

THE ULTIMATE ROGUE LEADER IN HISTORY?

Kim Il Sung and North Korea's position in the
international state system, 1945-1994



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To Janny van Oosterhout

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Nadia Fievet

Student Number: 3978923

Supervision: Maartje Weerdesteijn

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FORWORD

‘If you look at a picture from the sky of the Korean Peninsula at night, South Korea is filled with lights and energy and vitality and a booming economy; North Korea is dark.’
(Donald Rumsfeld)¹

North Korea to most people remains a rather mysterious, unknown and unreliable state in today’s globalized world. With a highly secluded society combined with extreme love and loyalty to the leader, North Korea comes across as one of the most odd countries when studying international relations. Yet, North Korea and its leaders may not be as different from the others as is often believed. By analyzing the position of North Korea in world order under Kim Il Sung, the founding father of the country, this research aims to set light on this often misunderstood country.

Although history never repeats itself, the development of a certain state cannot be separated from the path it has chooses to follow both on the national as well as the international stage. Taken this into account, this research intents to link historical developments of a certain place to political theory by including the individual level. World politics have been dominated by individual decision-making of leaders, from Karel V as the ruler of the greatest empire, to Adolf Hitler as the aggressor in Europe and Pol Pot as the instigator of a national genocide. The way the international community has responded to these so called Great Men has grasped my interest. Therefore this research combines the international level, the national level and the individual level to analyze the role Kim Il Sung played and to understand North Korea’s particular position in modern day world order. Being a relatively small state with neighbors such as China, Russia and Japan, North Korea’s position in the international state system as a growing power can at least be called unique.

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¹ Christine Hong, ‘The Mirror of North Korean Human Rights. Technologies of War’. *Critical Asian Studies* 45 (2013) 4, 561-592, referring to 561.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Korea is often perceived as a nefarious regime arming itself with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Since 1988 the country has been put on the United States' list of states that sponsor terrorism, mainly because of two incidents, and was classified as a rogue state. This research will analyze the process of becoming perceived as a rogue state on the international stage in relation to the way North Korea behaves regarding security and human rights. International relations studies often overlook the importance of individual decision-making in the state-behavior, while the decisions individuals make can be of crucial importance. Therefore, this research focuses on the period North Korea was ruled by Kim Il Sung from 1948 till 1994, who is considered to be the founding father of modern day North Korea. By doing so, the international level will be combined with the national and individual level of analysis which all contributed to North Korea's unique position within the international state system.

First of all, this research discusses the concept of rogue states and how it developed over time. Prior to the late 1970s rogue state classification dealt with the way a state treats its own people, but over time the way a state behaves internationally became more important due to the changing global threat perception. Nowadays, rogue states are states that support international terrorism, desire regional expansion and a pursuit weapons of mass destruction. Because rogue states threaten common security, those states are diplomatically isolated in the international system, making them depend even more on their national military to deal with their own security issues. This downward spiral is hard to break through, as this research has shown in the case of North Korea.

Secondly, historical developments are analysed in order to provide more insight in the reasons why North Korea under Kim Il Sung behaved rogue. The Japanese occupation and the Korean War have profoundly altered Kim Il Sung's perception on political power and state-building in that the Great Leader has created a highly secluded society based on the philosophy of Juche, the leadership culture and the concept of a garrison state. Kim Il Sung as a revolutionary individual was, thus, able to establish his utopic version of North Korea.

Finally, the concept of rogue states has been applied to North Korea under Kim Il Sung to analyze the developments in the fields of security and human rights. The leadership imitated a nuclear programme because they were disappointed in the outside world when the American bombing campaigns, that completely leveled North Korea during the Korea War, was not internationally condemned. To cope with security concerns North Korea could not let go of its ambition to develop weapons of mass destruction, while the United States could never accept a North Korea in the possession of such weapons which resulted in a Nuclear Crisis. Because direct confrontation is in none of the actors interest, conditional reciprocity in the *Agreed Framework* was the only way both party could come to an agreement. In the meantime, the United States the United States links North Korea's human rights record with nuclear non-proliferation in order to alter the behavior of the latter. All in all, it can be question whether North Korea or the United States threatens common security.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>DPRK</i>	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
<i>IAEA</i>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<i>NEAJUA</i>	Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army
<i>NPT</i>	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons
<i>UDHR</i>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<i>UN</i>	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

“The biggest problem that the world has is nuclear weapons.
Our big problem is the maniacs that are controlling weaponry
that has never been like it is today”
(Donald Trump, president of the United States)²

In the run-up to the 105th birthday of the Great Leader last April tension between North Korea on the one hand and South Korea with American backing on the other ran high. While the United States is building a missile defence shield in South Korea both China and Russia move troops to bordering regions of the Korean peninsula. These combined military actions of the United States and South Korea are perceived as ‘the biggest, most aggressive war preparation ever’ by North Korea.³ North Korean expert, Remco Breuker argues that the relations between North Korea and the United States have always been a source of tension, which is now heading to escalation as North Korea could never give up the desire to develop nuclear bombs while the United States could never accept a North Korea in the possession of those kind of weapons. This vicious circle has now led to a situation in which escalation and thus a nuclear war is very near and may even be inescapable.⁴

In the meantime up to 120 thousand people are being held in prison camps in North Korea in which they are ill-treated and sometimes even tortured according to the Amnesty International Report of 2016.⁵ Since 1948 the North Korean population has lived under the rule of the Kim dynasty which transformed the northern part of Korea into the first postmodern dictatorship, a state in which the influence of the leader on society and daily life is profound even after the Second World War.⁶ Kim Il Sung, often referred to as the founder of North Korea, created the *songbun* system, which divided the North Korean people into three classes. Each person based on

² *The O'Reilly Factor*, Interview, directed by Bill O'Reilly, Donald Trump running for President, 2015, 3'26 - 3'48, <http://www.foxnews.com/transcript/2015/06/17/donald-trump-running-for-president.html>.

³ NOS, 'VN-diplomaat N-Korea: we zijn klaar voor elke soort oorlog' (version 17 April 2017) <http://nos.nl/artikel/2168767-vn-diplomaat-n-korea-we-zijn-klaar-voor-elk-soort-oorlog.html> (19 April 2017).

⁴ PAUW, interview, directed by VARA, Korea-deskundige Remco Breuker is verontrust over de kerndreiging uit Noord-Korea, 2017, 0'26-11'28, <https://pauw.vara.nl/media/372145>.

⁵ Amnesty International, 'Report 2016/2017. The State of the World's Human Rights' (version 22 February 2017), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/4800/2017/en/> (9 March 2017).

⁶ Jasper Becker, *Rogue Regime. Kim Jong Il and the Looming Threat of North Korea*. Oxford University Press (Oxford 2006), ix.

their political, social and economic background was classified as belonging to the core, wavering or hostile class. A great amount of the hostile class consisted of intellectuals, land owners and former supporters of Japan's occupying government. Those dissenters were considered threats to the system and therefore often relocated to the country's most isolated and impoverished northern provinces or even sent to political prison camps. Not only dissenters but their entire families would be reclassified or be at risk of being sent to one of those camps. These camps, *kwanliso*, remain a vast part of the network of abusive penal and forced labour institutions in North Korea today. Prisoners are often held for life and are forced to perform back-breaking labour while being faced with deadly living condition, including near starvation, lack of medical care and proper housing according to Human Rights Watch. On top of that, prisoners are closed off from the outside world and escape is physically impossible since the camps are located in mountainous areas.⁷

Both the extreme repression of the people and the mass atrocities that take place under this dynasty as well as the fact that North Korea considers the ideologies and interests of the free world hostile to theirs combined with an active pursuit of weapons of mass destructions, attracted the attention of the international community. The importance and intractability of the North Korean matter, in fact, remains one of the major issues in the world today in terms of security and the development of human rights.⁸ In this light, the North Korean government is perceived a rogue regime and the country a rogue state, which threatens both regional as well as international security.⁹ But how did we arrive here and why is the matter continuously at the brink of escalation, is a question that remains unanswered, or put differently:

Why and to what extent did North Korea under Kim Il Sung position itself outside the international system regarding security and human rights to such an extent that North Korea was eventually perceived to be a rogue state?

⁷ Human Rights Watch, 'North Korea: Kim Il Sung's Catastrophic Rights Legacy' (version 13 April 2016) <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/13/north-korea-kim-il-sungs-catastrophic-rights-legacy> (9 March 2017).

⁸ Victor Cha and David Kang, *Nuclear North Korea. A debate on Engagement Strategies*, Columbia University Press (New York 2003), 4.

⁹ Becker, *Rogue Regime*, ix.

The State, the System and the Leader

In order to relate to the position of a state to the international system, an understanding of the components of that system is needed. First of all, the international system has not always looked the same, as it depends on the existing powers and their ability to create a sphere of influence. Nowadays, the international system consists of the interrelationships among states because states are the principal entities that possess power instead of, for instance, great empires or feudal lords. Because states balance against or bandwagon with each other a world order is established in which power is not equally divided amongst the states and, as a result, a hierarchy has emerged in which great powers are the most influential within the system.¹⁰ However, many scholars believe the state as an entity, in a more and more globalizing world, is no longer of importance and some even argue the state is dead. By moving away or beyond the state in international relations theory, they believe, the state has become irrelevant.¹¹ However, by elaborating on the changing position of the state in the theory, the state continues to be an important part of the debate.

