 to Japanese hands but had been installed in 1392.[3] Korea was no stranger to conflict though: it had its slew of local invaders coming from Japan, China, and Manchuria routinely threatening its borders. A string of encounters with foreigners, Dutch sailors seeking new territories to conquer in the sixteenth century and Catholic missionaries seeking new souls to convert later in the eighteenth century, confused Choson.[4] Torn between opening and a desire to preserve its security, Korea chose

V. Grzelczyk, *North Korea's New Diplomacy*,
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seclusion: for many years, missionaries were banned, borders were sealed, and a capital punishment was ordered for those fraternizing with foreigners. That is when Korea became 'Hermit Kingdom.'[5]

The Hermit Kingdom was pried open when French and American naval expeditions reached its shores in 1866 and 1871. On the outside, Korea showed hospitality and kept face, helping shipwrecked sailors return West. On the inside, Choson was suffering a crisis of faith, torn between orthodox and heterodox forces. Korea was faced with a dilemma that had also plagued Japan and China: to open or not to open. For Don Oberdorfer, Choson had to decide how to balance traditions with foreign ideas and new technology, and how to assess the power of Westernization, enlightenment, and opening.[6] In a curious karmic turn, this is what today's DPRK also has to contend with. So while nineteenth-century Korea was a divisive society ruled by an elite class wanting to keep its supremacy in light of foreign unknowns, twenty-first-century DPRK is concerned with elite supremacy and preserving its system from foreign influence. The difference is that, to reprise Donald Rumsfeld's piquant phrasing, Pyongyang has the benefit of now knowing these unknowns: for the DPRK, Choson's history does not draw a favorable picture of changes coming out of foreign forces.

Because of lack of experience, weakness, misunderstanding, or just bad luck, Korea was confronted with foreign modernity and power, and had little understanding for what this all meant. So if Korea was a Hermit Kingdom, Japan was, according to British Diplomat Earnest Satow's diary, a sleeping beauty about to be risen by vigorous foreign powers.[7] This rude awakening, when Commodore Perry came sailing to Edo in 1853, ignited the first sparks that would lead Japan to its ambitious modernization. In the late nineteenth century, Japan exerted its naval power over Korea. Gunboat diplomacy was instrumental in helping Japan pry open a number of Korean ports to Japanese trades and interest after subjecting Korea to the Treaty of Ganghwa in 1876.[8] This would be the first of a number of treaties weakening Korea, ultimately bringing it down to its knees. Korea's sometimes naive understanding of the foreign world departs from that of China and Japan during the same period because it never really had the time to make a conscious choice between heterodox and orthodox forces. By the end of the nineteenth century, both China and Japan had thoroughly exchanged with the West, sending emissaries, scholars, and students abroad. Korea had been reluctant to engage and had very little understanding of what international law meant. For Eric

Lee, the most modern of changes, albeit a brutal one, is the Chemulpo Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, signed in 1882 with the United States.[9] After the humiliation suffered with Ganghwa, Emperor Gojong ordered for foreign law textbooks to be imported into Korea, in a bid to make sure treaties signed in the future would not be as asymmetrical and unequal. The Chemulpo Treaty was in itself a novelty, the first time Korea had engaged with Western powers. The treaty also seemed innocent enough, proclaiming the 'everlasting amity and friendship' between Korea and the United States of America.[10] Though collective security as we know it today mainly takes the shape of the United Nations where an attack on one is an attack on all, a number of clauses in the Chemulpo Treaty suggested similar ties: good offices were to be exerted in case of a third power unjustly or oppressively dealing with either party. Korea, with its limited textbook knowledge of international laws and its articulations, saw the clause as a guarantee of protection, which was subsequently annihilated when the United States signed with Japan the Taft-Katsura Memorandum in 1905. The memorandum allowed the establishment of Japanese suzerainty over Korea while the United States would be assured that Japan would refrain from taking over the Philippines. To this date, whether the United States consciously betrayed Korea or not is still a hotly debated issue among historians. For some, there is no debate: Kirk Larsen and Joseph Seeley have clearly showed how both Koreas use textbooks, comic books, and editorial boards to maintain the narrative of a great American deception.[11] For obvious reasons, this narrative is especially sustained in the DPRK nowadays. But was this true deception, or a lack of knowledge and agency in an international system that was becoming increasingly dangerous? For Choi Woonsang, Korea was in an impasse, unable to develop any meaningful relationships or partnerships with other states once conflicts seized Northeast Asia and Japan surged as a hegemon.[12] Indeed, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 gave Japan Formosa, the Liaotung Peninsula, and a sphere of influence over Korea. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 furthered Japan's reach, gaining part of the Sakhalin Islands and further influence over Manchuria. Four more decades of Japanese influence and colonization would leave Korea, and therefore the DPRK, with a scant amount of understanding and practice of diplomacy when freedom came in 1945.

If the Kingdom of Korea had difficulties engaging with the international world, the establishment of separate states thrusted Seoul and Pyongyang into a contentious political order. The Republic of Korea was established

on 15 August 1948 and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 8 September 1948, and initial state creation was far from an all-Korean affair. Many other powers invited themselves at the table, if not set the table themselves. The result was dichotomy, a concept that has pervaded many aspects of the Koreas' development. Of course, dichotomy is easily understood over the peninsula when thinking about political ideology. With the United States' involvement in South Korea, and the USSR's support of North Korea, relationships for both Seoul and Pyongyang were developed within a Cold War context. Some would sit at one side of the table while others would be on the other side, and some would stand and watch from afar. This included the People's Republic of China as part of a Communist brotherhood and later on as a political balancer between Washington and Moscow. Japan, Taiwan, and Cuba, as neighbors and proxies, also played an important role. For the next decades, the international relations stage was set up for North Korea in a relatively orthodox fashion. On the one hand, antagonist relations were formed with the United States and Japan. Exchanges and attempts at conciliation have also peppered this tensed history. On the other hand, closeness was developed by necessity, more than affinity, with the Soviet Union and its satellites, as well as with the PRC (Table 2.1).

Sitting on the same side at the table does not mean agreeing about everything, however. Though closeness has been an apparent and enduring feature in the Communist world, differences existed. The DPRK developed what Charles Armstrong calls 'radical nationalism,' a blend of

Table 2.1 DPRK rhetoric—antagonism/closeness

Country	*Diplomatic relations original date*
1. Antagonism	
Japan	
Korea (Republic of)	
United States	
2. Closeness	
Russia	1948-10-12
China	1949-10-06
Cuba	1960-08-20

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by The National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

socialism and communism that could not, however, erase divergent interpretations on Marxism or minimize disagreements over the growth of Kim Il Sung's cult of personality.[13] South Korea's place within North Korea's relationship spectrum is more contested: while there is belligerence against Seoul because of its relationship with Washington, North Korea and South Korea have constructed their own identity brick by brick, with one another yet, against one another as well. Cultural identity is another dichotomy, and according to Yim Haksoon, the Koreas have developed strands of cultural nationalism that inform many areas within their separate Korean societies.[14] In the face of division and contested identity space, it is not surprising that both Koreas have actively engaged in state-building. Knudsen's initial stages, collective identity formation and the creation of a legal and recognized state, have thus happened in tandem on the peninsula. Though two separate states were created in 1948 on dichotomous political premises, the shared past and history prior to the division has remained in their collective consciousness, albeit colored by the need to survive in a politically charged world. Revisiting North Korea's early years is essential to understand the political landscape that surrounded the newly created DPRK, and what choices Pyongyang could, or could not, make.

Antagonism: A Clash of Ideology and Power

If Choson had lost agency during Japanese colonialism, it also had little say in how the country was partitioned. To revisit history here, a few tools are needed. Park Han, in his work on North Korea's perceptions of itself and others, has suggested through phenomenology that objective and subjective conditions are useful to explain Pyongyang's foreign policy behavior.[15] For Park, objective conditions are largely historical and, in the case of Korea, center around its colonial past, its experience as a divided nation, as well as Cold War politics. We could add a few others, such as weather, leaders' ill health, technological developments and deaths. Every country, even the DPRK, is a product of their own domestic and foreign policy decisions, and the subjective conditions that result from this environment are essential to consider. By 1950, clashing ideologies between the two superpowers had taken dramatic proportions, and the Cold War theater was already in place. The United States' own security objectives were stated in the now famous NSC60, the report to the National Security Council about the United States' objectives and processes on National Security. The aims were simple and fundamental, with Washington striving

to 'establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.' On the other side of the political chess sat Russia, a former ally turned enemy, or at least in these early times, the main contender for power and ideology. The Kremlin's fundamental design, seen through Washington's eyes, was 'to retain and solidify their absolute power, first in the Soviet Union and second in the areas now under their control.'[16] Europe was the target, and therefore, the main concern. The United States decided to apply a good dose of Marshall Plan in the hope of thwarting Communist efforts. Northeast Asia was worrisome too, with the Chinese civil war and the subsequent 'loss' of China to Communism also on America's radar. A comprehensive solution to manage the region was needed, and it was needed fast. The answer was the hub and spokes model as a way for Washington to manage the region, but for Victor Cha, especially as a means to avoid global entanglement.[17] Thus, monitoring and managing bilateral relations tightly was the new Asian plat du jour. It was important for Washington to also support the ROK into becoming an established and possibly democratic state, and President Rhee Syngman received American help, though Washington was also on guard, cautious about Rhee's apparent desire to push for taking over the North at any cost.[18] Japan was a delicate topic as well, given the United States' military occupation and its initial bid to 'democratize and demilitarize.' But with Communism looming North and West, favoring Japanese left-wing politicians in order to quench a potential right-wing revival was starting to look problematic. A controlled Japanese remilitarization suddenly seemed a better option for the American interests in the region.[19] When Secretary of State Dean Acheson's January 1950 speech excluded the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China from its explicit defense perimeter, instability took over in the region.[20] Washington did not abandon Northeast Asia though, but priority lay with Japan, the San Francisco Peace Treaty signed in 1951 both codifying and solidifying its relationship.[21] The absence of a defense treaty that could protect Seoul or Taiwan was glaring, however. It would take more than absence to make the heart grow fonder though. In the aftermath of the Korean War which had greatly clarified the PRC's position and its willingness to join in defending the region, the United States eventually signed a defense treaty with the Republic of Korea in October 1953 and a security treaty with the Republic of China in December 1954.[22] What did this all mean for the DPRK? As a newly established state, defining its own identity while overcoming the

trauma of Japanese colonialism, there was little time to celebrate freedom, especially given the United States' military presence, and apparent alliance with Japan and its support to the ROK. Antagonism, already sustained by historical uneasiness, was bound to arise.

Japan

North Korea's contentious relationship with Japan was fueled by centuries of history that has, for many other neighbors, often been peppered by mistrust and conflict. Japanese colonialism inflamed those embers before American support to Japan post-1945 roused the hatred once more. Though geopolitical concerns have fed the feud, the North Korea–Japan relationship has also centered on identity and people, articulated for many years around the question of Korean citizens living in Japan. The San Francisco Treaty officially freed Japan from Allied occupation. As an incidental, Tokyo had to renounce the territorial claims it had once had over the Korean peninsula. This meant that Zainichi, Japanese citizens of Korean origin who had been displaced during colonial times, also lost their Japanese citizenship. A repatriation process started with the Calcutta Accords signed in August 1959 by the North Korean and the Japanese Red Cross societies.[23] By 1960, close to 6000 Korean nationals had been repatriated to North Korea, which was a promising start.[24] Many Zainichi Koreans strongly desired to return to their homeland, as they had often faced ethnic discrimination and unfair access to education in Japan. Diplomatic archives reported that upon their arrival in North Korea, repatriates could enroll at university, receive government support, and access housing and goods: they appeared, overall, to be better treated than the local Korean population.[25] The Calcutta Accords also represent an important step for the DPRK, as it was one of the first decisions and negotiations it took part in independently. But there was an economic element to the repatriation, and one that was crucial to the DPRK: overseas Korean citizens often brought back with them superior technical knowledge and language skills acquired during their time in Japan. They could make a substantial contribution to the North Korean industrial development, and returning as many as possible was a rational decision for Pyongyang, at a time it needed know-how and intellectual capacity. Beyond these objective concerns, subjective narratives are also important, especially in the dichotomous relationship Pyongyang maintained with Seoul. Because the ROK had no official relationship with Japan, Zainichi regardless of which

side of 38th parallel they had originally come from, were all sent, for lack of a legal channel, back to the North. Once Japan signing the Treaty on Basic Relations with South Korea in 1965, things changed, though.[26] For Tokyo, Seoul became the only legitimate Korean government, and the Calcutta Accords were unilaterally voided by Japan in 1967. Zainichi repatriation to North Korea came to a halt.[27] The 1965 Treaty fueled the DPRK's attempts to offset Japan's economic and political growth within the region.[28] The relationship, if there had been any, was irreparably damaged and has yet to change into anything more meaningful. Limited interaction and cooperation have taken place between North Korea and Japan through the years, with agreements on fishing zones for Japanese boats or conversations regarding nuclear proliferation via the Six-Party Talks. Trade is also quite extensive. But no formal recognition was ever signed between Pyongyang and Tokyo.[29]

The United States

Though the first encounters between Koreans and Americans date back much earlier than the twentieth century, the Pyongyang–Washington antagonistic relationship has rested on a central pillar: American military presence on the Korean peninsula. For the DPRK, this presence is at the origin of the Koreas' partition and their current relations, and a constant source of instability. In a speech given in February 1960 to honor the Korean People's Army, the DPRK Chief of General Staff Kim Chang Bong suggested that 'if aggressive force of the American imperialists were withdrawn from South Korea, like the Chinese volunteers, and the occupation of South Korea were ended, our motherland would already be united by peaceful means and the people of South Korea together with the people of the northern part of the republic could live a happy life filled with hope.'[30] North Korean rhetoric on that matter has changed little over time, and a daily KCNA read will yield a similar message five decades later. It would be unrealistic to claim that the withdrawal of American troops would lead to Korean peninsula's happily ever after, filled with unity, peace, and prosperity. Yet, at the very core of the DPRK–US antagonism is the simple concept of the security dilemma.

Though John Herz' security dilemma was born within the Cold War's constructs, it is not restricted to great power relations.[31] Herz' notion of spiraling spun by self-attempt to tend to one's security needs fits a young DPRK well. With American forces supporting and re-arming Japan,

a defense treaty signed with the ROC and the United States' military engagement in the ROK, it is easy to understand Pyongyang's antagonism toward anything American. Reports that nuclear weapons could be placed by the United States in the South only spun the wheel faster.[32] The USS Pueblo incident in 1968 and the Panmunjom 1976 Axe Murder made it grow much taller. During times of crisis, Pyongyang did not retreat into isolation, though. On the one hand, Pyongyang sought to rally the Socialist world together by disseminating information directly to a number of foreign ambassadors, and often succeeding in gaining support.[33] On the other hand, Pyongyang kept a dialogue with Washington, even though communication lines were far from direct. During the Pueblo crisis, General Pak Jung Gunk and US Rear-Admiral Smith exchanged messages through the Swiss Neutral Nations Commission contingent[34] before direct negotiation took place in Panmunjom on 24 January 1968.[35] The spiral slowed down a bit when in 10 more months, 82 crew members were released after the United States issued both a written admission that the USS *Pueblo* was indeed spying and an apology for the disruption.[36] The Panmunjom Axe Murder had a far more long-lasting effect, well beyond the murder site being a 'popular' spot for tourist groups on bother sides of the border. By 1976, the United States had started playing Ping Pong with the Chinese and President Nixon had both visited the Great Wall and hosted Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev at the White House while deep ideological differences had started to appear in the PRC–USSR–DPRK Communist alliance. The political landscape was slowly shifting, and it was increasingly more difficult for the DPRK to retain an exclusive relationship with both the DPRK and the USSR, especially when the United States was engaged in consultation with both of them, hoping they would send a warning message to Pyongyang that any further act of aggression would result in serious consequences.[37] Washington even turned to Beijing for help on how find appropriate ways to respond to North Korean provocations.[38] With the United States notifying the incident to the Security Council on 20 August 1976 and both the DPRK and the ROK declaring the state of emergency, it seemed very likely that the crisis would spiral out of control.[39] De-escalation came from a very isolated North Korea, and it was Kim Il Sung's turn to express its 'regret' that American soldiers had died during the tree trimming incident.[40] Though a crisis had been averted, Pyongyang was cognizant that its relationship with most of its allies was slowly eroding. This refueled its anti-American rhetoric. A few days after the incident, it rallied a number of heads of diplomatic missions

from Socialist countries and incriminated the United States by calling an international campaign to condemn Washington's imperialist status on the Korean peninsula.[41] The 1968 and 1976 crises are important because they erode Kenneth Waltz' bipolar stability argument.[42] The early 1950s and 1960s could still be read as a traditional Cold War setting, with one superpower pitted against the other. But the world had started to shift by the 1970s. What this also means is that considering the DPRK through the looking glass of the Cold War, even up to a few years ago, provides a simple, black-and-white snapshot of the DPRK which is only a sketch. It is necessary to add color and texture to this picture in order to reveal more encompassing and ultimately more useful narratives.

One of these narratives is about achieving peace on the Korean peninsula, regardless of ideologies and beliefs, away from containment, security dilemma, and spheres of influence. Essentially, this is about finding the key to transcend what has become an intractable conflict. Much has been written on the topic but a fitting approach could be that of Jay Rothman and identity-based conflicts, as he encourages parties to negotiate not on the basis of their own interests but on the basis of what they absolutely need.[43] North Korea has clearly articulated its need: it is still, as Kim Chang Bong said in 1960, concerned about the removal of United States military from region in order to allow the Korean peninsula agency in the handling of its own divisions, and its own affairs. While this might be the DPRK's need, it might not be that of a US-dependent ROK, a military-stilted Japan, or a reforming PRC. But yet, the question of American troop removal has always been at the core of the antagonism between the United States and the DPRK. By the early 1970s, Washington was talking to the PRC and it had been engaged in Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the USSR for a few years. Domestically, presidential hopeful Jimmy Carter had suggested a troop reduction in South Korea.[44] When Carter came into office at the beginning of 1977, the Axe Murder episode had reshuffled Korea's card deck. Declassified White House documents from the summer of 1977 show Carter's multipronged attempt to foster talks on the peninsula by approaching the ROK, and approaching China and Russia in parallel, yet separately.[45] North Korea had its own idea on what its preferred solution would look like, and had requested bilateral talks with the United States over the years, proposing peace treaties, and asking for the withdrawal of US troops from the South. This was done with a Supreme People's Assembly's letter to the US Senate on 25 March 1974 which stated the peace-loving nature of the Korean people and called for

(1) a non-aggression promise between the DPRK and the United States, (2) a stop to both sides' arms reinforcement efforts, (3) the removal of United Nations forces, and (4) the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the peninsula.[46] Little by little, Pyongyang's desire to hold direct talks with the United States morphed into an encompassing need. While an American refusal could easily be exploited as a proof that Washington was not genuinely interested in peace over the peninsula,[47] direct talks held the possibility of something more to be gained. So, Pyongyang utilized many diplomatic channels, asking China to facilitate contacts during Henry Kissinger's visit to Beijing in 1975,[48] sending an official letter on the occasion of Carter's inauguration, or passing on missives to the United States via a number of African and Asian heads of states.[49] If North Korea wanted the relationship to be exclusive, the United States was reluctant and wanted South Korea to join[50]: on the eve of President Park Chung Hee's assassination in 1979, Washington and Seoul had agreed to 'a joint US-ROK proposal for tripartite summit talks with North Korea to test Pyongyang's willingness to adjust its policies and deal with practical measures for the reduction of tensions in the area.'[51] More than three decades later, it is still hard to tell if Washington wants, is ready, or even should sit down for bilateral talks with Pyongyang.

Closeness: A Communist World

Communist principles have bound many countries together in the twentieth century, providing a sense of belonging, an economic direction, a platform for popular opinions, and a safety blanket in times of turmoil. Soviet influence on the peninsula cannot be denied, especially during the Korean partition and its aftermath when the DPRK was constructing a political system with Kim Il Sung at its center. Communist influences predate the partition though, and were born out of Japanese oppression. By 1945, a newly liberated Korea had a functioning and organized Communist party which would eventually also be split into two discrete entities upon the Korean partition. Numbers were small, but party members active. In the South, the Communist Party headed by Pak Heon Yeong was officially registered within the American Command, organized into six Provincial Committees and counted about 2000 members. In the North, 3000 members were divided into five Provincial Committees.[52] The parties were also connected despite the partition, with the North Korean bureau subordinate to the Central Committee of the Korean Workers Party in Seoul.

The Communist enterprise was nurtured in the North by Moscow's influence: gone were the old Bolshevik Party documents, replaced by new policy documents translated into Korean. Moscow's aim was to support the Korean Communist Party, and help it become a legitimate, modern, and vital political organization, not just the illegal and underground political survival tool it had been during the Japanese occupation. This support, which was largely functional, became more official when both Koreas had become independent countries with discrete governments, as separate political systems made it possible to have political influence at the highest decision-making level. Joseph Stalin and Kim Il Sung started to trade telegrams and developed a relationship. The DPRK and its relationship with Communism became global in 1948, when Stalin and Kim Il Sung started an official correspondence.[53] Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung established a similar relationship following the establishment of the PRC on 1 October 1949. While the USSR–DPRK relationship had taken time to develop since there was no real political force within North Korea at the time, the PRC–DPRK relationship started like a whirlwind romance: Minister of Foreign Affairs Zhou Enlai received a telegram from DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs on October 4 and by October 6, Zhou Enlai had already accepted Pyongyang's overture to establish diplomatic relations with immediate exchange of ambassadors.[54] Getting together was quick for the Communist trio, but staying committed to one another would be a more complicated story. Chen Cheng and Lee Ji Yong suggest that Pyongyang was initially a domestically weak and internationally insignificant country within the broader Communist movement before it started to rewrite its own story, injecting imagined and real external threats to galvanize its domestic system and justify its militarization.[55] So it was the weakest link in the trio it formed with the PRC and Russia, its position typical of a post-colonial small state seeking security. Here, Mohammed Ayoob's extensive work on security problems of Third World countries is useful the DPRK's international relations: Ayoob suggests that for such states, economic collapse is often a far greater concern than a potential external invasion.[56] For a young Communist North Korea, the focus on building a political system and finding an ideological calling that counterbalance the growing influence of the South and the United States becomes clear. The threat of collapse morphs into a dual concern: on the one hand, consolidating the domestic system, and on the other making oneself relevant, perhaps even by posturing and appearing dangerous to South Korea. So, joining forces with the USSR and the PRC was done for different reasons, with Moscow

providing trade and production supports and Beijing practical support as a border country and an ideological presence vis-à-vis American influence. Was it a relationship as close as Mao's famous 'lips and teeth' line? For a few years, perhaps. But the region was no stranger to broader political problems that rocked the Communist world and beyond. Ideological discord over de-Stalinization changed the DPRK–PRC–USSR relations. Year 1956 was, for Andrei Lankov, an annus mirabilis and a turning point that would forever alter Communism.[57] Yet, Pyongyang's course as a struggling post-colonial state seeking to survive had already been chartered as early at the Korean partition, when it had to interact with its patron state. For Selig Harrison, the USSR–DPRK client/patron relationship was no puppet/puppeteer relationship.[58] Instead, the DPRK has been skillful in manipulating countries and exploiting gaps in relationships. Here, declassified documents are helpful to retrace the DPRK's policies and interaction with its allies. Though Harrison's broad argument is supported, the DPRK was far from omnipotent during the Cold War as well: its value, and therefore survival, was tied to its location, natural resources, and place within the struggle between the Communist world and the West.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Korean partition was an opportunity the USSR could not pass on. In the years following the end of World War II, Korea was a means to achieve parity status with the United States. A zone of influence North of the 38th perimeter could of course help extent Communism, but would also provide potential resources that could be of interest to Russia. This included uranium, but also beryllium, often used to develop aluminum and copper in the aeronautical field. So in 1946, the Ministry of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy and the Geological Committee under the Council of Ministers of the USSR launched a prospection program in the North.[59] Kim Il Sung and Stalin often discussed shipments of lead, lead ore, and lead concentrates. The DPRK wanted to hold its end of the bargain, and dutifully informed Moscow of its production, including what it sent to the PRC as well.[60]

The USSR–DPRK partnership was initially focused on developing a coherent and competitive economy in the North. For Kim Chong Won, this is when the DPRK was at the 'satellite' stage, a time when Moscow had a relatively fair bit of control over Pyongyang, because Soviet-Koreans were working in key military and administrative posts. In prac-

tice, this also allowed for daily Soviet input into the DPRK economy.[61] Pyongyang's requests for additional Soviet technical specialists to modernize its infrastructure were often approved.[62] Stalin also granted Kim Il Sung's request for weapons and ammunitions in exchange for lead shipments.[63] This was, according to Kim Chong Won, a period of political consolidation for Pyongyang, but that also gradually saw the purge of Soviet elements from the Korean system, and a new independence developing within North Korea. By 1950, Pyongyang's requests were often made against future credits[64] and the DPRK kept on playing Russian credit roulette. The USSR was no fool, and it was clear to both Stalin and Kim Il Sung, even before the Korean War, that North Korea was running a very imbalanced trade deficit. So Soviet help was needed in just about every sector, from textile industry machines to railroad locomotives to teachers.[65] With the advent of the Korean War, military and defense requests from Pyongyang to Moscow increased. Kim Il Sung was confident the USSR would not tolerate an American occupation of Korea and was not shy in his requests to Stalin. Just as it had already done in the past, Kim Il Sung often made sure the PRC knew of the USSR's military support and vice versa.[66] Yet, even though USSR never officially joined the Korean War and was not part of the Armistice negotiations, it was an integral part of the conflict. It trained North Korean jet fighters and delivered armaments to the Chinese troops.[67] It sent Soviet military advisers to teach Koreans how to command a modern army.[68] It sent torpedo boats to boost North Korea's coastal defense.[69] To support the war effort and keep troop morale, it also manufactured more than 300,000 military medals.[70]

The Korean War had a profound effect on the DPRK–USSR relation. If the USSR had hoped the DPRK would be a flourishing Communist satellite, one that would provide a needed buffer zone against American imperialism, reality hit hard as soon as the Armistice was signed. The war had devastated the DPRK and helping it recover would be taxing for the Soviet system. So the focus was on repair and reconstruction of the entire industrial base, from textile and fertilizer plants to fish canning, railway stations, metallurgical plants, and hydroelectric stations. By 1956, internal North Korean figures showed it would be hard for Pyongyang to meet its financial obligations.[71] The relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang had also changed: while the DPRK was for all purpose a satellite before the Korean War, the Kim Il Sung cult of personality was creating a rift. For Moscow, the pervasive lack of self-criticism within the Workers' Party of

Korea (WPK) was worrisome.[72] If economic difficulties could sometimes be turned around with proper planning, it was not as easy to bridge ideological divergences.

In his speech made during the 20th Party of the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 25 February 1956, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev rejected Stalin's cult of personality. With riots already on the way in Hungary and Poland, revisionism was slowly gnawing at old Communist bones. Both North Korea and China joined sides in an anti-revisionism movement, but with the PRC's drastic and alienating Great Leap Forward bringing the country to an almost collapse, the PRC–USSR–DPRK relationship had lost a lot of steam. Soviet first Secretary I.N. Dudoladov captured its essence in a telegram in 1973, noting that 'good relations between the DPRK and the PRC correspond to cold relations between the DPRK and the USSR, and vice-versa.'[73] The PRC–USSR split affected the DPRK: Moscow was unwilling to support Pyongyang if the PRC was to benefit from the support in any way, shape, or form. Beyond the political crisis of faith that rippled out of Khrushchev's revisionist speech, Pyongyang needed to pursue a survival strategy that would not be solely dependent on its two giant neighbors. The distance that had been created by the DPRK–USSR ideological rift, and the PRC's own concerns with its economy provided new space for the DPRK to pursue and nurture new relationships with other states, including a number of Communist satellites.[74]

The People's Republic of China

While Choson and the Middle Kingdom have a long and intermingled history, the clock was reset for both in the 1940s, when they were transformed amidst colonization and civil war into formal states. Both states were dealing with national fragmentation: Pyongyang and Seoul were contenders for the title of 'official' Korea just as Beijing and Taipei were also both trying to establish their identity and own 'raison d'être'. This fits snuggly into Knudsen's initial small state survival stage, except that the PRC was no small state itself. In this quest for survival, Samuel Kim has suggested that war is the greatest catalyst for a new national identity.[75] So, supporting the DPRK into claiming its right to exist, Mao Zedong engaged with Kim Il Sung in 1950 to help him achieve Korean reunification.[76] Specific war plans were not drawn but it was becoming clear that military action was one of the preferred options to achieve the goal.[77]

With the Chinese Civil War still fresh, China was interested in supporting a left-leaning North Korean government, especially against the United States. The Kuomintang's exile to Taiwan, under American protection, only added to the PRC's resolve. China offered the DPRK both political support and military help very early on during the war, though Beijing stayed strategic about what it could, could not, or would not promise: China provided a large amount of military and strategic guidance during the early days of the war,[78] but full Chinese military engagement, at least at that time, was not on the table because China's resources were just starting to recover after the Civil War.[79] Mao was also wary of large-scale conflicts given China's limited navy and military capacities.[80] Thus, China was a giant with clay feet, a necessary partner and, to some extent, savior for the DPRK during the Korean War, but one that also needed Soviet help. So China sent military forces, tank artillery, and planes to Korea in October 1950 after it had negotiated backup support from the Soviet Union. It had also clarified military command, insisting that China would join as volunteers only, and deferring command to the Soviet Union as the major power in the region.[81] In the years that followed, Mao required more military support from the Soviet Union, especially military advisors.[82]

The DPRK's relationship with the PRC rested, then, on three pillars. First, the shared experience brought by the Korean War but especially what B. C. Koh calls the 'profound gratitude' Pyongyang had toward Beijing for its rescue.[83] Second, the synergies between what Ji You calls 'sinified' and 'Koreanized' Marxism.[84] Third, a common denominator which according to Evan Medeiros and Taylor Fravel centered around the strategic environment created by a struggle against Western and especially American forces.[85] Those pillars have now disappeared, and the PRC–DPRK relationship has evolved into a more pragmatic partnership while it still retains elements of what Charles Armstrong calls 'big brother-little brother' dynamics.[86] They have had, just like siblings, disagreements on what belonged to whom, and how they perceived Marxism. Practically, Beijing and Pyongyang have had to negotiate population movement around their common borders. The problem appeared simple: as the number of North Korean citizens receiving training in China in the 1950s grew, more Koreans established themselves on the Chinese territory in all legality. North Korea grew concerned about migration flux, and asked China to help control population movement.[87] In order to assist ethnic Koreans to return to North Korea, education and training facilities were developed, and a specific returnee number agreed upon.[88] But numbers started to grow exponentially as

many chose to return illegally into North Korea, and the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Security had to ask Beijing to help return illegal ethnic Korean border-crossers back to China.[89] Eventually, an official Protocol in Safeguarding National Security and Social Order in Border Areas between China and North Korea was signed in June 1964, providing very strict guidelines on cooperation to maintain safety around the borders, and aiming to regulate illegal border crossings.[90] The situation would remain a bone of contention over the years, as reports of mistreatment, human rights concerns, marriage trafficking, and abuse often challenged the relationship.[91] Ideologically, both sided against Khrushchev's 1956 Cult of Personality ideas and revisionism of Stalin and Marxism-Leninist principles. But North Korea suffered its own internal scandal at the 1956 Korean Workers' Party Central Committee plenum when a number of Chinese party members suggested the cult of personality was now pervasive within the WPK.[92] Though Mao attempted to assuage North Korea, suggesting it was business as usual for Communist parties to share advice and opinions with one another, the seeds of doubt and suspicion had been planted.[93] Mao played a duplicitous game, suggesting to the USSR in late 1956 that Kim Il Sung was in fact a problematic element that was going against the CPSU and the Chinese Communist Party's principles.[94] By early 1960s, a number of other nations had started to wonder about the nature of the WPK and its relationship with Communism and the Communist tradition, while Kim Il Sung's cult of personality had slowly started to replace element of Communist history within the North Korean society.[95] The DPRK was in a difficult position, unable to trust the Chinese Communist Party and the WPK alienated itself more and more.[96] Though the relationship still precariously rested on two pillars, a shared history and a need to balance against Western forces, the Cultural Revolution launched by China in 1966 tipped the scales: Pyongyang rejected this element of revisionism, though declassified documents show that the DPRK was trying not to antagonize its Soviet partner.[97] Another pillar crumbled to pieces with the Sino-US rapprochement in the 1970s. In order to ensure its survival, the DPRK's only option was to turn to new markets and to try to make new friends.

Satellites and Proxies

Though most of the Communist world's relationships with North Korea have been defined by their interface with the USSR and the PRC, a

number of satellites and proxy-states have also played an important role in North Korea's foreign policy construction. In true North Korean style, Pyongyang's behavior toward specific states has at times appeared mysterious, if not even capricious. Considered within the context of challenging times, changing relationships with the PRC and the USSR, and a slippery economic development, North Korea's attachment to a number of states reflects that of a small state struggling for survival. Beyond the PRC and the USSR, the DPRK's extended 'circle of friends' has included Albania, Romania, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. But all these were heavily influenced by the necessity to choose a side after Khrushchev's 1956 speech. The relationships conform to Keohane's notion of 'system-affecting' alliance, a peripheral group of states that is not 'system-dominating.'[98] Balazs Szalontai added the notion of 'pericentrism,' to describe the DPRK's asymmetric relationship with the Soviet Union: essentially, this is how a less powerful country like the DPRK manages to have an impact on both sides of the Iron Curtain.[99] He has also suggested that Kim Il Sung was no puppet at the mercy of any stronger power. This is important to remember when considering Pyongyang nowadays, and especially the Kim Jong Un regime. Perhaps, the DPRK is 'system-determining' then, a term Keohane has used to categorize states that have succeeded in gaining more clout and agency. Today the DPRK has managed to capitalize on its relationship with satellites and other countries around the world, and emerge, several decades later, as the only small state that has managed to develop a nuclear deterrent.

But back in the 1950s and 1960s, the DPRK had few friends and was forced to work hard to cultivate relationships. Many other small states were in need of political and ideological support too, and a colorful and imaginative rhetoric flourished between them. When talking about the DPRK in 1966, Albania, who had fallen out with Moscow in 1961 following Khrushchev's speech, praised an 'eternal friendship that shall flower through the centuries and there will never be a force in this world that could harm it.'[100] Putting out a unified front was a necessity for the DPRK and its small partners, but internal Albanian documents spoke of the practical ways in which North Korea would choose its trading partners and develop diplomatic relationships.[101] How can we explain small states alliances when the scholarship was dominated by Great Powers and their needs during the Cold War? Steven David has provided valuable insight in explaining alignment by suggesting that small and third world leaders made rational calculations that had little to do with balanc-

ing, but more about which actors would be most useful to keep them in power.[102] Browning has developed this concept further, suggesting that small states are smart and innovative,[103] but in the context of the Cold War and survival, the DPRK's behavior was neither, as it was clearly struggling to survive, and seizing just about every opportunity to develop and strengthen itself, within its political flavors. In line with Alyson Bailes and Baldur Thorhallsson's argument that small states need to find a protector or join an alliance in order to development and eventually prosper,[104] the DPRK's rational calculations were to do both: it praised the development of relationships with other satellite nations, it expected a degree of allegiance in return, it provided some amount of devotion and economic support, but it still courted large Communist powers while also playing them against one another.[105] Hungary and Germany in particular were prime friends, participating very early on in a number of reconstruction projects in North Korea following the end of the Korean War. In theory, altruism was part of the plan, but often makes little sense in international relations. In practice, North Korea was full of economic opportunities.[106] So, Germany developed the DPRK's textile industry,[107] while Romania provided medical assistance to the Red Cross and supervised the development of a hospital in Pyongyang in 1954.[108] Poland built workshops to repair railway infrastructure and locomotives, while Hungary supported North Korea's communication grid.[109] Cooperation helped in rebuilding a North Korean economic base, which paved the way for more sustained engagement over the next few decades. Poland and the DPRK discussed pharmaceutical and coal mining protocols in the early 1970s.[110] Yugoslavia and the DPRK worked on naval constructions, and Pyongyang providing metals and chemical products in exchange for fertilizers and insecticides.[111]

Even though cooperation was praised by emphatic statements, technical difficulties and communication problems were latent. They can be attributed to the inner dysfunctional workings of the WPK and the perilous balancing act the DPRK was involved in following the Sino-Soviet split. Hungary, a trusted partner, was not shy about denouncing the WPK's 'reluctance to adopt and adapt fraternal countries' experiences.'[112] Germany was also aware of internal Korean political problems, but was more pragmatic in its criticism, focusing instead on infrastructure problems that could be fixed.[113] By the mid-1960s, Pyongyang was conscious of its difficulties and the need to find more friends. It was also slowly starting to acknowledge its inability to meet long-term export obligations to other socialist countries.[114] As years went by, the debate over the cult

of personality within the Communist world slowly faded, allowing North Korea a more transparent, candid, and somewhat unapologetic approach to 'maintaining the monolithic unity of our party around Kim Il Sung and the Central Committee, even if it means putting our lives on the line.'[115]

North Korea's diplomacy also went beyond the Soviet world, and turned actively toward the Third World. Pyongyang supported the Vietnamese cause, and developed solidarity for African and Asian countries.[116] But regardless of how relationships developed, one element stayed constant in the DPRK's development, and that is its thirst for nuclear energy. With Moscow rebuffing its calls for nuclear cooperation, the DPRK relentlessly shopped around its partners. It engaged German universities and research institutes working on atomic energy.[117] It pressed to send technical–scientific delegations to study atomic energy in Romania and Poland.[118] It asked Hungary and Czechoslovakia to come build nuclear power plants on its soil, provide equipment, and train nuclear scientists.[119] However relentless the quest, it was unsuccessful, with many satellites choosing to defer to Moscow on the matter, and clearly distancing themselves from North Korea's future nuclear endeavors.

