



RESEARCH PAPER

North Korea Nuclear Deterrence: A shift from Assured Retaliation to Assured Destruction

Javeria Shams*¹ Dr. Muhammad Usman Askari²

1. Lecturer, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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***Corresponding**

Author

Javeria.shams@uc
p.edu.pk

There are multiple debates and complexities around the nuclear policies (Nuclear deterrence) of North Korean regimes. Despite various efforts of negotiating meetings in 2018, 2019 US and other states failed to bring DRPK into leaving their nuclear program. North Korea's Advancement of nuclear weapons for the purpose of nuclear deterrence is observed in North Korean risk-taking strategies and the regime's willingness to provoke. This article will analytically conceptualize the theoretical explanation that represents a presumption that North Korean Nuclear deterrence is shifting from Assured retaliation capabilities to assured destruction capabilities based on the credibility of nuclear weapons that NK possesses. Findings also suggest that a confident prediction can be drawn that North Korea's "Fire and Fury provocations" are back representing the shift towards an Assured destructive posture of its nuclear deterrence policy with its emphasis on modernizing its nuclear weapons posture.

Introduction

The theoretical discussions since the dawn of the nuclear age focused on understanding nation-states' pursuit of nuclear weapons. Amid all the theories, neorealists' "Security Model", provides the best context to explain states' quest for nuclear armaments which views "Security is the necessary and sufficient cause of nuclear proliferation". (Monteiro, 2014) North Korea's first use doctrine of nuclear weapons represents deterrence as their security model rationale. North Korea needs a nuclear weapon for a comparable reason some small countries needs – to deter an attack by enemies, especially great powers or a neighboring state. (Lee, 2007) North Korea truly fears an American threat. (Yanagisawa, 2019) The Kim line has dependably publicized this dread among its people. From the regime's beginnings after World War II, its leaders have seen their nation as a "shrimp among whales" whose survival relies upon playing the more noteworthy powers off each other. North Korea's nuclear weapons motivations are driven by security and survival, in the words of Kim Jong Un: "Nuclear weapons are self-defensive means of coping with the

hostile policy and nuclear threat further on United States [and] nuclear weapons serve the purpose of deterring and repelling aggression."

Regardless of years of international criticism, diplomacy, and pressure, North Korea's aggressive rhetoric regarding the use of a nuclear weapon has aroused apprehension worldwide. Despite continuing efforts to deter North Korea from developing a nuclear weapon, world power has remained ineffective in slowing North Korean path to acquire nuclear weapons. According to Un report (2020), North Korea is continuously accelerating its nuclear fissile materials. Though North Korea has not conducted any nuclear test since September 2017. North Korea is developing miniaturization to develop multiple Nuclear Warheads. North Korean leaders pledged in meeting with defense officials to implement and developing new policies for nuclear war deterrence in the country. North Korean leader flaunted in July 28 speech that *"Thanks to our reliable and effective self-defense nuclear deterrence, the word war would no longer exist on this land, and the security and future of our state will be guaranteed forever"*. The Main change in North Korean nuclear deterrence from a catalytic model of deterrence is clearly evident.

The Aim of the Assured Retaliation posture of North Korea is to deter any coercion and hostile attack on the regime. North Korea always fears the US and South Korea plan to install an anti-missile defense system in South Korea. In 2016 at United Nations UN General Assembly North Korea Ri Yong Ho, the North Korean foreign minister states North Korean nuclear weapons are a Self-righteous defense system against the constant threat from the US and South Korea. (Dian, 2018) North Korea clearly state that survivability and security concerns as the main purpose that maintaining its nuclear weapons.