The contemporary debate in international relations theory is dominated by the neorealism and neoliberalism schools of thought. The position of the state within the system is highly debated, because both ideologies have a different stance towards state behaviour. To analyse state behaviour neorealists refer to states as interacting units that constitute the international structures of the system. Because it takes more than one unit to create those structures, the structures constrain the choices of the units. Thus, the way a state behaves is dependent on existing structures in the international system. Because the state is the starting point from where analyses derives neorealism embodies an individual ontology. Neoliberalists, in contrast, demonstrate a holistic ontology in the sense that the analyses arises from the international system structures. Those structures underlie the existence of states within the system. In this way, international system structures do not constrain state behaviour, instead, those structures generate state behaviour.¹²

¹⁰ Robert Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Orders. Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10 (1981) 2, 126-155, referring to 126-128.

¹¹ John Hobson, *The State and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge 2000), 1.

¹² Alexander Wendt, 'The agent-structure problem in international relations theory', *International Organization* 41 (1987) 3, 335-370, referring to 335-336.

What becomes clear from the neorealist-neoliberalist debate, is the fact that the state is the fundamental entity in the system. Both schools of thinking structure the existing international system around states as the entities that either generate or result from the structures within the system. The degree to which these entities have power in the contemporary international system is, however, another point of debate. John Hobson as a specialist in politics and international relations, in *The State and International Relations*, argues that states can have high or low agential power, depending on the way one looks at international structures. High agential state power enables the state to shape and reconstitute the international system in order to create an advantageous world for that particular state. On the international level a state can shape the stage with its policies and behaviour. Neoliberalist scholars believe states have such high agential power because states are primarily the result of the international system structures and for that reason the system does not by definition bind state behaviour. Neoliberals thus take in a state-centric approach. On the contrary, system-centric neorealist scholars believe states have no agential power to autonomously shape or modify the international system. States are elements of international structures and cannot individually shape the international stage. States, thus, have no choice but to conform to the existing international structures which they created, according to neorealists.¹³

Apart from the origin of state behaviour and its agential power in the international system, all scholars refer to the international system as a multi-state system in which no higher authority exists than that of the state, meaning the international system is anarchic. For that reason states remain very much alive even in a highly globalized world.¹⁴ The case of North Korea, which consistently tries to put itself outside the system while simultaneously continues to influence it, shows states do have the power to shape the international system to some extent. Or as Thomas Henriksen, a specialized scholar in American diplomacy and international political affairs, argues in *The Rise and Decline of Rogue States*, that 'Pyongyang managed to insinuate itself into the American consciousness through nuclear blackmail'. By behaving like a rogue North Korea could influence the system in such

¹³ Hobson, *The State and International Relations*, 5-9.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 1 & 5-9.

a way that the most powerful state after the Cold War needed to take North Korean interests into consideration.¹⁵ North Korea, thus, is allowed more power and influence in the international system as a rogue state than it would have had, regarding its position as a marginal power within the existing world order.

This academic debate of state behaviour within the international system and to what extent the state can influence international system structures does, however, not include the importance of the leaders of states. Nonetheless, precisely this individual level of analysis has been of great importance within international relations throughout history. Because the crucial impact of individuals is often downgraded as bound by impersonal forces, a lot of scholars overlook when and how individuals can make a difference. Daniel Byman and Kenneth Pollack in *Let Us Now Praise Great Men*, in contrast, argue that had it not been for 'the idiosyncrasies of certain people' and 'human error', history would have looked very different. How can the twentieth-century issues, for instance, be explained without referring to Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi or Mao Zedong. The goals, abilities and weaknesses of these, and many other, leaders are crucial to the intentions, capabilities and strategies of a state. Common international behaviour almost always results from decisions made by individuals. However, Byman and Pollack argue, 'individuals matter more to international relations under certain circumstances. Individual personalities take on added significant when power is contracted in the hands of a leader, when institutions are in conflict or in times of great change'.¹⁶ In this light, the path North Korea committed itself to within the changing international system after the Second World War, as a postmodern dictatorship, cannot be separated from the choices its leader, Kim Il Sung, made.

The inextricability between state behaviour, the international system and the role of the leader on the one hand and the concept of rogue states on the other is focussed on in this research. Often scholars tend to direct their attention to either one instead of all three levels of analyses that influence international relations. To

¹⁵ Thomas Henriksen, 'The Rise and Decline of Rogue States', *Journal of International Affairs* 54, (2001) 2, 349-373, referring to 364.

¹⁶ Daniel Byman and Kenneth Pollack, 'Let Us Now Praise Great Men. Bringing the Statesman Back In', *International Security* 25 (2001) 4, 107-146, referring to 107-109.

understand the complexity of the system today, we need to look at its past and answer the question why some states, as the main actors in the system, have positioned themselves outside of it and to what extent leaders influence this process, with North Korea under Kim Il Sung as the best example. Kim Il Sung has installed a society in which self-reliance as well as love and loyalty to the leader remain of great importance in daily life, although the outside world has changed profoundly. His death in June 1994 did not bring significant changes within the domestic and foreign policies he has pursued from 1948 onwards. The future path for North Korea, which was perceived a rogue during the Cold War, had been set by the way Kim Il Sung ruled the country over forty years.¹⁷ Because of this continuity this study will focus on the period Kim Il Sung was in power as the determining period in North Korean history.

Methodology

In order to be able to fill in the missing link between the state, the system and the leader this research will make use of a variety of sources. Academic literature will account for most of my analysis. This has to do with the secluded nature of the regime that is focused on in my research. North Korea has not shared political documents that contain underlying arguments for the policies they conduct with the public. To overcome this lack of transparency I focused on the agreements between North Korea and international organizations and institutions on security and human rights, because they often fulfil a public role and thus feel the need to share their findings.

When analyzing the situation in North Korea under Kim Il Sung regarding security, insight will be given based on the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) and the *International Atomic Energy Agency* (IAEA), which were respectively signed in 1985 and 1992. What in particular has been agreed upon on and especially what elements are referred to when withdrawing membership during the Nuclear Crisis, will reveal the interests North Korea is trying to protect. In addition, the *Agreed Framework* of 1994 will be taken into consideration. Although

¹⁷ Akan Malici and Johnna Malici, 'The Operational Codes of Fidel Castro and Kim Il Sung. The Last Cold Warriors?', *Political Psychology* 26 (2005) 3, 387-412, referring to 389-391.

Kim Il Sung died shortly before the signing, he started the dialogue in order to solve the ongoing conflict. The IAEA and the NPT form the basis of how to guide and handle deterrence and non-proliferation since the end of the Second World War. The way North Korea responds to deterrence and non-proliferation efforts will derive from analyzing the listed documents. Turning to the human rights situation, only a number of international treaties have been signed by North Korea since the 2000s. Bearing in mind that this research only covers the period from 1948 till 1994, these treaties cannot be taken into consideration. Therefore, I turn to the visitations of Amnesty International which were allowed by Kim Il Sung in 1991 and 1994. The reports that followed both visitations will provide insight in the conditions of life within the North Korean society under the Great Leader. At last, the speech Kim Il Sung held in 1946 when the Korean Workers' Party was established, is analyzed to include his personal perspective on matters of security and human rights in the process of state building.

By combining the security and human rights analyses more insight will be given in the reasons why North Korea and especially Kim Il Sung position the state out of the system. Put differently, an overarching framework to analyze the North Korean case is constructed, which will put it in broader international perspective. Furthermore, studying the case will make the umbrella of international security, human rights and all aspects of international relations tangible. Hopefully this work triggers other academics to apply this research method to other cases. General theories in varying fields of research can be improved by this bottom-up approach as every case has its own specific context in the way the state, the system and the leader interact and effect one another.

To explain the unique position of North Korea under Kim Il Sung in the international system regarding security and human rights this research consist of three chapters. Throughout the research state behavior in relation to the concept of rogue states, the position of North Korea within the international system in the period from 1945 till 1994 and the influence Kim Il Sung has had on domestic and foreign affairs, is analysed. The first chapter will discuss the concept or rogue states and what characteristics of a state can attribute to being perceive as a rouge state.

What position those states hold within the international system is taken into account as well. In the second chapter the way Kim Il Sung ruled over North Korea and the kind of society he installed regarding security and human rights will be discussed. To what extent Kim Il Sung played a decisive role in shaping the position of North Korea within the international system in the fields of security and human rights is analyzed in the third chapter. This research ends with concluding remarks by answering the main question.