Significant Other: South Korea as a Brother in Arms

To Charles Armstrong, the North–South relationship was, during the Cold War, the product of great powers rivalry. Post-Cold War, it has evolved to center on the internal dynamics of the Korean peninsula.[120] This does not mean, however, that the Koreas have ironed out of all their differences. Yet, their twin recognition as official states, both parties to the United Nations since 1991 has removed the degree of tension usually associated with having to defend one's legitimate right to exist. But in the grand scope of international relations, the Koreas still exist within an acute state of tension, rooted in the very existence of what constitutes a state. International relations theory usually tells us that for a state to exist and be recognized as such, it needs a stable population, stable borders, a government and the ability to enter into relations with foreign actors. This means that the two Koreas are still in contention over, at the very minimum, people and territory, considering the scattered Korean population and defector issues, and unresolved issue of the Korean borders. There are also in contention over identity, a more intangible aspect of statehood but one of grand importance given the Koreas' split history. This contention has led both countries to develop next to one another, sometimes against

one another, sometimes in spite of one another, but always in light of one another. That is why the relationship they have developed is neither one of full antagonism nor one of complete closeness. So this makes the two Koreas, for better or worse, significant others. Samuel Kim has used the concept of 'significant other' to describe how the Soviet Union developed with the United States as its dominant international reference, but this can be easily applied to the Koreas as well.[121] Considering the broader context of identity studies, Anna Triandafyllidou's work on redefining national identity is a helpful addition when combined to Kim's argument, and central to the Korean context: having a 'significant other' allows for two groups sharing a set of cultural and historical traditions and experiences to develop a discrete identity in relation to one another.[122] As significant others, the two Koreas have related to one another over three themes: how to resolve the conflict derived from the partition, how to resolve markedly different ideologies, and how to manage a state of tension born out of foreign influences.

For the two Koreas, negotiating peace has been the centerpiece of their relationship since the beginning of the Korean War. Inter-Korean talks in Kaesong as early as July 1951 were tainted by misunderstanding and mistrust surrounding military forces on the peninsula.[123] For North Korea who had started the war on the premise of achieving victory and reunification, the restoration of a status quo was largely unacceptable.[124] In the South, President Rhee Syngman was equally reluctant to agree to an Armistice. It would take the United States' decision to offer a Mutual Defense Treaty to slowly lessen Rhee's belligerent attitude.[125] Following the Armistice, a wide array of conflict resolution tools was used to move past the gridlock. Meetings in Panmunjom were designed for North and South Korean delegations to discuss cultural and commercial services between each other.[126] Kim Il Sung even sent letters on the 15th anniversary of the Korean liberation from Japanese colonialism, suggesting a new confederation model to the South.[127] Yet, the conflict appeared intractable. The Conflict Resolution literature is deeply dissatisfied with this concept, which seems to carry a shroud of helplessness, and lead people to believe that nothing can change and be changed. Intractability is also influenced by many factors, from context, issues, socio-psychological factors to global dynamics.[128] Extracting John Burton's Human Needs theory from the Conflict Resolution literature is useful here as it suggests that the absence of a fundamental need is often the cause for deeply rooted conflicts.[129] For Burton, fundamental

needs range from security identity to respect, safety but especially control. Even though confederation was welcomed by some in the South, the main contention point between the parties centered then, and still now, on the presence of American troops on the Korean peninsula.[130] Essentially, the Koreas' fundamental needs, be they security, or even control, are taken away and managed by foreign militaries and international processes. What can then be achieved, if the basic concepts of control, agency, and ownership cannot be guaranteed on the Korean peninsula? Given this conundrum, one of the only possibilities that was left open for dialogue surrounded human needs and family reconciliation. Hence, the inter-Korean dialogue established in 1971 was supported by the Red Cross,[131] and opened the way for discussing humanitarian issues, with the hope that it would be possible to consider the economic implications of a long-term division.[132] Realist concerns caught on quickly though. Under General Park, the ROK's economic development was worrisome to the DPRK, as Pyongyang, Moscow, and Beijing were slowly distancing themselves from one another. It was clear that the South was getting economically stronger, and hopes of reunification started to evaporate in the North. Pyongyang's tune slowly evolved to cooperation and unification rather than confrontation and division.[133] Park Chung Hee had a different vision for the peninsula though, and a strong distrust for North Korean intentions.[134] For the South, it was hard to ignore the evidence available, especially when North Korea was touting confederation as a peaceful way out of the conflict yet was getting caught red-handed building infiltration tunnels in the midst of inter-Korean negotiations in 1972. But a Joint Declaration was signed, outlining three principles of unification: non-interference outside of Korea, peaceful unification, and the maintenance of a unified nation as a whole regardless of differences.[135] For Pyongyang, non-interference was particularly important given its campaign to seek solidarity in the Third World. For Seoul, the impetus was on security and dealing with the armistice first. This meant that reunification took a backseat for both sides.[136]

The two Koreas are often cursory described as opposite political systems, one cultivating democracy and capitalism, and the other tools of popular control amidst a planned economy. During the Cold War, it was easier for the Koreas to define one another as ideological opposites as after all, the capitalism versus communism clash encompassed far more than just the Korean peninsula. Roland Bleiker goes back to the vacuum left by years of Japanese colonialism, and suggests it was the perfect breed-

ing ground to develop dualistic identities.[137] But developing political ideologies took work, with both Koreas launching into active campaigns to undermine one another, both in the public and especially in international spheres. They also targeted their own citizens, constructing popular narratives for children and adults alike to sustain division and legitimize political action. How the Koreas could discuss reunification when such domestic enterprises were busy building walls between one another? The only element left is the tenuous bridge provided by their original Korean identity. This identity is torn between a common past, an unstable present, and a potentially alarming future. On the one hand, the presence of American troops has been heavily used by the DPRK as the mother of Korea's problems. On the other hand, a nascent concern over South Korea's economic growth fueled Pyongyang's efforts to develop a coherent and encompassing ideology. It also tried to exploit political cracks, and grasp at any sign of anti-American sentiment. This meant supporting South Korean uprisings in Taegu, or demanding the removal of US Ambassador McConaughy who had help Rhee Syngman leave the country when he was ousted.[138] It meant promoting Marxist ideas in the South by targeting the intelligentsia.[139] It also meant that Kim Dae Jung's kidnapping in Tokyo in 1973 was fair political game for Pyongyang: Kim Yeong Ju, the North Korean Co-president of the South-North Coordinating Committee calling Seoul on its 'terrorist-fascist activities' that, according to the North, would repress democracy.[140] Not surprisingly, it meant that Park Chung Hee's death was another opportunity for Pyongyang to attempt to gain influence. In late November 1979, 34 heads of overseas missions were recalled to the North. The goal was to launch a coordinated political operation in countries where South Korea also had a presence, in an attempt to isolate the ROK from the Non-Aligned Movement and instigate an international front against Seoul.[141] The Gwangju uprisings were almost handed on a platter to Pyongyang, who swiftly talked about how unstable and weak the South Korean political system was. According to North Korean propaganda, it was only a matter of time for Chun Doo Hwan to lose power to popular protests.[142]

An unresolved partition fueled by foreign interests, influences, ideological differences, and survival as political unit is a volatile combination. This volcanic recipe has been rocked by a number of spats, incidents, and at times serious entanglements. It is not possible to rewrite the world and suggest that without the moderating yet overbearing presence of Cold War giants United States and Soviet Union, mayhem would have erupted

and the Korean peninsula would have turned to dust. But both Koreas have actively promoted instability, using incidents for their own political means. Pyongyang was more than happy when South Korean fishing boats were seized in their waters in 1958 because it could then parade the captured fishermen.[143] But behind political antagonism lies a harsh reality: with the armistice, Koreans live in an artificial state of peace, one which unfortunately does not preclude them from dying. North Korean agents infiltrated the DMZ and were killed by South Korean forces on 18 April 1973.[144] South Korean vessels were fired upon in North Korean territorial waters in February 1974 when they were suspected of spying on the North. The 1976 Axe incident in Panmunjom almost brought the two Koreas to war.[145]

What becomes of reunification then? Well before the DPRK tested nuclear weapons, Barry Gills argued that there was no great conundrum on the peninsula: even though the Koreas had been talking about reunification for decades, their national identities were born out of national division.[146] Even Kim Dae Jung, one of the most important artisans and proponents of engagement with the DPRK, often repeated reunification would not happen in his lifetime.[147] It would then be very easy to engage into a blame game. There, North Korea's sympathizers and anti-hegemonic paragons would gladly join in the rant that all evils on the peninsula come from the United States' military presence on Korean soil. For those subscribing to Francis Fukuyama's vision of a world where a marriage between capitalism and democracy is the ultimate achievement, the North's socialist agenda and belligerent policies would be prime targets.[148] De-escalation is perhaps not possible then, when both Koreas have exploited tensions to strengthen their own political agendas and political elites.[149] Inter-Korean negotiations, especially during the 1970s, paved the way for a more permanent separation, especially when the ROK sought support for both Koreas to join the United Nations separately, and not as a unified Korea.[150] By the mid-1980s, the fracture between the two Koreas had even deepened. The 1983 Rangoon bombing and the downing of Korean Air flight 858 further broke the little trust and hope that might have existed between the two. The Koreas would not find any common ground to jointly host the 1988 Olympic games. With the games, Seoul made its entry in the developed and modern world, while the DPRK's economic difficulties were compounded by the downfall of the Soviet Union. By all accounts, the DPRK was headed toward its own collapse.

Famine, Drought, Aid, and the International Community

Though Pyongyang's interactions with the international community during the Cold War period were largely organized along bilateral and historical ties, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet System provided new opportunities for the DPRK. These interactions have played a large role in the DPRK avoiding collapse, though they are not often regarded as crucial. While state to state relationships are still more prominent, globalization and especially the rise of non-state actors in the political world paved the way toward many new types of interactions, and the DPRK had to learn fast. Of particular interest are NGOs that were tasked to assist during the 1990s famine, and which furthered the DPRK's interaction with organizations as a new socialization process. Many have jumped on the bandwagon, looking at how NGOs could be a key variable in understanding and reaching Pyongyang. Lee Shin-Hwa hoped that NGOs could be seen as less threatening than states, and thus have more impact to help the DPRK.[151] Hazel Smith has suggested that this process was at the core of confidence-building measures with the DPRK, especially since it was the first time that Pyongyang had officially acknowledged a need for foreign help.[152] There was hope for change on the peninsula as engaging the DPRK had started on the backdrop of tentative successes. First, the signature of the Agreed Framework raised expectations about the possibility of peace on the Peninsula. Second, Pyongyang's initially receptive attitude toward Seoul's Sunshine Policy, and tentative steps toward dialogue during US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to the DPRK in 1999 helped motivate international donors. In a pre-Axis of Evil era where Pyongyang had yet to test nuclear weapons, it seemed possible to invert steam, and change the DPRK. From rice shipment to debt cancellation, aid was delivered through bilateral relationships by countries that had long-established ties with the DPRK, while seemingly non-traditional allies delivered aid through the IGOs or NGOs. The DPRK was no longer only interacting with antagonists, allies, or its significant other South Korea, but with a new gamut of actors and the aid substantial. North Korea received 2000 tons of rice from Taiwan in March 1997,[153] 30 tons of free grain from Pakistan in September 1998,[154] and 1000 tons of rice from India in 1999,[155] while Vietnam kept on delivering rice to Pyongyang all throughout the 2000s and further beyond.[156] Germany donated more than 18 tons of beef to North Korea in 2001 after the cattle had been slated to be destroyed in order to resurrect a slumping European beef market marred

by the mad cow disease crisis.[157] Long-time ally Mongolia sent more than 35 tons of goat meat directly to the DPRK after Pyongyang had requested aid to the United Nations in early 2011.[158] But aid was also provided in times of adversity, when a North Korean train blast killed at least 150 people in 2004.[159] Yet, if a seemingly compassionate Hungary suggested writing off part of the North Korean debt,[160] many offered only conditional help: Israel asked North Korea to agree to an arms control deal in exchange for its humanitarian assistance,[161] and Japan pledged a large crude oil donation in 1999 in exchange for North Korea to commit to the end of its nuclear program.[162] The relationship between aid and the DPRK falls within the common trapping of humanitarian assistance and how it is connected to power in general. Ian Watson has summarized the conundrum simply by returning to the core concepts of power and interest: what are the fundamental pillars upon which aid is given in the short term, and who will really benefit from such a partnership?[163]

As the DPRK was reluctant to dispose of its missile and nuclear weapons programs, it was becoming incredibly difficult for some countries to justify helping the DPRK at all. Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland have highlighted how, in unexpected ways, the question of aid provision has started to be linked with North Korea's nuclear ambitions, and how there was hope that aid provision could make North Korean change.[164] It is clear that some of the DPRK's partners have turned their back away. So, the Czech Republic very publicly refused to support the DPRK because of its missile programs.[165] Important aid contributors Canada, Australia, and New Zealand severed their aid packages over Pyongyang's nuclear development.[166] In order to distance themselves from Pyongyang, but still hoping to curb its behavior, many countries decided to provide aid via service-oriented organizations. Sweden provided more than a quarter of the World Food Program (WFP)'s 1996 food appeal, while Estonia offered €32,000 in 2008,[167] Germany supported the DPRK both via the WFP and via its domestic agency German Famine Aid.[168] France, who has consistently refused to recognize the DPRK officially, has channeled a lot of its contributions via two non-governmental organizations, Première Urgence Internationale and Aide Médicale Internationale, with yet more than €500,000 offered in 2011 alone.[169] The International Committee of the Red Cross received donations from the Netherlands and flour and rice from the Iran Red Crescent Society.[170]

Today's North Korea is, just like any other country and individual, a product of past experiences, influences, and choices. But for the DPRK,

history is especially important: with the Kingdom of Korea isolated from world developments and pried open by foreign forces in the late nineteenth century, Korea was ill-equipped to deal with Japanese colonization and especially its aftermath. Following the Korean partition and the Korean War, the DPRK's external relations were again shaped by external forces and organized mostly through the prism of the Cold War. Here, the DPRK learned how to navigate a dichotomized world that fell along ideological lines. The DPRK's reality was split between antagonistic relationships and close political ties, while it attempted to forge a discrete political identity from that of the Republic of Korea. The end of the Cold War forced Pyongang once again to interact with new actors, from states it had had very little relationship with organizations that presented a different political reality, and that also brought a number of opportunities. If one subscribes to collapsist theories, the end of the Cold War has heralded the end of the DPRK, and is no more than a big slope downward until Pyongyang hits rock bottom and disintegrates. Yet, from revisiting history, it is clear that the DPRK has navigated many a troubled water, and has yet to capsize. It is argued in the next chapter that most of the tools the DPRK has needed to stay afloat were acquired during the Cold War, and have been honed ever since. Of course, there are many strong arguments that link Pyongyang's survival to authoritarianism, as demonstrated by Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind[171]: it is impossible to deny the nature of the North Korean regime, yet focusing on this one element often eclipses the importance of the DPRK's international relations. While the DPRK has, during the Cold War, often been analyzed and understood via its relationship with the PRC, the USSR or the United States, it makes little sense to forget and negate their influence or the vacuum they left following the end of the Cold War. The difference is that since the end of the Cold War, the DPRK has been more politically independent, and has been engaged with a multitude of actors, instead of acting under the influence of the Soviet Union and the PRC alone.

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CHAPTER 3

Nothing but Words? Rhetoric and Beyond

One of the most appealing locations to capture a panoramic view of Pyongyang is the Chuch'e Tower. Sitting across the Taedong River and opposite to the Kim Il Sung Square, it stands 170-meter tall and was built in 1982 as an ode to self-reliance. The tower itself is the second tallest column in the world after the San Jacinto tower in Houston, Texas. But there is another fascinating aspect of the tower besides cityscape view it affords after a claustrophobic ride in an aging elevator. In its foyer, just before entering the monument, a curious and solemn display awaits visitors: 82 commemorative plaques coming from all corners of the world, some gifted by private citizens, other by political groups or scholars, but all celebrating the Chuch'e ideology. To say that the DPRK is a hermit, isolated country is a misnomer, a stereotype touted and reprised by popular media, sometimes because of a lack of fundamental understanding and knowledge about the country but more often because this sort of bylines attract people and sell copies. But if the DPRK was as isolated as it is often portrayed, there would be fewer than 82 plaques at the Chuch'e Tower. There also would be far fewer than 164 countries having officially recognized the DPRK, and only a handful of foreign embassies in Pyongyang instead of the 24 currently operating in the North Korean capital.[1] What is the state of Pyongyang's diplomatic landscape then? Short of going to the DPRK to check the vital pulse of its foreign relations as North Korea is still not a country that can be visited freely, there are other ways to capture a snapshot of its international relations. In this instance, North

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Korea propaganda provides a looking glass, a way to learn more about the DPRK's priorities and interests, since they are the ones that the government has chosen to broadcast via its state-owned media. Since 1946, the Korean Central News Agency has been tasked with presenting the Worker's Party of Korea (WPK) and the leadership's views to a wide audience. Initially through printed media, the news has now become digital, hosted on a Japanese server before it got transferred in August 2016 onto a new platform, complete with its '.kp' domain.

Propaganda as an Analytical Tool

Of course, using propaganda to probe the North Korean psyche raises a number of red flags with propaganda being defined by Henry Giroux as a way to 'misrepresent information, promote biased knowledge or produce a view of politics that appears beyond question or critical engagement.' It is not inconceivable that intellectual investment in DPRK propaganda could be fruitless.[2] So how does propaganda work? Won Jong Jang suggests that 'only two sides are allowed, for and against, in the conflict.'[3] The dichotomy is useful here: propaganda removes nuances and can point more directly than political discourses, toward what matters most. Going 'directly' to North Korean sources might also, according to long-time DPRK observer and historian Bruce Cumings, be relatively more effective in establishing Pyongyang's intentions. For him, it removes a subsequent bias, the one that adds a foreign media filter to understand North Korea.[4]

American or South Korean news media has been used extensively in North Korean studies, yet the field has only recently started to turn toward DPRK data as a source provider. Timothy S. Rich has used Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) data for a large automated content analysis project, looking at how, if at all, key themes such as reunification, socialism, sovereignty, nuclear issues, or war were linked to different stages of the Kim family leadership.[5] Won Yong Jang provided a comparative politics angle by looking at how the Six-Party Talks was framed by the KCNA, South Korean Yonhap News Agency, and the Associated Press.[6] Previous works conducted by myself have looked at the KCNA corpus to consider North Korea's framing of its energy needs and how the energy sector might slowly be transforming.[7] These works, and many more, all point to one important factor: the KCNA is written with a foreign audience in mind and should be treated as such. One could thus presuppose that the KCNA would be used to court and chastise foreign actors alike, meaning the news content would be fairly static. It is only when conducting a longitudinal KCNA

analysis that variations appear: though the DPRK's stance via the KCNA is consistently acerbic, especially toward the United States, the KCNA also reports on the changing nature of some of the DPRK's relationships. This has been particularly notable since Kim Jong Un's rise to power and provides important insights into how the DPRK sees the world. Over the next pages, an 18-year (from 1997 to 2015) analysis of the KCNA's portrayal of 192 countries exposes North Korea's engagement with the foreign world. The tables focus on notable behavioral under Kim Jong Un, an indication of shifting relations, and shifting policies.

A Rhetorical World: From Indifference to Hope for Change

Pyongyang's relationship landscape is a spectrum that extends from closeness (with countries such as China) to antagonism (the United States and Japan are prime examples featuring in this category), and match very closely its historical and diplomatic engagement. A large part of North Korea's communications features rhetorical relationships, namely relationships that do not amount to much interactions. This translates into a lack of official state-to-state recognition that leaves many countries in the 'indifference' category. These countries are neither praised nor antagonized by the DPRK (Table 3.1).

Pyongyang also uses the KCNA as a public diplomacy tool, sending congratulations to a large number of countries to celebrate national holidays, leaders' elections, or independence anniversaries. Condolences are sent upon leaders' death, and when natural or man-made disasters strike (Table 3.2).

While a number of relationships are portrayed via the KCNA as having evolved from indifference to greetings, a change from greetings to diplomatic meetings, delegation exchanges as well as group travel, be they to perform a play in the DPRK, or discuss railway affairs is important in itself. Receiving delegations involves tight controls within North Korea, and guests are always accompanied and minded. A comparable amount of scrutiny and controls are needed abroad, with North Korean delegations and groups visiting other countries, be they diplomats, politicians, musicians, or athletes. Those physical exchanges are not to be taken lightly within the North Korean context and are indicative of vested political and economic interests. A 'back-burner' category also lists countries that the DPRK wish to develop more sustained relationships with. This has happened for countries that already have an official diplomatic relationship with the DPRK, but that have not developed extensive ties. Under Kim Jong Un, a number of these countries have engaged with the DPRK and sent delegations (Table 3.3).

Table 3.1 DPRK rhetoric—indifference

1. Absence of diplomatic relations and indifference

Andorra	Israel	Monaco	Solomon Islands
Bhutan	Kiribati	Palau	Taiwan
Costa Rica	Kosovo	Panama	Tonga
El Salvador	Marshall Islands	Paraguay	Tuvalu
Honduras	Micronesia	Samoa	Vatican City

Country	Diplomatic relations original date	Change under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions
2. Engagement despite absence of diplomatic relations		
Estonia	/	Railway delegation exchange, June 2013
France	/	Unhasu Orchestra visit, March 2012
3. Diplomatic relations but absence of engagement		
Iraq	1968-06-09	/
Afghanistan	1973-12-26	/
Papua New Guinea	1976-06-01	/
St. Lucia	1979-09-13	/
Georgia	1994-03-11	/
Liechtenstein	2001-05-02	/
4. Diplomatic relations and going beyond indifference		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Changes under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions**
Equatorial Guinea	1969-01-30	Delegation exchanges, July 2013
Sri Lanka	1970-07-15	Delegation to DPRK, September 2014
Madagascar	1972-11-16	Included in 'Congratulations' since 2014
Norway	1973-06-22	Joint concert in Pyongyang, May 2012
Mexico	1980-09-09	Mexican political party visits, September 2014
United Kingdom	2000-12-12	British embassy hosting receptions
Canada	2001-06-02	Education cooperation on SEZs, May 2014
Ireland	2003-12-10	Included in 'Congratulations' since 2014

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by the National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

Table 3.2 Greetings, congratulations, and condolences

1. Greetings, congratulations, and condolences despite lack of diplomatic relations

Antigua and Barbuda	Ecuador	Saudi Arabia
Bolivia	Haiti	Uruguay

2. Diplomatic relations and greetings, congratulations, and condolences

Country	Diplomatic relations original date	Country	Diplomatic relations original date	Country	Diplomatic relations original date
Hungary	1948-11-11	Jamaica	1974-10-09	Cyprus	1991-12-23
Albania	1948-11-29	Botswana	1974-12-27	Turkmenistan	1992-01-10
Mali	1961-08-29	Ethiopia	1975-06-05	Kyrgyzstan	1992-01-21
Ghana	1964-12-28	Cape Verde	1975-08-18	Moldova	1992-01-30
Burundi	1967-03-12	Portugal	1975-10-16	Tajikistan	1992-02-05
Somalia	1967-04-13	Comoros	1975-11-13	Uzbekistan	1992-02-07
Zambia	1969-04-12	Seychelles	1976-06-28	Armenia	1992-02-13
Central African Republic	1969-09-05	Barbados	1977-12-05	Slovenia	1992-08-09
Maldives	1970-06-14	Grenada	1979-05-09	Eritrea	1993-05-25
Sierra Leone	1971-10-14	Lesotho	1980-07-19	Djibouti	1993-06-13
Cameroon	1972-03-03	Lebanon	1981-02-12	Macedonia	1993-11-02
Chile	1972-06-01	Vanuatu	1981-10-01	Bosnia & Herzegovina	1996-01-19
Pakistan	1972-11-09	Suriname	1982-10-11	Netherlands	2001-01-15
Burkina Faso	1972-11-10	Trinidad & Tobago	1986-01-22	Belgium	2001-01-23
Argentina	1973-03-01[a]	Colombia	1988-10-24	Luxembourg	2001-03-05
Mauritius	1973-03-16	Morocco	1989-02-13	Greece	2001-03-08
Sweden	1973-04-07	St. Vincent & The Grenadines	1990-08-16	New Zealand	2001-03-26
Iceland	1973-07-27	Dominica	1991-01-21	Bahrain	2001-05-23
Liberia	1973-12-20	Bahamas	1991-05-16	East Timor	2002-11-05
Cote d'Ivoire	1974-01-09	Belize	1991-06-20	San Marino	2004-05-13
Guinea-Bissau	1974-03-16	Lithuania	1991-09-25	Montenegro	2007-07-16
Guyana	1974-05-18	Latvia	1991-09-26	Swaziland	2007-09-20
Jordan	1974-07-05	St. Kitts & Nevis	1991-12-13	Dominican Republic	2007-09-24

(*continued*)

Table 3.2 (continued)

3. Diplomatic relations and going beyond greetings, congratulations, and condolences		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Changes under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions**
Congo (Rep)	1964-12-24	Republic of Congo visits DPRK, October 2013
Palestine	1966-04-13	Meetings with Palestinian ambassador to DPRK, April 2013
Chad	1969-05-08	DPRK ambassador visits, May 2014
Denmark	1973-07-17	Danish Batida Theatre performs in DPRK, September 2013
Bangladesh	1973-12-09	Cultural exchanged plan signed, May 2014
Austria	1974-12-17	Active Austrian DPRK support organization, December 2012
Australia	1974-12-31	Foreign delegation to DPRK, June 2012
Nicaragua	1979-08-21	Foreign delegation to DPRK, July 2013
Azerbaijan	1992-01-30	DPRK railway ministry delegation visits, June 2012
Belarus	1992-02-03	Railway ministry delegation to DPRK, April 2014
Spain	2001-02-07	New DPRK ambassador appointed, January 2014
Turkey	2001-06-27	Turkish political party visits, September 2012

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by the National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

[a]Assumed, as took place between March and December, but no source can confirm exact date

Table 3.3 DPRK rhetoric—hope for relations

1. Existing/passive official diplomatic relations and hope for relations			
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Country**	**Diplomatic relations original date**
Serbia	1948-10-30	Sao Tome & Principe	1975-08-09
Mauritania	1964-11-12	Malawi	1982-06-25
Malta	1971-12-20	Kazakhstan	1992-01-28
Rwanda	1972-04-22	Oman	1992-05-20
Togo	1973-01-31	Qatar	1993-01-11
Nepal	1974-05-15	Guatemala	2007-09-26
Kenya	1975-05-12		

2. Existing/passive official diplomatic relations and going beyond hope for relations		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Change under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions**
Tanzania	1965-01-13	Foreign delegation to DPRK, June 2012
Mozambique	1975-06-25	Foreign delegation to DPRK, June 2014
Namibia	1990-03-22	Foreign delegation to DPRK, May 2014
Croatia	1992-11-30	Croatia to increase ties, December 2011

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by the National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

DPRK Meets World: From Delegations to Protocols and Agreements

A large part of the DPRK's communication involves relationships that have evolved to allow contacts between diplomatic staff via delegation travels. As noted before, a state delegation traveling to the DPRK or a DPRK delegation traveling abroad requires organization, control, and money. Hence, those relationships actually do matter a fair bit to Pyongyang, at least enough to take the risk of inviting foreigners within its borders or sending its own citizens abroad. Among this category, one can find a number of official delegations such as Libyan, Thai, or Senegalese counterparts, as well as countries the DPRK has signed protocols or specific agreement with (Table 3.4).

Protocols and agreements signature is an important aspect of the DPRK's foreign policy, and while many protocols have involved long-term allies or historical partnerships, the end of the Cold War has

Table 3.4 DPRK rhetoric—delegations

1. Diplomatic relations and delegation exchanges		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Delegations examples as mentioned by KCNA**
Senegal	1972-09-08	Kim Young Nam in Senegal, April 2010
Congo (DR)	1972-12-15	Congolese (DR) to DPRK, December 2009
Benin	1973-02-05	Benin delegation to DPRK. November 2011
Libya	1974-01-23	DPRK delegation to Libya, July 2010
Niger	1974-09-06	Niger delegation to DPRK, May 2012
Venezuela	1974-10-28	Venezuelan delegation to DPRK, April 2012
Switzerland	1974-12-20	Swiss delegation to DPRK, November 2010
Thailand	1975-05-08	SPA delegation in Thailand, March 2010
Tunisia	1975-08-03	Tunisia delegation to DPRK, June 2010
Angola	1975-11-16	Angola delegation to DPRK, October 2010
Zimbabwe	1980-04-18	Inter-sectoral talks, May 2009
South Africa	1998-08-10	GFTUK Delegation to South Africa, February 2012
2. Diplomatic relations and going beyond delegation exchanges		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Change under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions**
Congo (DR)	1972-12-15	Agreements and inter-sector talks, October 2013

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by the National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

Table 3.5 DPRK rhetoric—protocols and agreements

1. Diplomatic relations and protocols and agreements

Country	Diplomatic relations original date	Protocols and agreements examples as mentioned by KCNA
Bulgaria	1948-11-29	Cooperation on health, November 2009
Yemen	1963-03-09	WKP and Yemeni Party, December 2008
Gambia	1973-03-02	Agreement signed, April 2010
India	1973-12-10	Plan for cultural exchange, March 2010
Gabon	1974-01-29	Plan for cultural cooperation, March 2010
Czech Republic	1993-01-01	Cooperation on education, December 2008
Slovakia	1993-01-01	Protocol signed, January 2009
Brazil	2001-03-09	Agreement on technology, October 2010

2. Diplomatic relations and increased activities around protocols and agreements

Country	Diplomatic relations original date	Change under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions
Egypt	1963-08-24	Cultural cooperation plans, November 2011
Indonesia	1964-04-16	KPA military visit, September 2012
Kuwait	2001-04-04	DPRK visit Kuwaiti Emir heir, June 2014

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by the National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

meant that the DPRK has started to engage with countries it had had little understanding and knowledge of before. There are important relationships between the DPRK and a number of countries such as Iran or Syria, who have both signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DPRK on matters involving technology cooperation (Table 3.5).

Defense agreements have also been signed with both Cambodia and Laos, and sustained delegation exchanges involving the KPA have taken place often in the DPRK as well as abroad. The KCNA has also made a specific commitment to highlight, under Kim Jong Un, the relationships it has developed with a number of countries also operating at the margins of international law, such as Syria and Iran (Table 3.6).

This relationship landscape represents the DPRK's own communication efforts. But does the DPRK actually interact with other countries in a meaningful way, or is this public communication effort just a lot of hot air and very little lift?

Table 3.6 DPRK rhetoric—MOUs and defense agreements

1. Diplomatic relations and MOUs		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**MOUs as mentioned by KCNA**
Mongolia	1948-10-15	Economy and trade/Rason, April 2010
Syria	1966-07-25	SEZs cooperation, November 2012
Iran	1973-04-15	Science, technology and education, September 2012
Fiji	1975-04-14	Cooperation, signed in Tehran, August 2012
Nigeria	1976-05-35	Foreign investment, December 2012
	Change under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions	
Mongolia	Several more MOUs with IT (July 2013), Science (September 2014)	
Syria	DPRK economic delegation despite Syrian conflict, May 2014	
Iran	Military delegation to DPRK, July 2013	
Fiji	Delegation to DPRK, October 2012	
Nigeria	Visit to DPRK embassy, September 2014	
2. Diplomatic relations and defense agreements		
Country	**Diplomatic relations original date**	**Defense agreement examples as mentioned by KCNA**
Cambodia	1964-12-28	KPA meets Cambodian Defense Ministry, April 2011
Laos	1974-06-24	KPA and Lao Defense Ministry Talks, April 2011
	Change under Kim Jong Un: KCNA mentions	
Cambodia	2014–2017 Cultural exchange plan signed, July 2014	
Laos	DPRK economic delegation, October 2014	

Source: Relationship coding compiled by author via KCNA content analysis (1997–2015). Diplomatic relations original dates as listed by the National Committee on North Korea—Issue Brief—DPRK Diplomatic Relations, August 2015

What Do We Know About North Korean Diplomacy?

Diplomacy is often conflated with foreign policy but though the two are linked, their functions within the international realm are discrete. For Christopher Hill, foreign policy refers to 'a set of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations.'[8] For Hedley Bull, diplomacy is 'the conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world Politics by official agents and by peaceful means.'[9] The DPRK is not new to diplomatic relations: since its creation in 1948, it has developed its diplomatic footprint by maintaining embassies or representations in 47 countries abroad, while 28 countries are currently represented in Pyongyang (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 DPRK diplomatic footprint

Embassies in both DPRK and host abroad	*DPRK embassies/missions abroad (non-reciprocated)*		*Foreign embassies/mission in DPRK (non-reciprocated)*		
Country	*Diplomatic relations original date*	*Country*	*Diplomatic relations original date*	*Country*	*Diplomatic relations original date*
Russia	1948-10-12	Algeria	1958-09-25	Vietnam	1950-01-31
Mongolia	1948-10-15	Guinea	1958-10-08	Palestine	1966-04-13
Poland	1948-10-16	Tanzania	1965-01-13	Libya	1974-01-23
Romania	1948-11-03	Equ. Guinea	1969-01-30		
Bulgaria	1948-11-29	Cameroon	1972-03-03		
China	1949-10-06	Uganda	1972-08-02		
Cuba	1960-08-29	Bangladesh	1973-12-09		
Egypt	1963-08-24	Nepal	1974-05-15		
Indonesia	1964-04-16	Venezuela	1974-10-28		
Cambodia	1964-12-28	Austria	1974-12-17		
Syria	1966-07-25	Thailand	1975-05-08		
Pakistan	1972-11-09	Myanmar	1975-05-16		
Sweden	1973-04-07	Ethiopia	1975-06-05		
Iran	1973-04-15	Singapore	1975-11-08		
Malaysia	1973-06-30	Angola	1975-11-16		
India	1973-10-12	Congo (DR)	1975-12-15		
Laos	1974-06-24	Zimbabwe[a]	1980-04-18		
Switzerland[a]	1974-12-20	Mexico	1980-09-09		
Nigeria	1976-05-25	South Africa	1988-08-10		
Czech Republic	1993-01-01	Peru	1988-12-15		
United Kingdom	2000-12-12	Belarus[a]	1992-02-03		
Brazil	2001-03-09	Hong Kong	1997-01-01		
		Italy	2000-04-01		
		Kuwait	2001-04-04		
		Spain	2001-02-07		

Source: Compiled by author using public domain, governmental and news resources
[a]Representations, not embassies

When compared to South Korea, the difference may appear staggering: there are 110 embassies in Seoul and 116 South Korean embassies abroad. Yet, when comparing this diplomatic footprint to countries with similar GDPs, the DPRK's diplomatic footprint is of a similar size (Table 3.8).

While traditional diplomacy concentrates on states-to-state relations, newer forms of diplomacy or 'tracks' have incorporated citizens, business,

Table 3.8 Diplomatic footprint (GDP ≅ USD (million) USD 17,000) comparison

Country	*GDP USD (million) $*[a]	*In-country embassies/ missions*	*Embassies/missions abroad*
DPRK	17,396	47	28
Bosnia and Herzegovina	18,491	62	66
Gabon	17,412	31	28
Brunei	17,104	35	37
Mozambique	17,081	45	13
Iceland	17,036	43	43
Cambodia	16,778	29	42
Equatorial Guinea	16,731	14	13
Papua New Guinea	16,576	30	23
Georgia	16,530	38	42

Source: Compiled by author using public domain, governmental and news resources

[a]As listed by the United Nations Statistics Division, December 2015 ('GDP and Its Breakdown at Current Prices in US Dollars,' United Nations Statistics Division, December 2015, available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/dnltransfer.asp?fID=2 [Last Accessed 18 December 2016])

non-governmental organizations, and the media as legitimate actors. What this means, in practice, is that the field of diplomacy and its analysis has moved away from just being exclusively about states, their interests, and their behaviors. This was crystallized in the early 1980s by Joseph Montville who coined the term 'Track-Two Diplomacy' and defined it as 'unofficial, informal interaction among members of adversarial groups or nations with the goals of developing strategies, influencing public opinion, and organizing human and material resources in ways that might help resolve the conflict.'[10] Since then, a multi-track approach has become more and more popular, with practitioners Louise Diamond and John McDonald identifying nine additional tracks, including religion, business, funding, peace activism, or research/training/education.[11]

It is unsurprising that there is an extensive literature that analyzes a country's diplomatic interaction, its foreign policy decisions, and its negotiation strategies. But the DPRK has only recently come into the spotlight as a country to study, and a potential case to help contribute to this particular literature. This has been motivated by North Korea's nuclear weapons development, a number of negotiation schemes it has taken part in, and the immutable question of whether the DPRK is rational or not. Hence, North Korea's diplomacy is often used interchangeably with its

negotiation style. How does the DPRK negotiate? Admiral Turner Joy's 1955 *How Communist Negotiate* was the original book to provide an answer to this question[12] As the chief of the United Nations Command delegation to the Korean armistice Conference, Joy experienced first-hand one of the DPRK's initial forays into international diplomacy as an independent country, attempting to negotiate peace over the peninsula. Turner Joy suggests the DPRK was wise to never take the military option off the table, and to essentially make sure that coercion, if hinted at, was backed up by a capacity to deliver a credible threat. But this says more about how to deal with the DPRK, and not really if there is a particular North Korean negotiation style. What Turner Joy tells us about Pyongyang is ultimately quite pedestrian: for North Korean negotiation, every small detail matters, agenda-setting is important as Koreans tend communicate on their objectives early on in the discussions, and they also use a number of distractions and diversion tactics to stop the process at times. Joy suggests they are perfectly capable of understanding that they must, at times, accept to meet their negotiation counterparts somewhere in the middle, but that they would also be keen on vetoing proposals that would take them further from their initial objectives. Joy essentially paints a picture of rational decision-making, of a state attempting to receive its best outcome during a negotiation without compromising on anything. But this was North Korea in 1955. What about North Korea now? It would take almost half a century for the next in-depth analysis of North Korean negotiation and decision-making to appear. Scott Snyder's *Negotiating on the Edge*, published in 2000, engages with negotiation episodes during the 1990s between the United States, the ROK, and the DPRK, and suggests that the DPRK has developed a predictable negotiation strategy, and one that is especially efficient in times of crisis.[13] Snyder's conclusions eerily resonate with that of Joy: the DPRK usually opens up with a strong position, engages in brinkmanship to raise the stakes, and never caves when bargaining. So, it would appear nothing much has changed over the past 50 years: the DPRK is still attempting to survive, be it in times of crises or in times of peace, and is unlikely to compromise on its core principles. It will search for opportunities that can fit within its political and ideological constructs.