This Research paper is divided into three different sections. The first section provides an overview of nuclear weapons and the Program of North Korea along with detail on Nuclear Weapons experimented with by North Korea. The second section of this paper talks about the nuclear policy of North Korea and what drives its nuclear policy. The last section is the theoretical explanation to explain the shift that has been observed in past few years in the nuclear deterrence of North Korea. The **overarching research question** of this article is to find out how North Korea's nuclear deterrence is shifting from assured retaliation capabilities to assured retaliation capabilities. The article used an analytical research approach that aims to build presumption based on theoretical debates of Nuclear Deterrence theory and the "security model of nuclear weapons acquisition" of neorealist perspective. Secondary data sources are used in this article. Multifaceted hindrances are faced in exploring North Korean nuclear policies due to absence of the official policy documents, and only available resources to research is through media talks, news channels and intelligence reports of North Korea nuclear program.

North Korea's Nuclear Capabilities

North Korean nuclear capabilities have a lot of secrecy around it. Most of the known formation comes from the different intelligence sources and information from the defectors and it can be said that maybe capabilities are portrayed much worse than it really is. (Shen, North Korea, nuclear weapons, and the search for a new path forward, 2016)

North Korean nuclear interests back to the Cold war-The First nuclear age time. (Futter, 2021) In 1962, they got their first nuclear reactor from USSR, when the two superpowers were trying to grow their regional support by increasing arms, especially nuclear arms race. In 1964, DRPK even requested China to provide them with the technology of atom bomb after the Chinese first atom bomb explosion. In the Post-cold war second nuclear age, when globally states were trying to limit nuclear proliferation and stopping growth of nuclear weapons states. North Korea withdrew from NPT in 2003 after joining it in 1983. They first accepted in 2005 that state is developing nuclear weapons which was later confirmed in 2006 when they did first nuclear experiment. They further did nuclear experiments in 2009, 2013 and 2016 respectively. (Mount, Conventional Deterrence of North Korea, 2019) Alongside these nuclear experiments, the developments and modernization of nuclear weapons and the emergence of multiple regional and global power rivalries and state-driven models of nuclear-powered arms represent the “Third nuclear age”. (Naylor, 2019) NK has the capability of producing uranium and plutonium to produce nuclear weapons. (Kang, North Korea and the U.S. Grand Security Strategy, 2001) Which would have destabilizing consequences for regional and global security in this growing third nuclear age.

North Korea has been developing Multiple Ballistic missiles since 2003, which are considered as the best delivery vehicle source of nuclear weapons.

Table 1
Ballistic Missile ranges

Types	Range
Close-range ballistic missiles	50-300
Short-range ballistic missiles	300-1000
Medium-range ballistic missiles	1000-3000
Intermediate-range ballistic missiles	3000-5500
Intercontinental ballistic missiles	5500+

Land-based ballistic missiles (Close-range)

North Korea ballistic missile range has evolved over the past two decades. But Their capability to carry nuclear material is still un clear. North Korea has large number of Close-Range ballistic missile TOKSA (KN-02), having range of maximum 120 km. These short-range ballistic missiles have dual-capability. (Shen, North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and the Search for a New Path Forward, 2016)

Short-range ballistic missiles

Nuclear Deterrence is supposed to work best when the cost is less than the casualties. North Korea is expected to have around 100 launchers (Salisbury, North Korea’s Missile Programme and Supply-Side Controls: Lessons for Countering Illicit Procurement, 2018) for the Short-Range ballistic missiles- SCUD B and SCUD C.

Medium-range ballistic missiles

In Medium Range ballistic missiles, North Korea possess SCUD ER (Hwasong-9), Nodong (Hwasong-7) and Bukkeukseong-2 (KN-15). These are Single-stage and two-stage, liquid or solid fueled ballistic missile. The missile launchers and

carriers are four-axle transport erector launcher (TEL), Five-axle transport erector launcher (TEL) and road-mobile caterpillar-type TEL. According to some analyst, these medium-range ballistic missile of North Korea has operational nuclear capability. (Salisbury, North Korea's Missile Programme and Supply-Side Controls: Lessons for Countering Illicit Procurement, 2018)

Intermediate-range ballistic missiles

The long-range missiles are projected as appropriate course of action to counter any threat to the state survival when the chances of retaliation are minimum. Intermediate-range Ballistic missiles Hwasong-10 (Musudan) and Hwasong-12 (KN-17), after conducting many failed tests, North Korea finally successfully demonstrated in 2017 (Norris, North Korean nuclear capabilities, 2018) that it could travel up to 4500km. Hwasong-10 (Musudan) and Hwasong-12 (KN-17) and single stages, Liquid fueled Ballistic missile launched and carried in six-axle TEL and Eight-axle TEL respectively.