I

POLITICS OF ROGUE STATES

“The danger of [...] rogue states is compounded by the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.”
(Joe Lieberman, *Senator of Connecticut*)¹⁸

After the Western triumph over communism, that accompanied the end of the Cold War, the bipolar system came to an end and a new world order was established. The chain of events in the period of 1989 to 1991, from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, validated the moral superiority and practice of western politics.¹⁹ Although the most vicious rival was no longer in power, the West feared other ‘rogue states’ that had become more isolated than ever.²⁰ Those states constitute a distinct category of states in the international system as they are, according to the hegemon, the main actors that threaten regional and even global security after the Soviet Union collapsed.²¹ This chapter will both focus on the origin and the development of the concept of rogue states. The changing perspective on what kind of states qualify as a rogue state clarifies the changing global threat perception. Furthermore, the position these states hold in world order is analyzed by looking at the influence rogue states have on the international system and vice versa.

The origins of rogue states

The concept ‘rogue state’ plays a preeminent role in today’s political planning and analysis.²² Till the late 1970s those states whose internal system or behavior towards its own people resulted in horrific repulsive records, where considered a pariah, outlawed or rogue state. Since those states acted as free agents and did not practice any form of democracy nor value the freedom of human beings, their brutal repression of the people placed them ‘beyond the pale’.²³ In addition, history has

¹⁸ CNN, Debate, directed by Commission on Presidential Debates, U.S. Vice Presidential Debate between Dick Cheney and Joe Lieberman, 2000, 40’32 – 41’6, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K00iC_YNG5o.

¹⁹ Robert Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy. Containment After the Cold War. The Woodrow Wilson Center Press* (Washington D.C. 2000), 19.

²⁰ Hendriksen, ‘The Rise and Decline of Rogue States’, 360.

²¹ Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, xiii

²² Noam Chomsky, *Rogue States. The Rule of Force in World Affairs. Pluto Press* (London 2016), 12.

²³ Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 7 & 49-50.

always known regimes that stood outside the international community, because they show contempt for international norms by repressing their own population.²⁴ In the face of brutal repression and genocide, Pol Pot's Cambodia and Idi Amin's Uganda were the typical examples of rogue states prior to the 1980s.²⁵

Since 1979 rogue state rhetoric shifted away from the way a regime treated its own people to the way a state behaves on the international states. By the end of the year the United States' State Department announced a list of states that 'repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism' what came to be known as the terrorist list.²⁶ Advocated by this list the criterion for rogue state status shifted towards whether or not a state supports international terrorism. During the Cold War the Soviet Union used other states to sponsor or practice terrorism against Western states and interests in exchange for arms supply and aid. Those states were considered rogue after the Cold War.²⁷ With the Soviet Union crumbling, threat perception moved away from bipolar rivalry to marginal players that want to obtain power but in the process threaten international security. The power vacuum that followed created room for states to acquire more power, by which the rogue state classification became even more concerned with external behavior of states. The Gulf War of 1990-1991 highlighted this new security problem of radical states with regional hegemonic ambitions that pursue or have weapons of mass destruction. Since the early years of the 1990s the criterion for rogue states, thus, focuses on a combination of the support of international terrorism, the desire of regional expansion and a pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. As a result, policies how to address rogue states shifted away from internal criteria and focus more on threatening external behavior of states and their regimes. After all, how to secure peace and stability lies in the international orientation of states, which is not linked to the way a state treats its own people. The rogues of the 1970s, Pol Pot and Idi Amin, were supplanted by new ones, notably Ryhollah Khomeini of Iran, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya and of course Kim Il Sung of North Korea.²⁸

²⁴ Henriksen, 'The Rise and Decline of Rogue States', 349.

²⁵ Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 50.

²⁶ U.S. Secretary of State, *State Sponsors of Terrorism* (Washington D.C., 29 December 1979).

²⁷ Henriksen, 'The Rise and Decline of Rogue States', 358.

²⁸ Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 7 & 49-53.

However, the focus on external behavior does not mean the internal component fully disappeared after 1979. As described in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* of 2002 rogue states are states that:

- Brutalize their own people and squander their national resources for the personal gain of the rulers;
- Display no regard for international law, threaten their neighbors, and callously violate international treaties to which they are a party;
- Are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, along with other advanced military technology, to be used as threats or offensively to achieve the aggressive designs of these regimes;
- Sponsor terrorism around the globe; and
- Reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands."²⁹

What becomes clear from the above is the fact that the internal character of a state is still taken into consideration when labeling a state as rouge, although it is no longer the primary concern as international security and peace is at stake by the way those states act on the international stage.

Additionally, because rogues are totalitarian and dictatorial in nature, rogue leaders are perceived the new international 'villains' after Adolf Hilter and Jozef Stalin. In the absence of the checks and balances of a democratic order, rogue regimes are more subject to the politics of personality. Leaders play a profound role in domestic and foreign policy-making. So, in case a state acts rogue, all eyes turn to the leader as he may hold the future of international stability in his hands.³⁰ The status of Iraq as a rogue could, for example, have crumbled if Saddam Hussein had not chosen to invade Kuwait in 1990 since the state was on its way to rebuild strong relations with the West. Indonesia would, in contrast, have remained an enemy if it was not for Suharto who took control over Indonesia in 1965 and implied western minded policies.³¹ Thus, the path the leader and its government choose is of great importance to whether or not a state is perceived a rogue in the international system.

²⁹ National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C., 17 September 2002), 13-14.

³⁰ Raymond Tanter, *Rogue Regimes. Terrorism and Proliferation. St. Marin's Griffin* (New York, 1999), 1-5 & 16-17.

³¹ Chomsky, *Rogue States*, 31-32.

Rogues in the new world order

Since the end of the Cold War, when their biggest enemy was defeated, one of the main objectives of the foreign policy of the United States has been the containment of rogue states. Those states constitute a distinct category of states in the international system.³² The 'strategy of openness', which includes the liberal ideals of economic openness, democracy, limited government, human dignity, and the rule of law, did not find hearing in those states.³³ Instead, those states did not rush to democratize their governments, liberalize trade or install market economies and a free flow of information. Even the opposite happened as they turned their back to the West in particular and the outside world in general.³⁴ President George W. Bush at the State of the Union in 1991 feared that "what is at stake is more than one small country, it is a big idea, a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in a common cause to achieve the universal aspiration of mankind – peace and security, freedom and rule of law".³⁵

In general the American hegemony was challenged by less powerful states that had surfaced the international scene by criticizing and undermining the existing order. The new world order was to be bound by collective security and rooted in international law. However, rogue states threaten this system as those state challenge international law and do not consider themselves bound by international norms. In fact, anything except the interests of its own leadership, and the forces around the leadership that dominate policy, matter. By primarily serving their own survival rogue regimes flout international norms and are perceived as irrational actors on the international stage. For that reason, such states do not only threaten their neighbors but the entire world and, thus, must be contained by the 'guardians' of world order, according to the United States.³⁶

What becomes clear for the above is the role a state itself plays in conceptualizing rouge states. By focusing on state behavior a state-centric approach

³² Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, xiii

³³ John Ikenberry, 'Illusion of Empire. Defining the New American Order', *Foreign Affairs* 83 (2004) 2, 144 - 154, referring to 149.

³⁴ Hendriksen, 'The Rise and Decline of Rogue States', 360.

³⁵ *State of Union*, Speech, directed by United States State Department, President H.W. Bush addressing the 102nd United States Congress, 1991, 8'18-8'41. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-HkxV8N2UE>.

³⁶ Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 19-47. Chomsky, *Rogue States*, 1-12.

to rouge states is conducted. While the concept focusses on the influence a rouge state has on the international system, the latter does influence the behavior of the former as well. In general, rogues are rather weak or small states actually or potentially outnumbered by its surrounding adversaries due to weak, waning or nonexistent support from great powers. In relation to this lacking support, the national origins and legitimacy of rogue states is widely questioned on grounds of border issues or a conflict over self-determination. The present status of such states is at issue since it's not commonly accepted by the outside world. As a result, the rogue state is faced with adversaries that do have solid support from one or more great powers leading to diplomatic isolation and a security dilemma for the rogue. When a rogue tries to heighten its security for instance by increasing its military strength or making alliances a response from its adversaries is unavoidable, ultimately worsening the situation. In a search to break this downward spiral rogue states want to acquire weapons of mass destruction to compensate their lack of security and diplomatic weakness.³⁷

Turning to the hierarchy in the existing international system, weak or small states are only allowed to survive in this anarchic system once they balance with one or more great powers who in return protect those states.³⁸ By doing so, collective security will be guaranteed. However, to provide collective security great pressure is exerted on states that threaten the present world order. For states that are perceived as rogues by the majority in the system collective security has become collective damnation. Because great powers are reluctant to be identified with these abominated rogue states, the latter will become extremely isolated. In this light, one could question the extent to which those states really have a choice but to operate outside the pale in order to survive.³⁹ In the end the rogue state and the international system as actors mutually influence each other's attitude and behavior, which is vested in their nature.

³⁷ Robert Harkavy, 'Pariah States and Nuclear Proliferation', *International Organization* 35 (1981) 1, 135-163, referring to 136-137.

³⁸ Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society. Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 2002), ix.

³⁹ Harkavy, 'Pariah States and Nuclear Proliferation', 137-138.