How the DPRK creates and manages its diplomacy is a much-less developed research area, and is often guided by Pyongyang's relationship with large powers, or larger units, such as China or Russia. Yet, even in this field, studies tend to mute the DPRK's role and interests in the relationship and focus on the larger partner. On the China side, You Ji tells us that

the DPRK is gifted in the art of provoking ideological dissonance and irritation, but that for China, the DPRK is only a bargaining chip to keep the United States at bay[14] Alexander Zhebin tells us a similar story about the Russia–DPRK partnership, but highlights the DPRK's economic ambition and need for education and industrial training.[15] Samuel S. Kim talks about North Korea's foreign policy in a post-Cold War world within the constraints of the 'near abroad' environment, focusing on Japan, Russia, China, and the United States.[16] Charles Armstrong brings more light to Pyongyang's diplomatic overtures: for him, Pyongyang engages with socialist and left-leaning parties around the world, but also with capitalist countries in order to generate money.[17]

Post-Cold War Environment: New Patterns of Interaction

The end of the Cold War meant that political polarity and ideological camps no longer provided clear and divisive lines in the international system. Kenneth Waltz saw the bipolar system as inherently stable since it was simply less ambiguous to navigate: essentially, it was easy to know who was a friend and who was a foe.[18] A post-Cold War world means a seemingly more complex world for a small state like the DPRK; it was necessary to redefine its relationships since it could no longer rely on the Soviet Union. A first step was United Nations Security Council Resolution 702 recommendation that both the DPRK and the ROK receive United Nations General Assembly Membership. The Koreas' full membership took effect on 19 September 1991,[19] and both countries have since expanded their diplomatic presence. So, many new relationships were developed in the 1990s and 2000s, a time when the DPRK had not yet tested nuclear weapons, and did not seem as dangerous to the rest of the world as it might appear now. This meant that the DPRK was able to develop partnerships with a wide range of countries, well-beyond Asia or well-beyond left-leaning governments. On 20 September 1993, a North Korean embassy opened in Mexico, a country neither geographically nor politically close to the DPRK.[20]

As the Iron Curtain fell, it also transformed Europe. This meant that a number of established European powers had to renegotiate relationships with Eastern Europe nations, while newly independent countries were developing their own relationship portfolio. For the DPRK, engaging with Europe was seen a win-win situation: on the one hand, it could benefit from international aid, and on the other hand Pyongyang could

Table 3.9 DPRK—ROK recognition in Europe

Country	*DPRK diplomatic relations original date*	*ROK diplomatic relations original date*
Austria	1974-12-17	1963-05-22
Belgium	2001-01-23	1961-03-23
Bulgaria	1948-11-29	1990-03-23
Croatia	1992-11-30	1992-11-18
Cyprus	1991-12-23	1995-12-28
Czech Republic	1993-01-01	1990-03-22
Denmark	1973-07-17	1959-03-11
Estonia	/	1991-09-17
Finland	1973-06-1	1973-08-24
France	/	1949-02-15
Germany	2001-03-01	1955-12-01
Hungary	1948-11-11	1989-02-01
Ireland	2003-12-10	1983-10-01
Italy	2000-01-04	1956-11-24
Latvia	1991-09-26	1991-10-01
Lithuania	1991-09-25	1991-10-01
Luxemburg	2001-03-05	1962-03-16
Malta	1971-12-20	1965-04-01
Netherlands	2001-01-15	1961-04-01
Poland	1948-10-16	1989-11-01
Portugal	1975-04-15	1961-04-15
Romania	1948-03-11	1990-03-30
Slovakia	1993-01-01	1993-01-01
Slovenia	1992-09-08	1992-04-15
Spain	2001-02-07	1950-03-17
Sweden	1973-04-07	1959-03-07
United Kingdom	2000-12-12	1949-01-18

Source: Compiled by author using public domain, governmental and news resources

send a number of delegations to Europe to learn how to make positive changes to help its crippled economy (Table 3.9).

But engaging with the whole of Europe, especially with established powers such as Great Britain or France, was difficult: many countries had already established relationships with the ROK during the Cold War, and were unwilling to compromise their trading relations by adding a dash of political imbroglio. Yet, Italy was the first to open the way, capitalizing on old communist sympathies, and on bearing food aid worth more

than three million USD.[21] Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini's visit to the DPRK in 2000 marked the first G-7 countries to establish official relations,[22] a point dutifully highlighted by the KCNA.[23] Then, Germany was the first European country with a resident ambassador in the DPRK, quickly followed by Sweden.[24] The DPRK reciprocated by sending a number of ambassadors to Europe. But diplomatic enterprises are not without cost, and establishing discrete embassies in each country could soon be unsustainable. Instead, the DPRK went for economic rationality: an ambassador would have to cover several countries. The June 2000 Inter-Korea Summit was a blessing for North Korea's diplomatic adventure. Suddenly, Pyongyang was presented to the world as seeking reconciliation with its long-lost brother, and North Korea's initial European successes paved the way for more interactions. New Zealand, the only country in the Asia-Pacific region that had refused to engage with Pyongyang, finally established a diplomatic relationship.[25]

The DPRK also increasingly pursued a resolute diplomatic strategy outside of Europe and especially outside communist or former communist countries. The aims were quite practical, and revolved around replacing failing or flailing partners, countries that had turned a page and were now looking resolutely toward the West, abandoning socialist principles, and thus creating a degree of uncertainty for the DPRK. As a small state still struggling to establish itself as a legitimate entity, especially in light of South Korea's concurrent United Nations status and its increased economic output, the DPRK had to prospect further afield. It also meant that pump-priming dormant or once damaged relationships were revisited since bringing them back to life could be orthwhile. This was the case for the DPRK's relations with Australia and with Myanmar.

In order to achieve these objectives, delegations scheduled to travel overseas for a specific diplomatic meeting often conducted sideline business. This diplomatic prospection was thus savvy, but undoubtedly motivated by a desire to seize opportunities that would otherwise have been quite difficult and costly to organize. So, North Korea Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun orchestrated a meeting with the Australian diplomatic corps while conducting side business in Bangkok in the summer of 1999.[26] The aim was to resurrect a relationship that had initially started in 1974 when Australia had officially recognized the DPRK. But the relationship had fizzled out after the North Korean embassy had closed in Canberra and Australian diplomats were unexpectedly expelled from Pyongyang in 1975. An agreement to establish embassies finally came about after two years of

negotiations,[27] and a North Korean embassy finally reopened in 2002. Alan Thomas then became ambassador to both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the DPRK.[28] The DPRK–Australia relationship is an example of how limited the DPRK's own power and efforts can be when trying to engage a country that is, and has portrayed itself as, a middle power. The relationship has been marred by hesitations, backpedaling, and incidents since its inception. As many other professed middle powers, Australia's engagement with the DPRK could be explained by Andrew Cooper who made the argument in the late 1990s that instead of focusing on broad actions, Australia had chosen to focus on specific sectors or niches, away from potential coalition entanglement in the Middle East.[29] So we come to a critical point here: it is difficult for the DPRK to engage with large powers, as there are countries either antagonistic like the United States or increasingly uninterested as Russia and the PRC because they pursue their own path to essentially balance the United States' influence. Engaging with middle powers was thus a preferred option for Pyongyang at the end of the Cold War, as middle powers were less predisposed to use military force, and more willing to find diplomatic and peaceful means for change. Thus, Australia provided significant economic aid to the DPRK during the 1990s famine, even though the DPRK–Australia official relationship was embryonic at the time.[30] But Australia also provided support at critical moments, such as in 2004, when the Ryongchon Railway Station was rocked by an explosion that left hundreds injured, many dead, and thousands homeless.[31] As it became clear the DPRK was committed to develop nuclear weapons, Australia drew the line late 2000s, and Foreign Minister Stephen Smith made aid conditional on the DPRK pursuing substantial steps toward denuclearization.[32] The North Korean Canberra embassy closed in 2008, only a few years after its opening, Pyongyang citing cost-saving measures. Ties with Australia would now be routed via the North Korean embassy in Indonesia.[33]

While the DPRK aimed to revive, in the Australian case, a relationship that had been largely peripheral to its political context, its relationship with Myanmar had collapsed because of the 1983 North Korean bombing that occurred as South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan was visiting the Burmese capital. But strong ties had once existed between the DPRK and Myanmar, as their relationship had developed somewhat informally in the 1950s around trade representations and cultural development.[34] When Myanmar arrested a North Korean agent after the 1983 explosions, and called for sanctions at the United Nations,[35] it was up to Pyongyang

to find the proper incentives to bring Myanmar back into its fold. With shifting politics within the country and the Burmese military junta being on the lookout for nuclear capabilities,[36] North Korea had a solid card to play. Ties were restored in 2007, Myanmar Foreign Minister U Nyan Win visited and new joint initiatives were launched in tourism and the construction sector.[37] Bilateral visa exemptions for diplomatic and official passport holders were put in place[38] and talks about a KCNA office opening in Rangoon apparently supported by the new Myanmar Media Council.[39]

Managing and Maintaining Traditional Ties

In the post-Cold War environment, North Korea has been busy extending its diplomatic reach to find sympathetic partners, whether they subscribe to similar political ideas, are interested in resources and trade, or are willing to provide development aid, hopefully free of charge. It did not mean, however, that the DPRK completely abandoned or even neglected some of its most long-standing partnerships in the Asian region. Objectively, Pyongyang has few close partners, as most Asian countries have developed strong relationship with rival South Korea for salient economic gains. The DPRK had thus to work on relationships that were often born out of old personal ties between strong leaders during the Cold War. Such is the case for the DPRK–Vietnam relationship, one of the longest partnerships Pyongyang has developed. With the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries celebrated in 2010, both partners have expressed strength and confidence in their relationship.[40] But the ties have had ups and downs, and now rest on very different pillars than when originally cemented. Following the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1950, leaders Ho Chi Min and Kim Il Sung developed a personal relationship—Ho Chi Min visited the DPRK in 1957, while Kim Il Sung visited North Vietnam in 1958 and 1964. The DPRK also lent support to North Vietnam in 1957 when it sent 50,000 Rubles to help the population suffering from floods,[41] or in 1965, during the Vietnam War when the DPRK contributed construction materials, train cars, and other military supplies that were delivered via China.[42] The relationship, however, is atypical of what is found in alliance typology. For Melvin Small and David Singer, partnerships are about the strength of commitment over a specific period of time, and can take the form of a neutrality or non-aggression pact, an entente, a defense, or a deterrence pact.[43] No such commitments

were ever made between Vietnam and the DPRK. This led to an elastic relationship that could feel as close as times as it could feel distant. The partnership also suffered from Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, with the ousting of the Khmers Rouge in 1970s creating a schism between Pyongyang and Hanoi.[44] Vietnam's slow economic opening and the new ties it created with the United States in the 1980s strained the relationship further.[45] The coup de grace could well have been Vietnam establishing diplomatic ties with the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 1992, and allowing Seoul to become the prime source of foreign investment in the country.[46] But just as Cuba is reforming yet retaining its socialist core, Vietnam still clings to its communist principles despite its engagement within the global markets. This means that Vietnam and the DPRK maintain somewhat of a communist brotherhood ideology and have attempted to rekindle ties. But Pyongyang has little to give to Vietnam at time point. Both countries also need to talk about difficult issues, since Vietnam is located in one of the increasingly popular defector corridors. Thus, talking about border issues was crucial and new delegations and political dialogues started again: President Tran Duc Luong's visit to Pyongyang in 2002 was important as it was the first for a Vietnamese leader in almost four decades.[47] Cooperation has timidly resumed in economic, cultural, and education fields,[48] and both countries made tentative commitment to develop trade via 'market economy principles.'[49]

There are also very few willing partners in the Asian neighborhood, and it is becoming more complicated and difficult for the DPRK to preserves its ideas on politics and sovereignty. Laos and the DPRK celebrated in 2009 their 35th anniversary ties, with Mun Jae Chol, Acting Chairman of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries calling the relationship one of independence, building of socialism and keeping imperialism at bay.[50] Non-communist Asian partners were also been sought out. Thailand, for example, had never developed diplomatic relationship with communist countries before it engaged with Pyongyang in 1975. While a series of commemorative stamps on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the DPRK were released in 2015,[51] public celebrations belie a relationship that has become increasingly tense over the years. On the one hand, the Thai government has insistently asked for information regarding the case of Anocha Panjoy,[52] a Thai woman supposedly abducted by North Korean Intelligence Agency in 1978 in Macao, a matter also brought to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.[53] On the other hand, Thailand, just

like Vietnam, has had to deal in recent years with a growing number of North Korean defectors, and has had to make the decision of whether to return them to the DPRK or not.[54] So why would Pyongyang purse relationship with Asian neighbors? The answer lies in their engagement with multilateral endeavors. Pyongyang has been invited to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum but only if it is recognized by all ten ASEAN nations. This adds a layer of complexity as Manila is essentially North Korea's linchpin in its engagement with this particular economic and political arrangement.[55] While Cold War paradigm and its collapsist legacy still remain present in North Korean studies, new waves of research have started to acknowledge the potential role that non-state actors such as organizations, corporations, and even private individuals can have in fostering development and change on Korean grounds. Er-Win Tan, Geetha Govindasamy, and Chang Kyoo Park have argued in 2015 that it was critical look at the potential attractiveness of the some of the ASEAN economies development model.[56] This brings us back to Knudsen's small state framework, and the ultimate stage by which states either disappear or join multilateral arrangements. Would the DPRK take a leap of faith and joint the connected world, one which does not always revolve around states?

From Traditional to Twenty-First Century Diplomacy

A cursory glance at the DPRK shows that most of its interactions have in fact revolved around states. Given that North Korea is a society that does not allow for much social independence and creativity, it is not surprising. Does it mean that the DPRK will not engage with non-state actors? The hierarchical and top-down nature of control in the North Korean society has clearly made it difficult for the DPRK to face these actors, especially as they became more prominent in the political field in the 2000s.[57] We know from Randal Curthbert that North Korea was once confused about the concept of NGOs as organizations partially funded by the United States, for example, but operating independently from Washington was difficult for Pyongyang to comprehend, and thus by definition, to treat as legitimate.[58] While it is true that Alexander Zhebin has suggested the DPRK knew well how to interact with a range of actors during the Cold War, it was engaged with those actors only within a communist context, while newer interactions have occurred with Western parties.

Track-Two often focuses on how to manage relationships that are deemed unmanageable or that are seen as futile and unfruitful. So, relationships are seen as socialization events that allow for what Harold Saunders calls the 'other side'[59] to be slowly known. It is conceivable that one wants to focus on the meaning of such interaction for a conflict, or a process, but the concept of reciprocity, and its aftermath, should not be ignored. Hence, while in theory, the United States has no direct political relationship with North Korea, non-political events have taken place between the two, when the New York Philharmonic Orchestra played in Pyongyang in 2008 for example. Suddenly, both Americans and North Koreans were 'humanized' to one another, as American citizens played music that North Korean people appeared to appreciate. While attempting to transform the image one has of the 'other' in order to lead to more constructive resolutions,[60] a subsequent function of Track-Two is to develop further socialization as a way to ultimately reach a specific political class or group that appears as resolutely untouchable via regular diplomatic interaction. During the Clinton Administration, the United States was especially hopeful that such processes could lead to progress and openness, as a way to, as Graham Kelley suggests, 'ensure, in line with its short-term objectives in relation to the DPRK, that incremental gains in confidence can be transferred from the semi-official to the official sphere.'[61] The space between a semi-official and an official sphere has been at time quite tenuous when the DPRK has engaged with Track-Two ventures. The 1994 Agreed Framework negotiations, after all, saw American former president Jimmy Carter seal the deal on behalf of the United States, yet he was not even on the US government payroll.[62]

Track-Two: NGOs and Learning About the World

Most of Pyongyang's experience with Track-Two projects took in 1990s, which is consistent with North Korea's reevaluation of its diplomatic landscape post-Cold War. Musical or educational exchanges were not the plat du jour: it was the donor–recipient relationship that characterized North Korea's Track-Two relationships during that time, with the European Commission being one of its most important aid partners. Aid was funneled via European institutions even before Brussels and Pyongyang established official relationship in 2001. So, the European Commission developed on the one hand a bilateral relationship with the North Korean government. On the other hand, it also nurtured partnerships with a num-

ber of non-governmental organizations and international bodies such as the World Food Program that were tasked with providing aid and delivering relief in North Korea. In 1995, the European Union (EU) became a proxy between service-oriented European NGOs and the North Korean government, and with funds channeled through the Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) project.[63] Through this process, more than 400 million euros of aid, most of its food and agricultural assistance, was sent to North Korea. The initial shipment aimed to alleviate the suffering caused by the late 1990s floods and droughts.[64] Subsequent aid focused on clothes, sanitation devices, and medicines.[65] By 2002, an additional 35 million euros had been budgeted for, and NGOs expanded their work beyond crisis relief. Première Urgence Internationale, a French NGO that has provided North Korea with medical supplies, was tasked to clean and refurbish a number of North Korean medical facilities before engaging with the sustainability sector, supplying and breeding rabbits to seven North Korean farms.[66] From 1995 to 2008, the European Commission was the only official EU organ to fund projects designed to strengthen North Korean economy, regardless of the denuclearization process and missile talks the United States, South Korea, Russia, North Korea, or China were involved in. In May 2008, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department closed the project: according to its assessment and criteria, North Korea was no longer in an emergency situation.[67]

From then on, partnerships were no longer aimed at providing only relief while waiting for an eventual regime collapse or absorption by the South. Instead, there was an active Western enterprise focused on capacity-building and intellectual exchanges. These 'knowledge partnerships' rapidly developed under the late Kim Jong Il and have spanned a multitude of sectors: from book exchanges to industrial and business field trips, from training conferences to joint research development, and from delivering training programs to creating knowledge institutes, North Korea was slowly opening to foreign influence, motivated by a rational need to obtain technological and educational advance it could neither provide to its citizens directly nor tap its former close allies for.[68] Examples included promising ventures, with North Korea developing a partnership with the Hanns-Seidel Foundation Korea, a German non-governmental organization that eventually led to the establishment of the EU–Korea Industrial Cooperation Agency. From 2006 onward, the program provided business and trade trainings to a number of mid-level

North Korean officials. But teaching North Korea to trade might be risqué, as it would invariably have to encompass, at some point, the notion of free market, which the DPRK was thoroughly uncomfortable with at the time and the program ended in 2009.[69] North Korea has now allowed the foundation to help with a three-year project that is also supported by the EU and that seeks to improve rural living conditions by developing sustainable forestry.[70]

From Track-Two to Multi-track

Under Kim Jong Un, North Korea continues to explore some of the partnerships and models developed in the late 2000s. This is especially salient in the field of education and training with the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) project which was launched in 2010. James Chin Kyung Kim opened with the support of the South Korean NGO Northeast Asian Foundation for Education and Culture North Korea's first and only private university to this day.[71] In parallel to allowing foreigners come to the DPRK to provide education opportunities, the DPRK has focused some of its efforts to develop a viable tourist base. This has meant allowing foreign companies to organize travels to North Korea in partnership with the North Korean government, which is no mean feat considering that the DPRK had little experience in dealing with private, capitalist ventures a decade prior. Tours now take place around North Korea's important events, be they Mass Games, Kim Jong Il's birthday, or the April Pyongyang marathon. They fulfill a number of purposes for Pyongyang, least of which is acting as a foreign cash generator: tourists pay in American dollars, Euros, or Chinese Yuans, bringing an attractive foreign currency reserve directly into North Korean coffers.[72] Some of the tours organized are also geared toward businessmen looking for possible investment ventures in North Korea.[73]

The search for economic support has led the DPRK to pursue relationships with NGOs, which has led in turn to Pyongyang being socialized to foreigners, and individuals and small organization. Under Kim Jong Un, relationships with individuals have been more common. On the one hand, political affinity has been nurtured by friendships associations and usually far left-wing groups that support North Korea. The largest of these associations, the Korean Friendship Association (KFA), is featured prominently on a number of websites dedicated to North Korea. KFA national associations are particularly active in Chile, Spain,

Italy, Poland, and the United States. But KFAs differ greatly in their activity level and are especially dependent on who presides each of them, and what their knowledge of the DPRK and political motivations are. Personal interviews with KFA president reveal different purposes, with some KFAs actively promoting Chuch'e ideas (UK), while others are more interested in developing potential cultural and economic ties (India, with the promotion of chess competitions and Indian food within the DPRK). Some KFAs have had a longer engagement history with the DPRK and especially with the Korean Association of Social Scientists, which has been keen on promoting exchange between DPRK and foreign scholars.[74] On the other hand, the DPRK has welcomed private and seemingly well-off foreigners on special visits. This is how basketball player Dennis Rodman or Google CEO Eric Schmidt each ended up visiting Pyongyang in 2013. Dennis Rodman's visit is part of a new type of public/citizen's diplomacy that received a lot of media coverage and a lot of attention in the press as this was originally initiated by the news media CNN as part of one of its program, the VICE TV Show which usually sends a guest to visit places around the world and interviewing a range of people and locals on controversial topics and issues. Rodman's visit was also heavily promoted by the KCNA,[75] but it was largely criticized by the US government, as well as observers and researchers of North Korea. Parallels to the 1970s Ping Pong diplomacy between Washington and Beijing and that had eventually paved the way for a Nixon-Mao rapprochement featured at length in the media. The basketball star has returned a number of times to North Korea since his initial visit in February 2013. However, he was put under investigation by the US Department of Treasury regarding potential luxury gifts he might have brought to North Korea's Kim Jong Un.[76] Eric Schmidt's visit to North Korea in 2013 was part of a private citizen diplomacy effort led by former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, a long-time proponent of North Korean engagement. While Schmidt's visit was not officially coordinated by the US government, it led to a number of in-depth conversations on the nature of internet access and internet technology, with Schmidt openly supporting the idea of providing internet access in North Korea in order to bring new opportunities to the greater good of its citizens.[77] The visit was promoted via the KCNA, but only with a two-line entry, a rather far cry from the various Dennis Rodman entries detailing the visit at large.[78] Yet, this visit was of great importance especially in light of the North Korean–Sony hacking charges that

occurred later in 2014. Evidence is elusive to either confirm or deny North Korea's action against Sony. What the Richardson/Schmidt visit confirmed, however, was that North Korea was only running a rudimentary internet system at the time.

The story of how North Korea learned to expand its diplomatic footprint from a few allies in the 1950s to, at the beginning of the 1990s, being able to interact with non-state actors and develop some of its sectors almost appears banal. It is, after all, similar to many underdeveloped and developing countries' path to achieving prosperity and modernity in a post-Cold War environment. The difference is that no other country has managed, in the same time-frame, to develop nuclear weapons. The DPRK's twenty-first century diplomacy thus cannot be divorced from its quest to achieve security, which led Pyongyang to build not only weapons but also an entire new network of relationships designed to support its military industry.

Notes

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CHAPTER 4

Securing Freedom

> We will consistently take hold on the strategic line of simultaneously pushing forward the economic construction and the building of nuclear force and boost self-defensive nuclear force both in quality and quantity as long as the imperialists persist in their nuclear threat and arbitrary practice.' Kim Jong Un, 7th Korean Workers. (Party Congress, May 2016)

Seventy years separate Kim Jong Un's official words at the latest Worker's Party of Korea (WPK) Congress from those of his grandfather Kim Il Sung at the very first WPK Congress in August 1946. The original Congress cemented the elder Kim's position as vice chairman of the North Korean Workers' Party at a time of great turmoil on the peninsula, when both Koreas were scrambling to establish political order within their own territorial boundaries. Kim Il Sung's official speech at the Congress also stressed the importance of the 'freedom and democratic independence' North Korea was entitled to. Those values are certainly not unique within the international system: from waging war to marrying into alliances, leaders have just about always strived to defend their country's independence and sovereignty, territory, and political system. In the North Korean context, preserving sovereignty has always been especially important given the peninsula's contested borders. For a small state like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), maintaining sovereignty and independence was no mean feat given its geopolitical concerns during the Cold War and its aftermath. But the transformation from a country that, in 1946, fought tooth and nail to establish itself politically is now in sharp

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contrast with the 2016 Congress picture, where nuclear posture and military arsenals were discussed front and center at the most important communication event organized by the DPRK in two decades. How has this transformation occurred?

Small, Rogue, and Isolated? Framing the DPRK's Security Evolution

When the DPRK became the first state to officially withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on 10 January 2003, Pyongyang had played the 'energy need' card, claiming it was stuck between a rock and a hard place, constrained to 'unconditionally accept the U.S. demand for disarmament and forfeit its right to self-defense.'[1] It quickly launched a pair of Nodong and Taepodong missiles and added three nuclear tests to its hand, hitting the world with a full house in 2013, ten years after leaving the NPT. A few more nuclear tests allowed North Korea to clean the table, and no amount of poker face could hide its desire to become a full-fledged nuclear weapons state. It also became increasingly difficult for the international community to deny that North Korea's nuclear program was indeed growing. Yet, the image of North Korea as an irrational, collapsing, and dangerous state incapable of understanding deterrence theory still persists, crystallized around the immutable concept of rogue state. Anthony Lake coined the term during his tenure under President Bill Clinton as assistant secretary for National Security Affairs. For him, rogue states were nations that 'exhibited a chronic inability to engage constructively with the outside world.'[2] Backward, outlaws, renegade regimes, pariahs, failed and terrorist states morphed into the tamer and more politically savvy 'states of concern' when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in 1999: it was counterproductive for the United States to be calling North Korea names, especially when at the end of Clinton's second term, and when he was trying to establish his legacy by solving problems in both the Middle East and on the Korean peninsula. But when the Twin Towers collapsed on 9/11, engaging dangerous actors seemed utterly unthinkable, and the rogue rhetoric came back at lightning speed in the United States, propelled worldwide by George W. Bush's Axil of Evil speech in 2002.

It would be easy to dismiss the concept of rogue state as just another politically charged and value-laden gimmick. But while it is all this, it is also much more. Granted, such a relatively young concept might speak

about modern and dangerous states, yet nothing is new about isolation, realpolitik, and impaired constructive engagement: it is very easy to retroactively apply these definitions to Nazi Germany and rediscover it as a proto-rogue. Can the concept of rogue state be really useful to understand the DPRK, then? At its core, the term rogue state is an illocutionary act, a 'performative speech' figure, and best explained by John Austin in 1975.[3] In *How to Do Things with Words,* Austin tells us that when a priest declares a couple husband and wife, they become so, on the spot. Likewise, a country is framed and judged a rogue state because of actions that may or may not be crimes in the eyes of a referent beholder: yet when they are labeled rogue, they become so. Who would have such power in the international system? For Alexander George, the answer is straightforward: the rogue state doctrine is a construction of American politics, is self-serving as it strives to maintain American dominance and power within the system, and is not born out of any internationally recognized legal tradition.[4] Hence Iraq, Iran, and North Korea became axes of evil incarnated at the 2002 State of the Union Address. But, it would be easy to stop at a simplified explanation of why rogue states are singled out, by saying those states are simply crazy. For better or worse, this theme is central in the literature. Hence, well before the 9/11 attacks, Barry Rubin had looked at the Middle East and labeled rogues as carrying a 'certificate of political insanity.' And just before North Korea tested its first nuclear weapons, Jasper Becker spoke of a dangerous insanity that could imbalance the diplomatic world.[5] But sound foreign policies can hardly be based on quicksand facts alone, and that is why objective and comprehensive analyses of potential rogue states are needed. Paul Hoyt provided in 2000 an initial set of criteria based on a close reading of public speaking records and government documents spanning both Clinton terms.[6] From his work, it is clear that the term rogue state was used at the highest level of command within the US political apparatus and this spanned four broad categories: development of weapons of mass destruction capability (seeking to acquire, develop, and/or utilize weapons of mass destruction and missile technology), posing a threat (political, military, regional, and/or global), being linked with terrorism (supporting and/or sponsoring, and using terrorism to undermine the Middle East Peace Process), and challenging international norms (weapons proliferation, UN/international sanctions, crimes against humanities, and narcotics trafficking). The first two categories featured most prominently in Hoyt's results, but still represent a catch-all and vague grouping: there is a world of difference between 'seeking to acquire

weapons of mass desctruction (WMDs)' and being able to 'utilize WMDs.' Yet, Hoyt's categories are useful in the North Korean context, as they trace, to some extent, Pyongyang's development trajectory, from a state that did not have WMDs to a country that is now in a position to disseminate them though sales, and that might also have connections with terrorist groups in the Middle East. Because of these actions, the DPRK is essentially challenging norms, and posing a threat to other states, though it is still unclear whether so-called rogues can indeed destabilize the global system. Robert Litwak, writing in 2000, did not think so, as the rogue focus was, then, on relatively marginalized states that might threaten their immediate region, but could not have much influence further afield.[7] Recent articulations within the literature have shown a dichotomy, one that focuses on the use of domestic versus international criteria for labeling a specific state. In a post-9/11 world, it is easy to conceive that most discussions surrounding rogue states have focused on WMDs and terrorism links. Yet for Jasper Becker, the original rogue state doctrine focused predominantly on seemingly dangerous states that were, in essence, failed states, born out of incomplete decolonization processes, civil wars, conflict spillovers, or bad governance.[8] The DPRK fits just about every rogue state definition and their declensions then, but is better understood by marrying its security development with its historical context. Thus, it is unhelpful to pigeonhole the DPRK as a rogue state, crazy and irrational, and unfit to understand nuclear deterrence. Instead, it is more helpful to reframe the DPRK within Kim Bomi's besieged consciousness concept, and consider it as a small state fighting for its internal and external survival, and doing so by any means possible. With a leadership virtually following the same lines since 1948, namely protecting the elite to ensure state survival, it would also be easy to suggest that the DPRK has stayed static, not evolving, and constrained by path dependency. Yet, it takes only a glance at North Korea's seven Workers' Party Congresses to see clear evidence of change.

North Korea's security dynamics and security discourse have evolved from the Kim family's political consolidation (First WPK Party Congress, August 1946) to the establishment of an independent state (Second WPK Party Congress, March 1947). The DPRK's commitment to Communist ideas was created to counteract, according to the WPK, a rising sense of imperialism and feudalism around the peninsula (Third WPK Party Congress April 1956). Once the initial identity and ideology were established, the DPRK needed to consolidate its economy to ensure its basic survival, which led to several economic plans, starting with the first seven-year plan to further develop industrialization (Fourth WPK Party

Congress, September 1961). The Sino-Soviet schism led to the slow disappearance of Marxist–Leninist ideas from within the WPK, while Kim Il Sung's Chuch'e ideology of self-reliance was imposed within the DPRK (Fifth WPK Party Congress, November 1970). Kim Il Sung emphasized similar ideas a decade later with the Three Revolutions: via ideology, technology, and culture, the North Korean society would be transformed and modernized (Sixth WPK Party Congress, October 1980).

Was the Seventh WPK Party Congress held in May 2016 a real departure from the DPRK's previous development and concerns? How can we explain the country's need for a nuclear deterrent, and especially its success in developing a test program? Pyongyang's quest for nuclear mentors, technology design, and raw materials started decades ago. But these efforts had to be financed, often by sacrificing economic welfare for the greater nuclear pursuit, and engaging in a number of cash-generating activities such as missile sale in order to fill its coffer and sign off on its nuclear program. From the outside, and especially from the land of capitalism and democracy, such behavior is often seen as irrational and unacceptable. From within though, getting the bomb is a rather rational decision best explained by compounding Scott Sagan's three nuclear models. According to Sagan, states engage in nuclear proliferation because they (1) seek to increase national security in light of foreign threat, (2) need nuclear weapons as political tool to organize their domestic politics and manage bureaucratic entanglements, (3) want to project an idea of modernity to the outside world.[9] If we add Steven David's work on Third World countries, and his argument that states have pursued weapons of mass destruction in order to ensure the survival of their leadership, we start to see a clearer picture for the DPRK. This picture is based on rational calculations, though rationality is always bounded, and one that is not necessarily meant to balance against a specific threat, but to keep the leadership in power.[10] When adding the rogue state filter to this situation, North Korea has developed and ensured its security in four distinct phases. First, as a small, newly created state, the DPRK had to fight for political acceptance and to consolidate its own domestic system. Its security was largely guaranteed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This spans the first three WPK Congresses. Second, the DPRK started to exercise a more independent decision-making style, since its economy had strengthened somewhat, and it had already started to distance itself ideologically from the USSR and the PRC. This means that the DPRK started to develop security relationships with smaller states around the world, especially states that would not

curtail its independence. This spans the fourth and fifth WPK Congresses. Third, part of the existing weapon stockpile acquired from allies was recycled and resold for profit, allowing the DPRK to provide and license weapons. This spans the sixth WPK Congress. Fourth, the latest development stage shows the DPRK as a potential nuclear-weapons state holder by developing its own technology. This spans the seventh WPK Congress. The road to North Korea acquiring enough money, materials, know-how, and gumption to develop and test nuclear weapons took the better half of the last century.

Trading Conventional Security

The Early Years: DPRK as a Military Recipient

Initially, the DPRK was in need of fire power during the Korean War, and received extensive support from China and Russia. Fully reliable data on the exact nature, quantity, and payment arrangements, if any, will always be difficult to find given that it is not possible to receive direct confirmation from North Korea about what did or did not happen. But a large amount of legal arms trade involving the DPRK and other countries has been recorded via official trade registers by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database provides a record of all major conventional weapons from 1950 onward. It has also been recognized and endorsed by many organizations, research institutes, and scholars as a tangible data source. In order to enhance accuracy and comparability, SIPRI has developed a cost index called trend indicator value (TIV). A TIV will be generated to measure the volume of international conventional weapons transfer, with unknown values replaced by comparable units, and a rate of depreciation integrated in the calculations. Given North Korea's original founding date, the SIPRI Arms Transfer Database provides an illuminating picture since it covers just about the entire North Korean trade history, highlighting Pyongyang's needs and military trading patterns. What is also useful in the context of this book is that it shows clear evidence of North Korea's transformation from an arms importer, often receiving second-hand goods free of charge from China and Russia, to an arms exporter itself.

The active flow of arms imports to the DPRK (Fig. 4.1) falls into three broad periods: from 1950 to the early 1960s, from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, and from the early 1980s to the late 2000s. The first period is

directly related to the Korean War and its aftermath, yet the weapons value is not as high as could have been expected, but can be simply explained. First, most of the equipment used during the Korean War belonged to the Chinese army, and would not have been factored into the trade registers. Second, most of what the DPRK imported during this period was used stock, thus less valuable (Fig. 4.2).

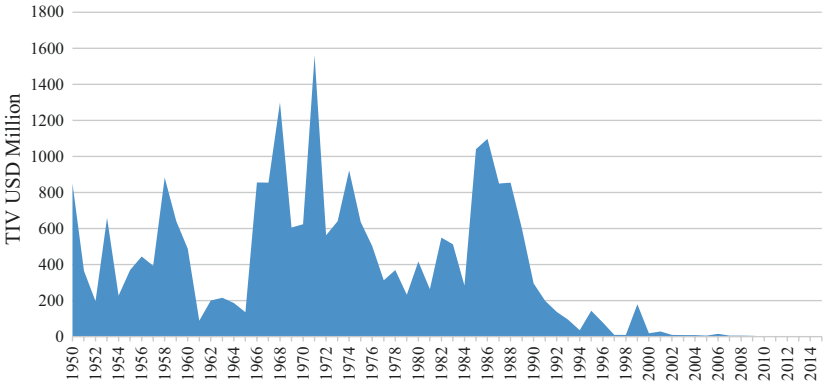

Fig. 4.1 North Korea's arms imports—1950–2015 (*Source*: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Figures are SIPRI trend indicator values (TIVs) expressed in USD million at constant (1990) prices)

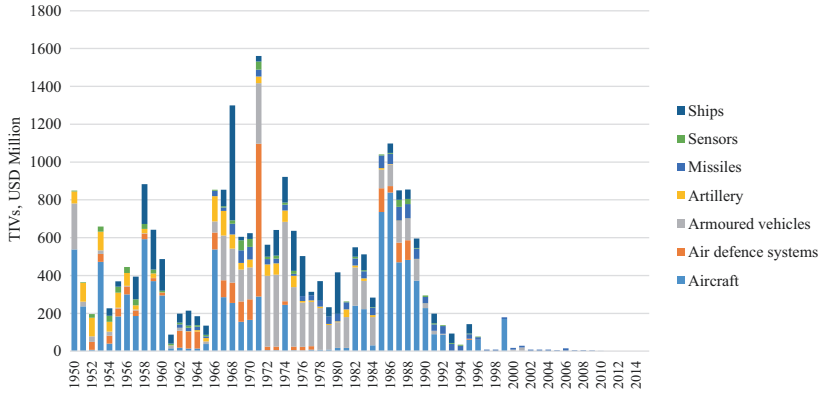

Fig. 4.2 North Korea's arms imports by type—1950–2015 (*Source*: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Figures are SIPRI trend indicator values (TIVs) expressed in USD million at constant (1990) prices)

Because the SIPRI TIVs are built on weapon values and incorporate a depreciation rate given the weapons' previous usage and age, the actual value of what the DPRK imported is not a high as later on during the second period since the weapons were older, often used, and likely outdated. In the mid-1960s and all through the 1970s, the DPRK received fewer second-hand supplies from the Soviet Union. Instead, it purchased more complex systems from the PRC including high-ticket items such as ships and aircrafts. The last spike period incorporates more aircrafts and armored vehicles, and more advanced technologies such as missiles. The DPRK also acquired a substantial amount of missile licenses from China and the Soviet satellites as well as directly from Russia in the 1980s (Fig. 4.3).