Intercontinental ballistic missiles

Intercontinental Ballistic missiles of North Korea includes the Taepo Dong-2, the Hwasong-13, and the Hwasong-14. These ICBM are three-staged, liquid fueled and carried on eight-axle TEL. These ICBM have range from 6700km to approximately 13000 km. According to many analysts, the operability of these ICBM is not confirmed. According to nuclear deterrence theory, deterrence is more reliable when the threat is present is credible. It can be said that if DRPK have operational ICB, that means these are sufficient to target all of the United states. These ICBM body is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. In this case, Pyongyang nuclear deterrence credibility is effective.

Submarine-launched ballistic missiles

Submarine launched ballistic missiles are traditionally considered as tool of nuclear retaliation capability. Bukkeukseong-1 is the only known Submarine-launched ballistic missile of North Korea. First experimented in 2016. It is carried and launched in Sino-class single submarineⁱⁱ. (M., 2018) It is single stages, solid fueled Ballistic missile with range of up to 500km that is equivalent to 1200km in Normal land based ballistic missiles. The role of SLBMs is transforming from instrument of nuclear retaliation to be used as option for First strike or counterforce weapons.

Literature Review

In-state affairs Military and Nuclear doctrines exist to make it clear to the adversaries, the events and circumstances under which the state will go for the use of Military and Nuclear arsenals. North Korea's Nuclear doctrine lacks any official documents (Husenecova, 2018) from the state rather it is just communicated verbally in the form of statements issued by Korean Government and its defense ministry. (Mount, Conventional Deterrence of North Korea, 2019). Public domain available documents and statements of North Korea shows its increasing capabilities of Nuclear and defense strategy (Norris, North Korean Nuclear Capabilities, 2018).

North Korea's a first use doctrine of nuclear weapons represents deterrence as their security rationale. North Korea needs a nuclear weapon for a comparable

reason some small country's needs – to deter and attack by enemies, especially great powers or neighboring states (Kaplan F, 2016). North Korea feels threatened by American and South Korean military capabilities and their talk about the regime change in North Korea and pre-emptive strike. They support their stance by giving examples of Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussain.

It is to be noted that North Korean nuclear weapons serve multiple purposes simultaneously: enhancing its deterrent power; consolidating its regime by showing technological development to its people; inducing economic assistance from outside powers. The North Korean ambition to institute a deterrence based strategy is moved from an assured retaliation posture to incorporating options of limited use of nuclear weapons in order to shore up its deterrence credibility (Bermudez, 2015). North Korea always fears US and South Korean plan to install an Anti-missile defense system in the South Korea. During 2016 at UN General Assembly North Korea Ri Yong Ho, North Korean foreign minister states North Korean nuclear weapons as Self-righteous defense system against constant threat from US and South Korea. North Korea clearly state that they maintain their nuclear weapons due to security concerns. North Korean tactics are defensive (Graham, 2019) and linked to regime survival that's why Pyongyang uses harsh threats to keep enemy away.

What Derives North Korea Nuclear Policy?

To gain a better understanding of the nuclear policy of North Korea it is necessary to look at the reasons why DRPK has decided to acquire nuclear weapons and chosen to keep it despite serious backlash and sanctions from the world. (Kang, North Korea and the U.S. Grand Security Strategy, 2001) Despite severe criticism by the world media on Korean government statements about its nuclear strategies, the internal coherence between these statements represents clear and determined strategic thinking of the DRPK. (Park, 2017).