Conclusion

Modern rogue state classification is strongly linked to the perceived global threat perception. When the bipolar period came to an end states that do not adhere to international norms and, thus, disturb the process of creating common security are seen as rogue states. In this, the support of international terrorism, the desire of regional expansion and a pursuit of weapons of mass destruction are of greater concern than the way a regime treats its own people. By labeling a state as rouge the focus is on the behavior of that particular state within international politics. What caused this behavior is, however, often neglected. Hereby a distinct category of states is created that find themselves in a seemingly impermeable downward spiral of lacking security and diplomatic isolation.

II

KIM IL SUNG'S UTOPIA

"The oppressed people can liberate themselves only through struggle.
This is a simple and clear truth confirmed by history."
(*Kim Il Sung, Great Leader*)⁴⁰

Kim Il Sung to many is the personification of the ultimate dictatorship as his culture of personality, over time, developed into the most fanatical and astonishing in history. Still, every day the North Korean people are reminded of the greatness of their leader and the wonderful things he did, whereas the 'terrors' that exist outside their own country are displayed at large too.⁴¹ To explain how this has come to be, the context in which Kim Il Sung became more influential and powerful will be discussed at first. This historical background is needed to understand how his perception on the world and especially his view of political power and state-building has been shaped. For that reason the history of the North Korean state will be explained in respect of its influences on the Great Leader. Secondly, the way Kim Il Sung governed North Korea and turned the state into the first postmodern dictatorship will be analysed. By taking this individual level into consideration it becomes clear to what extent Kim Il Sung played a decisive role in placing North Korea in a unique position regarding the existing world order. All together this chapter will combine the individual level of Kim Il Sung as the founding father of North Korea; the state level as a unique nation and regime; and the system level as North Korea's unexpected position within the international system.

Rise to power

On April 15th, 1912, Kim Il Sung was born in the Mangyongdae district in the North of Korea. During that time the whole of Korea was considered a colony of the Japanese empire. Japan ruled over Korea with an iron fist, politically Koreans could barely breathe when the Japanese legally downgraded the Korean people as second-class citizens. Economically Korea was extensively exploited to primarily serve the

⁴⁰ DPRK State Television, Speech, directed by DPRK, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123864>.

⁴¹ Tyler Lutz, 'Cult of Personality. North Korea under Kim Il-Sung', *Arcadia University, Senior Capstone Theses* (2015), 2.

economic growth of the occupier.⁴² Despite Japanese efforts to control the Koreans, the Korean people never considered the Japanese occupation to be legitimate, which resulted in continuous upheavals. On March 1st, 1919, Korean nationalists came to the front in massive demonstrations against the Japanese regime, collectively known as the March First Movement. This movement aimed for self-determination for the whole of Korean.⁴³ Under these restless circumstances Kim Il Sung was raised in a family that had an active role in anti-Japanese practices.⁴⁴ In the wake of the movement his family left Korea for Manchuria, a region that nowadays belongs to China, where the Japanese authorities had less reach and nationalist activities could be conducted with greater freedom. During this period the young Kim got familiar with the ideals of Chinese communism and, at the same time, was taken to every important event regarding Korean independence.⁴⁵

By the time the Korean nationalists succeeded in lessening the Japanese repressive rule, Kim Il Sung, at the age of nineteen, began to make a name for himself on the battlefields of Manchuria.⁴⁶ After the Japanese takeover of the region in 1931, Kim joined a Chinese communist led guerrilla movement, ultimately for the sake of Korean independence. He became a member of the communist party and fought in an army under their control, called the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army (NEAJUA). The NEAJUA brought scattered Chinese and Korean fighters under unified command to conduct in anti-Japanese guerrilla activities.⁴⁷ Under the banner of the NEAJUA Kim organized his first guerrilla unit in the spring of 1932, but did not stand out until the battle of Dongning in September 1933. The Chinese, assisted by two Korean guerrilla units under Kim's command, attacked the city of Dongning, but were beaten back by a strong Japanese counterattack. Because of Kim's thoughtful handling of the situation, a total massacre could be avoided. He managed to break through the Japanese siege, which enabled him to spare many guerrilla

⁴² Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun. A modern history*. Norton (New York 1997), 140-150.

⁴³ Kim Jinwung, *A history of Korea from "land of the morning calm" to states in conflict*. Indiana University Press (Bloomington, 2012), 323 & 331-333.

⁴⁴ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State*, 66.

⁴⁵ Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty. Politics and Leadership in North Korea*. I. B. Tauris Publishers (New York, 1999), 1&2.

⁴⁶ John Fairbank, Edwin Reischauer and Albert Craig, *East Asia. The Modern Transformation*. Houghton Mifflin (Boston 1965), 552-557.

⁴⁷ Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty*, 8.

fighters. From then on, the 21-year-old Kim was considered a top trusted leader amongst guerrillas both from Chinese and Korean backgrounds. Within a few years Kim was in command of an entire division, which he led to several victories against the Japanese. The most outstanding victory became the battle of Pochonbo. The attack on Pochonbo in June 1937 showed the effectiveness of the way Kim led his division as the entire city was taken back from the Japanese in a relatively short amount of time. After that, it did not take long before Kim was a top commander of the NEAJUA and one of the most feared guerrilla leaders in Manchuria. But Kim's success on the battlefield did not remain unnoticed by the Japanese, who quickly forced him out of Manchuria into the Sino-Russian border area. Unable to return safely, Kim needed to await another opportunity to regain his position.⁴⁸

When examining Kim's military career, the strength of his basic convictions is immediately apparent. Why he joined a communist guerrilla in particular remains unclear, but the decision to join was his own. Apart from the fact Kim was raised in an anti-Japanese fashion, clear guidance or mentoring was absent and therefore it can be argued, to join the fighting was his personal ambition. In this he could have been aided by the traditional Korean political culture which had nothing on offer for a person of his background. The lack of military tradition and widespread adherence towards autocracy in Korea traditions were obstacles to a revolutionary who had chosen a life of guerrilla warfare. Secondly, the way Kim worked himself up in the organization of NEAJUA demonstrated his leadership qualities. He was given command over a significant number of men, of whom the majority was loyal to Kim, because they could identify themselves with him as a person as well as his ambitions in battle. Kim had earned great respect and support through his victories over the Japanese in Manchuria. Finally, the extent of Kim's isolation is noteworthy. Due to virtual exile and guerrilla warfare Kim's contact with and exposure to the modern world was very limited. All in all, the period as a guerrilla commander had a profound influence on Kim's perception on the world and, in particular, his vision on political power and state-building.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Bruce Cumings: *North Korea. Another country. The New Press.* (New York 2004), 106-123.

⁴⁹ Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty*, 9-10.

In August 1945, when Japan was brought to its knees by the American atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Kim's chance to reclaim prominent influence came. During his time in exile, Kim crossed into the Soviet Union where he was exposed to Russian nationalism. Overwhelming military mobilisation and rapid post-revolutionary modernisation in the Soviet Union had a significant imprint on Kim's vision of the utopic state. Soon he joined the Soviet Army and within a few years he marched back into Korea as part of the 88th Soviet Brigade in the liberation of the Korean peninsula. Although the brigade was not of decisive importance in the Soviet takeover of Northern Korea, Kim was amongst the former Korean officers who were reassigned to assist the Soviet occupying authorities.⁵⁰ Because the Japanese colonial administration left after thirty-five years of occupation, a political vacuum was created. No strong government-in-exile was present to reclaim power nor was the Soviet occupation throughout. Because the Soviets were unfamiliar with the local political culture, they were in need of Korean political allies that understood this culture but clearly shared the same political philosophies. This placed Kim, as one of the most Soviet-trusted Koreans, in a strategically important position in the period of Soviet control over North Korea.⁵¹ What also strengthened Kim's position in the process to gain political influence was the importance of one's record under Japanese rule. The more successful a person was in fighting the occupation, the more legitimized his leadership was in post-occupied Korea. Therefore, Kim's military successes and prestige during anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare functioned as a formidable weapon against rivals with the ambition to govern North Korea, but with marginal or no military experience.⁵² In short, Kim possessed all the desirable attributes, both from the Soviet as well as the Korean perspective, to become a, if not the, key leader of North Korea. Politically, at the formation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in September 1948 his power was firmly established.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 11-12.

⁵¹ Cumings: *North Korea*, 106-123.

⁵² Kim Jinwung, *A History of Korea*, 393.