In recent years, legal weapons sales and exports to the DPRK have stopped, rendered almost impossible because of the economic sanctions imposed on Pyongyang. But legal sales into the DPRK only tell half of the story since the DPRK is now a missile producer and licenser. That is not to say that the DPRK does not import any military technology though: it is likely that materials and weapons still reach the DPRK, but via illegal and undercover channels.

TIVs are especially useful to highlight broad patterns overtime. But trade registers also contain specific weapons types, order year, order delivery, as well as quantity ordered and delivered (see Table 4.1). They tell the story of a close trading partnership between the Soviet Union and the DPRK during the Cold War, with Moscow's military involvement preceding the

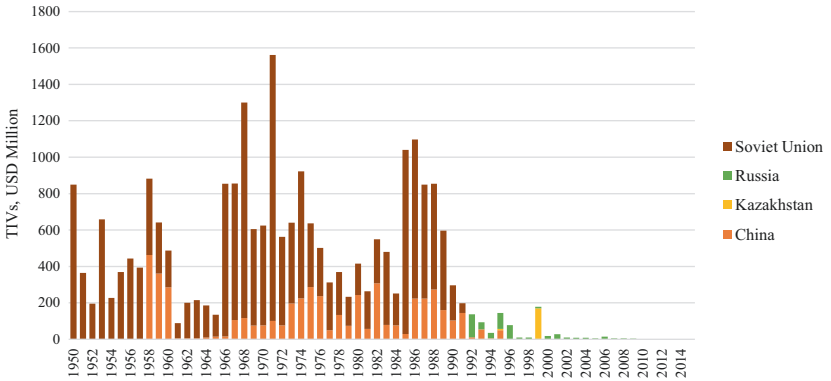

Fig. 4.3 Top four arms exporting countries to North Korea—1950–2015 (*Source*: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Figures are SIPRI trend indicator values (TIVs) expressed in USD million at constant (1990) prices)

Table 4.1 DPRK as weapons recipient

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
Licenses					
China	1963[a]	1964	4000[a]	4000[a]	Towed multiple rocket launcher
		1990			Type-63 107 mm
	1948[a]	1969	100[a]	100[a]	Anti-ship missile
		1974			HY-1/SY-1/CSS-N-1
	1972[a]	1972	500[a]	500[a]	Armored personnel carrier
		1992			YW-531/Type-63
	1973[a]	1976	200[a]	200[a]	Anti-ship missile
		1989			HY-2/SY-2/CSS-N-2
	1973[a]	1973	23	23	Submarine
		1995			Type-033/Romeo
	1981[a]	1985	1000[a]	1000[a]	Portable surface-to-surface
		1994			missile
					HN-5A
Russia	1975	1992	4000[a]	4000[a]	Anti-tank missile
		1995			9M14M/AT-3
	1985[a]	1992	500[a]	500[a]	Portable surface-to-air missile
		1993			Strela-2/SA-7
	1987[a]	1992	3000[a]	3000[a]	Anti-tank missile
		2010			9M111 Fagot/AT-4
	1989[a]	1992	1500[a]	1500[a]	Portable surface-to-air missile
		2009			Igla-1/SA-16
Soviet Union	1959[a]	1961	11[a]	11[a]	Patrol craft
		1965			SO-1
	1960[a]	1961	10[a]	10[a]	Fast attack craft
		1965			Project-123/P-4
	1966[a]	1961	1000[a]	1000[a]	Tank
		1965			T-54
	1970[a]	1972	1000[a]	1000[a]	Tank
		1982			T-55
	1975	1976	16000[a]	16000[a]	Anti-tank missile
		1991			9M14M/AT-3
	1976[a]	1978	4000[a]	4000[a]	Portable surface-to-air missile
		1991			Strela-2/SA-7
	1976[a]	1980	470[a]	470[a]	Tank
		1989			T-62
	1987[a]	1988	1000[a]	1000[a]	Anti-tank missile
		1991			9M111 Fagot/AT-4
Suppliers					

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
China	1956[a]	1958	100[a]	100[a]	Lift transport aircraft
		1980			An-2
	1958[a]	1958	80[a]	80[a]	Fighter aircraft
					MiG-15 [Second-hand]
	1957[a]	1958	200[a]	200[a]	Fighter aircraft
		1960			MiG-17 [Second-hand[a]]
	1957[a]	1958	50[a]	50[a]	Trainer aircraft
		1959			Yak-18
	1958[a]	1958	40[a]	40[a]	Bomber aircraft
		1959			Il-28
	1967[a]	1967	15[a]	15[a]	Fast attack craft
		1968			Project-183/P-6
	1967[a]	1967	23[a]	23[a]	Patrol craft
		1978			Type-062/Shanghai
	1968[a]	1969	6[a]	6[a]	Coast defense system
		1971			Hy-1 CDS
	1971[a]	1971	50[a]	50[a]	Light tank
		1972			Type-62
	1972[a]	1973	175[a]	175[a]	Tank
		1975			Type-59
	1973[a]	1974	10[a]	10[a]	Air search radar
		1975			Cross Slot
	1974[a]	1975	6[a]	6[a]	Patrol craft
		1978			Type-037/Hainan
	1977[a]	1977	50[a]	50[a]	Trainer aircraft
		1978			BT-6/PT-6
	1979[a]	1980	4[a]	4[a]	Fast attack craft
					Type-021/Huangfen
	1980[a]	1981	50[a]	50[a]	Towed gun
					Type-5901 130 mm
	1981[a]	1982	100[a]	100[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket
		1985			launcher
					Type-63 130 mm
	1982[a]	1982	40[a]	40[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft
		1985			A-5/Q-5
	1986[a]	1986	100[a]	100[a]	Fighter aircraft
		1988			F-6/J-6
	1988[a]	1989	30[a]	30[a]	Fighter aircraft
		1991			F-7A/J-7
	1956[a]	1958	100[a]	100[a]	Lift transport aircraft
		1980			An-2

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
Kazakhstan	1995	1995	24	24	Anti-aircraft gun KS-19 100 mm [Second-hand]
	1995	1995	4	4	Fire control radar SON-9/Fire Can
	1998[a]	1999	34[a]	34[a]	Fighter aircraft MiG-21bis
Soviet Union	1948[a]	1950 1953	50[a]	50	Trainer aircraft Yak-18
	1949[a]	1950 1951	200[a]	200[a]	Reconnaissance armored vehicle BA-64B [Second-hand[a]]
	1949[a]	1950 1955	500[a]	500[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-13 Grad 132 mm [Second-hand[a]]
	1949[a]	1950 1953	500[a]	500[a]	Towed gun BS-3 100 mm [Second-hand[a]]
	1949[a]	1950 1959	150[a]	150[a]	Armored personnel carrier BTR-152
	1949[a]	1950 1957	100[a]	100[a]	Armored personnel carrier BTR-40
	1949[a]	1950	175[a]	175[a]	Fighter aircraft La-9 [Second-hand/Aid]
	1949[a]	1950	150[a]	150[a]	Tank T-34/85 [Aid]
	1949[a]	1950	10[a]	10[a]	Trainer aircraft Yak-11
	1949[a]	1950	175[a]	175[a]	Fighter aircraft Yak-9 [Second-hand/Aid]
	1950[a]	1951 1953	500[a]	500[a]	Towed gun A-19 122 mm [Second-hand]
	1950[a]	1950	50[a]	50[a]	Ground attack armored carrier Il-10 Sturmovik [Second-hand[a]]
	1950[a]	1951 1955	500[a]	500[a]	Towed gun M-30 122 mm [Second-hand[a]]
	1950[a]	1950 1955	1000[a]	1000[a]	Mortar M-43 120 mm
	1950	1950 1951	100[a]	100[a]	Fighter aircraft MiG-15
	1950[a]	1950 1951	100[a]	100[a]	Towed gun ML-20 152 mm [Second-hand]
	1950[a]	1950 1955	10[a]	10[a]	Air search radar P-3/Dumbo

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
1950	1950	15	15	Trainer aircraft Po-2 [Second-hand]
1950[a]	1950	24[a]	24[a]	Trainer aircraft Po-2 [Second-hand/Aid]
1950[a]	1950	132[a]	132[a]	Self-propelled gun SU76 [Second-hand]
1950	1950 1954	500[a]	500[a]	Tank T34/85 [Second-hand[a]/Aid]
1950	1951	35[a]	35[a]	Bomber aircraft Tu-25 [Second-hand/Aid]
1950	1950	24	24	Fighter aircraft Yak-9 [Second-hand/Aid]
1951[a]	1951 1962	100[a]	100[a]	Light transport armored craft An-2
1951[a]	1952 1960	500[a]	500[a]	Anti-aircraft gun KS-19 100 mm
1951[a]	1953	100[a]	100[a]	Fighter aircraft MiG-15
1951[a]	1952 1975	320[a]	320[a]	Fire control radar SON-9/Fire Can
1952[a]	1953	70[a]	70[a]	Fighter aircraft La-11 [Second-hand]
1952[a]	1953	8[a]	8[a]	Transport aircraft Li-2T/Cab [Second-hand]
1952[a]	1953	5[a]	5[a]	Light helicopter Mi-1
1952[a]	1953 1957	50[a]	50[a]	Trainer aircraft MiG-15UTI
1952[a]	1953 1959	20[a]	20[a]	Air search radar P-10/Knife Rest
1953[a]	1954	2	2[a]	Patrol aircraft Antillerist [Second-hand]
1953[a]	1953	7[a]	7[a]	Bomber aircraft Il-28
1954[a]	1955 1956	40[a]	40[a]	Bomber aircraft Il-28 [Second-hand[a]]
1954[a]	1954 1955	8[a]	8[a]	Minesweeper Tral [Second-hand]
1955[a]	1956 1959	200[a]	200[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-24 240 mm

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
1955[a]	1955 1956	200[a]	200[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BMD-20 200 mm
1955[a]	1956 1958	100[a]	100[a]	Fighter aircraft Mig-17
1955[a]	1956 1958	5[a]	5[a]	Air search radar P-20/Token
1956[a]	1957	10[a]	10[a]	Transport aircraft Il-12
1956[a]	1957 1959	27[a]	27[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft Project-123/P-6
1957[a]	1957 1960	8	8	Patrol craft SO-1
1958[a]	1958 1960	29[a]	29[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft Project-123/P-4
1960[a]	1961 1962	60[a]	60[a]	Tank IS-2 [Second-hand]
1960[a]	1960	4	4	Submarine Project-613/Whiskey [Second-hand]
1960[a]	1960 1964	50[a]	50[a]	Towed multiple rocket launcher RPU-14 140 mm
1961	1962 1964	15[a]	15[a]	Surface-to-air missile system S-75 Dvina/SA-2
1961	1962 1964	450[a]	450[a]	Surface-to-air missile V-750/SA-2
1962[a]	1962 1966	25[a]	25[a]	Helicopter Mi-4A
1962[a]	1963	2	2	Minesweeper Project-254/T-43 [Second-hand]
1962[a]	1963 1965	12[a]	12[a]	Towed gun SM-4-1B 130 mm [Second-hand[a]]
1962[a]	1963 1965	3[a]	3[a]	Fire control radar Top Bow
1964[a]	1965 1966	100[a]	100[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-14 140 mm
1965[a]	1966 1975	500[a]	500[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
1965[a]	1965	250[a]	250[a]	Armored personnel carrier
	1971			BTR-152 [Second-hand]
1965[a]	1965	250	250	Armored personnel carrier
	1971			BTR-40 [Second-hand]
1965[a]	1965	15[a]	15[a]	Transport aircraft
				Il-14 [Second-hand]
1965[a]	1965	500[a]	500[a]	Short-range air-to-air missile
	1966			K-13A/AA-2
1965[a]	1966	160[a]	160[a]	Towed gun
	1967			M-46 13-mm [Second-hand[a]]
1965[a]	1966	20[a]	20[a]	Fighter aircraft
	1967			MiG-19 [Second-hand/Aid]
1965	1966	85[a]	85[a]	Fighter aircraft
	1967			MiG-21F-13
1965[a]	1966	100[a]	100[a]	Light tank
	1967			PT-76
1965[a]	1966	30[a]	30[a]	Surface-to-air missile system
	1971			S-75 Dvina/SA-2
1965[a]	1965	100[a]	100[a]	Self-propelled gun
	1968			SU-100 [Second-hand]
1965[a]	1966	1500[a]	1500[a]	Surface-to-air missile
	1980			V-750/SA-2
1966[a]	1967	50[a]	50[a]	Armored personnel carrier
				BTR-50
1966[a]	1966	200[a]	200[a]	Towed gun
	1967			F-30 22 mm
1966[a]	1966	300[a]	300[a]	Towed gun
	1968			D-74 122 mm
1967[a]	1968	400[a]	400[a]	Short-range air-to-air missile
	1971			K-13A/AA-2
1967[a]	1968	65	65	Fighter aircraft
	1971			MiG-21PFM
1967[a]	1968	150[a]	150[a]	Anti-ship missile
	1970			P-15/SS-N-2A
1967[a]	1968	12	12	Fighter/ground attack aircraft
				Project-205/Osa
1967[a]	1968	250[a]	250[a]	Self-propelled anti-aircraft gun
	1977			ZSU-57-2
1968[a]	1968	150[a]	150[a]	Anti-ship missile
	1973			KS-1/AS-1 [Second-hand[a]]
1968[a]	1968	9[a]	9[a]	Coast defense system
	1973			SS-C-2 CDS [Second-hand[a]]
1969[a]	1970	20[a]	20	Light transport armored craft
	1971			An-2

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
1969[a]	1970	15[a]	15[a]	Mobile surface-to-air missile launcher Luna/FROG [Second-hand[a]]
1969[a]	1970	9[a]	9[a]	Mobile surface-to-air missile launcher Luna-M/FROG-7
1969[a]	1970 1972	10	6[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft Project-183/Komar
1969[a]	1971	28	28	Fighter/ground attack aircraft Su-7B
1970	1972 1975	400[a]	400[a]	Anti-tank missile 3M6 Shmel/AT-1
1970[a]	1971 1975	350[a]	350[a]	Tank T-62
1970[a]	1971	100[a]	100[a]	Self-propelled anti-aircraft gun ZSU-23-4 Shilka
1971[a]	1973 1975	2[a]	2	Fire control radar MR-104/Drum tilt
1971[a]	1973 1975	2	2[a]	Sea search radar Rangout/Square Tie
1972[a]	1972 1973	100[a]	100[a]	Infantry fighting vehicle BMP-1
1972[a]	1972 1975	200[a]	200[a]	Towed gun BMP-1
1972[a]	1972	2[a]	2[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft Project-205/Osa [Second-hand]
1973[a]	1973 1977	250[a]	250[a]	Armored personnel carrier BTR-60PB
1973[a]	1974	150[a]	150[a]	Short-range air-to-air missile K-13M/AA-2C
1973[a]	1974	24[a]	24[a]	Fighter aircraft MiG-21PFM
1973[a]	1973 1974	4	4	Fighter/ground attack aircraft Project-206/Shershen [Second-hand[a]]
1974[a]	1976 1978	150[a]	150[a]	Tank T-62
1978	1979 1983	108[a]	108	Light helicopter Mi-2
1979[a]	1981 1991	15[a]	15[a]	Fire control radar MR-104/Drum tilt
1979[a]	1981 1991	120[a]	85[a]	Anti-ship missile P-15U/SS-N-2B

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
1979[a]	1981	18[a]	18[a]	Sea search radar
	1991			Rangout/Square Tie
1982[a]	1983	20[a]	20[a]	Transport helicopter
				Mi-8T
1982[a]	1983	2[a]	2[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft
				Project-205/Osa [Second-hand[a]]
1984[a]	1987	2[a]	2[a]	Air search radar
	1988			Big Back
1984[a]	1985	122[a]	122[a]	Infantry fighting vehicle
	1991			BMP-1
1984[a]	1985	60[a]	60[a]	Fighter aircraft
	1987			MiG-23/ML
1984[a]	1985	250[a]	250[a]	Beyond-visual-range air-to-air
	1987			missile
				R-23/AA-7
1984[a]	1985	8[a]	8[a]	Surface-to-air missile system
				S-125M/SA-SB
1984[a]	1987	4[a]	4	Surface-to-air missile system
	1988			S-200 Agara/SA-5
1984[a]	1987	75[a]	75[a]	Surface-to-air missile
	1988			S-200/SA-5
1984[a]	1985	300[a]	300[a]	Surface-to-air missile
				V-600/SA-3B [Second-hand[a]]
1984[a]	1985	48[a]	48[a]	Self-propelled anti-aircraft gun
	1988			ZSU-23-4 Shilka
				[Second-hand[a]]
1985[a]	1986	5[a]	5[a]	Anti-submarine warfare helicopter
				Mi-14PL
1985[a]	1985	47[a]	47[a]	Combat helicopter
	1986			Mi-24D/Mi-25
1985[a]	1985	50[a]	50[a]	Transport helicopter
	1986			Mi-8MT/Mi-17
1985[a]	1987	3[a]	3[a]	Air search radar
	1988			ST-68/Tin Shelf
1987[a]	1988	14[a]	14[a]	Fighter aircraft
	1989			MiG-29S
1987[a]	1988	50[a]	50[a]	Beyond-visual-range air-to-air
	1989			missile
				R-23/AA-10
1987[a]	1988	150[a]	150[a]	Short-range air-to-air missile
	1989			R-60/AA-8
1987	1988	36[a]	36[a]	Ground attack armored carrier
	1990			Su-25

(*continued*)

Table 4.1 (continued)

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
Russia	1979[a]	1992 1996	6[a]	6[a]	Fire control radar MR-104/Drum Tilt
	1979[a]	1992 1996	35[a]	35[a]	Anti-ship missile P-15U/SS-N-2B
	1979[a]	1992 1996	4[a]	4[a]	Sea search radar Rangout/square Tie
	1990[a]	1992	3[a]	3[a]	Fighter/ground attack aircraft MiG-29S
	1990[a]	1992	10[a]	10[a]	Beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile R-27/AA-10
	1990[a]	1992	40[a]	40[a]	Short-range air-to-air missile R-60/AA-8
	1994[a]	1995 1996	4[a]	4[a]	Transport helicopter Mi-26
	2000[a]	2000 2001	32[a]	32[a]	Infantry fighting vehicle BTR-80A
	2005[a]	2006	10[a]	10[a]	Anti-ship missile Kh-25 Uran/SS-N-25
United States	1983[a]	1983 1984	87[a]	87[a]	Light helicopter Hughes-500D/MD

Source: Adapted from SIPRI Arms Transfers Database
[a]Estimated

Korean War by a number of years. Pyongyang's propping-up started when the DPRK was a newly minted state. The Soviet Union provided second-hand artillery, ships, and armored vehicles to Pyongyang, before developing its air fleet with transports and fighter aircrafts. New systems came from China, but only later during the 1970s. Trade concentrated around defense system in the 1980s, with missiles purchased in large quantities, and missile licenses adding up to about 30,000 units. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan became one of North Korea's weapons suppliers. There was more international scrutiny, though: when it sold 21 Soviet-made MiG-21 jet fighters, the United States and South Korea started to protest.[11] While Kazakhstan apparently topped the list of North Korea's weapons providers for the 2000s with more than USD176 million worth of weapon imports out of a total of USD308 million,[12] trade deals have been dwindling since then because of sanctions. Small arms sales, a drop of water in a very large sea, came largely from Switzerland: shotguns,

rifles, and revolvers, worth about USD 170,000 were purchased by Pyongyang in the early 2010s,[13] while it was still a legal transaction.

The Latest Years: The DPRK as a Weapons Supplier

In a speech to senior officials of the Central Committee of the Worker's Party of Korea on 4 February 1992, Kim Jong Il said that 'state power is defended by force of arms,' suggesting that the modernization of the DPRK army had to be achieved by more training courses to promote soldiers to cadre roles, and that fur coats be provided to thank soldiers for their work.[14] Two decades later, Kim Jong Un attended precision drone tests designed to intercept cruise missiles, and celebrated the new 'Chuch'e-based art of artillery war.'[15] If the DPRK was already armed more than any state of its stature by then, the next two decades transformed it from a likely failed state to a rogue state . This might very well challenge Robert Litwak's suggestion that a rogue state is unlikely to threaten more than its immediate region since the DPRK has supplied weapons to the Middle East since the early 1980s. This role has been drastically curtailed amid sanctions imposed after its 2006 nuclear test. The DPRK's military trade is largely affected by five United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs):

1. Security Council Resolution 1718 (October 2006)[16] has called for the DPRK to stop the development of its ballistic missile program. A trade ban blocked the sale of battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large-caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, helicopters, warships, missiles, missile systems, and large-scale arms.
2. Security Council Resolution 1874 (June 2009)[17] banned all weapon imports and exports except small arms. It became mandatory for any state intending to sell arms to the DPRK to inform the United Nations Security Council first.
3. Security Council Resolution 2087 (January 2013)[18] clarified states' right to seize and destroy potential illicit cargo to and from the DPRK, including cargo that could contain materials supporting weapons development or research.
4. Security Council Resolution 2094 (March 2013)[19] made it more difficult for the DPRK to engage in cash transactions.
5. Security Council Resolution 2270 (March 2016)[20] prohibited leasing and chartering vessels to the DPRK. Small arms sales and light weapons trade were banned.

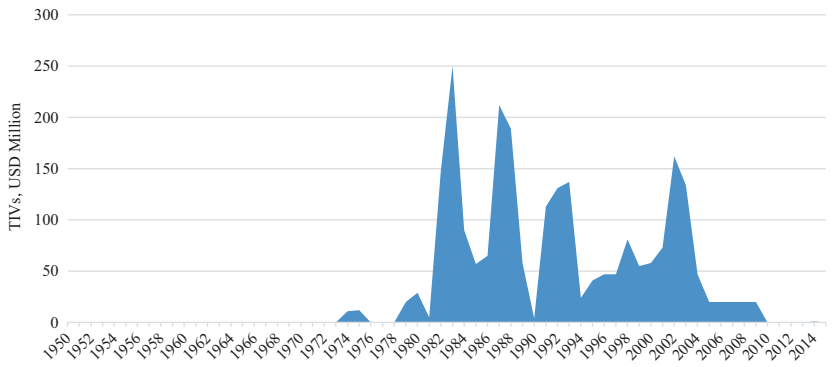

Fig. 4.4 North Korea's arms exports—1950–2015 (*Source*: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Figures are SIPRI trend indicator values (TIVs) expressed in USD million at constant (1990) prices)

The SIPRI TIVs clearly show that the totals of DPRK's arms exports are much smaller than what it has routinely imported from partners over the years (see Fig. 4.4). They also show that export values have come to a near halt following the initial 2006 sanctions.

Yet it would be wishful thinking to believe that sanctions have halted North Korean proliferation since the figures cannot mask two important facts. First, a number of trading patterns still occur illegally in spite of sanctions, and it is often impossible to know about the transactions unless an accident happens and a cargo ship sinks or is impounded, revealing illicit goods. Second, most harm has already been done: the DPRK has sold weapons to states located in unstable parts of the world; it only takes a cursory glance at North Korea's top arms exports destinations since the mid-1970s to realize the important role the DPRK has played, though indirectly, in a number of contemporary conflicts (see Fig. 4.5).

Most of the DPRK's weapons were bought by Iran in the 1980s, after Tehran fell out with the United States following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In the 1990s, Syria became a regular DPRK customer, having lost part of its weapons suppliers with the collapse of the Soviet Union. By then, the DPRK was ready to recycle some of its older and second-hand Soviet missiles and was also gearing up to license and sell some of its own technology. So for the past two decades, North Korea's bread and butter has been derived from profit-driven missile sales (Fig. 4.6).

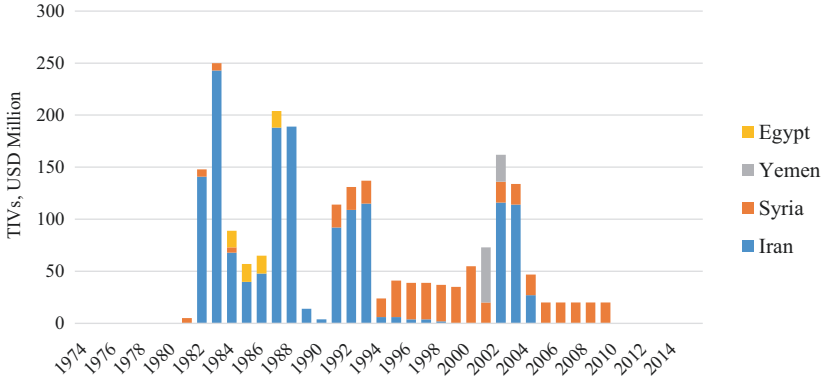

Fig. 4.5 Top four North Korea's arms exports destinations—1974–2015 (*Source*: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Figures are SIPRI trend indicator values (TIVs) expressed in USD million at constant (1990) prices)

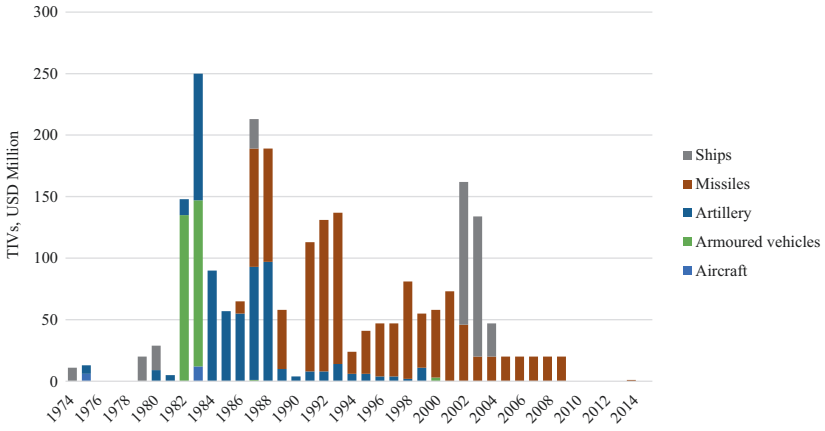

Fig. 4.6 North Korea's arms exports by type—1974–2015 (*Source*: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Figures are SIPRI trend indicator values (TIVs) expressed in USD million at constant (1990) prices)

In addition to systems, the DPRK also sells missile licenses (see Table 4.2). It is overall a much smaller number of licenses than the DPRK obtained itself from China and Russia, but it contributes to proliferation in the Middle East as well. Does this mean that the DPRK is attempting to create a balancing force against the United States by colluding with Iran

Table 4.2 DPRK as weapons supplier

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
Licenses					
Iran	1982[a]	1982 1987	100[a]	100[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm
	1987[a]	1988 1998	100[a]	100[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher M-1985 240 mm
	1990	1991 1993	170[a]	170[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Hwasong-6/Scud Mod-C
Syria	1996[a]	2000 2009	100[a]	100[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Scud Mod-D
Recipients					
DR Congo	1973[a]	1974	3	3	Fast attack craft Project-123/P-4 [Second-hand]
	1975[a]	1975	10[a]	10[a]	Towed gun M-46 130 mm
Egypt	1983[a]	1984 1987	145[a]	145[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm
Ethiopia	2000[a]	2000	10[a]	10[a]	Armored personnel carrier YW-531/Type-63
Guyana	1979[a]	1980	12	12	Towed gun D-30 122 mm [Second-hand[a]]
	1982[a]	1983	6	6[a]	Towed multiple rocket launcher Type-63 107 mm
Hamas (Palestine)	2014[a]	2014	25[a]	25[a]	Anti-tank missile 9M111 Fagot/AT-4
Iran	1981[a]	1982 1983	150[a]	150[a]	Tank T-62
	1982[a]	1983	6[a]	6	Fighter aircraft MiG-19 [Second-hand]
	1982[a]	1982 1986	200[a]	200[a]	Towed multiple rocket launcher Type 62 107 mm
	1983[a]	1983 1988	480[a]	480[a]	Towed gun Type-59-1 130 mm
	1986	1986 1989	4000[a]	4000[a]	Anti-tank missile 9M14M/AT-3
	1986[a]	1987 1988	3	3	Patrol craft Chaho
	1986[a]	1987 1988	20[a]	20[a]	Anti-ship missile HY-2/SY-1A/CSS-N-2
	1986[a]	1987 1988	20[a]	20[a]	Self-propelled gun M-1978 170 mm

(*continued*)

Table 4.2 (continued)

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
	1987	1987 1988	100[a]	100[a]	Surface-to-surface missile R-17 Elbrus/Scud-B
	1993[a]	1993 1995	10[a]	10[a]	Mobile surface-to-surface missile launcher 9P117/Scud-B TEL
	2001[a]	2002 2003	15[a]	15[a]	Fast attack craft Peykaap
	2002[a]	2002 2003	3[a]	3	Fast attack craft Ghjae
	2002[a]	2002 2003	3[a]	3[a]	Fast attack craft Kaami
	2002[a]	2002 2003	10[a]	10[a]	Fast attack craft Tir
Libya	1979[a]	1980	10[a]	10[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm
	1995	1999	5[a]	5[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Hwasong-6/Scud Mod-C
Madagascar	1975[a]	1975	4	4	Fighter aircraft Mig-17 [Second-hand]
	1978[a]	1979	4	4[a]	Landing craft Nampo
Myanmar	1998[a]	1999	16[a]	16[a]	Towed gun Type 59-1 130 mm
Nicaragua	1983[a]	1984	5[a]	5[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm
Pakistan	1993[a]	1996 1997	2[a]	2[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Nodong
Pop. Res. Committee (Palestine)	2014[a]	2014	25[a]	25[a]	Anti-tank missile 9M111 Fagot/AT-4
Syria	1981[a]	1981 1984	50[a]	50[a]	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm
	1981[a]	1982	10[a]	10[a]	Towed multiple rocket launcher Type-63 107 mm
	1990	1991 1993	12[a]	12[a]	Mobile surface-to-surface missile launcher 9P117/Scud-B TEL
	1990	1991 2000	160[a]	160[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Hwasong-6/Scud Mod-C

(*continued*)

Table 4.2 (continued)

	Order	*Delivery*	*Order*	*Delivered*	*Weapon type and description*
Tanzania	1979[a]	1980	4	4[a]	Landing craft Nampo
United Arab Emirates	1989[a]	1989	6[a]	6[a]	Mobile surface-to-surface missile launcher 9P117/Scud-B TEL
	1989[a]	1989	25[a]	25[a]	Surface-to-surface missile R-17 Elbrus/Scud-B
Uganda	1987[a]	1987	10	10	Self-propelled multiple rocket launcher BM-21 Grad 122 mm
	1987[a]	1987	14[a]	14[a]	Armored personnel carrier BTR-152 [Second-hand]
	1987[a]	1987	100[a]	100[a]	Portable surface-to-air missile Strela-2/SA-7
Vietnam	1996[a]	1996 1997	100[a]	100[a]	Portable surface-to-air missile Igla-1/SA-16
	1997[a]	1998	25[a]	25[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Hwasong-6/Scud Mod-C
Yemen	1994[a]	2001 2002	45[a]	45[a]	Surface-to-surface missile Hwasong-6/Scud Mod-C

Source: Adapted from SIPRI Arms Transfers Database
[a]Estimated

and Syria? Several decades ago, Pyongyang might have played middleman between Iran and the Soviet Union, selling Soviet weapons to Tehran in order to agitate the United States, which was backing up Iraq against Iran in the1980s.[21] But it is harder to find proof for recent political dealings with Iran and especially Syria. The more likely explanation for this weapons-trading motley crew is the fact that these states are already politically and economically isolated from the global world order, and it is not easy for them to find trading partners, especially those willing and able to procure weapons.

But using TIVs calls for caution, as it does not mean that the DPRK has received the amount of money listed in the table. 'Creative' arrangements, such as credit swap, and payment in food occurred more often than not, especially post-2006 sanctions. While Iran and Syria are at the top of the list of North Korean missile exports, Pyongyang's export roster also included long-standing partner Vietnam, which supplied rice to the

DPRK in exchange for weapons parts, ammunition, and Soviet-made Scud C missiles.[22] Iran financed most of its purchase by increasing its oil production incidentally going against OPEC guidelines, and supplying oil to Pyongyang. But Iran has also been a firm customer of North Korean self-developed technology: though it appeared that the DPRK had to cancel an order for Nodong-1missiles in 1994,[23] President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's desire to expand Iran's missile range to 3500 kilometers allegedly led Iran to purchase 18 BM-25 missiles from North Korea in 2005. With a range of 2500 kilometers each, they would expand on the existing Iranian Shehab-3 fleet that had a smaller range of 1300 kilometers.[24] This information cannot be cross-checked with the SIPRI data, however, and should as such be treated with caution. Is Iran a simple, straight-up customer, or is it working in concert with the DPRK to develop weapons? Tehran has often denied any involvement in helping North Korea with its missile program and Minister of Defense Brigadier-General Ahmad Vahidi stated in 2011 that both countries were self-sufficient. According to him, Iran had just 'no need of others.'[25] Yet, a UN panel of experts in May 2011 stated that 'ballistic missile-related items' were exchanged via North Korea's Air Koryo, and Iran Air, with the possibility of a Chinese involvement as flights had transited via Chinese cargo hubs.[26]

Libya also featured amply on North Korea's rolodex: Muammar Gaddafi was interested in purchasing Scud missiles from North Korea,[27] and the purchases appear in the SIPRI database for 1995. In the early 2000s, it appeared Libya was trying to play nice again, renouncing arms trade and the development of weapons of mass destruction, and welcoming inspectors to its supposed nuclear facilities. It seemed the DPRK's weapons trade relationship with Libya would thus fizzle out. Yet, even though Libya renounced any form of missile trade with North Korea, Syria, and Iran,[28] there was no clear denial of a prior relationship, nor that Iranian and North Korean engineers had been stationed in Libya for a number of years and were suspected of developing Nodong and Scud missiles.[29]

But it is Syria that typifies North Korea's customer base: the end of the Cold War led to a shortage of weapons, and a gap in the market which the DPRK was more than happy to fill. It started to engage with countries and in some cases political groups sitting at the periphery of acceptable political behavior and foreign policy choices. Kim Jong Il himself acknowledged the DPRK–Syrian relationship: for him, trading weapons with Syria was a way to generate large profits, and North Korea had no intention to stop the program, regardless of the type of incentives and codling it would

undoubtedly receive from the international community.[30] The DPRK also lent support to Syria's Al Assad regime by manufacturing Scud D ballistic missiles and by providing guiding technology similar to the one it had supplied to Teheran in the late 2000s.[31] The relationship may well have continued regardless of the sanction regime: British intelligence suggested in 2011 that North Korea was still selling guns and ammunitions to Syria via offices set up around the world by the Korean Mining and Development Corporation (KOMID), with the company being as a storefront to carry out illegal activities.[32] Pyongyang was also caught red-handed a few times, such as when a Chinese ship was intercepted in May 2012 on its way to Syria loaded with more than 400 graphite cylinders manufactured in North Korea and ready to be used to build ballistic missiles.[33]

There are a number of other suspicious trading deals between the DPRK and countries often qualified as exhibiting rogue or failed state characteristics, but evidence of ties are not always substantiated. What is clear is that from the time UNSCR sanctions started in 2006, there has been an increased scrutiny at sea. Ships are searched more frequently. Countries that might have in the past purchased weapons legally from the DPRK are also closely monitored. This includes Ethiopia, which was suspected of buying illegal weapons in January 2007, when Security Council Resolution 1718 was already in place. Ethiopia came clean quickly, acknowledging that a ship had indeed carried engineering equipment and parts to make small arms ammunitions, but this was then still allowed under SCR 1718.[34] Yemen, a county that was part of an alliance with the United States in the War Against Terror, also often sparks questions when it comes to its relationship with the DPRK. In December 2002, a ship originating from North Korea and manned with a Korean crew was halted in the Arabian Sea after being spotted by the US Navy without displaying a clear pavillon. Hidden Scud missile parts were found on board, but it was allowed to carry on toward Yemen, its final destination, as the parts were not yet subject to sanctions.[35] A decade later, everything came full circle when Yemeni rebel forces launched Korean Scud missiles into Saudi Arabia.[36] Mechanical failures and maritime woes have also provided useful insights into technology sharing: this was the case when Indian customs seized the North Korean vessel Ku Wol San which was on its way to Pakistan in 1999, and impounded its cargo. A number of missile components were found aboard the ship, including parts to build Pakistani Ghauri missiles. The Ghauri missile has since then been categorized as a North Korean Nodong clone,[37] most likely based on the 1993

Nodong units Pakistan purchased. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the DPRK was also keen on finding new markets for its missile components and tried to secure fresh deals with a variety of trading partners. Nigeria was particularly interested in maintaining its status as a regional power within Africa and was looking for potential security partners. North Korean Defense Attaché in Nigeria Colonel Ho Cho Guk saw 'fruitful possibilities' after a meeting with the Nigerian Defense Minister in 2000.[38] Four years later, a spokesman for Nigeria's Vice President Atiku Abubakar revealed that the DPRK had been pushing for signing a Memorandum of Understanding to develop missile technology.[39] But the deal was not to be, in the end: the DPRK offer was rejected when the United States, which considered Nigeria as an active partner in Africa, pressured Abuja to turn away from Korean technology.[40]

Nuclear Cooperation

While the DPRK was slowly developing its conventional weapons capabilities, it was also actively striving to develop a nuclear weapons program. If there had been any doubt about its intentions in the past, then those were made clear at the Seventh WPK Congress in May 2016: Kim Jong Un stressed the fact that the DPRK was not just a nuclear-weapons state, but a responsible one, and that it would only use its nuclear capabilities if its sovereignty was threatened by foreign nuclear weapons. While it was argued at the beginning of this volume that North Korea is no exceptional power, it should still be recognized that the DPRK's nuclear development over the past six decades has been atypical: most nuclear-weapons states have achieved this particular status before the NPT was signed, or never became party to it in the first place, pursuing their own nuclear weapons program at the margins of global non-proliferation norms and governance. In 1971, David Vital suggested that acquiring nuclear weapons would not necessarily guarantee that a small state would become as powerful as a large one: for him nuclear weapons would bring only a very limited deterrent value to small powers.[41] But it is quite unlikely that Kim Il Sung read David Vital in the 1970s, and so far, North Korea's nuclear capacities might very well have acted as a deterrent, though it remains impossible to prove that particular causal link. But many years ago, the DPRK was neatly tucked under the Soviet Union and the PRC's nuclear umbrella. It also became party to the NPT in 1985 but by that time, it was already working on facilities that could provide peaceful nuclear energy

to support its power grid, and on facilities that could provide energy to be weaponized. Yet, it also signed an agreement with South Korea on 31 December 1991, and committed to a nuclear free peninsula.[42] According to Richard Armitage, the later 1994 Agreed Framework provided an illusionary time-out in the race to curb the DPRK's nuclear aspirations and many senior administration officials believed the Agreed Framework had fully curtailed North Korea's nuclear aspiration.[43] But when Pyongyang decided to withdraw from the NPT in 2003, the Six-Party Talks became the last hope to make sure the DPRK would change its mind and accept denuclearization. David Albright and Corey Inderstein, writing in January 2006 for the United States Institute of Peace, were strong advocates of a complete dismantlement of North Korean nuclear facilities, one that would be organized under the IAEA and that would also incorporate confidence-building measures.[44] Yet when the DPRK tested its first nuclear weapon in August of the same year, achieving denuclearization suddenly looked more and more complex. The Six-Party Talks went back and forth on the question of denuclearization, and ultimately afforded very little incentive for North Korea to renounce its nuclear program. At this point, nothing appears solid enough for the DPRK to renounce the relative deterrence the weapons might offer, as well as the international and domestic clout it gives the regime. The potential cash-cow role that the program would play in the future, if the DPRK decided to barter its know-how, might have also tipped the scales. Yet North Korea's estimated nuclear warhead stock is relatively low compared to other existing arsenals (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Estimated global nuclear warhead stocks

	Deployed	*Stockpiled*	*Retired*	*Total available*
Russia	1796	4500	2800	6296
United States	1367	4571	2500	5938
France	/	300	/	300
China	/	260	/	260
UK	/	215	/	215
Pakistan	/	140	/	140
India	/	110	/	110
Israel	/	80	/	80
DPRK	/	8	/	8

Source: Adapted from Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, U.S. Department of State, November 3, 2016

But when it comes to nuclear weapons, the difference does not lie so much between having 100 or 1000 units: what is important is possessing at least one. As seen in 1945, it only takes one nuclear device to achieve near-irreparable damages.