The Arguments surrounding North Korea Nuclear Policy are divided in two camps. These arguments are significant in developing in-depth analysis of debates surround North Korean Nuclear policies. One Argument surrounds Threat perception and second one is related to leaders and their psychology.

Security Concerns

First Argument choose "Doves" Approach to explain North Korea Nuclear ambitions. This argument is rooted on liberal international relations theory that explains mollifying effects of Political engagement and economic exchange and the way threat perception is developed. As per this argument North Korea's Nuclear motivations are because it feels threatened militarily and Politically particularly from US and South Korea's Foreign policy, another reason is its ailing economy. Security Concern tops the reasons why DRPK is refusing to give its nuclear weapons. (Dalton, 2020)

The DPRK justifies its nuclear-weapons program with the claim that it is threatened by a nuclear or conventional aggression by the US and its allies South Korea and Japan. "Increasing nuclear threat from outside will only compel the DPRK to bolster up its nuclear deterrent to cope with this", a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said in October 2013.

The Choice of Pre-emptive Strike-Deterrence or aggression?

Second arguments surround “Hawks” approach focused on organizational and bureaucratic politics theories to explain north Korea nuclear policy. They argue that domestic political incentives, extortionary motives and revisionist intentions and personality Of North Korea. Moreover, there are various other debates that tries to explain North Korea's Nuclear policy. First the Problem which is structural “Power and Position”. North Korea Nuclear intentions are driven by USA’s tremendous Power and its Alliance with South Korea. That is why, north Korea nuclear narrative emphasis on pre-emptive strikes in case of any threat or attempt to destroy North Korea. (Anderson, 2017) The supreme Command of North Korea Army published an “Operational scenario” document in 2016, which stresses upon Pre-emption strikes. It states:

“From this moment all the powerful strategic and tactical strike means of our revolutionary armed forces will go into pre-emptive and operation against the enemy”.

Role of North Korea strategic culture in shaping nuclear policy

Researches on Strategic Culture provide great insight on how culture outlines the strategic thinking/making and execution of those strategies. According to Gray, strategic culture is important for the study of leadership decision-making because the “culture of the strategic players, individuals and organizations influence strategic behavior”. In Case of North Korea, State indoctrinated and controlled Juche ideology plays major role in politics, functioning of institutions and the life of people. North Korean foreign and strategic policies are made under the umbrella of ideological principles, songun and byungjin. The principles of Songun Refers to Military First Policy while the byungjin principles means development of economy and nuclear program. (Suh, 2002) North Korean strategic culture is more conflictual and crisis oriented with unfathomable level of militarization, the people are always prepared for any conflict.

Determinants of North Korea Nuclear policies

Main elements or determinants of North Korea nuclear policy are mentioned in official document released in 2013 “Law on Consolidating the Position of Nuclear Weapons State”. It tries to validate North Korea nuclear status and provide a framework in which North Korea will use Nuclear weapons. There are few points of concern that analysts have regarding this position of using nuclear weapons.

- 1- There was no distinction mentioned in the law between Conventional attack and nuclear attack.
- 2- “detering and repelling the aggression and attack of the enemy”, means if any nuclear state will attack North Korea, nuclear weapons will be used as retaliation to repel any invasion or attack from the hostile state.
- 3- Third point states that nuclear Attack will be used against non-nuclear state only if they join nuclear state against North Korea. Otherwise, it rules out nuclear attack against non-nuclear state.

North Korea Nuclear Capabilities: A Theoretical Explanation

Patrick Morgan defines **deterrence** as the capacity of one state (Defender) to prevent 'something' from another state (potential Challenger). Meaning the dissuasion of war; however, according to Morgan "deterrence is also used to keep wars from getting worse, or to prevent confrontations in which war could readily erupt".