However, the desire to unify the Korean peninsula remained a top priority of the North Korean government under Kim Il Sung. So, within five years after Japanese capitulation the Korean War broke out, which became a decisive turning point in Korean history. Although Kim instigated the war, which created an image of him as an aggressive leader internationally, the domestic support for unification and the cry for leadership backed Kim's ideals of self-reliance and military mobilization.⁵³ During three years of warfare, the North Korean people have lived through times of great uncertainty, especially in regard of the extraordinary destructiveness of the American air campaigns. Ranging from the widespread and continuous use of firebombing with or without napalm, to threats to use nuclear and chemical weapons, and finally to the destructing of huge North Korean dams in the final stages of the war. Although weapons of mass destruction were never used, North Korea was completely leveled and millions of civilians were killed by the end of the war. This horrific experience bonded the people together and especially to Kim, in that his leadership had avoided escalation into total destruction.⁵⁴ Due to the American meddling in the conflict Kim's warnings of external threats and high level of military mobilization found broad hearing under the North Korean population. Thus, because of the Korean War the support for Kim's authority has increased significantly, especially as a result of his leadership skills and focus on self-reliance.⁵⁵

Building the state

As a result of the Korean War both political power and widespread support are vested with Kim Il Sung, empowering him to build a state based on his beliefs and ideals. Both of which are highly influenced by the experiences as a guerrilla fighters and commander. The anti-Japanese guerrilla movement and Russian nationalism in particular shaped his view on how to rapidly create a post-revolutionary modernized state. Although both are very different in origin and focus, they do share many common points of philosophy, which allowed Kim to melt the two together into the state philosophy of Juche.⁵⁶ To rebuild the North Korean state after the destruction of

⁵³ Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty*, 22.

⁵⁴ Cumings, *North Korea*, 15 & 26-27.

⁵⁵ Cumings: *Korea's Place under the Sun*, 226-236.

⁵⁶ Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty*, 2.

the war, Kim wanted to create a hardworking people that suffered out of love for their leader. In his own words, the ruling party should 'strengthen in every way the community of ideology and will'.⁵⁷ In turn, power will be vested by the leader to create a postmodern dictatorship. For this reason, Kim emphasized the importance of the people to determine the destination of the state, while simultaneously creating dependency on the state.⁵⁸ According to the Great Leader:

"The idea of Juche means that the masters of the revolution and construction are the masses of the people and that they are also the motive force of the revolution and the work of construction. In other words, one is responsible for one's own destiny and one has also the capacity for hewing out one's own destiny. The basis of the Juche Idea is that man is the master of all things and the decisive factor in everything."⁵⁹

By pointing out the people as 'masters of all things' in the revolution of the North Korean state Kim focusses on self-reliance in the broadest sense. Revolution is needed as, according to Kim, 'the democratic reforms [...] put an end to all the colonial and feudal relations that had long retarded the development of our country's economy and culture, and pave the way to unhindered development'. Also to become an independent, sovereign and democratic state, North Korea 'fights to achieve the complete liberation of the country from the yoke of foreign imperialism' according to the leader.⁶⁰ To be free from foreign interference, self-reliance in political, economic and military sense is central to the philosophy of Juche. The process towards becoming such a state involves the development of an independent national economy through self-sustainability and a national capacity of protection through self-defence. The latter guarantees political independence, which in turn guarantees the conditions for economic self-reliance. This mutual dependency between politics, the economy and the military is essential for Juche to succeed. In North Korea Juche quickly came to dominate life, politics, economics and the foreign relations of the state.⁶¹ By 1972 Juche was not merely a philosophy, instead it became

⁵⁷ DPRK State Television, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946.

⁵⁸ Menno Bos, 'Geliefde grote leider', *Historische Nieuwsblad* (version 10 October 2010) <https://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/artikel/27108/kim-il-sung-1912-1994.html> (10 June 2017).

⁵⁹ DPRK State Television, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946.

⁶⁰ Ibidem

⁶¹ Paul French, *North Korea. State of Paranoia*. Zed Books (London, New York 2015), 45-48.

part of legislation, pervasively influencing the lives of the North Korean people. When the Constitution was put into force, the implementation of Juche became legally binding. Article 3 states that 'the DPRK is guided in its activities by the Juche idea' and emphasizes its importance in terms of self-reliance in that Juche is 'a revolutionary ideology for achieving the independence of the masses of people'.⁶² Although Kim claimed Juche is a self-conceived philosophy as a response to external threats, the philosophy also resulted out of necessity. Of course Kim has doubted the intentions of other states for a long while, but the chilled relations with Moscow and Beijing soon after the adverse outcome of the Korea War, left Kim with no other choice but to look inwards.⁶³ Ultimately, Juche serves as a tool to justify dictatorship, to demand unquestionable loyalty of the populace and to mobilize the broad masses around self-reliance. It even developed into a cult of personality, evolving around Kim Il Sung and supplemented all other philosophical and religious beliefs in the state.⁶⁴

From the 1950s onwards Kim actively exposed the people in North Korea to a cult of personality in order to legitimize himself as the preeminent leader. By creating an image of himself as a charismatic leader, his leadership would not be at risk of being undermined and he would be able to install a dictatorship in which rules and norms do not apply to the leader.⁶⁵ Academics call this a leader state, which is maintained by indoctrination of the people through the centrality of a leadership culture in daily life.⁶⁶ Exposure to a large number of leader symbols and participation in mandatory activities has maintained this culture and constitutes the backbone of the North Korean state. This resulted in a pervasive state interference in the lives of families and individuals.⁶⁷ Paintings like the one below are displayed at large in public buildings, schools and even at home to evoking feelings of peace and happiness in a paradise. In this case, the painting symbolizes the fatherly role Kim Il Sung fulfils for all North Korean people.

⁶² Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Constitution (Pyongyang, 27 December 1972), article 3.

⁶³ Bos, 'Geliefde grote leider', online.

⁶⁴ Dae-Kyu Yoon, 'The Constitution of North Korea. Its Changes and Implications', *Fordham International Law Journal*, 27 (2003) 4, 1291.

⁶⁵ Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind, 'Pyongyang's Survival Strategy. Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea', *International Security*, 35 (2010) 1, 44-74, referring to 50.

⁶⁶ Jae-Cheon Lim, *Leader Symbols and Personality Cult in North Korea. The Leader State*. Routledge (New York 2015), i.

⁶⁷ Byman and Lind, 'Pyongyang's Survival Strategy', 45.

Figure I: Kim Il Sung - a father to all



Source: Martin Sasse, 'Painting a Picture of North Korea'. CNN, 1999.

Although, the symbolization of a political regime in personal terms is characteristic of political life, because it allows the regime to mobilize its citizens easily by concretizing an object of their allegiance, the implementation in North Korea is unmatched by any other state. By incorporating leader symbols that greatly influence psychological thinking in all aspects of life, North Korea has developed a highly refined cultural system in which the leader's personal legitimacy has become identical to the state's legitimacy.⁶⁸ Thus, leadership cultures are present in every society, but the degree and scope of de culture of the North Korean leader is too extreme and too pervasive to be compared with leadership cultures that have existed in other societies throughout time.⁶⁹

Due to the great suffering under the North Korean populace during the Korea War, and the fact that the state is tactically still at war with the South, Kim Il Sung was left with no other choice but to implement a strong national military policy. In his eyes, the international community has fallen short to protect the North Koreans from extreme violence and destruction, and for that reason, external threats continue to be very real in the eyes of most Koreans. Kim Il Sung, on his turn, responded to this feeling of insecurity by perfecting the idea of the garrison state, based on the military mobilization he witnessed in the Soviet Union.⁷⁰ As a leading political scientist Harold Lasswell argued in his book *The Garrison State*, that in such a state 'the specialists in violence run the state; authority is dictatorial, governmentalized, centralized and integrated; and the power pyramid is steep but the distribution of

⁶⁸ David Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life*. Wiley (New York 1967), 304-305.

⁶⁹ Lim, *Leader Symbols and Personality Cult in North Korea*, 1-2.

⁷⁰ Cumings, *North Korea*, 16-41.

safety is equalized.’ The garrison state differs from other states in its military permanency, with a great army that is ready to fight at any time, not just in challenging times like in most states. On top of that, the military supremacy needs to be accepted by the population. Hence the enormous importance of symbolization and glorification of the military in a garrison state, as shown in the figure below.⁷¹

Figure II: Military propaganda in Pyongyang, 2012



Source:
Martin Sasse,
'Painting a
Picture of
North Korea'.
CNN, 2012.

Under Kim Il Sung North Korea has developed the military permanence and acceptance to such a degree no other state has ever, and perhaps will never, reach. In line with this military mentality Kim calls for militarization of the entire populace for the sake of turning the entire country into a fortress. Strengthening the military provides, according to Kim, 'an important guarantee of victory of our [North Korean] revolution'.⁷² In this light, Articles 85 and 86 of the Constitution state 'Citizens shall constantly increase their revolutionary vigilance and devotedly fight for the security of the state' as well as 'national defense is the supreme duty and honor of citizens.' Also, 'Citizens shall defend the country and serve in the army as required by law'.⁷³ Today in a population of almost 25 million, one million are in the army, six million in the reserves and almost all adult men and women have significant military experience. Armed forces steadily increased from the 1980s into the 1990s, moving

⁷¹ Harold Lasswell, 'The Garrison state', *American Journal of Sociology* 46 (1941) 4, 455-468, referring to 455-459.

⁷² *DPRK State Television*, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946.