North Korea's Cold War Nuclear Program

Within only a short decade, the United States had initiated its Manhattan Project, tested, developed, and used nuclear weapons, and had been caught up by Moscow's own nuclear development. This did not escape Kim Il Sung who expressed his own interest in nuclear technology shortly after the end of the Korean War. In order to get on the horse, the North Korean Ambassador to Moscow was tasked to request technological assistance so that Pyongyang could start producing atomic energy.[45] This was actually, then, a rather common situation: the United States, under the Atoms for Peace Program, had already shared some of its technology with a number of countries. That is indeed how Israel got started on its, still as of today, unconfirmed nuclear program, or how South Africa developed its own embryonic program as a way to gain regional hegemony in Africa, before eventually renouncing it altogether to join the NPT in 1989.[46] But when the United States deployed nuclear weapons on South Korean land in 1960, the DPRK was worried. As the relationship with both the Soviet Union and the PRC was tensing up, it is almost logical to see Pyongyang attempting to protect its sovereignty by developing a nuclear deterrent.[47] It is now possible to confirm this as many declassified Soviet documents show how the DPRK, used its diplomatic contacts and the President of the North Korean Committee for Atomic Energy to ask for Soviet Satellites' scientific team's help.[48] But Pyongyang also refused to listen to the PRC and the USSR's promises, doubting they would indeed protect its sovereignty shall the need arise again.[49] While maintaining its own security was an obvious concern, the DPRK was also trying to compete with the South, since Park Chung Hee was seeking nuclear technology.[50] But North Korea's economy was not very strong, and it was getting more and more difficult for Pyongyang to honor some commitments it had with Moscow and for many years, North Korea's requests fell into deaf Soviet ears.[51] Determined, Pyongyang went back to the drawing board and started knocking on different doors, asking Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic for assistance. Pyongyang begged for

any support: it was more than willing to host tech graduate students,[52] though it secretly hoped for uranium delivery, and perhaps even for a nuclear power plant to be built on its own soil.[53] On the other side of the Demilitarized Zone, South Korea was busy, in the early 1980s, building nuclear power plants. With South Korea's economy clearly surpassing that of the North, the DPRK went back to Moscow, trying its luck once again at the nuclear game. After much negotiation, Moscow finally let go: a 'prestige' reactor would be built in North Korea in 1985.[54] But by 1988, there was not much to show for: while Soviet nuclear experts had visited the DPRK, there was no consensus on where to build the plant and the project just faltered in the end.[55] While the end of the Cold War expanded the realm of international relations and international engagement for many countries, it made matters more difficult for the DPRK, especially when it came to sustaining meaningful relationships with former Soviet Union satellites, since they were more attracted by South Korea's wealth and potential. The little help that was provided did not match the DPRK's expectations either: Poland offered nuclear expertise to the DPRK in 2001, but ironically in the field of export control of weapons of mass destruction, not in their development.[56] Following the 2006 nuclear test, the Czech Republic changed its tune, offering civilian intelligence service to restrict the DPRK's purchase of dual use components, and working to bust a number of illegal transactions.[57] Yet, even though the DPRK was snubbed by many of its relatively close allies over the years in its quest for nuclear energy, it has managed to test nuclear weapons five times since 2006 (see Table 4.4).

But each test has led to a round of sanctions targeting nuclear trading, and nuclear R&D. As of 2016, there are five UNSCRs that regulate the DPRK's nuclear program:

Table 4.4 DPRK nuclear tests magnitude and yield

	Magnitude (Richter scale)	*Yield (Kiloton)*
9 October 2006	4.2	1
25 May 2009	4.7	2–4
12 February 2013	5	6–9
6 January 2016	4.9	7–9
9 September 2016	5	10

Source: Adapted from U.S. Geological Survey, Norsar Norway, Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense, United States Intelligence community

1. Security Council Resolution 1718 was adopted on 14 October 2006, and prohibits further nuclear tests while asking for the DPRK to halt its nuclear program and return to the negotiation table.[58] An asset freeze and travel ban on people and goods involved in nuclear program development was put in place. Nuclear technology imports into the DPRK were prohibited, as well as nuclear-related training. States were asked to participate in the effort to seize illicit materials by inspecting cargo destined to the DPRK, and to also freeze assets of individuals who would be suspected of assisting the DPRK.
2. Security Council Resolution 1874 was adopted on 12 June 2009, following North Korea's underground nuclear test that was conducted on 25 May 2009.[59] States now had a duty to inform the United Nations Security Council if they had found any suspicious cargo. Loans to the DPRK were further restricted, though humanitarian loans were excluded from the sanction regime.
3. Security Council Resolution 2087 was adopted on 22 January 2013, following the DPRK's 12 December 2012 satellite launch.[60] Urging for compliance with Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874, this new resolution also added a ban on materials and people that could contribute to research programs.
4. Security Council Resolution 2094 was adopted on 7 March 2013, following North Korea's third nuclear test on 12 February 2013.[61] This resolution mostly focused on financial control to prevent the DPRK from accessing cash. Along with restrictions on bulk cash transfer and further restrictions on accessing the international banking system, the resolution asked for increased scrutiny of North Korean diplomatic staff.
5. Security Council Resolution 2270 was adopted on 2 March 2016, following North Korea's fourth nuclear test on 6 January 2016 and the use of ballistic missile technology for the 7 February 2016 launch that in itself violated all previous four Security Council Resolutions.[62] The resolution imposed stricter control on air, land, and sea routes, and further prohibited states to sell aviation-grade fuel to the DPRK.

Evidence recently made available shows that Pakistan has been instrumental in Pyongyang's nuclear development, which was partly financed by its conventional weapons trade with Iran, Libya, Syria, and potentially Myanmar.

Finding North Korea's Nuclear Mentor

In the late 1990s, North Korea received gas centrifuges to support the production of weapons-grade uranium.[63] The equipment came from Pakistan, but the Pakistani government was hard-pressed to acknowledge its ties to Pyongyang. It was indeed a time, in the midst of the Gulf War, when Pakistan was busy 'cleaning up' its act to ensure cordial relationships with the United States. With Pakistan drafted into the Coalition of the Willing, it was crucial for Islamabad to keep its distance with North Korea, lest because Pakistan was also busy nurturing trade links with South Korea. But long-time significant other, neighbor, and nuclear nemesis India had a vested interest in making sure Pakistan's missile capabilities were kept under wrap.[64] So when India pressured President General Pervez Musharraf about alleged North Korean ties, he came clean about Pakistan's short-range missile purchase but denied any nuclear sale.[65] With instability mounting in the Middle East, suspicious nuclear deals could only enflame hearts, and in 2004, North Korea even denied via the Korean Central News Agency having received nuclear support from the Pakistani government.[66] But this was all a bit of a half-truth: while the Pakistani government did not directly send nuclear technology to the DPRK, its top nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, had in fact done the deed. A.Q. Khan is an important figure in Pakistani life, celebrated as a hero after Pakistan's 1998 nuclear test which was designed to reorganize regional stability and especially keep neighboring India in check.[67] But Khan threw Pakistan under the bus in 2008, reneging on previous confessions that had cleared the Pakistani government of all wrongdoing when he suggested he in fact did not act alone. Suddenly, the tale was a different one as it placed Pervez Musharraf at the heart of the operation, supervising the preparation of the centrifuges that were eventually shipped to the DPRK in the late 1990s.[68] Khan's dirty laundry list also included a number of Pakistani generals whom he accused of receiving bribes to help smuggle nuclear technology to the DPRK. Evidence were presented, including a letter from a North Korean official to Pakistani's Chief of Army Staff General Jehangir Karamat in 1998 disclosing information about an extensive multimillion dollar payment in exchange for the technology.[69] Perhaps Khan turned his coat because of a secret deal he had made with the Pakistani government, exchanging his silence for a pardon. What transpires from this story though is that the DPRK–Pakistani relationship involved several levels

of governance in both countries, and exposed links between a variety of profit-driven characters from the state apparatus, the scientific community, and the military establishment.

Ultimately, two questions remain: if Pakistan sold its nuclear technology for money, why wouldn't North Korea do the same with its own program? And who would be standing on the other side of the till? Nuclear weapons are not regular ticket items: with non-proliferation as a norm, strict controls in place and the fact that testing nuclear weapons will be detected by a spate of seismologic equipment, there is a limited customer roster for the DPRK's nuclear technology. We are then logically back, almost full circle, to the question of rogue states, and three in particular: Iran, Syria, and newcomer rogue Myanmar.

1. For Iran, the link might be logical: a long-time customer of North Korean goods, it has also signed a number of defense cooperation agreements with the North Korean government. Meetings between high-ranking figures took place numerous times. In 1989, Mohsen Rezaie, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, visited North Korea for a 6-day visit and met with North Korean Defense Minister Vice Marshal O Jin U.[70] In the 1990s, they also shared investigative police technology.[71] Upon North Korea's NPT withdrawal, they agreed to cooperate on a uranium enrichment factory in Kusong.[72] But Pyongyang was reluctant to admit to any nuclear cooperation with Iran while in the midst of Six-Party Talks negotiations and especially after it had just agreed in 2007 to dismantle Yongbyon.[73] Yet, the signs and evidence are there. North Korea exported nuclear software to Iran along with a team of scientists working on a neutron flow simulation program only a month after Kim Jong Il's death.[74] It is likely that the software could be used to help with its enrichment uranium plant in Fordo, one of Teheran's two enrichment uranium plants in addition to its Natanz plant.[75]
2. Syria and the DPRK have in the past traded and cooperated on missile development.[76] Evidence surrounding a potential nuclear relationship are harder to come by, but some links are possible. In September 2007, the Israeli secret service provided the United States with imagery that would suggest North Korea was helping Syria build a nuclear facility.[77] But just as it had done earlier the same year when similar allegations were made about its relationship with Iran, Pyongyang denied the accusations.[78] Syria also denied them,

though it took them 2 days to do so.[79] After the al Kibar reactor was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in September 2007, US Intelligence officials were relatively confident that North Korean and Syrian nuclear cooperation existed and that it had spanned more than a decade already. They thought, however, that North Korea was outsourcing technology in exchange for cash, and not using the reactor for its own nuclear needs.[80] Though hard to prove, since the Al Kibar reactor was not yet in operation at the time it was bombed, evidence brought forward by Japan suggest a North Korean shipment of yellowcake uranium was on its way to Syria just a few days before the reactor was destroyed.[81]

3. Burma's entanglement with North Korea nuclear program is less evidenced. Reports that a secret complex was being built in northern Myanmar in 2009 were corroborated by a number of high-ranking North Korean defectors' testimonies, and could be a starting point for further investigation.[82] Over the past few years, Myanmar has chosen, as many before, to distance itself from North Korea, and to also deny any nuclear cooperation.[83]

So, it appears that North Korea is willingly disseminating nuclear capabilities and products to those equally willing to pay for it. Could North Korea be pragmatic about this particular market? Is the DPRK likely to play a bigger role in the nuclear field in the future? In an odd twist, the DPRK has utilized its nuclear know-how in 2001 to help Taiwan dispose of its nuclear waste.[84] While this arrangement might herald a new type of security cooperation, one in which the DPRK is recognized as a country that can handle nuclear materials in general, there are only so many states willing to risk the international community's ire by acquiring North Korean nuclear technology, peaceful or not. If the DPRK believes, as it has broadcast to the world during the Seventh WPK Congress, that it is a nuclear power, and a responsible one, then its strategic survival might be ensured via this nuclear deterrent. Could this mean that the DPRK would no longer be a besieged consciousness and instead focus on its economic development now that it would be possible for Pyongyang to handle the existential threat posed by the United States' nuclear weapons, especially those stationed in South Korea? If that is the case, Pyongyang will be faced with a tough choice: going at it alone, and likely collapsing, or engaging in interdependence, but on its own terms, Chuch'e-style.

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CHAPTER 5

Navigating Interdependence

Despite the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) claim to self-sufficiency, the country is far from being as independent as it thinks or would like the rest of the world to think it is. For one, testing nuclear weapons in the hopes of perfecting a nuclear program and becoming a de-facto nuclear weapons state implies engaging with an audience. At the domestic level, it is about galvanizing citizens' support and managing the elite. At the international level, it is about communicating one's intentions, but within the constraints of its capacities. Thus, one of the most endearing features of nuclear development is that deterrence theory works only if countries are upfront about whether or not they have nukes, since mutually assured destruction functions on the premise that the fear of destruction will act as a safeguard against voluntary nuclear use. This simple truth applies very clearly to North Korea, which has started to seek international coverage when preparing its nuclear launches. While the DPRK gave a few days' warning ahead of its October 2006 nuclear test, it has repeatedly invited foreign media to attend launches in the past few years.[1] So it is certainly not antithetical to talk about North Korea being interdependent with parts of the world. As seen in the previous chapter, the DPRK has especially dabbled in interdependence to developing a nuclear deterrent and sell its weapons technology.

It would likely be too much to talk about North Korea's globalization, but the Korean Central News Agency is no stranger to the term, though it usually uses it to point out at South Korea's flows or at patterns of oppression. Interdependence, though, is a middle-ground concept useful in light

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of Knudsen's state formation stages. While the DPRK still strives to ensure its survival by developing nuclear weapons and especially reliable intercontinental ballistic missiles, it also needs a sustainable economic system. This is a complex task given the amount of sanctions, international condemnations, veiled disdain, or plain indifference that plagues the DPRK. In 1848, Karl Max described in his Communist Manifesto a changing international system, one where 'in place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nation.'[2] Today's reality, for North Korea, involves exchanges and trading. It also involves relationships and patterns that do not necessarily follow a strong political or ideological line. This can be easily explained: though the DPRK's trading momentum is regulated at the elite level by the Ministry of External Economic Affairs (formerly Ministry of Foreign Trade) with apparently little leeway for private economic initiatives, companies and business entities operate within the country's legal framework, but not necessarily in direct connection with the government. So, North Korea practices interdependence à la Robert Gilpin, in order to sustain its growth, and with entities usually searching for mutually-beneficial gains. This does not negate the fact that countries still distrust one another and compete with one another as well.[3] In order to parse North Korea's external engagement in the field of trade, it is useful to consider Vinod Aggarwal and Min Gyo Koo's institutional architecture concepts.[4] Put simply, their models provide a framework to analyze cooperation among various states according to variables such as geography and the number of participants to an arrangement, be it about security or about economic gains. Hence, categories range from bilateral concentrated, involving neighboring countries, to bilateral dispersed, for countries not located next to one another. The model also allows small groups, or mini-lateral schemes (still with either a concentrated or dispersed flavor), all the way up to multilateral arrangements. When placed within a North Korean context, this is a useful lens to consider Pyongyang's foreign interactions. While the most important economic arrangements for North Korea remain in its bilateral concentrated relationships with the People's Republic of China (PRC), strong trade partnerships have also involved distant lands such as Brazil and India. We also start to know more about North Korean trade through the study of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which were created following the regime decision in 1991 to relax financial regulations and offer incentives for foreign investors.[5] The study of older SEZs (Rason) and newer zones (Keumgang, Kaesong, or

Shinuiju) highlights the importance of Chinese investments and especially risk-taking investors who are, according to Heon Joo Jung and Timothy Rich, quite knowledgeable about North Korea, who speak the language, and who also act independently from the Chinese government.[6] Jong Woon Lee and Kevin Gray see Pyongyang's interest in such arrangements as vital, suggesting that North Korean leaders are now trying to compensate for a difficult economic environment fraught with sanctions, as well as what they call 'aid fatigue,' donors essentially reluctant to support the DPRK,[7] either because there are other many causes needing support around the world or because they are weary of the DPRK's nuclear antics.

North Korea's nuclear tests have had a significant impact on the Korean economy as United Nations Security Council Resolution's (UNSCR) sanctions have restricted many aspects of what would often be considered 'everyday' or 'normal' trading for any other countries:

1. Security Council Resolution 1718 (14 October 2006)[8] has called for a ban on luxury goods imports to North Korea and a heavy focus on inspecting any DPRK-related cargo.
2. Security Council Resolution 1874 (12 June 2009)[9] expanded sanctions on goods and prohibited loans to the DPRK, unless for humanitarian-purpose projects.
3. Security Council Resolution 2087 (22 January 2013)[10] expanded the ban on people traveling back and forth from the DPRK.
4. Security Council Resolution 2094 (7 March 2013)[11] restricted bulk cash transfer and made it more difficult for the DPRK to access international banking systems. Further bans on luxury goods such as jewelry, yachts, and conventional and racing cars were also added.
5. Security Council Resolution 2270 (2 March 216)[12] called for the closing of any foreign financial institution, bank branch, and joint venture in North Korea within three months and further sanctioned training and knowledge-exchange activities.

   While it is difficult to ascertain causality when looking at the DPRK since it is often not possible to cross-check data on the North Korean side, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) trend indicator values (TIVs) for arms exporters tell us that the DPRK has fallen out of the top 50 since UN sanctions came into effect in 2006 (Table 5.1). Could this be attributed to the sanctions that after all suddenly made it almost impossible for the DPRK to trade conventional weapons as it had done throughout the 1990s?

Table 5.1 TIVs of arms exports—top 50 largest exporters, 1950–2015

1950–2015			*1950–2006 (Before UN sanctions)*			*2007–2015 (After UN sanctions)*		
Rank	*Recipient*	*Total*[a]	*Rank*	*Recipient*	*Total*[a]	*Rank*	*Recipient*	*Total*[a]
1	India	114,899	1	India	85,664	1	India	29,235
2	China	75,244	2	China	62,529	2	China	12,716
3	Japan	63,322	3	Japan	59,535	3	S. Arabia	12,374
4	Egypt	60,194	4	Egypt	54,935	4	Pakistan	9830
5	Germany	55,763	5	Germany	54,198	5	UAE	9388
6	Turkey	54,805	6	Turkey	47,213	6	ROK	9245
7	Saudi Arabia	54,483	7	Iran	45,366	7	Australia	8605
8	Iraq	50,119	8	Iraq	45,332	8	United States	7958
9	ROK	49,349	9	Saudi Arabia	42,108	9	Turkey	7592
10	Iran	46,131	10	ROK	40,104	10	Algeria	7442
11	United States	44,306	11	Poland	39,508	11	Singapore	7293
12	Poland	42,256	12	Israel	38,625	12	Egypt	5258
13	Israel	41,868	13	Taiwan	38,441	13	Greece	5239
14	Taiwan	41,561	14	Syria	36,828	14	Venezuela	4850
15	Greece	40,197	15	United States	36,348	15	Iraq	4786
16	Syria	38,729	16	Greece	34,959	16	Viet Nam	4587
17	Australia	35,532	17	Libya	30,880	17	Indonesia	4564
18	Pakistan	34,740	18	GDR	30,794	18	UK	4207
19	UK	32,342	19	Soviet Union	29,927	19	Japan	3786
20	Canada	31,651	20	Czechoslovakia	29,584	20	Malaysia	3353
21	Libya	31,214	21	Canada	28,988	21	Morocco	3338
22	GDR	30,794	22	UK	28,135	22	Israel	3243
23	Soviet Union	29,927	23	Netherlands	27,559	23	Taiwan	3120
24	Czechoslovakia	29,584	24	Australia	26,928	24	Norway	2929
25	Netherlands	29,389	25	Italy	26,781	25	Poland	2748
26	Italy	29,100	26	Pakistan	24,909	26	Azerbaijan	2704

(*continued*)

Table 5.1 (continued)

1950–2015			*1950–2006 (Before UN sanctions)*			*2007–2015 (After UN sanctions)*		
Rank	*Recipient*	*Total*[a]	*Rank*	*Recipient*	*Total*[a]	*Rank*	*Recipient*	*Total*[a]
27	Algeria	25,708	**27**	**DPRK**	**24,029**	27	Afghanistan	2691
28	Spain	25,322	28	Spain	23,241	28	Canada	2663
29	UAE	24,759	29	Bulgaria	19,516	29	Chile	2536
30	**DPRK**	**24,043**	30	Viet Nam	19,415	30	Myanmar	2344
31	Viet Nam	24,001	31	Algeria	18,266	31	Italy	2318
32	Bulgaria	19,844	32	France	18,197	32	Brazil	2295
33	France	18,738	33	Yugoslavia	17,441	33	Bangladesh	2217
34	Romania	17,870	34	Romania	17,390	34	Spain	2082
35	Belgium	17,734	35	Belgium	16,985	35	S. Africa	2070
36	Singapore	17,584	36	UAE	15,371	36	Syria	1901
37	Yugoslavia	17,441	37	Brazil	13,912	37	Netherlands	1830
38	Indonesia	17,437	38	Hungary	13,828	38	Colombia	1765
39	Brazil	16,207	39	Indonesia	12,872	39	Oman	1727
40	Norway	15,142	40	Afghanistan	12,434	40	Portugal	1700
41	Afghanistan	15,125	41	Norway	12,213	41	Kuwait	1655
42	Hungary	14,068	42	Peru	12,087	42	Qatar	1643
43	Thailand	13,160	43	Cuba	11,866	43	Jordan	1577
44	Venezuela	13,080	44	Argentina	11,840	44	Germany	1565
45	Peru	12,792	45	Thailand	11,798	45	Thailand	1362
46	Sweden	12,360	46	Switzerland	11,666	46	Mexico	1349
47	Argentina	12,080	47	Sweden	11,635	47	Finland	1132
48	Switzerland	11,924	48	Singapore	10,291	48	Sudan	1009
49	Cuba	11,866	49	Denmark	10,256	49	Kazakhstan	992
50	South Africa	11,729	50	South Africa	9659	50	Nigeria	839

Source: Adapted from SIPRI Arms Transfers Database
[a]USD Million at constant (1990) prices

Sanctions should have, in theory, shrunk the size of the North Korean economy and restrict resources for the privileged ones. Then, a hurtful stalemate would have pushed the DPRK to backpedal on its nuclear development and accept the West's demands. But this 'dreamboat' scenario has lost credence over the past decade. While it is usually accepted that sanctions are useful because of their normative and political impact, their utility as a coercive tool is poor at best, especially because they tend to not be applied to their targets: This has been exemplified by Yong Suk Lee who looked at the domestic impact of sanctions by studying luminosity patterns and changes via satellite imaging. The simple truth is that the elite in Pyongyang is more sheltered from sanction impact than the rural population.[13]

The Reality of Developing as a Sanctioned Country

The 2006 nuclear test has thus created a world in which it is increasingly more difficult for the DPRK to develop. Yet, this does not mean that the DPRK does not change and develop either. But the web of sanctions that the DPRK needs to navigate is complex, with some countries calling for a strict enforcement of UNSC sanctions, while others pursuing their own sanctions against Pyongyang. European Union (EU) country members have agreed to implement all UNSCR sanctions.[14] But in many cases, not all actors are aware of what is prohibited and what is not. Hence, private companies and firms operating under a specific state jurisdiction might be trading with the DPRK and therefore enter into illicit activities which have then to be regulated. Is it possible to draw a clear picture of the DPRK's economic relations? COMTRADE registers can help, though the DPRK does not report its own economic transactions to the UN. We are thus left with what is reported by the rest of the world, which actually is a fair bit. As of 2015, the DPRK exported to 115 countries and imported from 87 (Fig. 5.1). This is a far cry from the 1988 figures, and a much more complex situation to manage, especially when it is superimposed with the sanction regime.

A Web of Sanctions

The international community has made a concerted and committed effort to implement UN sanctions, and in many cases trading partners and long-time allies of the regime have also chosen to balance against the DPRK's

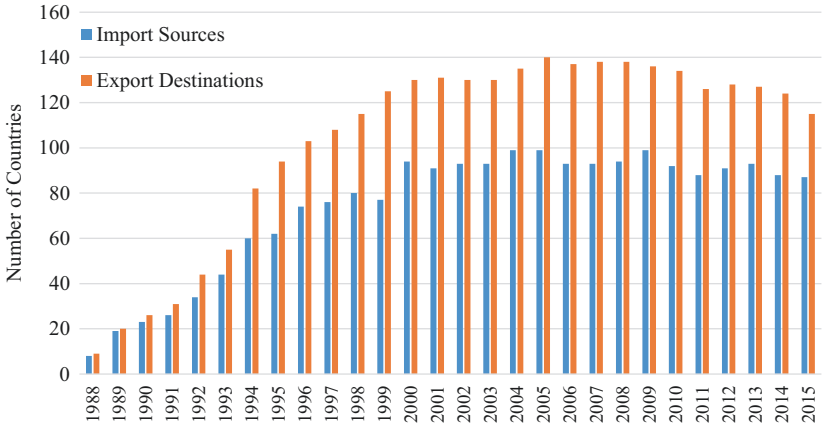

Fig. 5.1 DPRK export destinations and import sources, 1988–2015 (*Source*: Adapted from United Nations COMTRADE)

proliferation attempts by strongly voicing their support for sanctions. While the United States is usually at the forefront of any sanction discussion, middle and pacifist powers have often been almost as vocal, with Australia leading the pack. As a country that officially established a relationship with the DPRK in 1974, it has committed a large amount of economic aid to Pyongyang in the past but has also called for supporting UN sanctions many times since the 1990s. By the summer of 2006, Australia had canceled a planned diplomatic mission after North Korea's 5 July 2006 missile test. Even before the October 2006 nuclear test, Canberra had already imposed its own sanctions a month prior, singling out 11 companies based in Pyongyang and one Swiss individual suspected of helping with financing North Korean nukes.[15] The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade warned both the Australian population and Australian overseas nationals about the illegality of interacting with the DPRK.[16] Canada mirrored those actions, engaging with both Russian and Chinese foreign ministers following the 2006 test to secure backing for immediate action.[17] Canada not only followed UNSCRs but also revisited its DPRK relations, downgrading them to a controlled engagement policy. But if anything, it turned into a non-engagement policy, as it called for an end to all discussions on diplomatic and cultural exchanges, leaving Canada with minimal links with the DPRK. Canada also went an extra mile, symbolically barring North Korean ships and aircrafts from Canadian

land and airspace.[18] Those ships and crafts would have been hard-pressed to encounter Canadian territory though, as North Korean trade routes run in very different directions anyway.

India, a country concerned with nuclear matters, having itself developed and tested nuclear weapons outside of the boundaries of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, decided to apply UNSCR directives to search every cargo to a tee. It detained an albeit empty North Korean cargo ship that was bound for Iran on 29 October 2006 after the ship had strayed into Indian waters and broken down, having to be tugged into the port of Mumbai.[19] In the following years, India would detain several more ships because of suspicious cargo, including the MV Mu San in the summer of 2009,[20] before banning all trade of nuclear items, fully backing up the implementation of UNSCR 1874. It also included both direct and indirect trade of 'all items, materials, equipment, goods and technologies which could contribute to the DPRK's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related to other weapons of mass destruction-related programs.'[21] Yet, as featured in Table 5.2, India still ranks within the top ten countries the DPRK imports from, so it is clear that Indian businesses are engaging with Pyongyang regardless of the state's position. For countries such as Vietnam and Thailand, who have a long trading history with the DPRK, UNSCRs did not have to signify the end of mutually beneficial relationships. Vietnam emphasized dealing with North Korean issues through the Six-Party Talks[22], while Thailand was more evasive, suggesting that UN sanctions would not really alter its relationship with the DPRK.[23]

Sanctions: How to Make Them Work

The global sanction regime that has been put in place since 2006 is reliant on enforcement from the international community and is essentially a multilevel governance process. On the one hand, governments provide within their territory the political and legal framework for people, companies, and entities to operate. Illegal activities might occur with or without the state knowing about them. On the other hand, governments are sometimes the ones that engage willingly into illegal activities with other entities and states. So, enforcement is usually considered to be a sanction's Achilles heel and for Daniel Drezner, a lack of cohesion and cooperation within the enforcing community means that states will often backslide from strictly applying sanctions.[24] When looking at trade patterns over the length of the sanction period, the DPRK's trading relationship

Table 5.2 Top ten goods import sources for DPRK—1988–2015

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
	Japan	Japan	Japan	China	China
	$238,798,471	$197,923,907	$175,680,756	$224,576,485	$541,065,162
	GDR	GDR	GDR	Canada	Japan
	$39,874,000	$74,129,000	$49,808,000	$52,387,317	$223,338,448
	Australia	Singapore	India	India	Germany
	$33,135,967	$46,761,848	$35,453,112	$48,536,580	$52,800,000
	India	India	Singapore	Germany	Singapore
	$27,235,224	$30,416,204	$34,982,744	$48,050,000	$36,100,136
	Finland	Indonesia	Indonesia	Singapore	Turkey
	$5,290,287	$27,846,000	$33,996,632	$37,266,044	$33,419,483
	Switzerland	Romania	Australia	Mexico	India
	$4,960,486	$12,818,000	$27,147,778	$26,463,068	$25,439,160
	Portugal	Thailand	Turkey	Thailand	Ireland
	$61,727	$7,111,082	$25,671,523	$21,685,022	$23,151,436
	Greece	Switzerland	Thailand	Australia	Indonesia
	$13,287	$6,964,123	$12,353,937	$20,551,301	$14,792,431
		Turkey	Spain	Indonesia	Algeria
		$3,560,527	$5,087,256	$16,034,647	$13,971,226
		Brazil	Romania	Spain	Saudi Arabia
		$3,253,110	$4,490,000	$12,819,238	$11,745,967
Total top ten	$349,369,449	$410,783,801	$404,671,738	$508,369,702	$975,823,449
% Top ten	100%	94%	95%	95%	95%
% China	0%	0%	0%	0%	53%
% Russ. Fed.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% China + Russ. Fed.	0%	0%	0%	0%	53%
Total imports	$349,369,449	$437,140,806	$424,627,790	$535,345,046	$1,026,248,168

(*continued*)

Table 5.2 (continued)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	China	China	China	China	China
	$602,297,933	$424,459,357	$424,459,357	$424,459,357	$534,646,444
	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan
	$217,463,680	$169,972,450	$253,102,739	$226,869,387	$178,795,926
	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Singapore	Brazil
	$78,161,250	$61,760,892	$60,323,302	$66,362,211	$92,114,552
	India	Germany	Brazil	Hong Kong	Russian Fed.
	$60,648,084	$53,990,000	$46,515,644	$45,900,903	$73,517,520
	Germany	Brazil	Germany	Sweden	Germany
	$47,322,000	$38,598,224	$42,475,000	$36,155,968	$40,721,644
	Singapore	Italy	Thailand	UK	UK
	$38,292,132	$37,006,996	$38,407,216	$35,851,888	$40,624,332
	Ireland	India	Netherlands	Russian Fed.	India
	$32,478,160	$35,531,744	$35,560,376	$35,844,659	$37,638,248
	Czechia	Ireland	Singapore	Germany	Ireland
	$24,927,002	$32,288,134	$35,560,376	$33,829,000	$33,237,336
	Turkey	UK	UK	Thailand	Hong Kong
	$22,872,715	$32,134,648	$30,948,492	$32,065,485	$32,286,745
	Brazil	Singapore	India	India	Singapore
	$16,519,331	$23,424,696	$28,766,994	$29,834,334	$31,650,509
Total top ten	$1,140,982,287	$909,167,141	$996,119,496	$967,173,192	$1,095,233,256
% Top ten	92%	87%	80%	77%	83%
% China	49%	41%	34%	34%	40%
% Russ. Fed.	0%	0%	0%	10%	21%
% China + Russ. Fed.	49%	41%	34%	37%	46%
Total imports	$1,235,720,695	$1,041,790,291	$1,250,790,347	$1,252,415,089	$1,321,693,112

(*continued*)

Table 5.2 (continued)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	China	China	China	Japan	China
	$355,676,480	$328,668,684	$450,803,994	$1,066,511,737	$467,539,283
	Japan	Japan	Japan	China	India
	$174,603,798	$146,245,132	$206,719,135	$573,099,190	$178,490,052
	Ireland	Brazil	Thailand	Saudi Arabia	Thailand
	$109,608,656	$139,247,116	$189,183,233	$230,493,355	$172,242,114
	Brazil	India	India	Brazil	Saudi Arabia
	$65,608,820	$67,590,577	$159,501,121	$208,287,404	$142,452,711
	Russ. Fed.	Russ. Fed.	Brazil	India	Germany
	$56,703,519	$49,083,292	$109,229,769	$171,216,967	$139,156,000
	Singapore	Singapore	Qatar	Singapore	Japan
	$33,921,052	$48,066,838	$65,890,188	$112,253,431	$132,341,815
	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Germany	Thailand	Brazil
	$30,247,062	$42,561,926	$53,169,000	$106,047,127	$99,322,101
	Germany	Cuba	Singapore	Germany	Singapore
	$23,147,000	$35,156,918	$46,193,488	$79,791,000	$83,087,197
	India	Thailand	Hong Kong	Russ. Fed.	Russ. Fed.
	$18,940,734	$34,333,181	$42,561,926	$61,773,186	$68,661,274
	UK	Greece	Gabon	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
	$17,843,826	$29,639,664	$39,224,036	$42,561,926	$29,169,045
Total top ten	$886,300,947	$920,593,328	$1,362,475,890	$2,652,035,323	$1,512,461,592
% Top ten	82%	79%	80%	90%	85%
% China	33%	28%	26%	20%	26%
% Russ. Fed.	16%	14%	0%	18%	20%
% China + Russ. Fed.	38%	33%	26%	22%	30%
Total imports	$1,084,026,480	$1,158,028,612	$1,710,139,538	$2,937,874,468	$1,782,404,873

(*continued*)

Table 5.2 (continued)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	China	China	China	China	China
	$627,737,013	$799,499,576	$1,081,103,675	$1,232,322,985	$1,392,492,098
	Thailand	Thailand	Russ. Fed.	Yemen	India
	$204,132,919	$238,986,919	$226,346,204	$215,930,062	$638,901,641
	India	Russ. Fed.	Thailand	Thailand	Congo
	$128,336,635	$204,868,251	$206,950,543	$215,613,875	$214,207,019
	Russ. Fed.	India	Qatar	Russ. Fed.	Thailand
	$110,713,656	$180,585,317	$181,727,362	$190,434,477	$183,563,610
	Japan	Brazil	Singapore	Qatar	South Africa
	$91,801,875	$170,083,353	$73,247,250	$141,538,098	$137,368,245
	Brazil	Netherlands	Brazil	India	Brazil
	$73,633,870	$120,513,417	$66,238,773	$123,447,887	$122,834,925
	Germany	Japan	Gabon	South Africa	Russ. Fed.
	$71,383,000	$88,594,229	$63,722,274	$78,741,326	$103,616,171
	Singapore	Germany	Germany	Germany	Singapore
	$60,014,474	$68,557,000	$63,369,000	$63,369,000	$54,530,175
	Italy	Singapore	Japan	Brazil	Germany
	$27,763,143	$54,784,946	$62,367,981	$60,273,706	$39,909,000
	Canada	Qatar	Chile	Singapore	Chile
	$21,459,980	$36,831,698	$39,210,551	$60,020,898	$29,402,354
Total top ten	$1,416,976,565	$1,963,304,706	$2,064,283,613	$2,381,692,314	$2,277,923,597
% Top ten	88%	86%	86%	88%	72%
% China	39%	35%	45%	45%	44%
% Russ. Fed.	32%	59%	65%	55%	30%
% China + Russ. Fed.	46%	44%	54%	52%	47%
Total imports	$1,615,139,279	$2,275,063,306	$2,408,459,311	$2,715,120,597	$3,157,408,566

(*continued*)

Table 5.2 (continued)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	China	China	China	China	China
	$2,032,431,315	$1,887,740,680	$2,277,346,913	$3,164,703,511	$3,532,383,242
	India	India	India	India	India
	$1,093,608,381	$311,193,387	$427,417,629	$173,506,708	$230,157,947
	Brazil	Brazil	Egypt	Russ. Fed.	Russ. Fed.
	$204,698,925	$118,635,985	$269,876,147	$99,181,606	$58,428,245
	Peru	Qatar	South Africa	South Africa	Hong Kong
	$179,141,844	$118,445,515	$220,404,593	$46,734,221	$57,009,155
	South Africa	South Africa	Singapore	Honduras	Qatar
	$150,710,778	$92,820,835	$47,582,777	$32,041,671	$52,903,181
	Singapore	Singapore	Russ. Fed.	Peru	Singapore
	$120,819,385	$54,896,402	$45,797,092	$30,269,173	$47,926,030
	Russ. Fed.	Germany	Italy	Italy	Thailand
	96,882,457	$43,179,000	$43,562,459	$25,140,283	$40,309,351
	US	Russ. Fed.	Thailand	Thailand	Germany
	$52,151,230	$41,779,636	$29,684,797	$24,120,018	$29,933,459
	Thailand	Italy	Germany	Bahrain	Ukraine
	$46,094,660	$39,223,378	$24,477,032	$22,174,850	$15,126,917
	Italy	Thailand	Brazil	Germany	Chile
	$34,954,956	$30,425,092	$21,270,050	$16,593,883	$14,501,042
Total top ten	$4,011,493,931	$2,738,339,910	$3,407,419,489	$3,634,465,924	$4,104,959,873
% Top ten	93%	91%	94%	96%	98%
% China	47%	63%	63%	84%	84%
% Russ. Fed.	28%	12%	13%	28%	17%
% China + Russ. Fed.	49%	64%	64%	86%	86%
Total imports	$4,328,624,758	$2,995,953,376	$3,624,484,029	$3,787,212,860	$4,199,119,483

(*continued*)

Table 5.2 (continued)

	2013	**2014**	**2015**
	China	China	China
	$3,630,074,854	$3,520,407,974	$2,947,442,825
	India	Thailand	India
	$239,454,537	$107,250,682	$110,901,686
	Russ. Fed.	Russ. Fed.	Russ. Fed.
	$103,426,467	$82,157,152	$78,266,812
	Thailand	India	Thailand
	$99,788,505	$75,331,314	$73,817,007
	Singapore	Singapore	Philippines
	$59,351,650	$48,400,740	$53,242,211
	Hong Kong	Philippines	Mexico
	$26,369,519	$45,987,207	$45,716,382
	Ukraine	US	Ukraine
	$26,336,126	$24,028,661	$33,739,258
	Chile	Brazil	Singapore
	$26,143,809	$23,324,430	$28,316,674
	Nigeria	Honduras	Peru
	$24,050,397	$22,341,855	$21,187,372
	Philippines	Germany	Germany
	$22,045,333	$13,251,143	$8,171,777
Total top ten	$4,257,041,197	$3,962,481,158	$3,400,802,004
% Top ten	97%	98%	98%
% China	83%	87%	85%
% Russ. Fed.	30%	24%	22%
% China + Russ. Fed.	85%	89%	87%
Total imports	$4,370,776,710	$4,050,485,036	$3,481,696,988
1998–2015 import volume top ten		$54,363,375,423	
% Top ten		90%	
1998–2015 import volume overall		$60,557,159,063	

Source: Adapted from United Nations COMTRADE

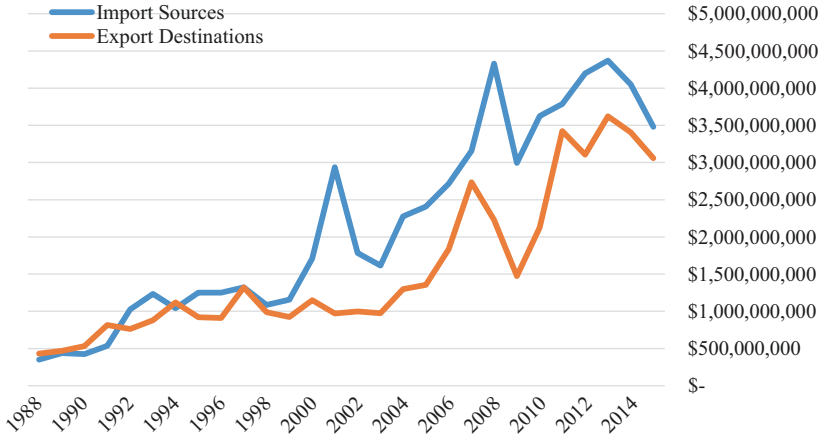

Fig. 5.2 DPRK export and import patterns, 1988–2015 (*Source*: Adapted from United Nations COMTRADE)

with the rest of the world does not appear to be as affected as one might have forecast. A rebuilding of the DPRK's exports and imports using the UN COMTRADE data (available from 1988 until 2015) shows that the DPRK's economic interaction patterns have not stopped despite sanctions, though it is clear from the data that the DPRK runs a constant trade deficit (Fig. 5.2).