Assumptions

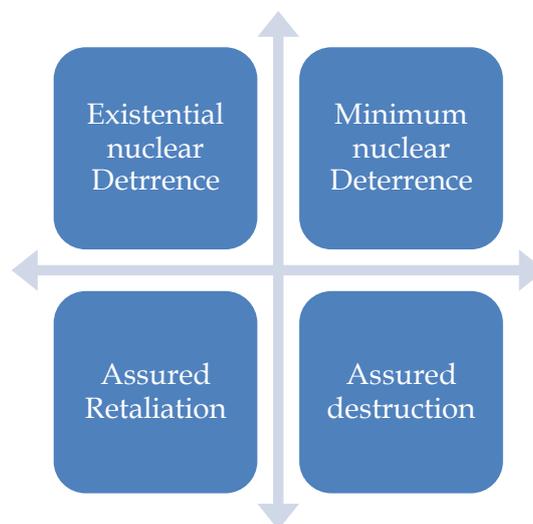
The basic assumptions of deterrence are:

- Decisions by both the defender and the challenger will be based on rational calculation of plausible costs and gains, precise assessments and careful calculation of comparative capabilities.
- A high level of threat, such as that posed by the nuclear weapons, inhibits rather than Provokes aggressive behavior.
- The value hierarchies of both the defender and the challenger are similar, at least to the Point where they each place the evasion of any large-scale violence at or near top.
- Both sides maintain tight centralized control over decisions that might involve or provoke The use of strategic weapons. Deterrence thus presupposes rational and predictable decision processes.

Dichotomy of Nuclear Deterrence

In present day Nuclear weapons are by default used by states for deterrence purpose This represents the dichotomy around Nuclear deterrence. The distinction between the use nuclear weapons as political tool or the military toolⁱⁱⁱ. (McGwire, 2020) Nuclear weapons are used as political tool to prevent the war. While the practical use of Nuclear weapons as means of warfare.

Four schools of Nuclear Deterrence theory



Existential Nuclear Deterrence

Existential Nuclear deterrence focus on the mere existence of nuclear weapons as source of Deterrence. According to this school, "Deterrence is law of existence of Nuclear Weapons". The logic of existential deterrence is psychological which stems from the "Power of uncertainty". The causal logic is Strategic in nature, because expected cost of Retaliation is significant enough to deter a potential attacker from using Nuclear Weapons. In simple, this school advocates believe that existential deterrence is easy to achieve due to inherent uncertainty of first-strike among nuclear states.

Minimum Nuclear Deterrence

This school of thought focuses on the Plausibility of retaliation for Deterrence to exists. They reject the existential deterrence notion that Retaliation must be guaranteed in order to stop the potential attack. (Radzinsky, 2018) They insisted on second-strike nuclear capabilities, as it is simple and cheap to build, very easy to hide and somehow remains unaffected by the Nuclear strategies of other states.

The causal logic of minimum deterrence is that only the prospect of Retaliation is enough to deter the adversary. However, this prospect should be a Realistic one, the enemy must be persuaded that Nuclear weapons not only exist but they are operational too. Their retaliatory posture stems from the "Bomb-in-the-basement" term.

Assured Retaliation

This school of thought claims that Deterrence is effective when retaliation is assured to the adversary not when deterrence is plausible or possible, rejecting claims of Existential and minimum deterrence. They insist that it is crucial that the enemy state is convinced of assured retaliation in case of first strike. Assured retaliation deterrence is based solely on the tangible capability to retaliate with nuclear force in case of attack from the enemy state. (Jervis, 1979)

Robert Jervis and other analysts claim that Cold war arms race was case of assured retaliation from both superpowers. The mutual second-strike capability of united states and Soviet Union made them vulnerable and became the reason for transformed in nuclear strategy of both states.

Assured Destruction

This school of thought presents more pessimistic view of deterrence. They claim that for successful deterrence, the retaliation not only be assured but it should also be Massive. The Causal logic of assured destruction is that potential attackers are deterred when they realized the massive retaliatory capability of potential victim state. This means the stakes of retaliation is kept so high that even a risk-acceptance leader avoids attacking victim state.