⁷³ Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Constitution (Pyongyang, 27 December 1972), articles 85 & 86.

from about 30 per one thousand to 48 per one thousand in 1991. On top of that, North Korea wants to acquire weapons of mass destruction in order to create a feeling of security in a hostile world. In comparison to all other states, North Korea is the most garrison like state in the world.⁷⁴

The implementation of the ideals of Juche, the cult of personality and the garrison state, by Kim Il Sung, had an overwhelming effect on the very foundations of the North Korean state and its society. Before Kim came to power both governance and daily life in North Korea looked very different from the North Korea under, but also after, his rule. Kim succeeded to establish his utopic self-reliant state with a great deal of support, enthusiasm and hope from the populace that agreed to centralized power, minimalized personal freedom and diminished external interference. By continuously referring to the efforts of 'citizens' and 'the people' Kim created a strong sense of unity, belonging and solidarity amongst the masses, while in the end the state remained the sole actor with power. Although the Korean War played a significant part, the state which Kim a revolutionary individual was able to create, shows Great Men can still be decisive. The survival of this self-reliant state in contemporary international politics, ultimately turned Kim Il Sung into the founding father of the state of North Korea.

Turning Rogue?

Kim Il Sung's influence on the development of the North Korean state and society is self-evident, but can the same be said for North Korea's position in the world system as a rogue state? First of all, neither a leader nor a state can actually choose to become a rogue state, because being a rogue is about the perception of the outside world on the behaviour of a particular state. As for Korea, the peninsula has been subjected to forms of political violence and nonconventional warfare including guerrilla tactics and terrorism after the war of which both sides are guilty. Yet, solely the North has been convicted for its aggressive attitude, which is internationally perceived as a serious threat to regional peace and security and eventually placed North Korea amongst the rogue states in the international system.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Cumming, *North Korea*, 1-2.

⁷⁵ Hendriksen, 'The Rise and Decline of Rogue States', 360. Cumings, *North Korea*, 15 & 26-27

In 1988 North Korea was designated by the American State Department as a state that sponsors terrorism mainly because of two incidents. The first occurred in October 1983, when South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan was on a state visit to Burma. Three North Korean military officers planned to attack this group of delegates during the official ceremony. 21 people got killed, but the delegations of both states were spared, because the bombs went off before their arrival. The second terrorist incident took place in November 1987 when two North Korean agents blew up South Korean air flight KAL 858, killing all 115 on board. Although a direct link to these incidents has never been uncovered, the meddling of Kim Il Sung in this remains doubtful. The perpetrators of both terrorist attacks were in uniform, thus, acting on behalf of the North Korean state. This indicates that orders from above were likely necessary for the conduct of these ventures. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue Kim approved to this kind of terror and perhaps even ordered the attacks.⁷⁶

When the decision to put North Korea on the terrorist list was announced, State Department spokesman Charles Redman noted that the country had failed 'to live up to the standards of civilized behavior', because of their involvement in terrorists acts.⁷⁷ By labeling North Korea as a state that promotes terrorism, North Korea was targeted with several economic sanctions including prohibitions on American foreign aid and limits on arms sales and dual-use technology. These unilateral measures, along with economic sanctions that have been in force since 1953, were implemented by the United States to modify the behavior of North Korea. The multitude of economic restrictions were not merely intended to pressure and punish the North Korean regime for its support of terrorism, but were also directed to change its policy of self-defense and the development of weapons of mass destruction in this.⁷⁸ When the Korean War had come to an end and Kim Il Sung installed a self-reliant state, the majority of states were convinced it would not last. But, against all odds, the secluded regime managed to survive.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Terence Roehring, 'North Korea and the US State Sponsors of Terrorism List', *Pacific Focus* 24 (2009) 1, 82-106, referring to 82-83 & 90-95.

⁷⁷ Elaine Sciolino, 'North Korea Added to Terror List', *New York Times* (version 21 January 1988) <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=940DEFD7163CF932A15752C0A96E948260> (10 June 2017).

⁷⁸ Roehring, 'North Korea and the US State Sponsors of Terrorism List', 100-104.

⁷⁹ Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*. Oxford University Press (New York 2015), xiii.

What becomes clear from the above is how much the United States needed to create diplomatic leverage over North Korea in order to put a hold to its military and economic progress. The United States acted under the banner of fighting terrorism, but most likely strived to fulfil the more pressing task of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation of North-Korea.⁸⁰ In contrast, Kim Il Sung has tried to break the downward spiral of diplomatic isolation and lacking security by installing a self-reliance state. But, as Kim himself puts it, 'many difficulties lie on the road of the democratic construction of the country, and our struggle is very arduous and complex. This is because of the aggressive army of American imperialism, seeking to turn our country into a colony once again'.⁸¹

Conclusion

The period of Japanese occupation over North Korea shaped Kim Il Sung's view on the world profoundly. Self-determination and independence were the primary incentives to protect his country on the battle field. Because Kim Il Sung's incentives were broadly shared, his leadership was legitimized domestically. For that reason Kim was able to create a secluded state based on the philosophy of Juche, a culture of personality and military mobilization. Even though the United States attempts to alter these developments by labelling North Korea as a rogue state, because the state fails to behave civilized, Kim Il Sung has ensured regime survival in contemporary international politics. Rogue state classification is, thus, used as a means to put pressure on and create political leverage over the North Korean leadership. Because of the mutual exclusive interests between the United States and North Korea, confrontation between the two has always lurked, putting international safety and security on the line.

⁸⁰ Chomsky, *Rogue States*, 31-32.

⁸¹ *DPRK State Television*, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946.

III

SURVIVAL IN A HOSTILE WORLD

“While there are still imperialist aggressors the state that has no defence power of its own to protect its sovereignty against internal and external enemies is, in fact, not a fully independent and sovereign state”
(*Kim Il Sung, Great Leader*)⁸²

Towards the end of the 1970s the process of being perceived as a rogue state on the international stage is strongly related to a state’s behaviour regarding international security and to some extent to the way a state treats its own people, which is why both aspects will be analysed in regard of North Korea under Kim Il Sung. By doing so, insight will be given on the underlying thoughts and interests for North Korea and in particular its leader, to behave rogue, risking economic sanctions and affecting the ability to manoeuvre diplomatically. Understanding the hard policies of confrontation rather than compliance, in this, is essential to be able to make sense of North Korean behaviour and policy, both domestically and internationally.

Playing the Nuclear Card

In the eyes of the Kim Il Sung leadership, the international community has fallen short in protecting North Korea from extreme violence and destruction deriving from the United States during the Korean War. Caught within the Cold War dynamics and the fight against communism, heavy American napalms bombing campaigns, as the most disturbing example, aimed at forcing North Korea to give up on their cause to unite Korea. Consequently, a huge amount of innocent citizens were victimized. Perceived as unproportioned terrorization of the nation, North Korea blames the United States for their inappropriate response to the possible risks Korean unification would cause to international peace and stability. A North Korea that aims to unify Korea was at best no threat to another country and at worst a threat to regional stability.⁸³ Besides, the United States is the sole country that actually made use of nuclear weapons to alter the behavior of another country and seriously

⁸² *DPRK State Television*, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946.

⁸³ Cumming, *North Korea*, 16-41.

considered using those kind of weapons against North Korea during the war. This led to an understanding that if the United States was willing to use those destructive weapons to alter behavior back then, they would be willing to use them at any time. In absence of international condemnation of the American excessive response, North Korea felt left on its own to protect the nation from continuing intimidating military maneuvers on the Korean peninsula. Leading to a nationwide focus on self-defense to solve the new security problems North Korea is faced with.⁸⁴

The economic sanctions the United States holds against North Korea since the end of the war caused Kim Il Sung to have a cautious attitude towards the United States. These measures did not withhold the economy to flourish on short term, but did hold back development into a stable and sustained economic growth. The breakdown of the Soviet Union combined with further American economic sanctions, when North Korea was added to the terrorist list in 1988, let the economy to crack, resulting in a national crisis.⁸⁵ Although, the implementation of this stream of sanctions was not the direct cause for the outbreak of the crisis, the relations with North Korea were affected in a negative sense. Over time a feeling of enormous distrust and suspicion regarding the intentions of the United States on the peninsula was widespread amongst the North Korean ruling party, but also amongst the ordinary people, who feared history would repeat itself.⁸⁶

These security and economic concerns combined with a persevering desire for unification led Kim Il Sung to initiate a nuclear programme. Such a programme could provide weapons in order to safeguard the state, may the conflict on the peninsula result in military confrontation; serve as an internal energy source to strengthen the economic development of the nation; and be used as a mains of pressure for an end to the division of Korea.⁸⁷ Already during the 1950s and 1960s the North Korean leadership launched its own nuclear research scheme and entered into nuclear cooperation agreements with China and the Soviet Union, resulting in the establishment of the first nuclear facility in 1964. At that time North Korea was

⁸⁴ Walter Dorn and Andrew Fulton, 'Securing Compliance with Disarmament Treaties: Carrots, Sticks and the Case of North Korea'. *Global Governance* 3 (1997) 1, 17-40, referring to 32-33.

⁸⁵ Roehring, 'North Korea and the US State Sponsors of Terrorism List', 98-104.

⁸⁶ Cumming, *North Korea*, 16-41.