In 2008, Marcus Noland predicted, at the onset of the UN sanction regime, that the trade between the DPRK and its largest trading partners (China and South Korea) would not suffer tremendously.[25] If anything, Chinese investments and engagement with the DPRK have now all but exploded (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3 later on). Though both imports and exports appear to have suffered since 2006, the overall trade volume has been rising even though there is a slowing down since 2012 and new sanctions. It is likely, however, that many of the DPRK's transactions do not appear on the books.

Taiwan and Singapore have been especially important for Pyongyang as transit places for both goods and funds. Thus, financial and goods transactions in these linchpin states have been scrutinized, and a number of illegal deals have been uncovered in the process.

Table 5.3 Top ten goods export destinations from DPRK—1988–2015

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
	Japan	Japan	GDR	Mexico	Japan
	$324,572,911	$299,151,338	$53,612,000	$349,932,320	$257,866,064
	GDR	Singapore	Indonesia	Japan	China
	$45,217,000	$54,128,528	$52,141,632	$284,114,490	$155,455,594
	Thailand	GDR	Thailand	Germany	India
	$31,637,054	$27,839,000	$27,393,204	$72,008,000	$89,677,744
	India	India	Mexico	Indonesia	Germany
	$26,316,714	$20,464,262	$25,784,306	$24,913,552	$87,160,000
	Sweden	Thailand	Spain	Thailand	Spain
	$1,459,818	$19,197,910	$19,341,086	$16,646,104	$44,822,632
	Greece	Indonesia	Thailand	Spain	Saudi Arabia
	$666,475	$16,926,804	$16,646,104	$12,820,812	$28,073,756
	Finland	Romania	Romania	Singapore	Indonesia
	$588,509	$13,399,000	$13,972,000	$11,105,123	$23,364,512
	Australia	Spain	India	India	Mexico
	$233,769	$7,942,804	$12,323,383	$10,442,088	$13,611,000
	Portugal	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Romania
	$103,944	$2,270,153	$9,589,051	$6,382,650	$8,863,659
		Greece	Singapore	Romania	Thailand
		$1,331,326	$8,466,852	$5,888,223	$7,290,975
Total top ten	$430,796,194	$462,651,125	$522,898,730	$794,253,362	$716,185,936
% Top ten	100%	99%	98%	97%	94%
% China	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
Total exports	$430,796,194	$467,022,615	$532,000,088	$814,749,002	$761,152,942

(*continued*)

Table 5.3 (continued)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	China	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan
	$297,282,586	$319,948,389	$342,050,372	$291,369,709	$302,266,534
	Japan	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
	$250,686,219	$270,300,992	$203,216,992	$118,118,192	$247,961,648
	Germany	China	China	China	Hong Kong
	$73,415,000	$199,205,967	$63,595,759	$68,630,844	$180,830,974
	Hong Kong	Germany	Germany	Hong Kong	China
	$69,670,052	$63,435,000	$40,740,000	$51,045,716	$121,604,553
	Saudi Arabia	Hong Kong	Saudi Arabia	Germany	Lebanon
	$48,903,112	$36,285,600	$39,857,148	$42,642,000	$83,901,608
	Colombia	Saudi Arabia	India	Saudi Arabia	India
	$21,642,706	$35,062,848	$38,454,512	$39,416,288	$57,288,768
	India	India	Hong Kong	India	Bangladesh
	$19,560,220	$32,332,868	$35,145,179	$32,257,095	$56,834,530
	Mexico	Indonesia	Indonesia	France	Germany
	$18,314,000	$24,804,004	$27,310,248	$31,307,736	$43,862,624
	Indonesia	France	France	Indonesia	Brazil
	$16,717,840	$18,206,074	$21,871,284	$30,750,284	$34,598,752
	Syria	Cyprus	Poland	Russ. Fed.	France
	$5,852,268	$13,444,626	$15,843,000	$28,982,712	$26,307,080
Total top ten	$822,044,003	$1,013,026,368	$828,084,494	$734,520,576	$1,155,457,071
% Top ten	94%	90%	90%	81%	87%
% China	34%	18%	7%	8%	9%
Total exports	$879,138,195	$1,120,682,998	$921,414,235	$910,307,636	$1,321,769,661

(*continued*)

Table 5.3 (continued)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	Japan	Japan	Mexico	Japan	China
	$219,765,305	$200,795,880	$164,198,329	$225,623,098	$270,685,256
	Mexico	Mexico	Brazil	China	Japan
	$128,097,696	$183,140,800	$125,519,810	$166,739,401	$235,072,938
	India	Hong Kong	Ghana	Mexico	Brazil
	$90,273,336	$63,482,071	$67,944,088	$99,637,929	$73,381,718
	China	Saudi Arabia	Japan	Brazil	Saudi Arabia
	$57,303,636	$53,316,182	$67,944,088	$62,470,244	$49,055,795
	Hong Kong	Brazil	Bangladesh	Hong Kong	Thailand
	$52,451,116	$47,315,797	$51,596,006	$37,968,761	$44,694,879
	Greece	China	Saudi Arabia	Chile	Mexico
	$47,376,520	$41,704,280	$50,528,063	$28,799,316	$37,470,911
	Brazil	Lebanon	Spain	Bangladesh	Germany
	$46,961,688	$33,247,778	$50,528,063	$24,967,013	$28,867,000
	Saudi Arabia	Macao	Hong Kong	Thailand	Hong Kong
	$44,670,856	$27,937,416	$46,442,299	$24,124,534	$21,924,255
	Lebanon	Ireland	China	Germany	Bangladesh
	$39,684,496	$27,499,596	$37,214,374	$23,307,000	$20,043,577
	Germany	Germany	France	Lebanon	Guatemala
	$29,838,000	$24,768,376	$26,249,229	$21,860,440	$13,187,856
Total top ten	$756,422,649	$703,208,176	$688,164,349	$715,497,736	$794,384,185
% Top ten	77%	76%	60%	74%	80%
% China	6%	5%	3%	17%	27%
Total exports	$988,612,838	$922,935,758	$1,150,676,269	$969,852,011	$999,023,521

(*continued*)

Table 5.3 (continued)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	China	India	China	India	Angola
	$395,344,691	$585,661,368	$499,140,536	$476,830,557	$1,051,122,766
	Bangladesh	Japan	Thailand	China	China
	$65,610,999	$164,101,207	$133,132,854	$467,763,631	$583,836,271
	Syria	Thailand	Japan	Thailand	Venezuela
	$50,920,567	$91,024,996	$131,672,030	$147,635,680	$212,102,809
	Germany	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil	India
	$23,832,000	$69,807,177	$71,584,216	$91,982,336	$167,167,056
	Japan	Mexico	Mexico	Greece	Brazil
	$23,832,000	$47,663,177	$70,174,806	$85,103,856	$109,300,432
	Mexico	France	Germany	Japan	Nigeria
	$23,832,000	$27,017,119	$45,113,000	$77,661,334	$54,391,060
	Nigeria	Germany	Saudi Arabia	Nigeria	Syria
	$18,672,163	$22,223,000	$33,883,629	$66,600,291	$48,544,194
	Colombia	Hong Kong	Poland	Mexico	Mexico
	$18,075,149	$20,088,855	$30,333,305	$54,151,630	$44,385,155
	Hong Kong	Egypt	France	Netherlands	Netherlands
	$16,559,684	$19,132,563	$29,901,124	$35,231,631	$41,517,441
	Egypt	Cuba	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Thailand
	$14,731,966	$13,638,316	$21,516,606	$29,117,790	$34,428,183
Total top ten	$651,411,219	$1,060,357,778	$1,066,452,106	$1,532,078,736	$2,346,795,367
% Top ten	67%	82%	79%	84%	86%
% China	41%	45%	37%	26%	21%
Total exports	$973,353,929	$1,298,644,511	$1,355,315,260	$1,834,179,791	$2,734,307,224

(*continued*)

Table 5.3 (continued)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	China	Chile	China	China	China
	$760,412,574	$793,025,950	$1,194,536,508	$2,475,459,898	$2,502,530,976
	Venezuela	Brazil	India	Bahrain	Indonesia
	$227,091,636	$95,980,558	$146,751,275	$236,415,520	$61,560,840
	Brazil	Venezuela	Brazil	Netherlands	Pakistan
	$176,398,426	$65,079,908	$121,254,774	$97,552,450	$52,284,981
	India	Germany	Netherlands	Brazil	Brazil
	$109,319,412	$52,499,000	$85,620,808	$51,092,796	$41,624,766
	Greece	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Germany	Venezuela
	$95,117,021	$50,767,792	$66,224,943	$50,443,435	$40,247,071
	Poland	Poland	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	Suriname
	$94,496,109	$48,416,886	$45,878,503	$36,663,779	$27,016,413
	Qatar	Egypt	Venezuela	Venezuela	Paraguay
	$68,817,786	$28,588,784	$42,318,258	$35,118,677	$24,175,583
	Afghanistan	China	Sri Lanka	Paraguay	Saudi Arabia
	$55,427,299	$23,535,124	$35,951,821	$33,568,937	$23,062,695
	Thailand	Paraguay	Germany	Indonesia	Egypt
	$51,923,755	$21,943,944	$33,941,602	$31,877,106	$21,455,371
	Paraguay	Netherlands	Saudi Arabia	Mexico	Thailand
	$34,969,868	$21,460,125	$26,084,833	26,602,719	$21,916,855
Total top ten	$1,618,546,587	$1,201,298,071	$1,798,563,325	$3,074,795,317	$2,809,341,657
% Top ten	73%	81%	85%	90%	90%
% China	34%	2%	56%	72%	81%
Total exports	$2,230,339,124	$1,474,822,436	$2,126,377,560	$3,423,795,797	$3,107,317,031

(*continued*)

Table 5.3 (continued)

	2013	2014	2015
	China	China	China
	$2,927,497,442	$2,867,699,391	$2,867,699,391
	Netherlands	India	India
	$130,011,580	$108,620,919	$108,620,919
	India	Pakistan	Pakistan
	$76,223,850	$42,282,946	$42,282,946
	Brazil	Nigeria	Angola
	$68,756,172	$25,525,535	$25,525,535
	Pakistan	Brazil	Burkina Faso
	$43,302,351	$20,211,770	$20,211,770
	Venezuela	Thailand	Saudi Arabia
	$28,956,277	$19,083,615	$19,083,615
	Egypt	Egypt	Chile
	$20,115,356	$15,823,509	$15,823,509
	Suriname	Paraguay	Paraguay
	$19,431,441	$14,664,649	$14,664,649
	Mexico	Mozambique	Brazil
	$14,440,173	$13,968,030	$13,968,030
	Guyana	Germany	Turkey
	$14,348,081	$12,019,236	$12,019,236
Total top ten	$3,356,978,356	3,139,899,600	$2,827,520,104
% Top ten	93%	92%	92%
% China	81%	84%	82%
Total exports	$3,621,579,015	$3,406,148,717	$3,058,466,361
1988–2015 export volume top ten		$37,190,836,983	
% Top ten		85%	
1988–2015 export volume overall		$43,834,780,719	

Taiwan has played a particularly active role in blocking a number of firms from exporting potentially dangerous materials to both the DPRK and Iran. Taiwan further blocked firms that were planning to export precision cannon shells to the DPRK, and control chips for missile and military computer softwares were also blocked in summer 2007.[26] So in that year alone, four Taiwanese businesspeople were indicted for violating the international trade embargo and providing Pyongyang with prohibited computer systems and tubes that could support its missile industry.[27] Taiwanese investigators stayed alert and blocked a number of other deals in subsequent years, so when authorities raided the Ho Li Enterprise in July 2010, a holding suspected of shipping computer-controlled machine tools and engines to the DPRK, its owner claimed he was unaware that laws and trade restrictions had been put in place.[28]

Singapore has expanded its prohibition lists to include arms, vacuum systems, pumps, and luxury items such as wines and televisions. Singapore has also worked to dismantle potential rogue collusion: entities trading with both the DPRK and Iran are now required to request Singapore customs' approval. Fines were levied to a USD 200,000 ceiling, and potential jail time set for up to three years.[29] Singapore is also committed to prosecuting offenders: Chinpo Shipping Company, whose headquarters were located in the same building as the North Korean embassy, was held responsible for shipping weapons from Cuba to North Korea aboard the Chong Chon Gang vessel that was blocked in the Panama Canal in July 2013.[30] The court trial that was held in August 2015 revealed a precious cargo hidden below wads of sugar: among anti-tank rockets and surface-to-air missile systems and components lay two 'vintage' 1960s' era MiG-21 jet fighters.[31] The Chinpo Shipping Company was found guilty of facilitating the passage of the Chong Chon Gang by bribing a Panama shipping agent with USD 72,000. It also carried out 605 remittance transactions on behalf of the DPRK between 2009 and 2013, totaling USD 40 million.[32]

So how to make sanctions work, in the DPRK case, depends largely on how a specific domestic and legal system is set up. It also requires a top-down approach for information to be spread from the government onto companies, agents, and citizens that could come into contact with the DPRK. This is not just limited to bilateral and geographically concentrated relationships that only take place in Asia. Beyond, the Central Bank of Nigeria has called upon its partner banks and subsidiaries to stop any dealing they might have with the DPRK, providing listings of Korean banks to avoid.[33] But all this has a cost: goods caught because of illegal

North Korean activities can incur important money loss for individuals and companies involved. Boat-builder Azimut Benetti was set to suffer a tremendous loss after two yachts destined to the DPRK were seized and the USD 13 million it had received in payment were frozen.[34] Collateral damages can also happen to both ship and crew on the DPRK's shipping routes: when North Korean ship Mu Du Bong got stranded in the summer of 2014 off Mexico after it hit a coral reef, 33 North Korean crew members were taken into custody by Mexico to await release and be return to the DPRK.[35] The ship had actually been blacklisted for its links with nuclear trade, and the situation suddenly became more complicated than just one about sorting out a stranded ship. While the crew was only detained for a few months, the ship was held by the Mexican authorities for several years, while the DPRK argued that the ship be returned to Pyongyang. Pyongyang even invoked historical grounds to highlight its value, as the ship had been visited by the Kim family at some point in the past.[36] With the seizing in July 2013 of yet another North Korean ship carrying old military equipments and explosive devices, the DPRK was confronted with a dilemma: Panama requested that Pyongyang pay a USD 1 million fine before they released the ship.[37] The fine was ultimately reduced to USD 690,000 and the 32 crew members were set free in February 2014, more than seven months after the ship's seizure. The captain as well as two aides were charged with trafficking illegal weapons.[38]

Enforcement has, in a lot of cases, rested upon international pressure and persuasion. In practice, this has meant that countries especially interested in enforcing sanctions as a point in case, such as the United States, have exerted diplomatic and political influence abroad to make sure other countries were on board as well. Washington blacklisted several Korean metal and mineral companies and a North Korean military officer in Myanmar in 2013, as they had worked closely with Myanmar's Directorate of Defense Industries, which had itself been blacklisted by the United States in 2012.[39] The United States also ramped up its own surveillance of individuals and entities in late 2015 by sanctioning the North Korean ambassador to Myanmar and three other North Korean individuals who had utilized the Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation (KOMID), previously blacklisted by the United States in 2013, as a storefront to facilitate the sale of DPRK weapons to other countries.[40] The United States has also followed up on Taiwan's own dealings with companies sending technology to the DPRK or facilitating illegal trade, citing and listing new entities and individuals under the Department of the Treasury. Those included

Alex Tsai, a procurement agent who was arrested in Estonia and accused of providing support to KOMID. Alex Tai was eventually extradited to the United States and received a two-year jail sentence in 2015 for his role in supporting the DPRK, designated by the United States as a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction because of his past association with KOMID.[41]

The United States is now focused on the Syrian–DPRK nexus, especially in the context of the Syrian civil war. While the Iran, North Korea, and Syrian Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA) provides penalties for entities that would facilitate the transfer or acquisition of equipment and technology agreed upon by the international communities for Syria since 1 January 2005 and North Korea since 1 January 2006, the relationship between Damascus and Pyongyang has come under scrutiny.[42] The United States has sanctioned the Commercial Bank of Syria in August 2011 for its involvement with the North Korean entity Commercial Bank Tanchon which had previously been blacklisted for its WMD proliferation activities.[43] Those sanctions were followed by South Korean sanctions in June 2015, a first in South Korean history, when Seoul joined Washington to bar Taiwanese entities responsible for trading with KOMID.[44]

Yet, the smuggling of sanctioned weapons has remained one of the DPRK's most popular activities. The investigation following the seizure of an aircraft in Bangkok carrying North Korean weapons revealed the existence of a complicated web of illicit actors. At its origin, the DPRK manufactured weapons that were in an Ilyushin 76 registered in Kazakhstan, but flown by five men holding Belarus and Kazakh passports who claimed they had no knowledge of the nature of the cargo.[45] The load was seized in Thailand following a US intelligence tip, and it was, according to Thai authorities, originally headed to Iran.[46] While Iran was not prevented by the international community to import weapons, sanctions toward the DPRK made such act de-facto illegal. Since the UN resolutions call for a country to intercept arms, and not to pass on a specific judgment against the perpetrator since this remains the UN's own prerogative, the weapons seized in Thailand stayed with the government as evidence, even after the crew was released.[47] Further afield, South Africa also notified the UN in February 2010 that it had intercepted a shipment of North Korean arms that were bound to the Democratic Republic of Congo, after following up on a tip they had received from a French shipping company.[48] The containers, originally loaded onto a ship in the Chinese port of Dalian, were filled with T-54 and T-55 tank parts that originated from North Korea and were hidden under sacks of rice. The cargo was valued at USD 750,000.[49]

Profit-Making Goods Smuggling

While illegal weapons trade tends to dominate the news, the DPRK has also repeatedly engaged in the smuggling of legal goods to raise cash. Yet, the Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment report published in 2010 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime says very little about the DPRK's smuggling operations.[50] On the one hand, this means that the DPRK has not reached a criminal status prominent-enough that it would link closely to crime syndicates. On the other hand, North Korea's illicit activities have been documented in previous decades as evidence in the rogue states literature, as part of its weapons development, and as part of the Kim family dictatorship support network analysis. Yet, smuggling and other illicit, non-weapons activities have only started to be factored into North Korea's ghost economy, the lion's share that is missing from North Korea's trade figures: this might provide part of the explanation as to how the regime is surviving. Sheena Chestnut Greitens' work on illicit networks is the most in-depth approach to DPRK's prohibited activities, and suggests the DPRK's illicit operations may be moving from the state-controlled sphere to the private sphere.[51] What this means is that citizens engage more and more into illicit activities for their own personal gain and survival, instead of following top-down directives. This links back to Hazel Smith's latest argument on the marketization patterns that start to arise, or at least start to be noticed, within the North Korean society.[52] So people will engage in illicit activities as a way to alleviate shortcomings from the domestic distribution system. But at the government level, the DPRK as a state-sponsored enterprise will also engage in criminal activities for the same reasons, as a way to survive in a competitive economic world system.

So what constitutes good value in the counterfeiting business? Cigarettes, for one. From bootlegging to smuggling to counterfeiting and as one of the highest taxed legal goods that exist and is consumed around the globe, cigarettes provide a surefire source of revenues for governments and people alike.[53] While positive evidence of trafficking depends on interception, preying on the misfortune of North Korean cargo ships sinking or getting stranded at sea or in ports has often led to lucrative finds: a container filled with 437 cartons of counterfeited Pall Mall cigarettes coming from North Korea was once intercepted in June 2008 in Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea.[54] So, the DPRK generates profit by engaging in all three activities, essentially purchasing, repackaging, and reselling cigarettes to third markets. This is how, in 2009, 15,000 cases of cigarettes manufactured by

the British American Tobacco company and bought by North Korea off a distributor in Singapore found their way out of the port of Nampo to be resold in Thailand and Vietnam.[55] British American Tobacco stopped exporting cigarettes to the DPRK altogether after the incident.[56] North Korean diplomats have usually featured prominently in such deals, but have also been, when caught, recalled to Pyongyang to face an uncertain future. This is what happened in Estonia in the late 1990s, with Prince cigarettes worth over USD 65,000 seized in a bus filled with North Korean diplomats who were bringing the cigarettes, sealed with Russian tax marks, into Sweden.[57] Three North Korean diplomats were subsequently expelled from Sweden but during this time of famine in the DPRK, diplomats often did not receive salaries and it is likely that these particular officials attempted the smuggling for their own personal survival. This is unlikely to be the case for Son Young Nam, the first secretary of the North Korean embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, who was caught in March 2015 with 27 kilos of gold on his way back from Singapore.[58] With a street value close to USD 2 million, it is very unlikely that Son was carrying the gold for his personal gain, and the DPRK actually officially apologized to Bangladesh after the incident.[59] For Pyongyang, gold and other precious metals constitute a bartering commodity, since it is barred from moving large sums of money via normal bank transfers. North Korea has dabbled into wildlife by-products trafficking to raise cash as well: North Korean diplomat Park Choi Jun was expelled from South Africa in May 2015 after he had been caught driving a South African-registered diplomatic car with 5 kg of rhinoceros horns on board. The estimated value of such a cargo nears USD 100,000 in the black market where it is prized for potential medicinal values.[60]

In the past decade, North Korea has also stepped up its role in illicit substance and especially as a drug producer, transporter, and redistributor. A shipment of 198 bricks of high-grade heroin with a street value of USD 6 million was seized in July 2002 in Taiwan.[61] In 2003, a North Korean ship belonging to the Workers' Party of Korea and registered in the Pacific Island of Tuvalu was caught unloading close to 50 kgs of heroin.[62] The cargo was seized and eventually destroyed in 2006 as a symbol of the global fight against narcotics.[63] North Korea's increasingly important role in narcotic trafficking has officially been recognized since 2008 by the Dangerous Drug Board, an organization whose Chairman Undersecretary Tito Sotto is the principal author of the Philippines' 2002 Dangerous Drug Act.[64] Initial suspicions were proven correct in 2013 when a large-scale drug sweep operation in Thailand, manned by undercover US Drug

Enforcement Administration agents, stumbled across methamphetamines manufactured in North Korea. Yet, it is likely that Korean laboratories used for this production in 2012 had been destroyed by the time the traffic was uncovered.[65] So, North Korea's drug production is following a similar path to the cigarette trade: Kim Eun Young and Min Woo Yun have discovered, partly from their interviews with North Korean defectors, that drug use is on the rise within the DPRK, with production slowly moving out of the control of the state and into private citizens' hands.[66] Their findings, published in 2010, have been corroborated since then by further works, including that of Andrei Lankov and Seok Hyang Kim's in 2013 on the spread of methamphetamine abuse in Northern North Korea.[67]

Sanctioned Goods and Collateral Damages

In parallel to trading sanctioned goods and weapons, and also smuggling cigarettes and precious metals, the DPRK has also smuggled a number of products that, while not being strictly prohibited, could be used to further missile technology as well as its nuclear program. Just as other smuggling operations, these have involved DPRK diplomats on the one hand and individuals and manufacturing companies on the other hand with goods transiting via a number of third-party countries. Only two years after the DPRK opened an embassy in Germany following the establishment of diplomatic relations in March 2001, the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution highlighted in one of its annual reports that the North Korean embassy was actively involved in spying and procuring goods to develop military technology. In this scheme, China and Singapore were routinely used as intermediary transit destinations instead of European routes which were monitored too frequently.[68] More than 22 tons of aluminum tubes heading for North Korea via China were intercepted only a few months after this report, loaded aboard a French-flagged ship in the Mediterranean Sea. Three German businessmen were charged with illegally exporting the tubes, on the grounds they had failed to obtain a shipping permit.[69]

North Korea has also sought different types of chemicals from a number of countries. A shipment of 2.5 tons of ephedrine coming from India and making its way to North Korea was stopped at Bangkok Airport in May 1998. Thailand was not sure whether they would allow the shipment to carry on to its destination, given that the substance could also be used to produce methamphetamine.[70] Other chemical traffics have also involved

sodium cyanide. North Korea was set to acquire 70 tons of the chemical that had been originally manufactured by South Korea and sold to a Thai company in 2002, with a large part of the lot being destined, in September 2004, to North Korea. While the chemical is commonly used to manufacture fertilizer, it can also be used in the production of sarin nerve gas. Because of the rogue state label sticking to the DPRK, this raised suspicion that Pyongyang would add new products to its chemical weapons arsenal.[71]

The DPRK has also continued to procure luxury goods that are, under UN sanctions, considered illegal. This defiance for international law, especially important since luxury items are promised to the elite and its supporters, is a direct representation of counter-hegemonic North Korean behavior. The firm that built the two yachts seized by Italy was not aware that the boats were destined to North Korea: they were initially headed for China and the DPRK had masqueraded the order to make it appear as to be coming from Chinese customers.[72] Only a few months later, in September 2009, Italy seized €12,000 worth of brandy and whisky headed to the DPRK.[73] Switzerland blocked Swiss cable-car company Bartholet Maschinenbau from selling and sending a USD 7.5 million ski lift to the DPRK to equip the country's newest ski resort which aimed to attract tourists, thus revenues, on the basis that this was a luxury good.[74] The luxury trade has also involved more bizarre goods: in December 2010, Italy blocked a DPRK-bound shipment of high-end tap-dancing shoes at Milan Airport.[75] In many cases, companies selling specific items were unaware they were breaching international law.

All in all, it is becoming more difficult for the DPRK to have access to large amounts of foreign currency, especially after its accounts at Macao's Banco Delta Asia were heavily sanctioned in 2005. The DPRK has reverted to utilizing banking transactions that could evade international monitoring. The DPRK's Tachon Commercial Bank, already known for its role in facilitating the DPRK's ballistic missile program, has held large sums of money in both USD and euros. Funds have been transferred quickly to other countries when operations came under the United States' scrutiny.

Exporting to Import

While the sanction regime has not prevented the DPRK from further developing and testing nuclear weapons, it has created more difficult conditions for Pyongyang to operate illegitimate and legitimate activities, and, as a result, it has cut out a number of cash-generating outlets that would have

not only been used to support proliferation, but would also have had some impact on the management and development of the North Korean society and economic system. But North Korean trade is not insignificant, even though it is difficult to recreate an accurate picture. Sources often converge to one single conclusion, however: the DPRK runs a perpetual trade deficit. COMTRADE figures for the 1988–2015 period list imports into the DPRK at USD 60,557,159,063, and DPRK exports at USD 43,834,780,719. Even though the DPRK balance sheet roster is composed of many countries, the bulk of trade involves only a small circle of friends, as listed in Tables 5.2 and 5.3.

While the PRC did not report figures until 1992, and ROK trade is reported separately, it is still easy to understand the broad DPRK patterns. For imports, the top ten countries already cover at least 90% of North Korea's needs, with the bulk coming from China and the Russian Federation. But it is China's exponential presence within the DPRK trading sheet that is remarkable, especially since 2010, with a percentage of import share rising to 85%. To compare, ROK–DPRK intertrade figures reported by the South Korean Ministry of Unification list for the cumulative 1980–2014 period has a total trade volume value of USD 21,771,000,000.[76]

The story is similar for DPRK exports, with the bulk of Korean products being traded out to China, especially in the past few years. For both exports and imports, the sharp increase in trading numbers with the PRC can be explained by a reorientation of the DPRK's trading relationship away from South Korea in 2010, following the sinking of the Cheonan and the 'May 24' South Korean sanctions. UNSC sanctions may have also prevented entrants to the DPRK market, thus making China, a country that had always moderately applied UNSC sanctions, Pyongyang's most important trading partner. This thesis is supported by Jong Won Lee and Kevin Gray's research on the North Korea–China trade relationship, and especially China's larger-scale investments in the DPRK's natural resources industry: when North Korea is able to mine and produce more iron ore, coal, gold, or copper, China is able to import more from the DPRK to support its own growth.[77]

DPRK Workers Abroad

The 'traditional' and illegal interdependent trade is also supplemented by channels that are less documented, and which involve foreign remittances coming from overseas Koreans. We know quite a bit by now about

ethnic Koreans living in Japan, and sending remittances to the mainland to support their families. But things are slowly changing and Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland provided an indication in their 2008 volume on North Korean foreign economic relations that the DPRK was departing from traditional remittances to a model that involves North Korean foreign workers abroad.[78] According to them, the DPRK was, then, already reproducing a model that had been used during the Soviet era, most notably in Siberia, where North Korean workers would be sent to generate revenues. Instead of Eurasia, workers are now sent much further afield, especially in Africa. While older working arrangements often involved technical training, newer partnerships appear to take place in specific industry sectors for a year or two, with earnings transferred as foreign currency directly to the DPRK government. Foreign remittance estimates have ranged from USD 200 to USD 300 million per year to potentially USD 2.3 billion, with about 1800 construction and sewing factory workers in Mongolia, another 800 based in shipbuilding companies in Poland, about 3000 in Qatar and close to 40,000 further dispatched in 16 countries around the world, with the largest part still working in Russia and China.[79] These arrangements are not overtly transparent, as countries hosting workers might not necessarily know the specific practical conditions surrounding these programs, or might not want to publicize the hiring of North Korean workers. Older allies such as the Czech Republic have hosted many of these workers in a variety of fields including the automotive industry, while Poland has hosted guest workers in its construction industry. New information on working conditions has started to appear, most notably as part of the United Nations Special Rapporteur work on the situation of Human Rights in the DPRK.[80] Further works, especially that of the 'Slaves to the System' project at the Leiden Asia Centre, and that focuses on North Korean forced labor in Poland talk about potential revenues of USD 1.2–2.4 billion per year.[81] A number of questions have started to arise regarding the workers' welfare especially because of increasingly alarming reports published by a number of human rights NGOs. While the DPRK has created a system that ensures workers' compliance, complacency from host countries and greediness from employers have led to shocking figures: workers are said to be usually spending 12 hours a day on the jobsite, and salaries can be as low as USD 100 a month, with about 90% being taken by the North Korean government.[82] International visibility has grown to sustain worldwide events, and the 2020 Qatar World Cup has provided ample opportunities for DPRK labor, though this has also

attracted scrutiny.[83] Public outcry is starting to be heard: while it is known that the DPRK has treated its citizens very harshly within its own borders, 'state-sponsored slaves abroad' is a different situation altogether, which has legal implications. Over the summer 2015, 108 North Korean workers were fired from Qatar's Construction Development Company because they violated company employment rules[84]: they were fired because under Qatari law foreign unskilled laborers are not allowed to work for more than one company at a time. In this particular case and in an apparent bid to raise more revenues, either for personal gain or to support North Korea's mobilization for modernity campaign, the North Korean supervisor reportedly forced his workers to take more shifts at another company during the night. Apart from construction, smaller-scale partnerships have also started to appear in the food industry. The Pyongyang Restaurant, which is a joint venture between North Korea and two Dutch businessmen, and the first North Korean restaurant venture in Europe out of a dozen of other establishments, opened in Amsterdam in 2012.[85] With a unique initial menu offer priced at USD 104, the restaurant is run by nine North Koreans and a manager who has already experienced running a similar restaurant in Beijing. It is both a cash-raising operation and an example of cultural diplomacy. The recent group defection from a Beijing North Korean restaurant, however, has raised further questions regarding whether being a North Korean workers abroad is a privilege, or a curse.[86] At times, overseas workers can also be hostages of international circumstances, such as in Libya. While Muammar Gaddafi was being deposed in 2011, the DPRK contacted its embassy in Libya and requested via a letter that the 200 North Korean contingent of nurses, doctors, and construction workers based in the country not return to Pyongyang.[87] In a twist of fate, three North Korean citizens were abducted by a patrol from the Daech/Islamic State patrol in Sirte in May 2015 while they were providing humanitarian medical assistance at several Libyan hospitals.[88] The North Korean embassy called upon the Libyan authorities regarding the whereabouts of its citizens, threatening to withdraw its entire medical staff from the country if the workers were not found.

Mansudae Arts and Statues

North Korean foreign workers have also started to feature prominently in their own bespoke Korean projects. While North Korean builders have been abroad, such as in Uganda where DPRK construction companies

have built police force accommodations,[89] most of North Korean foreign constructions have involved its artistic studio Mansudae. Mansudae is an umbrella company that was founded in 1959 and that hosts painters, sculptors, craftsmen, and technicians. The Mansudae group has produced thousands of creations, from statues to interior decorations within North Korea, but has slowly started to tap into the overseas market. The group is now catering to a number of states interested in the arts, and especially commemorative art pieces and monuments such as statues and victory sites. Outside of the DPRK, the African continent host the most Mansudae creations: these include the statue of King Béhanzin in Benin, the Revolution Torch Square in Burkina Faso, a number of government office buildings and villas in Equatorial Guinea, an Athletic Academic Centre in the Democratic Republic of Congo and many more (Table 5.4). The 1981 National Heroes' Arc of Zimbabwe is the oldest, and many of the pieces built in the 1980s hold a specific socialist character since Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso were at the time of monument constructions all ruled by militaristic, revolutionary regimes with socialist tendencies.