Theory Application: North Korea's Nuclear Deterrence

The possible assumption that experts get from North Korea's nuclear-based aggressive behavior is that North Korea would not want any nuclear war but instead

use the nuclear weapon for deterrence to threaten alliances against North Korea. It has been remained controversial whether North Korea is developing a nuclear weapon for Security purposes or on the lookout for power. Even though the immediate purpose of North Korean nuclear weapons is Survival and Security by consolidating its Deterrence. There are speculations that NK would try to dominate and direct inter-Korean relations. Its nuclear capabilities are threatening the security of its neighbor in the region. As acknowledged in Japan Defense white for the first time that North Korea possesses the capability and ambition to attack Japan. As stated by UN panel Report (August, 2020), the Global sanction campaign against North Korea somehow failed badly in deterring them from developing advanced nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. The way that experts don't trust that the DPRK has made an Nuclear weapons sufficiently little to be mounted on a rocket, demonstrates that Pyongyang's capacity to complete an atomic strike on the United States is not as much as certain. The DPRK are operationally fit for using nuclear weapons, however their alternatives for atomic strikes are seriously obliged due to underdevelopment of their rockets and weapons.

From Assured Retaliation to Assured Destruction

Nuclear Deterrence is credible when adversaries demonstrate that they serious about using nuclear weapons. In case of North Korea, Pyongyang constantly threatened of using nuclear weapons against South Korea and US and have deployed missile launchers on its coast. North Korea Fears a conventional attack from North Korea by USA which can lead to preemptive or nuclear first use policy to prevent conventional aggression. (Choi , 2018) A top Korean official, Lee Yong Pil said in an interview with NBC news that they will not stop back from pre-emptive strike if they feel threatened by US. He further state that they have nuclear technology of preemptive strike on US and North Korea have further plans to carry out Nuclear tests. DPRK's uses harsh rhetoric and threats as a part of its deterrence policy and its goal is to avoid attack on DRPK.

North Korea Existential Deterrence

Two events that brought major shift in north Korean Nuclear policy. (Suzuki , 2019) First incident happened in 2003, when Libya Gave up its nuclear program after getting pressures from US, and later in 2011 US attacked Libya. Second incident happened when North Korean Nuclear reactor under construction in Syria attacked and destroyed by Israel. These two events further reinforced North Korean leadership perception that these two events would not happen if these state-owned nuclear weapons. In- depth analysis of Operation Desert Storm resulted in conclusion that only chemical weapons did not deter US from attacking North Korea. Only Nuclear weapons can serve purpose of deterring US and its allied form attacking and using any conventional and nuclear weapons against North Korea. (Gill , 2017)

2002 Foreign Ministry statement declared that North Korea is:
"entitled to have nuclear weapons and more [powerful weapons] than those to safeguard

our sovereignty and right to survive in response to the increasing US threat of crushing us with nuclear armaments".

Two monumental moves towards existential deterrence were, the official promulgation of North Korea as a 'nuclear power state' and the adoption of the Byungjin line. North Korea amended its constitution to proclaim itself a 'nuclear power state' at the 12th Supreme People's Assembly in 2012.

Emergence of Assured Retaliation in North Korea Nuclear Policy

Self-defense as the rationale for a nuclear weapon program took a major step forward with North Korea's preparation for preemptive or retaliatory measures. After its fifth nuclear weapon test on 9 September 2016, North Korea claimed to have achieved a higher level of "technology of mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic rockets" that could strike the US mainland. (Diana, 2017)

This ability to launch satellites into orbit that resulted from the three successful tests enabled Pyongyang to successfully conduct its first ICBM test (Hwasong-14 test25) on 4 July 2017. (Diana, 2017) Shortly after the first ICBM test, North Korean successfully conducted the second ICBM test on 28 July 2017 and the third ICBM test on 28 November 2017 that could reach the US mainland with a standard trajectory.

North Korea provoked the Donald Trump administration (Liegl, 2017) and the Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea) with the announcement that "the ICBM will be launched anytime and anywhere determined by" the North Korean leader.