⁸⁷ Dorn and Fulton, 'Securing Compliance with Disarmament Treaties', 32-33.

not a member of the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons* (NPT), but in 1977 the reactor was placed under limited, facility-specific *International Atomic Energy Agency* (IAEA) safeguards that are applied to nuclear facilities in non-NPT states.⁸⁸ Although allowing safeguards may seem to be clashing with Kim Il Sung's militant strategy, as he told a Chinese delegation around the same time, 'if war breaks out in Korea in the future, we would still need your help and want to fight together' as 'it seems war is inevitable and it will come'. However, despite the growing tensions over their nuclear programme, Kim still adopted a cautious approach, because he acknowledged 'we are currently not prepared to expand our struggle against South Korea. Unless we are certain that we do it correctly, we are not prepared to provoke things'.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, North Korea completed the construction of a nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, which began operating in January 1986.⁹⁰ The possibility of North Korea obtaining atomic bombs was conceivable from then on, creating considerable leverage in negotiation talks in favor of Kim Il Sung. In pursuing a diplomacy of survival, Pyongyang used bluff, sham and brinkmanship to receive economic aid and to secure safety. In short, Kim learned how to play the nuclear card to protect the regional influence and position of North Korea.⁹¹

The operation of the reactor heightened international concerns over North Korea's nuclear intentions. The Soviet Union, which had valued nuclear non-proliferation throughout the Cold War, applied pressure on North Korea to become a party to the NPT. In 1985 North Korea yielded and acceded to the NPT, but the leadership could not fully meet the requirements as long as the United States posed a direct nuclear threat. In accordant with Article III of the NPT each state party is 'to accept safeguards, as set forth in an agreement to be negotiated and concluded with the IAEA'.⁹² Until a safeguards agreement with the IAEA was adopted, inspections of nuclear materials and facilities could not commence. Out of security concerns

⁸⁸ Paul Leventhal and Steven Dolley, 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis', *Medicine & Global Survival* 1 (1994) 3, 164-175, referring to 164-165.

⁸⁹ Balázs Szalontai, 'Whose War Plan Was It?: DPRK Relation and Kim Il Sung's Militant Strategy, 1965-1967', *Wilson Centre* (version 21 April 2016) <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/sino-dprk-relations-and-kim-il-sungs-militant-strategy-1965-1967> (17 July 2017).

⁹⁰ Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 201-203.

⁹¹ Cumings, *North Korea*, 47-49.

⁹² Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (New York, 1 July 1968).

adherence to the provision of the Treaty was linked to withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from South Korea.⁹³ The promise to ‘provide or support immediate assistance [...] to any non-nuclear-weapon state party’ in the event of nuclear threats or attacks by NPT state parties that are in the possession of nuclear weapons, did not satisfy Kim Il Sung.⁹⁴ For nearly seven years the regime pursued dilatory tactics to block actual implementation.⁹⁵ The way Kim tries to guarantee safety, while dealing with international pressure, against the backdrop of a persistent war with American backed South Korea, has indeed shown a rather reserved attitude. In the early 1990s North Korea has found itself extremely isolated, with many socialist regimes starting to crumble after the fall of the Soviet Union. The North Korean leadership was in a state of deep apprehension and needed to fight for its survival. Agreeing to inspections of their nuclear programme in the beginning of 1992, after the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from the peninsula, demonstrates the willingness of the Great Leader to neutralize the tensions instead of provoking confrontation.⁹⁶

When inspections were held from mid-1992 to early 1993 the IAEA created suspicion over the existing nuclear material, which may not be correctly and completely registered. In contradiction with the North Korean statement that it listed all its nuclear materials and facilities, the IAEA asked for further investigation. A special investigation to analyze two undeclared sites that may contain reprocessing waste, both located in the Yongbyon nuclear complex, must clear up this inconsistency.⁹⁷ But, requesting special investigation was perceived as an insult by the North Korean leadership as such investigations were never held in any other member state. Access to the sites was thus refused, based on the claim that the sites were of military purpose not related to the nuclear program. Although skepticism may have been in place as satellite images shown the outlook of the two plants, Kim

⁹³ Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 201-203.

⁹⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 255. Question relating to measures to safeguard non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (New York, 19 June 1968).

⁹⁵ Arms Control Association, ‘Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy. Fact Sheets & Briefs’ (version June 22 2017), <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron> (June 30 2017).

⁹⁶ Sergey Radchenko, ‘Russia’s Policy in the Run-Up to the First North Korean Nuclear Crisis, 1991-1993’, *Wilson Centre* (version 13 February 2015), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/russias-policy-the-run-to-the-first-north-korean-nuclear-crisis-1991-1993> (16 July 2017).

⁹⁷ Matthias Dembinski, ‘North Korea, IAEA Special Inspections, and the Future of the Nonproliferation Regime’, *The Nonproliferation Review* (1995), 31-39, referring to 32-33.

Il Sung felt stabbed in the back for granting the IAEA access. For North Korea, he argues, 'it's a matter of national security' and the IAEA needs to understand 'the nation remains in a state of war'. Being forced into a corner, the North Korean leadership announced its withdrawal from the NPT in March 1993 on grounds of 'extraordinary events [which] jeopardized the supreme interest of the country', as required by the Treaty.⁹⁸ The IAEA demand for special inspections and the renewed joint military maneuvers of the United States and South Korea on the peninsula, were cited by North Korea as validated reasons to withdraw. Altogether, the IAEA inspections are a missed opportunity for both sides to relax tensions, which now resulted in a Nuclear Crisis. The IAEA could not coerce North Korea any further and needed to abandon the need for special investigation in order to keep North Korea in the Treaty. This diplomatic effort paid off when Kim suspended its withdrawal for as long as necessary.⁹⁹

Just as one escalation was avoided, the next confrontation occurred. Kim Il Sung's claim for special status of North Korea under the NPT, because the country remains at a state of war, did not find hearing within the IAEA. Making Kim engage in hard politics by announcing the shutdown of the Yongbyon reactor in 1994 to unload its core. In a time communist regimes are crumbling down, Kim felt the need to defend North Korea's national interest of self-reliance at all costs, no risk could be taken. By shutting down the reactor the outside was no longer aware of North Korea's nuclear capabilities or its nuclear intentions. The reactor could contain enough plutonium to establish nuclear bombs, turning North Korea into a full-fledged nuclear power. Bearing in mind that this could be a reality soon, the IAEA played the only containing card it possessed by suspending technical assistance to North Korea. In response, Kim ordered to withdraw membership from the IAEA altogether, pushing the conflict to the brink of war.¹⁰⁰

The alarming situation of June 1994 urged negotiations between the actors as military escalation was only one step away. The chain of confrontations during the Nuclear Crisis made a diplomatic solution at short notice necessary for the region not

⁹⁸ Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (New York, 1 July 1968), article 10.

⁹⁹ Dorn and Fulton, 'Securing Compliance with Disarmament Treaties', 21-25.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 21-25.

to fall into instability. At this moment, a development occurred that completely changed the dynamics of the crisis. Former president of the United States, Jimmy Carter, arrived on the stage when paying a visit to North Korea. After meeting directly with Kim Il Sung, the two agreed to resume high-level talks between their governments. Also, Kim promised to 'freeze' its nuclear facilities under IAEA inspections. In return, Carter pledged to cease the American sanctions campaign at the United Nations (UN). This crucial meeting distressed the conflict by which military confrontation could be avoided.¹⁰¹ High-level talks were planned to take place within a month, but on the day negotiations should have started, Kim Il Sung unfortunately died of a heart attack. His unexpected death could destabilize the crisis as the future of the North Korean leadership was unknown. But the outcome of the high-level talks with Kim Jong Il, son of Kim Il Sung, in the *Agreed Framework* show North Korea did not deviate from the chosen path. Based on conditional reciprocity the North Korean leadership agreed to suspend the facilities at Yongbyon in exchanged for the promise of two light water reactors, annual fuel deliveries and humanitarian aid.¹⁰² This incentive-based approach made an agreement between those aversive states appealing and therefore possible.

To understand to course of this Nuclear Crisis two issues are of significant importance. Firstly, the importance of North Korean compliance to nuclear non-proliferation for disarmament to succeed. Secondly, the possible nuclear consequences of a conventional war. These were major factors in considering any action by North Korea and the United States, that could provoke a war on the Korean peninsula. Such a confrontation could lead to immense destruction on both sides and on overall failure in securing international safety, stability and peace.¹⁰³ Kim Il Sung was clearly aware of the critical status of his nuclear programme, which made his decisions, as the head of a totalitarian state, regarding the crisis, a determining factor. Diplomatic pressure has altered the baseline away from pragmatic and partial improvement towards a more 'all or nothing' approach to the crisis. The possibility that North Korea could be in the possession of nuclear weapons, was deployed by

¹⁰¹ Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 216.

¹⁰² Leventhal and Dolley, 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis', 167.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, 170.

Kim as a means of regime survival and to extract several kinds of aid.¹⁰⁴ He used the importance of international nuclear nonproliferation in the new world order to his advantage and played the North Korean nuclear card well-intentioned and rational as shown by the survival of North Korea and the relative stability of the region over time.