The range of monuments and pieces that have been built all over Africa has demonstrated a very visible relationship between African countries and North Korea and a mutually beneficial one: for countries that are often understood and treated as pariahs by the international community, a show of unity and interdependence via the art pieces is a strong political statement. But the DPRK is unlikely to build monuments abroad out of solidarity and pride alone. More pragmatically, Mansudae's overseas ventures allow North Korea to generate foreign currency and should be considered as bilateral dispersed cooperation patterns.[90] Though it is difficult to know the exact cost, estimates for the total amount Mansudae earned in Africa since 2000 run from USD 160 to USD 200 million.[91]

Among Mansudae's more ostentatious African productions, the Senegal's 2010 African Renaissance Monument obviously stands out because of its size. The statue representing a couple looking toward the horizon, following the direction given by a child's pointed finger, is more than 50 m tall and is made even more impressive by the fact that it is featured on top of a 150-m-high hill. At such height, the piece tops the Statue of Liberty (46 m), as well as Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer (43 m). The Renaissance statue as well as the wave of new monuments build by Mansudae in Africa during the past decade can be explained by a number of factors. First many African states were decolonized in the 1950s and 1960s, and are therefore just about to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their inde-

Table 5.4 DPRK Mansudae overseas constructions

Country	*Monument name*	*Completion year*	*Cost (USD)*[a]
Angola	Statue of Agostinho Neto	2012	Unknown
	Peace Monument	2009	1.5 million
	Antonio Agostinho Neto Cultural Centre	2009	40 million
	Cabinda Park	2008	13 million
Benin	Statue of King Béhanzin	2006	Unknown
Botswana	Monument to the Three Dikgosi	2005	1.7 million
Burkina Faso	Revolution Torch Square	1984	Unknown
Cambodia	Angkor Panorama Museum	2016	24 million
Chad	Independence Square	2010	Unknown
Congo (DR)	Statue of Joseph Kasavubu	2010	Unknown
	Lumumba Monument	2002	10 million
	Basketball Stadium	Unknown	14.4 million
	Athlete Academic Centre	Unknown	4.8 million
	Statue of Laurent-Désiré Kabila	2002	Unknown
Congo (R)	Presidential Villa	Unknown	0.8 million
Equatorial	Government Office Building	2010	1.5 million
Guinea	Luba Football Stadium	2010	6.74 million
	Luba Governmental Conference Hall	2010	3.5 million
Ethiopia	Tiglachin Memorial	1984	Unknown
Germany	Fairy Tale Fountain Frankfurt	2005	0.26 million
Mali	Statue of General Abdoulaye Soumaré	2012	Unknown
	Anonymous Soldier Monument, Army Square	2012	0.41 million
	Presidential Palace External Decoration	2010	0.7 million
Mozambique	Samora Machel Statue	2011	Unknown
Namibia	Presidential Palace	2008	49 million
	National Heroes' Acre	2002	5.23 million
	Military Museum	2004	1.8 million
	Independence Memorial Museum	2014	10 million
Senegal	Monument de la Renaissance Africaine	2010	30 million
Zimbabwe	National Heroes' Acre	1981	60 million
	Joshua Nkomo Statue	2010	Unknown
	Two statues of President Mugabe	2014	5 million
	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front Building	Unknown	Unknown
Estimated overall value			284.34 million

Source: Compiled by author using public domain, governmental and news resources

[a]Because it is not possible to receive DPRK confirmation on these numbers, they should be considered as indicative only

pendence (33 of Sub-Saharan Africa's 49 states gained their independence between 1958 and 1968). Hence, a number of counties 'ordered' monuments to celebrate their independence anniversaries in 2010. The need to present an impressive front is matched by Mansudae's apparent ability to deliver fast and cheap productions, and the intense building activities that took place from 2000s, a time when North Korea was slowly emerging from its economic collapse and famine, shows the important role the company plays for the North Korean regime in raising recognition, but also foreign funds. Mansudae is also providing bespoke productions, which gives it a strong appeal. Individual Mansudae pieces have been praised for their comparative prices, which would be difficult to match if the art pieces were manufactured by Western countries. For Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, 'only the North Koreans could build my statues. […] I had no money.'[92] Wade indeed had no money: North Korea did not receive payment in cash for its labor, but instead received 30–40 hectares of land surrounding Dakar Airport, which was subsequently traded by North Korea to a Senegalese pensions' fund for an unknown price.[93]

Beyond pure art, the DPRK has also assisted a number of other countries in museum construction. While Pyongyang has helped Tanzania with displays for the Tanzanian military building in Dar es Salaam in 2008,[94] the most visible iteration of North Korean art outside of the DPRK and Africa is the Angkor Panorama Museum that opened to the public in 2016. The museum cooperation between Cambodia and North Korea had been in the works for many years before the project officially started in 2011. As construction progressed over the years, the purpose of the museum was slowly revealed and was set to celebrate Cambodian life from the eighth to fifteenth centuries during the Khmer Empire. More than 50 North Korean artists worked on the fresco and displays in the museum. The museum is to be operated by North Korea for an initial period of ten years, and its admission ticket being included as part of the official Angkor Wat ticket complex makes the North Korean offer a de-facto visit or at least a de-facto sponsorship for tourists.[95] The museum price-tag has been estimated around USD 15 million but is, according to the DPRK, a 'gift' to Cambodia,[96] though ticket sales will funnel money to North Korea and the museum in itself is to be a flagship to showcase work that the Mansudae art studio can build. This is a new development as Mansudae constructions used to only be located in the DPRK, which meant that few pictures of them were available. With an average reported 30 people visiting the Panorama Museum per day, and a fixed fee of USD 15 for non-

Cambodian and USD 8 for locals, the museum can provide a guaranteed substantial USD 150,000 a year income to the DPRK on ticket sales alone which constitutes a steady stream of legal revenues.[97] The technology utilized by the North Koreans in the construction of the museum has also involved three-dimensional computer-generated simulations of ancient monuments in order to supplement drawing and frescos, thus showcasing a new and potentially lucrative business for the DPRK in the future.[98]

In sum, the sanction regime imposed on the DPRK has had some important effects on how Pyongyang conducts its foreign policy. Though there is an important question as to which countries will pressure the DPRK to conform to sanctions and which ones will be vying for more leniency, the current situation means that the DPRK is engaged in truly interdependent and transnational processes: entities that are trading with the DPRK and in some cases doing illegal transactions and deals without intending to. A more complex picture emerges then, with the DPRK also engaging in more diverse ways to generate money, and to spend money, well beyond Aggarwal and Koo's model, since it should also incorporate legal and illicit partnerships. What is clear when looking at economic indicators, is that a large part of the DPRK's economy remains undocumented, and the 'ghost' aspect points to the fact that the DPRK imports more than it officially exports, which means that money sources are still largely undisclosed. Foreign remittances from Korean workers abroad might actually amount to much more than reported, and the DPRK's own construction work via Mansudae might also generate a substantial amount of cash. It is becoming more difficult for the DPRK to important what is needs, however, especially when it comes to resources. With UNSCR 2270, jet fuel is now a prohibited item and many technology and educational transfers are also blocked. The most recent UNSCR 2321 now prohibits North Korea from exporting statues. Has the time now come for the DPRK to join the international global order, as Knudsen's last small state stage, now that is has achieved relative military security, and some form of economic stability, though it is still only reserved to a select few in the DPRK elite?

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CHAPTER 6

The DPRK and the Politics of Mainstreaming

> The WKP will as ever get closely united with all countries and peoples defending independence and vigorously struggle for the victory in the cause of global independence. Kim Jong Un, 7th WPK Party Congress

'Global independence' remains one of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) most treasured phrases, one that is often used in official speeches, news pieces, and pamphlets. Yet, Pyongyang has not been solely walking this line for a long time by now. Evidence of cooperation and interdependent behaviors abound in the DPRK's history, from the military and economic support it received from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War, all through its own nuclear weapons pursuit. Recently, the DPRK has also invited foreign investment within its borders. For a state that has based most of its survival on its contested existence, identity, and borders, this might sound antithetical. But struggle, and the need to voice oppression, is at the very core of many states that have engaged in seemingly isolationist practices. Helga Turku talks about self-sufficiency as an instrument of political power: in order for an isolated regime to survive in an interdependent world and practice isolation, there needs to be a clear connection between leaders and citizens' perception of reality and threat, and one that will enable any behavior, as irrational as it may be, to being embraced in the name of freedom.[1] The North Korean popular propaganda and population control has made this connection possible, but the need to maintain the system, and especially the need to satisfy the

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elite circle, also means that self-sufficiency is not practiced as it is preached. While the DPRK envisages its own place within the international system as being fiercely independent and sovereign, modernization also needs to happen, lest because it can ensure a more comfortable future, arguably primarily to the elite at this point, but also to the North Korean people, who remain the basic unit for the production of goods and wealth within the country. Hence, the DPRK is attempting to modernize. There is more widespread access to continuous electricity and more reliable communication networks, though this is still largely limited to the elite in Pyongyang and a few other cities. Technology that would have been considered luxurious only a few years ago, such as color television sets and mobile phone handhelds, is now available to some. Changes within the legal and economic structures were introduced to facilitate foreign investments, and initial steps toward a pseudo-primitive market economy have been made. But while the DPRK is steadfast in its rhetoric and especially in its quest to get a nuclear deterrent, it is much less so when it comes to making choices about its own economic development. Marcus Noland has retraced the state's flip-flopping stances on marketization, accepting it at the beginning of the millennium before retreating in 2005 to more state control.[2] But with a focus on attracting foreign investments, especially since Kim Jong Un came to power, the future might look different, if only the DPRK can commit to a specific path and if, according to Nicholas Eberstadt, the DPRK accepts that its enterprises need 'blueprints, distribution networks, and marketing networks.'[3] This, essentially, brings us back to North Korea's conundrum: how to practice independent interdependence in a globalized world. Suggestions about the DPRK's future abound, but though traces of economic improvements can be found, Peter Hayes and David von Hippel are rightly adamant that Pyongyang will not survive without a cash input to modernize its power grid and production facilities. This, according to them, will most likely come from China.[4] We can return here to the concept of path dependence: North Korea is likely to reproduce decisions that yielded perceived positive results within the perimeter of what it can, political and ideologically, allow. But how far away from complete isolation and independence has North Korea come already? And is it slowly departing from this line? In essence, choosing to develop while fighting against Western hegemony already implies engaging with the international world, if only just to show one's differences. And the DPRK, for better or worse, has traveled down the path of engagement as it has used interdependent fora to establish its own identity and presents its own world view. But it has also been engaged with the international economic

order, and is making strides to develop further, with the help of a number of international actors and within a number of global processes. Is the DPRK mainstreaming, then?

Participating in Global Governance

Global governance, as defined by James Rosenau, is essentially about 'activities backed by shared goals that may or may not derive from legal and formally prescribed responsibilities and that do not necessarily rely on police powers to overcome defiance and attain compliance.'[5] A large part of the DPRK's diplomacy involves bilateral relations with other states and spans a wide range of topics, from ideological and economic relations with the PRC and the USSR to bilateral partnerships to develop technology or trade patterns. Those are voluntary arrangements, either geographically concentrated or dispersed, aimed to further Pyongyang's national interests: essentially, they are to further its own survival. Multilateral processes are few and far between, and have centered on the international community proposing discussion fora: while the Four-Party Talks aimed to go beyond the Korean armistice and find a peaceful resolution to the Korean conflict, the Six-Party Talks focused, at least in their original intent, on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. This is a form of multilateralism that has been defined by John Ruggie as a way for states to coordinate their behavior 'on the basis of generalized principles of conduct.'[6] But it is also described by Michael Levi and Michael O'Hanlon as being mostly based on countries and institutions coaxing isolated, or essentially, rogue states, into renouncing their weapons of mass destruction.[7] Just as for bilateral processes, the DPRK came to the negotiation table for a number of reasons, some more plausible than others, but all crystalizing around the fact that there was something to gain. Be it time, money, security guaranties, or just a bit of leverage sitting down with the United States, which is something the DPRK always crave, from a status point of view, the DPRK certainly saw benefits in engaging with the process. But what of 'true' global governance, the one that, from John Stuart Mill to Anthony Giddens, would lead to a cosmopolitan society organized around globalizing markets and communication?[8] This would usually mean considering regimes. In the case of the DPRK, there is no real engagement with civil society because of the way the North Korean political system is organized. It does not mean that it is impossible to measure the DPRK's involvement with global governance, though: looking at Pyongyang's membership and participation in international institutions can provide some insights (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 DPRK international organization membership

Membership year	*IO creation year*	*International organizations*	
1960	1956	JINR	Joint Institute for Nuclear Research
1974	1956	AALCO	Asia-African Legal Consultative Organization
1974	1945	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
1974	1874	UPU	Universal Postal Union
1974	1967	WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
1975	1865	ITU	International Telecommunication Union
1975	1961	NAM	Non-aligned Movement
1977	1955	IOLM	International Organization for Legal Metrology
1978	1947	ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
1980	1883	IUPIP	International Union for the Protection of Industrial Property
1981	1945	FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
1982	1875	BIPM	BIPM 1982 International Bureau of Weights and Measures
1986	1959	IMO	International Maritime Organization
1986	1981	INFOFISH	Intergovernmental Organization for Marketing Information and Technical Advisory Services for Fishery Products in the Asia and Pacific Region
1987	1997	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
1987	1921	IHO	International Hydrographic Organization
1989	1989	CFC	Common Fund for Commodities
1989	1975	WTOURO	World Tourist Organization
1990	1990	NACAP	Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific
1991	1945	UN	United Nations
1991	1966	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
1991	1948	WHO	World Health Organization
1991	1950	WMO	World Meteorological Organization
1994	1976	APT	Asia-Pacific Tele-Community
1994	1991	GEF	Global Environment Facility
1995	1989	Montreal	Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol
2002	1924	IOEz	International Office of Epizootics
2003	1886	IUPLAW	International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works

Source: Compiled by author using the Correlates of War International Organizations Dataset Version 2.3, 2010

The DPRK's reasons for being a party to 28 international organizations reinforce the rational actor thesis, with Pyongyang utilizing the organizations for two particular purposes: getting specific gains and voicing specific concerns. It has overall little interest in changing other members' behavior and also little interest in changing particular organizational arrangements to make their structures more efficient. The exception here is the United Nations (UN), where the DPRK has been engaging in campaigns calling for the reform of the Security Council.

Global Governance as a Pathway to Gains

The DPRK's first foray into institutionalized power started in 1960 with its participation in the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research. This research facility located in Dubna, Russia, and specialized in peaceful use of atomic energy has afforded North Korean nuclear scientists exposure over the years to nuclear technology.[9] Eventually, a number of individuals were blacklisted as part of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) sanctions, including Hwang Sok Hwa, the Director of the General Bureau of Atomic Energy, who had spent time on the Science Committee inside the Institute.[10] In 2015, the DPRK's membership was suspended as Pyongyang had apparently failed to pay its membership fees, though it is also plausible that Pyongyang failed to see potential gains from its engagement with the institute, now that it had managed to develop and detonate nuclear devices.[11] Long before the DPRK joined the UN, it also became party to a number of international organizations aiming to regulate technology and communication. Being out of the communication loop was seen as a problem, especially when very practical gains could be made by acquiring memberships to specific organizations. The Universal Postal Union allowed the DPRK access to the postal service remittances. This has been particularly helpful for Pyongyang, since the system was used by ethnic Koreans living in Japan to send money to the DPRK on a regular basis, and without having to use a bank.[12] The World Intellectual Property Organization has allowed the DPRK to apply for patents in a number of areas, though it is perhaps more useful to the international community as this gives a sense of what scientific projects the DPRK is working on.[13] Joining the UN system in 1991 has enabled the DPRK to have access to a range of services it either did not have access to before or could not provide itself either. This is the case when it comes to the World Meteorological Organization, which is committed to help the

DPRK upgrade its weather forecasting computers.[14] Other agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have been instrumental in considering the DPRK's resource needs in light of the food crisis, and drumming up for the world community to support the country. The DPRK has also been especially active within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), calling for help to handle a number of potential heritage items. This has included historical sites and especially a successful bid to list ancient tombs and Koguryo murals as World Heritage sites.[15] It also has included cultural artifacts, and North Korea's traditional folk song 'Arirang' has now a spot on the intangible cultural heritage list. This is particularly important to the DPRK given that there is an Arirang version which comes from the Republic of Korea (ROK) and which was already listed at the UNESCO as well.[16] On the more practical side, food has also been considered: North Korean kimchi even received recognition, making it a markedly different product than South Korean kimchi.[17]

A few memberships might have double-edge swords, however, as they allow the DPRK to benefit from a service or a good while at the same time also allowing reporting on the DPRK's activities and in some cases, gravely disturbing some of Pyongyang's projects. This is the case with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which has helped assess the DPRK's communication needs but that has also placed the DPRK in an international hotspot.[18] On the one hand, North Korea has requested help to the ITU to switch from analog to digital TV broadcasting.[19] On the other hand, the ITU has shed light on the DPRK's tendency to disturb global positioning system (GPS) signals over the peninsula and has called for Pyongyang to stop interfering with South Korea's GPS systems.[20] The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has condemned the DPRK for its GPS scrambling, but has remained as a contact point organization for the DPRK's developing plane industry and allowing for communication to occur when settling new flight paths. This was the case when the DPRK decided to open its skies to international commercial flights in 1998, as the ICAO brokered a deal between the DPRK and eight airlines.[21]

Global Governance as a Pathway to Anti-hegemonic Agendas

Hegemony, in a Gramscian sense, describes how the capitalist state rules through both political force and elements within society that impose

content.[22] This translates at the international level into norms of behavior that are heavily influenced by powerful states, and that are thus not always representative of all actors' interests and circumstances. As a small state embittered in a long-standing contention with the United States, a state that also more broadly represents capitalism and democracy, the DPRK has been part of counter-hegemonic movements that have attempted to voice concerns and when possible provide an alternative to the existing and enforced power. The DPRK communicates on anti-hegemonic themes by using it membership to several organizations, with the UN being the prime forum.

The Non-aligned Movement and the G-77 meetings have also provided the DPRK with a platform to call for unity among small and developing countries, with North Korean Foreign Minister Park Nam Sun calling for nations to become more of a political force to represent the Global South.[23] The Asia-Africa Legal Consultative Organization, for example, fosters cooperation and solidarity on topics that deal with international law for countries that often do not have a strong legal system themselves, and who want to understand and especially gain legal leverage over greater powers in the international system.[24] The 53rd Asia-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) meeting organized in Tehran in 2014 was an opportunity for both Iran and the DPRK to communicate on Iran's inalterable legal rights under the NPT, in light of the P5+1 negotiations that could lead to legal requirements and changes for Iran.[25] The DPRK also communicates its view via the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in English and thus with an international audience in mind (Table 6.2).

Most of the views voiced by the DPRK in the international community have to do with presenting a unique stance, a right to survive, and a right to defend itself at just about any cost, while making sure its territorial sovereignty and integrity is respected. In many cases, the DPRK considers that the main hindrance to its peace and stability originates in American foreign policy, and especially American military presence in the ROK and in the region as well as its insistence Pyongyang denuclearizes. The speech that President Ronald Reagan gave at the American Bar Association in July 1985 was a precursor to the doctrine of rogue states, as it singled out a number of countries such as Iran, Libya, Cuba and Nicaragua as well as North Korea that, according to him, were engaged in 'acts of war against the government and people of the United States.'[26] So the DPRK has rallied support around the world in order to placate the United States and fight against what it perceives as unfair labeling and aggressive rhetoric.

Table 6.2 KCNA articles on globalization

KCNA records	*Date*	*Summary*
'Rodong Sinmun on South Korea's call for attraction to foreign capital'	1998/06/29	DPRK contends that attraction of foreign capital has led to the ruining of South Korean economy
'Worldwide changes after end of Cold War'	1999/12/19	DPRK explains that as the Cold War ended, there was a need in the 1990s within the international community to become more assertive for independence and democracy, with every country and nation wanting to live independently freed from any bloc
'Strengthened South-South Cooperation Called for'	2000/04/10	First NAM summit in Cuba under the sponsorship of the G-77
'Calls for WPK published to mark 55th anniversary of WPK'	2000/08/01	Important to move against globalization in order to create a new international order based on equality, justice and impartiality. Non-aligned movement is very important to work toward that aim
'DPRK Hails formation of African Union'	2001/03/08	DPRK supports the formation of the African Union and how it meets the challenge of globalization. DPRK aims to further develop friendly and cooperative relationships with African countries in the idea of independence, peace and friendship
'Greetings to Caricom Summit'	2001/07/02	Message sent to 22nd Caricom summit, by supporting their work against challenges set by globalization
'DPRK Delegate to UNGA on environment and development'	2001/11/04	DPRK delegate gives speech on environment and development at 56th UNGA. Criticizes globalization for broadening gap between developed and developing countries. Called for implementing Kyoto protocol (especially developed countries)
'Speech of Head of DPRK Delegation'	2003/09/30	Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs heading the DPRK delegation addressed foreign ministers meeting of G-77, calls for UN to be a hub dealing with loans for development, with loans not dependent on political strings. Need to establish fair international economic relations. South-South cooperation especially important

(*continued*)

Table 6.2 (continued)

KCNA records	*Date*	*Summary*
'DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Speaks at UNCTAD Meeting'	2004/06/23	DPRK asks UN Conference on Trade and Development to help create a fair and undiscriminating economic environment DPRK has developed its foreign day in multilateral ways, using science and technology as well as joint venture via international economic organizations
'Int'l Community Urged to Draw Lessons from Worldwide Financial Crisis'	2008/12/17	Globalization is cited as leading to a unipolar system. Stresses the importance of strengthening independence of national economy
'KCNA Commentary on Crisis of Capitalism'	2011/11/02	Suggests that a number of countries that pursued financial liberalization ended in trouble, especially when it comes to developing countries in Africa. Suggests BRICS and other groupings are challenging Western-led international economic order with South-South cooperation

Source: Compiled by author using the KCNA website

This has been done using diplomatic channels, such as when the North Korean ambassador-designate presented his credentials to Foreign Affairs Minister Hidipo Hamutenya of Namibia in 2003. The DPRK tried to organize a collaborative effort, asking for Namibia as well as South Africa's support to protest against potential sanctions that would be imposed on the DPRK for producing nuclear energy.[27] While Namibia was careful to consider facts in this complex picture and refused to give outright support until it understood the issues fully, the DPRK has been able to count on a number of countries to back its specific anti-American rhetoric. Venezuela has complained about a double standard when considering how the DPRK was condemned for testing its long-range Taepodong-2 stating that the United States or other Western countries were not condemned when they were testing their own technology as well.[28] Iran has also supported the DPRK's anti-American stance for many years, with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaking of the common enemy they had, and praising the DPRK's anti-West position.[29] Syria's Bashar Al-Assad has also spoken, after the start

of the civil war, of common enemies and conspiracies, with the DPRK's ambassador in Damascus Zhang Meng Hu suggested both countries were 'fighting in the same ditch against the policies of the U.S. and the Zionist entity.'[30] Though the DPRK and Israel have had very little opportunities to be in contact, the DPRK has argued many times for Palestinian rights or criticized Israel's treatment of Lebanon and especially its military actions and occupation, suggesting that access to land was crucial and that peace would not come from enforcing the spread of freedom and democracy.[31] The DPRK has also started to condemn the United States for its foreign policy in the Middle East, with the North Korean Foreign Ministry, cited via the KNCA, calling US special forces operation in Syria 'terrorist attacks.'[32] It is also within the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that the DPRK makes attempts to secure material gains on the one hand and push its anti-hegemonic agenda on the other hand, therefore using the UNGA dual advocacy and service role to fulfill its goals. So, the DPRK has used its speaking opportunities at the UNGA to call for more transparency within the UN system, especially regarding potential breaches of the UN Charter. Essentially, the DPRK's purpose is clear here: it is to ensure no force will be used against North Korea.[33] The DPRK has also repeatedly called for the UN to support the millennium development goals (MDGs), and especially promote investment in developing countries while making sure that recipient countries remain sovereign and independent.[34] Finally, the DPRK has also addressed numerous times two of its favorite topics. First, the fact that it does not pursue a nuclear arms race and is only aiming to secure a nuclear deterrent in order to avoid further conflict.[35] Second, that there is crucial need to create a just world, away from sanctions for countries that seek peace, and especially over the Korean peninsula, in order to allow the DPRK to grow and prosper.[36]

Becoming Part of the Global Financial System

How to produce better and especially how to attract investments in order to support domestic production has become part of a tentative new marketization structure within the DPRK. This behavior slowly takes self-reliance away in order to engage with the global financial system in ways that are thus very much mainstream. Yet, this approach is still tinted by the DPRK's specific political system, how it manages information, and how it controls both its citizens and foreign visitors coming within its borders, making investment opportunities in the DPRK, while potentially

interesting, still complicated for willing parties. But the DPRK itself has maintained an investment program abroad as well, and has been providing aid to a number of other countries, though this particular side of the DPRK is usually less-known. What is the DPRK's potential will and ability to join the international system and conform to a specific number of rules and norms that could eventually allow the country to, if not prosper and thrive, at least stabilize and grow?

Production and Investment

In 1998, the DPRK suggested via its Rodong Sinmun newspaper that South Korea's attempt to attract foreign investments and foreign capitals would most likely lead to its ruin.[37] Almost two decades later, the DPRK has started to slowly embrace the concept of investment it has rejected so publicly and vehemently in the past. There have been a number of structural and legal changes. This includes the creation of the Economic Development Association in 2013, a North Korean 'NGO' aims to support the establishment of foreign businesses.[38] Legal work to create a system supportive of international investments has also started, with the Korea's Lawyers' Association developing an external civil law office that can act as a legal representative and provide legal services to local as well as foreign businesses. It is also tasked, at least in theory, to provide arbitration and mediation between entities, if needed.[39] The changes have included the creation of the State Development Bank in 2010, which aims to provide investments on major projects. It also hopes to create pathways to make the DPRK system more compatible with banking rules within international monetary organizations as well as other commercial banks.[40] These changes have also been described at length in foreigner-focused sources such as the KCNA, where articles outlining how the DPRK is seeking international investments and is creating a positive climate to receive them are often published (Table 6.3).

These changes, most of them enacted since Kim Jong Un came into power, are slowly contrasting with how the DPRK has dealt with foreign investment in the past, when China was all but the only option. Against China's will, the DPRK sought investment from Taiwan, and a North Korean delegation traveled to Taiwan in June 1996 at the invitation of Yu Tai Enterprise, a company that was run by Taiwan's Kuomintang party.[41] An agreement was signed in October 1997 that aimed to set up semi-official trade offices between Taipei and Pyongyang, with North Korea seeking to

Table 6.3 KCNA articles on foreign investment

KCNA records	*Date*	*Summary*
'Foreign Delegations Arrive'	2006/10/10	Cuban delegation headed by Ramon Ripoll Diaz, first vice-minister of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation arrived to participate in 25th meeting of Inter-Governmental Economic and Scientific and Technological Consultative Committee between DPRK and Cuba
'1st Meeting of Korea Taepung I IG Held'	2010/01/20	Korea Taepung International Investment Group took place in North Korea, with a decision from the DPRK National Defense Commission to establish a state development bank The State Development Bank will provide investment on major projects, and will be equipped with advanced banking rules and compliant system for international monetary organization and commercial banks
'Security of Investment in DPRK Guaranteed by Law'	2011/03/01	DPRK encourages foreigners to invest in the country Law on foreign investment adopted on October 5, 1992 and revised in 1999 and 2004
'Pyongyang External Civil Law Firm'	2011/05/26	The Korea's Lawyers' Association has an external civil law office, which acts as legal representatives and provides legal service to local and foreign businesses. Also acts as legal advisers and lawsuit and arbitration representatives at the request of business and foreign investors
'Mt Kumgang Tourism Becomes Brisk'	2011/10/21	The Law on the Special Zone of Mt Kumgang International Tourism was adopted in May 2011 Rajin-Mt Kumgang international tourist route was opened in August 2011 Hope is to suit 'global trend', and exchange with international tourist organizations to draw foreign investment
'DPRK Encourages Foreign Investment'	2012/03/23	Vice-Department Director of the DPRK Committee for Investment and Joint Venture started that DPRK 's economy is gaining momentum, and several power stations are being built Investment-related laws amended for Hwanggumpyong, the river Amnok and Rason economic zone

(*continued*)

Table 6.3 (continued)

KCNA records	*Date*	*Summary*
'7th round of North-South Working-level Talks Held'	2013/08/14	Talks between North and South to normalize operation over the Kaesong Industrial Zone, with aim to increase foreign investment and increase attractiveness of zone
'Int'l Tourist Zone to Appear in DPRK'	2014/06/12	Masikryong Ski Resort and Songdowon International Children's Camp were built and are now international tourist zones. This was promulgated at the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly on June 11, 2014
'Business Success in Store for Foreign investors'	2015/02/02	DPRK Government is working hard to create a legal environment favorable for foreign investors Agreement on promotion and protection of mutual investment with 28 countries, in Asia, Africa and Europe

Source: Compiled by author using the KCNA website

guarantee specific taxation privileges in a bid to secure Taiwanese investment.[42] Taxation and investment protection were also discussed between the DPRK and Belarus in a move to deepen their relationship, which had already involved Belarus supplying a number of lorries and other agricultural vehicles to the DPRK.[43] While the DPRK conducted further missions to talk about investment, such as an investment-focused tour of Southeast Asia by Kim Yong Nam in May 2012, it also started to open up its borders to potential investors by allowing various industry groups to visit the county to consider where they could invest in it. A group of 16 businessmen from the Singapore Confederation of Industries visited the DPRK for eight days in October 2000.[44]

With the DPRK's slow recovery from the 1990s' drought and famine, family reunions in 2000, the visit by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and Pyongyang's further engagement as part of the Six-Party Talks in 2003, a number of nations started to see Pyongyang as a potentially interesting place to develop business and generate profits. Italy, which had led Europe's official DPRK recognition, sought to help the DPRK transition to market economy. Ambassador Carlo Trezza suggested, following a visit by an Italian delegation to Pyongyang in June 2001, that Italy wanted 'to teach them how to catch fish, rather than just giving fish,' suggesting that development aid and investments were much needed in the DPRK, but with a long-term vision, not a

collapsist one.[45] German electronics manufacturer Prettl was also the first foreign company apart from South Korean ones to build a factory in the Kaesong complex, where it would operate an 11,000 square-meter factory producing wiring looms and a number of automotive parts.[46] So the DPRK's strategy was to develop relationships where it could potentially secure investments, and many of these relationships ended up being with countries that the DPRK shared very little with, historically or politically-speaking, since the communist and counter-hegemonic front did not necessarily have the will and means to participate in semi-capitalist ventures. Hence, the upgrading of the Pyongyang wastewater collection network was financed by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in 2008, and the fund agreed to provide a massive USD 20 million to support the project and help with new pumping stations that would allow for a marked improvement to Pyongyang's public health and sanitation facilities.[47]

Considering the DPRK as a possible new market was made possible by a few conservative North Korean reforms in the early 2000s, and a number of joints ventures started during this time. While most investments still come from China, there are a number of new firms and companies that are investing money into setting up new factories and businesses in the DPRK under shared ownership schemes. In many cases, the working staff is mostly North Korean, while directorships and presidencies are composed of foreigners.[48] Singapore has become engaged in the DPRK via Maxgro Holding, which has set up a joint venture in 2001 that let the company use 20,000 hectares of North Korean land to cultivate paulownia, a fast-growing hardwood.[49] The same year, Singapore's Sovereign Ventures Pte. Ltd. was awarded a Korean onshore oil drilling concession and hoped to conduct testing and exploration for a few years before moving onto a 20-year development and production stage. However, the process was halted only a few years later due to international pressures.[50]

High-ranking managers and directors for Singapore ventures in the DPRK, such as Samtaeson, a fast-food restaurant in Pyongyang, or Choson Exchange, a non-profit organization that assists in business and legal training in the DPRK did not show extreme concern upon the death of Kim Jong Il.[51] Pyongyang also started to seek new forms of training: a number of North Korean government officials and business people have been trained on a 'mini MBA' course on free-market in Singapore in December 2015 via Choson Exchange.[52] There is cautious hope that the DPRK

could further market its new 20 special economic zones (SEZs) and follow Singapore's example to invest and engage on North Korean soil. Things are also changing beyond SEZs: a joint venture between Swiss-based management and investment group Parazelsus and the North Korean Health Ministry has led to the opening of nine pharmacies in Pyongyang, with the Pyongsu pharmaceutical factory the first of its kind to meet WHO quality standards.[53]

Along with attracting investment on its soil, North Korea has also engaged in its own brand of investment abroad, strengthening a number of partnerships that were based on trading alone, and moving on to sponsoring production and developing factories instead. Accepting North Korean investments funds might be problematic, however, given that there is still a large amount of Korean funds that are mismanaged, and that while they could be used to develop better living and working conditions for its own population, they are instead being invested abroad. The fact that the money invested abroad is also partly coming from income sources that are not always legal or that have involved weapons trade means that a number of countries will not want to engage with the DPRK. Malta was, for example, was very clear on this point in July 2015: Iran, Afghanistan, and North Korean nationals would not be allowed under any condition to acquire Maltese nationality, and especially not under its individual investor program that allows for citizenship to be essentially acquired by spending money in Malta.[54] With most European and Western powers holding similar positions, though not economically desperate as to seek investment from the DPRK, investment opportunities for the DPRK are rather sparse. Its own recent endeavors have centered more on providing input via its own experience and some of its manufactured goods instead of being able to provide hard currency, which it is lacking, for investment. Hence, support for other countries in the 1990s and 2000s ranged from helping Venezuela cultivate and process seaweed for food as well as medical purposes,[55] and a pledge to Uganda in 2002 to provide aid in the hydro and mineral resource exploitation sector.[56] In November 2007, Kim Jong Il visited Cambodia in a bid to further the already close relationship that had been established with former king Sihanouk by looking at how to start producing goods in Cambodia to later export them to larger countries, essentially using Cambodia as a manufacturing proxy.[57] The visit ended with an agreement that would provide Cambodian investments into the DPRK mining sector and North Korean investments into small- and medium-sized hydro-electric power plants in Cambodia. This

is similar to how the DPRK has developed hydro-electric power in other countries in the past and especially in Nigeria.[58] But Pyongyang's own investment efforts also caused tensions when it offered a USD 100 million loan to Thailand for Bangkok to modernize its infrastructure, and especially its mass-transit system.[59] The problem was that the DPRK was still receiving support from the World Food Program (WFP) as well at that time, in 2008. But there are still some opportunities than are being created or pursued. Pyongyang's ambassador in Angola Kim Hyon Il has expressed interest in the Malanje region as a potential area for Korean investments, especially in the field of agro-industry and potentially tourism as well.[60] A North Korean delegation led by Minister of Foreign Trade Ri Ryong Nam in November 2015 has focused on the of Ha Nam region and Mekong Delta province of Hau Giang and especially high-tech agriculture and vocational training, areas that the DPRK has invested in abroad before.[61] Other opportunities have included Bangladesh seeking, in January 2014 the newly appointed North Korean Ambassador in Dhaka Ri Song Hyon for investments, especially in the fields of mining and telecommunications,[62] and chairman of Iran Tobacco Company Mohammad Hossein Barkhordar meeting with DPRK ambassador in Iran Kang Sam Hyun to explore avenues for North Korean investment in the tobacco industry.[63]

While the DPRK relied on its own resources for trading for a number of years, furnishing raw materials to the Soviet Union and seeking partners to market it coal, such as Malta in the early 1980s,[64] the DPRK has also managed to market and sell some of its specific skills. The DPRK is thus engaged in trading a wide range of its own production and especially theatrical animation features. The North Korean outfit Sek replaced South Korean mini-major Hahn Shin Corporation in May 2003 as Italy's partner for a USD 20 million series of animation deals, with Sek paying a large sum of money to acquire 30% of the Asian distribution rights to four biopics.[65] The DPRK has also manufactured jeans for the Noko company, a Swedish-led venture that oversaw the production of 1000 pairs of black jeans made in North Korea.[66] The jeans were never sold as the original distribution refused to sell products made, essentially, in a dictatorship.[67] So new avenues must also be pursued, with Pyongyang seeking partners that will be less scrupulous about a product's origin. A recent visit in April 2014 by a North Korean diplomat to France's National Dairy Industry College, might pave the way for the DPRK branching out in the cheese industry, which is a relatively soaring market in Asia.[68]

DPRK as a Connected State

Along with a move toward more economic interactions with the outside world, and more engagement in patterns that, for all purposes, are about investment and revenue-making, the DPRK is also more physically connected with the outside than it was in the past. All of this is very relative, however, when comparing the DPRK's standards with even that of the South. Some changes in how to reach the DPRK, both physically and virtually, could lead to further trading and exchanges. The most dramatic changes have to do with air travel. Thailand's Thai Airways International signed an air service agreement with the DPRK in March 1993, making it the first country outside of Russia's Aeroflot and China's Civil Aviation Administration of China to land planes in the DPRK.[69] In 1995, Switzerland followed as the first European nation to launch a regular commercial air service to Pyongyang, partnering with North Korea's civilian airline Air Koryo, and adding six international routes to its existing operations.[70] But safety has been a concern for Air Koryo: its fleet of Russian-made planes failed to meet international safety standards for a number of years. As a result, they were not allowed to land within the European Union air space. Air Koryo has also faced travel limitations because of the type and number of aircraft it possesses. The DPRK is not able to purchase airplanes from potential sellers as international sanctions prohibit large money sum movements. Airplanes are also luxury items, hence prohibited goods under the UNSC sanctions. Yet Pyongyang was reported to have recently purchased an An-148 and An-158 from Ukrainian plane manufacturer Antonov. With a unit price around USD 20 million, there are speculations as to how the DPRK paid for the planes. Russian leasing company Ilyushin Finance Co. might have facilitated the deal, though the company has denied its involvement, cautious about not antagonizing its relationship with European partners because of potential ties with the DPRK.[71]

The second-best option for the DPRK to increase its air route is to partner with foreign airlines. Taiwan launched charter flights with the DPRK in the mid-1990s, creating opportunities for Taiwanese travel agents to come to Pyongyang and organize tours for the Pyongyang International Sports and Cultural Festival in 1995.[72] So, the DPRK then needed to support this tourist intake, and it opened the Korea International Travel Bureau in Taipei. The hope was that 3000 Taiwanese tourists would come to visit the DPRK, once the flights were in place.[73] Tourism slowly started to be seen as a potential cash avenue: tourism offices in China, Malaysia,

and Germany, and various tours ranging from the cultural and architectural to running, cycling, and hiking were put in place.[74] With more regular connections operated via China, such as the Shanghai-Pyongyang route as well as the a direct flight from Kuala Lumpur since 2011, the DPRK has also started to negotiate to offer a visa exemption system to tourists traveling via Shanghai.[75]

Beyond Collapse Theory: A Future for the DPRK?