From Assured Retaliation to Assured destruction

The causal logic of assured destruction school of Nuclear deterrence is that Nuclear weapons are specifically designed to deter typical adversary state and its leaders even in normal circumstances. At 75th Anniversary of founding of North Korea Ruling party, 10 October, 2020^{iv}. The celebrations included Grand Military Parade. North Korea Head of the State Kim Jong un stated that

"if any forces infringe upon the security of our state and attempt to have recourse to military force against us, I will enlist all our most powerful offensive strength in advance to punish them."

The Grand Military Parade ended with reveal of New Strategic weapon "intercontinental-range ballistic missile (ICBM) design". This New Ballistic Missile design was different from Hwasong-15, the ICBM (tested in 2017) and appeared in Military parade right after Hwasong-15. It could be said that they were largest missiles (Road-Mobile) on integrated launchers to be seen anywhere in the world. according to experts deploying large liquid propellant ICBMs in Road mobile configuration was idiosyncrasy of North Korea. The Precise capabilities of the New ICBM design presumably named as Hwasong-16 is still unknown. But according to experts, the Absolute size of the missile represented that it has the capabilities to deliver multiple Nuclear vehicles into entire United states of America. Strategically, it would also ensure "assured destruction" of Entire US by increasing capability of North Korean Nuclear Deterrence of US.

These Events represent the gradual change in the Nuclear strategy of North Korea. Which is shifting towards Assured destructive posture. Despite being the heavily sanctioned state, any pressure has failed badly to persuade North Korea

to Give up its nuclear program. The Recent developments of bilateral talks between North Korea, South Korea and US can be assessed by two different perspectives. (Rappeport, 2017) First reason for Pyongyang to negotiate with US was that, North Korea Regime was highly assured that its nuclear program was nearly complete, which gave North Korea position of strength to negotiate in their own terms. Another possible reason could be Pyongyang trying to persuade US and south Korea that it is possible to co-exist with Nuclear North Korea.

North Korea-Provoking and risk-taking strategies

In the core of these events, three explanation are given by experts, that could explain North Korea willingness to Come on discussion table and change its position. On the Top is pressure from US and the world, secondly International uncertainties mainly economic problems. Lastly, the Assurance in its Nuclear Capabilities. (Choi, 2018) North Korea nuclear capacity make it confident that on the negotiation table it could get satisfactory results with respect to its security Concerns^v.

North Korea Nuclear program will soon have competences to overwhelm the Missile defense System of US. It is predicted by Northern Command of US, that it is possibility in the coming few years. The nuclear progress of North Korea in achieving long-range delivery system that could affect US and its allies in Asia. DRPK nuclear capabilities are now at adequate scale to cause serious existential and destructive threat to all the allies of US in Asia. North Korea capabilities of assured destruction may not be existential threat but even US vulnerability would raise serious question about its defense capabilities.

“Assured Destruction”- Is North Korea Capable of it?

The first indicator of achieving Assured destruction capacity is increase in stockpiles and production of Nuclear Fissile materials. North Korean is to continuously increasing its Precision, reliability and range of its nuclear missiles. The recent North Korea show of its new ballistic missiles during its parade on October, 2020, has been called idiosyncratic by many Scholars. (Panda, 2020) Specifically, its disposition of liquid propellant ICBM of this large size in road mobile configuration creates safety complication. But it represents North Korea risk-taking strategies. In the big picture, North Korea nuclear weapons and forces are mounting and refining with every fleeting week. It can be presumed that North Korea wants to show its adversaries that they are now able to cost unacceptable loses from their high-capacity ICBM nuclear weapons. (Majumdar, 2017)