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, all 189 UN member states and a large number of organizations committed to achieve specific goals by 2015. The goals were organized along a number of target areas: economic development (eradicating extreme power and hunger, developing a global partnership for development), education (achieving a universal primary education), societal (promoting gender equality and empowering women), health (reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and a number of other diseases), and the environment (ensuring sustainability).[76] The DPRK's achievements in these areas are uneven at best. It is also often difficult to evaluate progress against targets, since the DPRK is reluctant to release data about its economic and health situations. These difficulties have been noted in official publications summarizing the most recent works that UN humanitarian agencies have done with the DPRK: they include the FAO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the WFP, and the WHO.[77] The 'Humanitarian Needs and Priority 2015' report suggests that the DPRK still lags far behind targets, especially for diet, food security, nutritional diversity, and access to health services. Other shortcomings include access to clean water and proper sanitation. While international agencies have noted improvements, at times, the situation in the DPRK remains critical and helps from international donors fundamental. Donor fatigue is real though, with only about USD 18 million-worth of projects funded for 2015 out of a requested USD 110 million, a sharp decline from the previous years when about 40% of projects had been funded.[78]

The DPRK itself has started to communicate on the topic of the MDGs, and has slowly stewarded some of its modernization efforts toward their achievements. In the mid-2000s, the DPRK was somewhat slow, however, to include the MDGs in any significant programs, until they were

framed within a discussion at the 60th UNGA on 9 November 2005. For the DPRK, the MDGs are important for South–South cooperation.[79] A further call at the 62nd UNGA on 10 October 2007 stated that the UN should work on three pillars: economic growth, social develop and environmental protection.[80] But the MDGs have also been used by the DPRK to warn that the international community should not use aid as a pretext to trample weaker countries' sovereignty. The discourse espoused by the DPRK concentrates on the need to consider environment degradations, pollution and resource depletion. The MDGs have been used to call for the creation for a peaceful environment that also needs to be supported by a neutral UN. DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun, who was heading the DPRK delegation at the Special Ministerial Meeting for the Millennium Development Goals Review in Asia and the Pacific in August 2010, stated that the United Nations Development Program should not be used as a lever to purse any political purpose.[81] North Korean rhetoric about its cooperation with UN agencies has also started to be more engaging though, with the official media talking about the positive relationship that has been developed between a number of agencies. This can be seen through the three-decade-long partnership with the UNFPA, which helped the DPRK organize its first national census in 1993 and its second in 2008.[82] In the past few years, and in concert with Kim Jong Un's ascent to power, the DPRK has increased its communication on the MDGs and what is needed from the international community in order to meet the goals. This communication could have been strategized by the DPRK elite as a way to engage with the international community and UN agencies to receive support, while at the same time arguing that the support is needed to attain globally agreed targets, and not because of economic mismanagement. So the MDGs could be a convenient way to receive aid without admitting to its own domestic population that the leadership is facing difficulties. More candid acknowledgments of difficulties have been made in public settings such as by the head of the DPRK delegation to the 38th Conference of the UN FAO in June 2013, who talked about the global food insecurity, and the need for each country to increase grain production to fight off starvation.[83] The DPRK did not directly address its own food shortage, however, but placed Kim Jong Un at the center of a new national dynamic focused on agriculture and the use of scientific developments to improve rural areas' food security. At the G-77 meeting in September 2013, the DPRK talked about a changing North Korean outlook, with a new focus on knowledge-based economy, but reiterated

the principle of sovereignty, as well as the right of poorer countries to be allowed to develop. Essentially, the DPRK is not willing to compromise on its own vision of security and sovereignty as well as its weapons program development but is looking for independence on these matters while still seeking international support for development.[84] This, essentially, brings us back to the initial conundrum, of how the DPRK can be independently interdependent.

Securing Modernity

A large part of the DPRK's international relations are maintained and further developed in order to meet Pyongyang's basic energy and food requirements, since the country's own economic system is not efficient or modern enough to produce what it needs. Partnerships have also started to provide new technology and concepts to the DPRK, thus playing an important role in the development of the country as a more modern nation, a point often overlooked given the prominence of security concerns regarding the DPRK's nuclear proliferation and missile programs. Long-standing partners such as Mongolia, Malaysia, or Laos have cooperated with Pyongyang on a number of issues, from post and telecommunication to sports, culture, and tourism.[85] These agreements are generally well publicized by the DPRK and hailed as contributing to strong and long-lasting friendships. New agreements with Belarus in 2015 have been set up to prop up North Korea's agricultural sector, with MAZ trucks and MTZ tractors supplied to the North.[86] This particular arrangement also calls for production assembly facilities to be set up in North Korea in order to put the equipment together: this light technology transfer is vital to the DPRK as it provides new skills and exposure to foreign production methods. It is further helpful to compare these new processes to domestic and in some cases outdated production mechanisms.[87]

Skills training has taken the form of North Korean personnel sent abroad to receive specialist knowledge, especially in the medical field. Kim Jong Il had, for example, a medical team in his later years that had been trained for a month in brain disease-related rehabilitation in Singapore in 2010.[88] Training opportunities have also been negotiated via the Choson Exchange: North Koreans on the programs have travelled to Singapore to explore business opportunities on behalf of the DPRK government, and have been very active in promoting North Korea as a promising environment for foreign investments.[89] But this potentially promising investment

landscape is greatly contingent on the DPRK being able to support business practices as well as providing an infrastructure that allows for business to be conducted. Getting up to speed with current communication technologies has been a priority over the past few years in the DPRK, with a strong involvement in developing a reliable mobile phone network as well as mainstreaming computer.[90] Egypt has been the main technology provider via Orascom Telecom Holding, the largest Arab mobile operator by subscribers in January 2007.[91] Orascom invested about USD 400 million to develop the DPRK's first mobile phone network, with exclusive rights for 4 years over a 25-year license that would give Orascom control over 75% of the entire operation, leaving 25% to be controlled by Pyongyang's Korea Post and Telecommunications Corp.[92] While Orascom's initial investment was meant to offset slumbering market conditions, the deal's expected revenue of USD 12–USD 15 million in 2008 was quite far from reality.[93] It was estimated in 2015 that the actual cash worth for Orascom's holding was about USD 7 million on the North Korean black market. With the North Korean won set artificially high against the USD, and a lack of funds to back up the deal value, Orascom's holding would be worth USD 585 million according to the DPRK exchange rate.[94] Because of international sanctions that restrict financial transactions associated with large sums of money, Orascom has also been unable to receive its profits, thus creating a catch-22 situation in the DPRK: investment is needed as opportunities exist, but profits cannot really be made, thus seriously limiting potential investors.

Partnerships for Long-Term Change

One of the areas that the DPRK has achieved a measure of comparative success for a number of years, as opposed to many underdeveloped and developing countries, is education. While training partnerships have been in place for many years since the Cold War, more recent endeavors have focused on modernization and development of teaching means to support the economy. In the Education for All 2015 National Review Report, which was written by the DPRK Education Commission, the DPRK stresses that it is a 'country of learning and education,' but that the current education strategy has been focused on bringing Information Technology to the sector, as well as a fresher perspective on content and methods.[95] In truth, the DPRK boasts a comprehensive education: its system is free and supported by the state, from kindergarten to university, and education

attainments of population aged over 15 showing less than 8% having only attained a primary school level, more than 70% having attained a secondary school level, and 10% a university and postgraduate course, and a general parity when it comes to gender ratio.[96] While education in the DPRK is used largely to control the population and perpetuates the Kim family to ensure political stability via a curriculum that reflects very little awareness of the international world, changes were being considered following the 2008 survey. At the primary level, the inclusion of English and computer courses has been made, while the government has also started to renounce dictation methods in order to favor a more heuristic teaching approach. Yet, shortcomings still remain according to the report, with a lack of textbooks for all, poor nutrition provision for children and difficulty to access water in school buildings.[97]

The DPRK has now started to develop new education partnerships, which present both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, it is impossible for the DPRK to always control ideas that are being exchanged at a human level, but on the other hand the recognition that new technologies might be of use to develop the society further has pushed the DPRK to engage. The opening in 2004 of the Goethe Institute in Pyongyang, the first Western reading room in the DPRK, after several months of negotiation by its sister institute in Seoul, and the German Parliament's Culture Committee paved the way for more foreign ideas within the DPRK. The reading room content was negotiated, censorship not permitted, and access theoretically granted to anyone.[98] The reading room stayed opened until 2009 when a decision was made by the Goethe Institute to close the space: the doors to the institute were often locked, construction was blocking the entrance, and there was no Internet access, which had yet been requested as a condition to open the space.[99] Perhaps the closure is related to the library's content as well: the DPRK government wanted mostly science, technology, and medicine books, while the Goethe Institute stressed that half of the content should be about promoting German culture, literature, and music, in a bid to contribute to bridging cultural difference between the and the rest of the world.[100]

A decade later, another foreign education venture has launched on DPRK soil: the completion of the first construction phase of the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) in 2009 was celebrated by Jon Kuk Man, vice-president of Education, as well as James Chin Kyung Min, the founding president of the university,[101] with Chin also being praised in the DPRK for his education efforts by receiving a

DPRK honorary doctorate of pedagogy in 2011.[102] The first graduating class out of PUST was celebrated in May 2014, with 44 graduates with Masters in information, food engineering, and communication, after having been taught in English by foreign volunteer faculty.[103] PUST is starting to be recognized as a potential game-changer for the DPRK, though it is clear that only a handful of elite students have access to this form of education. New prospects such as a visit by Dr. Peter Agre, director of the Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute, and four other Nobel laureates to the DPRK in 2016 following Agre's initial visit in 2015 at PUST could lead to new education partnerships and a way for the DPRK to engage in more advanced technologies.[104] PUST could also play an important part for the DPRK's health system in the future as it opened a medical school in September 2015.[105] Because the partnership is taking place on North Korean soil, however, several problems might complicate PUST's future, from North Korean government control to political views outside of the DPRK. Two American professors who had taught economics and business administration at PUST from August to November 2013 had their visa denied upon their return to the DPRK to teach the new semester, with suspicion that the denial was led to them encouraging North Korean PUST students to think critically.[106] PUST also relies on the goodwill of teaching staff as there is no salary for those who want to come to PUST to teach, and with funding coming from South Korea and the United States dwindling, PUST's operating budget was recently reduced from USD 100,000 to USD 50,000 a month.[107] Finally, as PUST operates within the DPRK, there is scrutiny and reluctance to fund activities that, while providing new technology and outlooks to the DPRK, also overlook the fundamental question of human rights within the North Korean society.

Apart from PUST, a number of academic endeavors have also taken place outside of the DPRK. The scientific cooperation between Syracuse University and the DPRK over the past decade has led to a consortium engaging North Korean scientists and English teachers, and has taken place in Dalian, China, with workshops on helping North Korean participants to use digital media for research. The WHO has also allowed for a number of academic journals to be accessible via the DPRK's newest digital libraries.[108] A number of academic visits outside of the DPRK have also been organized recently, with the University of British Columbia in Canada hosting North Koreans professors taking classes in international business for several months each year, international economics as well as finance and trade, via the Canada–DPRK Knowledge

Partnership Program.[109] The program, which started before Kim Jong Un came into power, has continued despite the leadership change and has slowly morphed into a more practical experience. Since 2014, the program has co-hosted an international academic conference on SEZ development in Pyongyang and has also organized visits for foreign experts to tour North Korea's SEZs. The University of British Columbia partnership has also evolved in 2015 with a 'study trip' organized in Indonesia in June, which exposed North Korean academics as well as officials from the DPRK's Ministry of Finance, Economy and Foreign Affairs to on-the-ground projects.[110] Similar visits have also been organized in Vietnam for Pyongyang to look at models of rural area development, and how to make sure constructive steps can be taken in the fields of poverty reduction, employment, and social welfare.[111] In May 2014, the DPRK also signed a new agreement to promote exchange with Nigeria: under the agreement, education cooperation between the two countries would promote visit exchanges between university lecturers, with the aim to develop mutually beneficial research projects in the fields of agriculture, geology, oil, and gas.[112] This agreement, and the subsequent Education Cooperation and Protocol of Implementation agreement, came into effect after four joint commissions held between the DPRK and Nigeria between 1988 and 2014, thus cementing a relationship that has always been described as cordial between the two countries. Vocational and science education, especially engineering structures, was described by Dr. MacJohn Nwaobiala, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, as areas that Nigeria should emulate,[113] while the DPRK could mostly gain from Nigeria's experience in the field of natural resources and energy.

Education and health have also been closely connected for the DPRK, with shared expertise and efforts to sustain cooperation with foreign powers for many years. While traditional cooperation fell along ideological lines, a number of countries remained connected with the DPRK after the end of the Cold War. Poland, for example, signed a new cooperation plan in health protection and medical sciences with the DPRK in July 1992.[114] Twenty years on, health partnerships are now less based on political affiliation than in the past but more on mutually beneficial relationships with states that often are also part of the developing world. The Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Report 2015 highlights the DPRK's need for medicines and vaccines, as well as basic equipment: the problem at the DPRK level is not so much the lack of infrastructure

and doctors, but the lack of basic functionality within the infrastructures to combat malaria and to provide better care in maternity hospitals for newborns and their mothers.[115] Some of these shortcomings have been tackled with a memorandum of understanding signed with Zimbabwe in August 2006 in order for the DPRK to secure medical products from Zimbabwe, while North Korean doctors would be going to Zimbabwe to fill a gap created by a massive brain drain as many of its doctors and nurses emigrate to South Africa or the United Kingdom in search of better-paying jobs. For the DPRK, the agreement provides a double-win: securing medicines it needs in order to provide better medical conditions and essentially a more profitable workforce for its future, while being able to derive further foreign income from its medical staff abroad.[116] Agreements with Gabon, a country with one of the best medical infrastructures in West Africa,[117] as well as an extensive visit from North Korea's Health Minister Kang Ha Guk in December 2015 to several hospitals in Angola, where about 180 North Korean physicians work, have furthered the DPRK's exposure to new techniques.[118] But health cooperation has also been expanded to traditional medicine. Médecins Sans Frontières deplored in 1997 the state of medical supplies in the DPRK: while the country lacked antibiotics, anesthetics, and dressing kits, it would make use of local produce such as Ginseng and traditional techniques such as acupuncture.[119] Two decades later, both ginseng and acupuncture have now become part of a desired set of goods and services and are in demand in certain parts of the world. Mexico, for example, signed a cooperation agreement with the DPRK in 2009 which focuses on prevention strategies, treatments of infectious and chronic diseases, monitoring system, and traditional medicine. The DPRK has already been working for a number of years with Mexico in the field of acupuncture, and trading traditional medicine for much-needed drugs is another way for the DPRK to try to narrow its health gap.[120] Cooperation with agencies has also been crucial, and though many relations with non-governmental organizations and international organizations had been severed in the 1990s and early 2000s, WHO and UNICEF have been, more recently, instrumental in helping the DPRK roll out vaccination campaigns. The DPRK recently introduced a pentavalent vaccine to immunize against meningitis, pneumonia, diphtheria, tetanus, and hepatitis B, which the minister of Public Health Choe Chang Sik said gave the DPRK 'a good prospect for the reduction of child mortality and morbidity and for achieving MDG goals.'[121]

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusion: Fostering Cooperation in a Multipolar World

What does the future hold for the DPRK? If anything, the Seventh Congress and Kim Jong Un's Byungjin policy, or the parallel pursuit of a strong economy along nuclear power, show that the DPRK's return to a negotiated solution that would foster denuclearization appears less likely, especially as years keep on going by without the Six-Party Talks resuming. With the rapid succession of nuclear weapons and missiles that have been tested since 2012, the question of how to engage the DPRK into a constructive dialogue, one that potentially involves becoming responsible and more transparent about nuclear energy but all within the context of retaining its nuclear weapons, is crucial. Actors who could pretend to be adequate brokers within the international arena, as well as within nuclear negotiation arrangements, are few and far between.

Brokers and Friends

Brokering Re-engagement

China's role as a broker while the Six-Party Talks were still meeting at regular intervals was crucial, at a time when the United States was concerned with the Middle East and the War in Iraq. This was a time when Beijing was particularly apt at bringing the DPRK back to the negotiation table. The relationship between the PRC and the DPRK is not as close as it was in the past decade though: Kim Jong Un purged

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a large number of older party members, people who had been part of Kim Jong Il's inner circle. This is especially true with the purge of Jang Sung Taek, Kim Jong Un's uncle, who had been Pyongyang's main contact with Beijing for many years. At the same time, China is unlikely to pressure the DPRK into abandoning its nuclear weapons: Chung Jae Ho and Choi Myung Hae have recently argued that the relationship is neither that of uncertain allies nor that of uncomfortable neighbors, and is based on a fundamental lack of trust which far predates post-Mao reforms or the normalization of ties between Seoul and Beijing.[1] But Beijing is perhaps not the only beacon that could re-engage the DPRK. A number of other countries have stepped up to the plate, over the past decade, but usually as they attempt to cement their own roles as regional powers and brokers. If we go back to Aggarwal and Koo's work, this would mean replacing processes that are usually largely multilateral and dispersed into multilateral concentrated, a move that could give more agency to Asian actors to deal with problems that affect their region without former colonial powers or Western powers' interference.[2] This is the case for Malaysia, who attempted, on the margins of the Non-Aligned Movement 2003 Summit, to facilitate talks between the United States and the DPRK, even though neither had requested any brokering help.[3] Malaysia also offered to become a neutral meeting ground for the DPRK and Japan to solve the issue of American deserter Charles Robert Jenkins. This was a bid to reunite Jenkins and his daughters with their mother and Japanese former abductee wife Hitomi Soga, who had returned to Japan in 2002.[4] There was indeed a need for neutral grounds since the meeting could neither be organized in Japan nor in the DPRK: Jenkins feared he would be sent back to the United States to be court-martialed if he left the DPRK to visit Japan, and Soga did not want to return to the DPRK. In the end, the meeting happened in Indonesia.[5] But this is not all about Asian agency: it is also about relative power and leadership within the region. Japan has developed a DPRK foreign policy which is essentially one of 'encirclement': it focuses on strengthening diplomatic relationships with countries that have relationships with Pyongyang themselves.[6] Mongolia has thus been keen on acting as a broker, and has done so several times since 2007, providing space for Japan–DPRK neutralization talks, as well as a meeting ground for more hostage talks.[7] Talks between Abduction Issue Minister Keiji Furuya and Mongolian President Tsakhia Elbegdorj in July 2013 were followed in March 2014 by a meeting in Ulan Bator between the parents of Megumi

Yokota, who had been abducted by the DPRK in 1977 and her daughter Kim Eun Gyong, who was born in the DPRK and still lives there.[8]

Japan has also sought out a number of countries, some in Asia and some beyond, to ask for leverage in dealing with other abductees cases, one of the most unresolved historical fractures between Tokyo and Pyongyang. Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations Osamu Sakashita revealed in 2008 that Japan had been closely monitoring DPRK diplomatic visits abroad, especially those on the African continent, and had sent follow-up requests, as was the case with Uganda to pressure DPRK partner countries to communicate on the abductee issues.[9] At times though, the DPRK has reacted differently depending on who has proposed to help broker talks, and especially how the request came about. Despite historically good relationships, the DPRK was, for example, unhappy with Egypt's potential brokering inter-Korean relations after Kim Dae Jung had made the suggestion 1999.[10]

Nuclear Talks

How to restart talks on denuclearization and nuclear weapons management is now of the utmost importance, but appears more and more unlikely given Pyongyang's stance at the Seventh Party Congress. With the last round of Six-Party Talks having taken place in September 2007 and despite multiple efforts to restart the dialogue, should the Talks be abandoned and could a new model, brokered by a new set of countries, see the light? Historically, a number of countries have positioned themselves as potential brokers in the Korean nuclear crisis. Pakistan under Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the early 1990s, wanted to play the role of an international peacemaker.[11] Yet, given what we know now of Pakistan and the Khan network's role in North Korean's nuclear weapons development, it is unlikely that Islamabad could bring a neutral hand to the game. In the mid-2000s, Japan attempted to balance further against the DPRK by asking India to step in as a potential mediator, hoping that India's contention with Pakistan, and its own security relationship over the region, would lead to cooperation.[12] Other regional Asian powers have stepped up to the plate and offered help. In 2003, the Philippines offered Pyongyang guarantees if they relinquished their weapons after it had received the endorsement of all ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.[13] Later, Malaysia suggested Kuala Lumpur as a potential venue in the margin of ASEAN meetings and the 13th Asian

Regional Forum for a new round of talks in 2006.[14] Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra provided a more involved approach, suggesting directly to North Korea's ambassador to Bangkok O Yong Son that Bangkok was ready to act as a mediator in the crisis, especially following the North's missile launch in 2006: in this scheme, the Asian Regional Forum would be used as a backdrop, since all six members would be coming to the meeting.[15]

Further afield, Australia, as part of its positioning as a middle power, has suggested Canberra sends a delegation to speak with all parties in contention regarding the DPRK's nuclear program.[16] But following the DPRK's nuclear tests, its disengagement from nuclear talks, and its change of leadership, there have been fewer attempts to mediate and propose a solution, given that it appears difficult at this point to request that the DPRK stops its nuclear program. Switzerland offered in April 2013 to mediate a discussion about UN sanctions imposed after the DPRK's third nuclear test, building upon its experience as a neutral country and a measure of success in helping Armenia and Turkey resolve long-standing historical issues.[17] Ultimately, North Korea's chief nuclear envoy and the former US State Department official Joel S. Wit met in the margin of a conference in Mongolia in May 2014.[18] For the United States and according to United States Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel, the problem is not about finding a broker, but about the DPRK honoring its previous commitments.[19] Given that these previous commitments were made before the DPRK even tested nuclear weapons, it is unlikely any talk can resume on old grounds, and a fresh approach is urgently needed.

Sustaining a Relationship with the DPRK: Uncertainties and Difficulties

Despite a will to commit to cooperative patterns, spats, disputes and tensions have also marred relationships that the DPRK and other countries have taken a long time to develop. The world is far from being static and it is likely that some of the newer patterns of interaction that have developed out of a need to seek new markets and new opportunities may suffer from similar difficulties. For one, there are shifting dynamics in Europe. When Poland started the process of joining NATO following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the DPRK was uncomfortable and thought this was compromising the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission and

especially the neutral aspects of its inspection teams, including the Polish contingent which was stationed in Panmunjom. The DPRK expelled the Polish observers, and Poland threatened to cut its own embassy staff in the DPRK. In a game of tit-for-tat, Poland then asked for the DPRK to halve its diplomatic staff in Poland.[20] Ultimately, the DPRK pulled its ambassador out of Warsaw.[21] Despite having played an important role in the Japan–DPRK normalization process over the past decade, Mongolia has been in contention with Pyongyang before when the DPRK closed its own embassy in Ulan Bator on 25 August 1999 to protest over rapprochement between Mongolia and South Korea, and especially President Kim Dae Jung's visit to Mongolia a month prior.[22] The DPRK has also downgraded its ties with Hungary in 1989 over South Korean President Roh Tae Woo's visit to Budapest that fall, as Hungary had become the first communist country to be recognized by the South.[23]

Other relationships have also been affected by economic factors. According to Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, the relationship between Pyongyang and Teheran was very much hampered by North Korea's debts to Iran. Further rapprochement and closer cooperation plans were made conditional on addressing this particular hurdle first.[24] Political changes have also led to relationship breakdowns, such as the decision by Libya in 2013 to close its North Korean embassy in light of its reassessment of its diplomatic partners and diplomatic needs. Australia, often oscillating on a spectrum ranging from condemnation, sanctions, engagement, brokering and providing economic aid, ultimately scrapped its plans to open an embassy in the DPRK in 2002 when Pyongyang was considering withdrawing from the Non-proliferation Treaty. For Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer, the message sent to Pyongyang was crystal clear: normalization talks could not proceed unless the DPRK would accept non-proliferation standards.[25] While Australia did not cancel its humanitarian aid to the DPRK, it has brought its diplomatic interactions with Pyongyang down to a minimum following North Korea's 2006 missile tests,[26] and Pyongyang closed its Canberra embassy in 2008, allegedly for financial reasons. In December 2012, Australia invited the DPRK to reopen its embassy, but rescinded its offer in March 2013 following North Korea's February 2013 nuclear test, while pursuing new rounds of sanctions during its temporary membership to the United Nations Security Council, further deteriorating hope for diplomatic relations between Canberra and Pyongyang.[27] Other much smaller countries with much

more modest cooperation relationships with the DPRK have also taken very public stances against the regime, such as Botswana, with President Ian Khama initially suspending all cooperation with the DPRK following nuclear testing in 2013,[28] before severing all diplomatic and consular relations following the release by the United Nations Commission report on Inquiry on Human Rights.[29] Though Kenya and the DPRK established diplomatic relations in 2008[30] Kenya denied North Korea's request in 2015 for the opening an embassy on its soil, and the move might have been motivated by Kenya receiving counsel within the UN about the risks of diplomatically engaging with the DPRK.[31] This denial shows the reality of international relations for the DPRK: its role as pariah within the international community is very pervasive, and it is easy for the DPRK to very quickly alienate a lot of its support base. Change and adaptability appear to be the two criteria that the DPRK is struggling against though, and these might be crucial when it comes to how the DPRK might want to construct its future.

North Korea's Next Game

Given the DPRK's status as a quasi-nuclear power, its retreating from international negotiations over the past few years as well as increasing drastic purges within the regime, isn't North Korea, in the end, still navigating at the fringe of the international system? Questions regarding who would still be engaging with the DPRK and especially which other nations the DPRK would also be willing to invest and provide resources are very much open for discussion. There are, however, a number of ways in which the DPRK is somewhat making itself relevant and useful to others, and this goes well beyond providing illegal weapons or cheap labor around the world.

Peripheral Politics

Because of its own political isolation and special brand of hereditary dictatorship that has existed in a counter-hegemonic world, the DPRK is well-placed to give assistance to questionable political leaders seeking asylum. In the past, Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, who had been in exile for a number of years in Zimbabwe, was allegedly given political asylum to the DPRK after he had sought assistance at the North Korean embassy in Harare in 1998.[32] North Korea's relationship with Mengistu was far from new at this point: Pyongyang had provided weapons to

Mengistu after his successful coup to seize power from Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.[33] But what Menfistu might or might not have been promised by Pyongyang would remain a mystery: what we only know is that the North Korean embassy in Addis Ababa denied Mengistu had been given asylum though.[34] The DPRK has, however, welcomed Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk in Pyongyang for extended stays on various occasions. Kim Il Sung had developed a close relationship with Sihanouk, with the DPRK allegedly building a palace for Sihanouk on the outskirts of Pyongyang, and provided bodyguards for Sihanouk's personal security when he returned to Cambodia after years of conflict in 1991.[35]

But the contested politicians' asylum trade runs both ways. Securing personal relationships has been vital for a number of North Koreans as well. It is a vital question for any North Korean who risks potential political persecutions if they return home. This is true for part of the elite, and especially for those belong to the Kim family. Kim Jong Nam, Kim Jong Il's first son and the half-brother of current DPRK ruler Kim Jong Un, was known before his death in early 2017 to have relied on a number of political ties in order to find a safe place to live. Initially groomed to potentially take over from his father Kim Jong Il, his attempt to enter Japan in 2001 on a fake Dominican passport led to his fall from grace and Kim Jong Il negotiating exile for his son in Macau. While Kim Jong Nam might have indeed been disconnected from the DPRK regime, his presence in Macau could have also been fortuitous to facilitate illegal banking activities and gold trafficking on behalf of the DPRK regime: Kim Jong Nam's own standards of living, highlighted as rather ostentatious, were most likely still sponsored by some parts of the DPRK elite.[36] But after the execution of his uncle Jang Sung Taek, who might have had a hand in funneling funds to support his lifestyle, Kim Jong Nam had been seen in Malaysia, raising suspicion that he might be trying to hide from potential assassination attempts that would be organized by Kim Jong Un.[37] Other Kim family members maintained in semi-exile by the DPRK regime include Kim Pyong Il, Kim Il Sung's son and half-brother to Kim Jong Il, who fell out of favor in the 1970s due to a rivalry with Kim Jong Il, and was subsequently posted in a number of European embassies.[38] After serving 17 years in Poland, where he was allegedly kept away from power lines in the DPRK, Kim Pyong Il was seen in Pyongyang with Kim Jong Un in 2015, the year he was also transferred from his post as Ambassador in Poland to the Czech Republic, where he has taken on the same function, raising suspicion that the move away from Poland was a way for Pyongyang to make sure Kim Pyong Il

could not build too strong of a power-base there.[39] Given his half-sister Kim Kyong Hui's disappearance from Kim Jong Un's inner circle, either because she has been executed like her husband Jang Sung Taek or because of ill health, Kim Pyong Il's presence in Pyongyang is significant. It also shows that seemingly exiled elite members might actually play a much more important role consolidating the DPRK's foreign interests and outputs than usually thought.

Finding New Ties and New Opportunities

With a regime that appears now consolidated under Kim Jong Un, the DPRK has extended its outreach to capture new opportunities for development, diplomatic relations, and economic relationships. Fiji is a relatively newcomer to Pyongyang's diplomatic circles, as it started to engage in 2012, the same year it also opened diplomatic relationships with Iran.[40] For Fiji, which has been led by military strongman Voreqe Bainimarma since he seized power in 2006, engaging with the DPRK and Iran could be an attempt to develop friendships at the margin of an international world order based on the UN and American leadership. For Pyongyang the move is also diplomatic, though it might provide some bilateral cooperation following a Memorandum of Understanding signed to support further trade and development.[41] South–South cooperation has also been pursued by the DPRK with its engagement with other states in Africa, such as with Gambia, which received a visit from Kim Yong Nam, the President of the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly upon the invitation of Gambian President Yaya A.J.J. Jammeh.[42] Further visits over the years have led to Gambia openly praising Kim Jong Un in his efforts to defend sovereignty as well as the importance for both Gambia and the DPRK, who are facing parallel complex security environments in Africa and in Northeast Asia, to foster cooperation within the Non-Aligned Movement as well by cooperating with one another within existing international organization such as the UN or the African Union.[43]

The DPRK has also started to further develop partnerships in the fields of water and energy saving: dwindling resources and limited options to achieve economic outputs or importing what is missing within its own society have forced the DPRK to embrace new technologies and further existing ones. Water resources have been especially important, and the relationship between the DPRK and Ethiopia has been focused on

developing Ethiopia's water supply plans, and Ethiopia has in 2007 requested the DPRK's help on a number of projects.[44] Ten years later, Ethiopia and the DPRK have emphasized cooperation once again, with Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome suggesting that cooperation in the fields of health, irrigation and mining industry needed to be furthered.[45] Old-time partner Indonesia is also becoming increasingly important to the DPRK in the field of technology, after a memorandum to cooperate was signed between the two parties in 2009.[46] Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa has suggested that the North Korean energy-saving technology could be of use to Indonesia, and further cooperation would be needed between the two countries.[47] Slowly, the DPRK is also cementing its position within specific countries as a provider of particular goods and services, as a way to general foreign income revenues, one of the main goals the regime need to attain given the complex sanction structure that prevents the DPRK from developing and trading as it wants. To this extent, the relationship Pyongyang has developed with Angola over several decades, and which started with the DPRK supplying support personnel in a move by President Luanda to protect its country over potential invasion by South Africa and Zaire is an interesting example.[48] North Korean troops eventually replaced Cuban soldiers as willed by Angola's President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, who was unhappy with Cuban lack of skills and ambition when dealing with South African troops in southern Angolan territory.[49] But all these are now considered illegal under United Nations Security Council Resolutions.[50] Other dealings with African countries such as Namibia have accelerated, with cooperation in 2008 that centered around health and medicine, though suspicions were rampant that the DPRK might be interested in Namibian enriched uranium, with Namibia being the world's fifth-largest uranium producer.[51] Under Kim Jong Un, the DPRK–Namibia relationship has been a visible one, with a number of constructions and monuments built by Mansudae rising in several parts of the capital city Windhoek, as well as beyond.[52] Whether the DPRK is being paid in hard currency for its constructions, or whether it is paid in uranium remains a mystery, at this point. More recently, the DPRK has also started to use its geographical location to its advantage, as it allowed for Mongolia's Sharyn Gold, a mining company, to supply its coal to South Korea and Japan via North Korea's Rason port, thus leading to the DPRK to collect port remittances by dealing with increasing traffic on its soil.[53]

Optimism and the Politics of Disappointment

How is it possible for a state seemingly as isolated and dysfunctional as the DPRK to survive the end of the Cold War, the death of its ideological leader, and disastrous economic planning? While it would be easy to describe the DPRK as a unique state, an exception that eludes politicians and researchers alike, this book suggests that it is perfectly possible to analyze and understand the DPRK's development by using existing theories and accessible data. While revisiting the DPRK's past is useful to understand the nature of its long-lost economic and military support system, and its transition, slowly, from a country on the brink of collapse to a nation that has now developed and tested nuclear weapons, framing the DPRK as both a small state, and a rational actor allows for new insights. It is Pyongyang's status as a small state, fighting for its own state legitimacy and survival in a conflicted peninsula, that sets the stage for its foreign policy and diplomatic choices. North Korea's Chuch'e quickly became the political and ideological vehicle that governed how the country would talk to its citizens, interact with other countries, and color its diplomatic discourse. As an independent and sovereign country since 1948, the DPRK has ignored, recognized, congratulated, met, signed, or even reneged on treaties with just about every other country around the globe. How the DPRK has managed its foreign relations has also evolved: while diplomatic relationship only meant state to state decades ago, Pyongyang now talks to IGOs, NGOs, private citizens, and businesses. How to yet survive in a hostile world, fraught with weapons and realpolitik? From superpowers to the Third World, no country ever has a prerogative over this particular question. For the DPRK, survival means more than defying those who call Pyongyang a rogue state. It has meant getting security guaranties from partners during the Cold War, until it could sell its aging technology and finance its own weapon-making facilities, and emerge, after the fall of the Soviet Union and China's near capitalist embrace, as a small state capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons. If some have tried to stop this ascension by imposing sanctions, other have helped, and it should come as no surprise that collusion occurs between states that attempt to defy the international order imposed by a handful of powerful states whose values are often rejected by the DPRK and its partners. To transcend its initial fragility, fighting for its political survival, and later on the rise of South Korea as the main economic powerhouse on the Korean peninsula, the DPRK had to compromise and redefine its commitment to self-reliance. How to

practice independent interdependence now occupies a large part of the DPRK's international agenda. This has meant navigating an extensive web of sanctions, developing smuggling operations to raise revenues, sending workers abroad to secure remittances, or exporting bespoke DPRK talents. Despite its best efforts to broadcast an image of independence, the DPRK is engaged in global governance and interdependence. A utilitarian state in just about every settings, the DPRK's participation in organizations and global processes has achieved practical gains while aiming to broadcast an anti-hegemonic message. Ultimately, the DPRK is making steps to engage in the global financial system and is seeking new ways to modernize, via foreign investments, telecommunication opportunities, and education.

By looking at understudied and often unused yet freely accessible data, this book has shown that North Korea is slowly engaging in interdependent processes while at the same time maintaining counter-hegemonic approaches to most of its relations with large powers and international laws and norms. Knudsen's small state development stage model is useful in the North Korean case: it is clear that the DPRK is still working hard to ensure its survival, but is not ready to succumb to neo-liberal capitalist influences because it is either on the verge of collapse or on the verge of reforms. Instead, the DPRK utilizes interdependence to strengthen its own independence. It is able to do so, however, only because of its wild card, its nuclear weapons program. So it is unlikely that Pyongyang, as a small state, will disappear, or be absorbed into another state, or will drastically change its economic and political arrangements. Instead, we start to see mainstreaming patterns with the DPRK making policy choices that are rational in nature. Those choices are rooted in the DPRK's small state status and political struggle to be recognized as a legitimate Korean state, and in ensuring its own survival. They have focused on how to manage a domestic economy that needs international input, and how to deal with the potential political and societal repercussions that an engagement with the outside world would bring, both in terms of its impact on the leadership and its relation with power, as well as its impact on North Korean citizens and their relation with freedom. Though the evidence shown in this book points to more openness, it also shows North Korea's invariable commitment to the development of weapons of mass destruction as sovereignty guarantor and income generator. Therefore, any state or actor engaging with twenty-first century North Korea needs to consider Pyongyang's interests, limitations, and aspirations.

In conclusion, and with the caveat that making predictions about the future is never a wise choice in the policy world, I would like to suggest three trajectories that need to be considered:

1. It will not be helpful to keep on engaging the DPRK in potential denuclearization, if the goal is to only remove North Korean weapons. From a North Korean perspective, the question of American nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and its surroundings must be addressed as well. Just as India and Pakistan have become de-facto nuclear powers, it is now time to consider the DPRK as a nuclear power, and to engage Pyongyang in a different dialogue, one that has to do with managing nuclear weapons, equipment, infrastructure, and waste.
2. Clear choices must be made when it comes to accepting to support the DPRK in its effort to modernize and guarantee a better future for part and hopefully all of its population. This most likely means accepting the Kim family leadership and legacy as legitimate and for the unhelpful rogue state doctrine to be remised.
3. Information, knowledge, and experience that help understand the DPRK have evolved: as the research has shown, considering NGOs, individuals, corporations, and the developing world's own relationships with Pyongyang can bring about a more accurate picture of how to deal with the DPRK.

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