To strengthen the strategic Assured destruction Nuclear deterrence, Practicable higher-yield nuclear weapons and Reentry vehicle for ballistic missiles are mandatory to show adversaries the high cost with even limited weapons. It is implied that the North Korea’s presentation of “New strategic weapons” in 75th anniversary of the founding of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) has capability to carry and deliver Several Reentry Nuclear vehicles to the entire US continent. North Korean leader Mr. Kim said during his speech “We will continue to strengthen the war deterrent, the righteous self-defense means, against threats from hostile forces”. From North Korean willingness to invest in Multiple nuclear reentry vehicles, it can be presumed that North Korea possess enough fissile material and resources. As Multiple Reentry vehicles requires more sophisticated control and

command system. These recent developments suggest that it is no longer unthinkable that North Korea have the capabilities and willingness to deliberately use nuclear Weapons^{vi}. (Kodama, 2020) The nuclear first use option is now part of North Korean nuclear posture^{vii}. (Erin Hahn, 2020) Nuclear deterrence- assured destruction chief crux is the prospect of launching Second-strike nuclear capability that make both sides susceptible to retaliation. (Mohan, 1986)

Findings

Despite various criticism on nuclear ambitions and credibility of North Korean nuclear deterrence, Pyongyang continues to enlarge and strengthening its credible deterrent. Another finding is that while theorizing about the nuclear deterrence in the ongoing third nuclear age, it is presumed by some scholars that sometimes smaller nuclear states go for First Use nuclear weapon for Assured destruction of enemy states when they considered their adversary to be more conventional and nuclear superior to them. Amid contrary stances by experts, a confident prediction can be drawn that North Korea “Fire and Fury provocations” are back representing the shift towards Assured destructive posture of its nuclear deterrence policy with its emphasis on modernizing its nuclear weapons posture. (Khan, 2020).

Recommendation

The status quo in Northeast Asia is very fragile and it is significant for the United States to develop a well-planned strategy for negotiation with North Korea in which all parties get involved and develop some realistic goals to prevent North Korean assured destruction strategies other than denuclearization.

- United states should accept nuclear armed NK, because even though very risky but deterrence is the only feasible option that can provide the United States with strategic gains to defuse the crises. The extended deterrence should be a blend of nuclear and non-nuclear strategies.
- To achieve Comprehensive strategic gains United states should employ modern tailored deterrence, diplomacy and coercive strategies of gray-zone tactics.
- A reoriented regional equation must be developed by United States and its allies that give North East Asian states credible security and peace guarantees to restrain the bellicosity of NK. Another important aspect is the facilitation of economic ties with NK and its neighbors lessen their reliance on Beijing.

Conclusion

While conceptualizing the variants of nuclear deterrence theory on North Korean nuclear weapons strategy the article concludes that Nuclear weapons states sometimes go for First Use nuclear weapon for Assured destruction of enemy states when they considered their adversary to be more conventional and nuclear superior to them. Despite the fact that North Korea nuclear strategist and leadership has not claimed to go for First use nuclear policy option, yet it growing dependance on Nuclear weapons especially acquiring second strike nuclear capability. It can be presumed that as the world is moving towards third nuclear age, North Korea has

also been able to attain nuclear deterrence assured destruction capability. Despite contradictory stances by experts, a confident prediction can be drawn that North Korea's "Fire and Fury provocations" are back representing the shift towards an Assured destructive posture of its nuclear deterrence policy. This article suggests new thinking of nuclear assured deterrence and its intermingling with the third nuclear age. Nuclear war in this nuclear age remains too costly, states are now more careful to wage any war either armed or nuclear. Because it would cause mutual annihilation. This "mutual vulnerabilities" is what makes nuclear assured deterrence credible enough. It also raises questions about what will be the future nuclear strategy of the world superpowers in this third nuclear age to maintain strategic stability and control the growth of the modernized nuclear arms race. Because nuclear armaments will still remain central in this nuclear age. They also have to look for novel mechanisms and new and different ideas to encounter the challenges of the third nuclear age and changing North Korean nuclear posture. This raises another question of how US allies would respond to North retaining and improving its Nuclear Weapons strike capabilities, what would be the implication of this on both the regional and global stability and non-proliferation regimes and the following unfolding of third nuclear age?

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