Imprisonment and Labour Camps

Human rights are, in the broadest set of the concept, a set of basic human values that transcend diverse cultural contexts. Those rights and the way a country treats its people became more important after the Second World War. The experience of the enormous civilian casualties and Holocaust during the war, gave rise to the human rights movement which promoted the idea of universal human rights. In December 1948 the human rights chrysalis burst open when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR). This declaration ushered in a new era in the way of thinking about the protection of human beings. No longer was protecting the people solely a task of sovereign states, it became a task of the international community as a whole.¹⁰⁵ Generally, the UDHR is agreed to be the foundation upon which international human rights law has been built. Because of the Declaration, a comprehensive legally binding system for the protection of human rights has been established by the late 1970s.¹⁰⁶ In 1975 the Helsinki Accords were signed, including agreement and cooperation among 35 countries in Europa, North American and the Soviet Bloc on human rights.

Pressure on North Korea's human rights record rose after this period. Over time, an image of North Korea was held up as 'a nefarious regime arming itself with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens' according to political scientist John Feffer. The famine North Korea was faced with just after the Nuclear Crisis, is often claimed to be a human rights violation rather than the result of economic breakdown. In this, the persistent food shortage was used by the

¹⁰⁴ Martin Curtis, 'Rewarding North Korea. Theoretical Perspectives on the 1994 Agreed Framework', *Journal of Peace Research* 39 (2002) 1, 51-68, referring to 51-52.

¹⁰⁵ David Mayers, 'Humanity in 1948. The Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights', *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 26 (2015) 3, 446-472, referring to 446-447.

¹⁰⁶ Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn, *The Breakthrough. Human Rights in the 1970s*. University of Pennsylvania Press (Philadelphia 2014), 3-4.

leadership as a political weapon to starve the people into submission. Of course all famines have political causes, however, it is not likely that the North Korean regime has deliberately attempted to harm its own people by starvation. It is true that its penitentiary system is designed to handle all threats to the established order, but it is implausible that, by doing so, it would undermine its own philosophy of self-determination. Risking opening up the country to outside ideas, by joining the United Nations in 1991 and asking them for help, does not stroke with politically deploying famine to oppress the North Korean people and strengthen regime survival.¹⁰⁷

To consolidate Kim Il Sung's rule over North Korea, politically motivated executions were present in the late 1940s and political and individual freedoms were severely curtailed. This has to do with possible 'internal enemies' as Kim refers to domestic threats that still exist after the failed liberation of Korea. He may have signed the *Korean Armistice Agreement* in July 1953 to insure a complete cessation of hostilities with South Korea and the United States, North Korea has been in a state of war ever since the attempt to unify Korea. Combined with the experience of Japanese occupation in recent history, a feeling of enormous mistrust and suspicion determined Kim's attitude towards the North Korean populace. When analyzing his speech during the first Congress of the Korean Workers Party in 1946, he states 'Korea today is precisely the people's Korea, a Korea that is governed and built by the people themselves'.¹⁰⁸ Construction is in line with the philosophy of self-reliance, suggesting a focus on hard work and even suffering for the greater end of building a strong and powerful state. However, to what extent the people have a voice in ruling the country is rather doubtful. Or as North Korean refugee Dzhon Khen-mu argues, 'in the North, the ruling party tells you what to do your whole life. You do not make any decisions'.¹⁰⁹ Due to this lack of 'voice' in the system, North Koreans could accede to state policy, keep quiet about their misgivings or try to leave the country.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ John Feffer, 'The forgotten lessons of Helsinki. Human rights and U.S.-North Korean relations', *World Policy Journal* 21 (2004) 3, 31-39, referring to 38.

¹⁰⁸ *DPRK State Television*, Kim Il Sung addressing the 1st Congress of the Korean Workers' Party, 1946.

¹⁰⁹ Roman Super and Claire Bigg, 'I got too rich in North Korea and had to fake my own death. A defector's story.' *The Guardian*, 11 July 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/11/north-korea-too-rich-fake-death-defector-story>.

¹¹⁰ Feffer, 'The Forgotten lessons of Helsinki', 32-33.

When accused of political crimes offenders were sent to labour camps already under Kim Il Sung's rule. According to Stalinist model, North Korea has built labour camps where prisoners are often given impracticable work quotas to fulfill and are subjected to brutal punishments. Instead of creating a penitentiary system to reform prisoners through corrective labour, a Soviet commissar stated 'we've put up secret police fortresses'.¹¹¹ The same has happened in North Korea. After the war North Korea found itself relatively isolated, the whole country leveled and its future uncertain. To reinstall its economy and prepare for war, a network of labour camps would offer a solution by eliminating internal enemies while simultaneously rebuilding the country. Although Kim repeatedly denied the existence of such a network, claims by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International were confirmed by the mid-1990s. By joining the UN in 1991 and asking for help during the famine, North Korea had no other choice but to carefully open up to the outside. Meaning inspections by Amnesty International to examine the human rights situation were unavoidable. These inspections held in 1991 and 1995, combined with prisoners' testimonies and satellite photographs, provided strong evidence to the claims that the North Korean leadership does violate human rights in multiple ways.

Due to Kim's denial of violating human rights and the lack of transparency of the leadership, outsiders have drawn conclusion based on fragmentary evidence.¹¹² Although this may have worked in favor of their nuclear programme, the claims on human rights violations do threaten the established regime. Kim undoubtedly failed in keeping the labour camps hidden and by withholding any form of explanation the legitimacy of his rule is further undermined internationally. Meaning the human rights record is used to define the leadership as brutal, frightening and above all rogue. Contrary to Kim Il Sung's attempts to reduce tensions, his Cold War foes linked internal mistreatment of the populace to regional aggression, worsening the position on the international stage of the former as the country remains highly isolated and most of all misunderstood.

¹¹¹ David Hawk, *The Hidden Gulag. Exposing North Korea's Prison Camps*. US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea (Washington D.C. 2003).

¹¹² Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, eds., *The New North Korea. Korea Briefing 2000-2001*. East Gate Books (New York 2002), 78-79.

Rogue States Politics

From 1979 onwards the way a state behaves in terms of security issues regarding international terrorism, regional expansion and weapons of mass destruction, is strongly related to the determination of rogue state status.¹¹³ Because the United States tried to suppress actors that challenge their cause of common security and undermine the existing world order, North Korea has been put under great pressure to comply with non-proliferation. However, Kim Il Sung is faced with a security dilemma since the end of the Korean War, which makes abandoning their nuclear programme impossible.

Instead of finding common ground, the United States has used North Korea's biased human rights record to strengthen the claim that North Korea is a rogue state. While in general, the importance of the way a state treats its own people has declined in rogue state classification since the late 1970s, in the case of North Korea it has been deliberately linked to nuclear proliferation. Kim Il Sung has tried several times to relax tensions by opening up the international community. For instance, by becoming a NPT member, allowing Amnesty International inspections and joining the UN. The United States should have supported those developments, if it really wanted to end human suffering. However, as history has shown, that is not the case. The United States cannot afford to lose control over North Korea, because it would hurt their security interests.¹¹⁴ Therefore, North Korea must remain in a distinct category of states within the international system at all costs. Rogue state status, thus, is a political measure that is concerned with the perceived threat perception and has little to do with fighting violations of human rights.

Conclusion

The initial purpose of the North Korea's nuclear programme was to fulfil the needs of national security. Over time, the programme served as a means to create diplomatic leverage on the international stage. Kim Il Sung was well aware of the consequences of any form of direct confrontation with the United States, but he refused to obey to their will in terms of deterrence and non-proliferation, since it

¹¹³ Litwak, *Rogue states and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 7 & 49-53.

¹¹⁴ Chomsky, *Rogue States*, 12.

would hurt North Korean national security and survival interests. Because diplomacy altered into an 'all or nothing' approach the Nuclear Crisis was continuously at the brink of escalation. Conditional reciprocity was perhaps the only way to prevent direct confrontation. In addition, North Korea's human rights record became of sizable importance internationally from the 1970s onwards, although human rights have been violated to consolidate Kim Il Sung's rule over North Korea. Because the state is not sharing information on its penitentiary system, outsiders have drawn conclusions based on fragmentary evidence, deriving from satellite photographs, prisoners' testimonies and Amnesty International inspections. In the case of North Korea, non-proliferation is linked to its human right record in order to force the state into nuclear compliance.

CONCLUSION

The fact that the United States' Congress has reached agreement on a bill that enables sanctions against North Korea last July combined with a statement from CIA Director Mike Pompeo, who said that the Trump administration needs to find a way to separate Kim Jong Un from his growing nuclear stockpile, confirms the North Korean matter is still a major issue in the world today.¹¹⁵ On its turn, North Korea responded that it would not give up on its nuclear programme and threatens to harm the United States with a nuclear strike if the North Korean regime would be threatened.¹¹⁶ These current developments show the relations have not significantly changed since Kim Il Sung ruled over North Korea. The North Korean leadership still seeks to obtain weapons of mass destruction and the society remains seclude, while the United States still tries to alter North Korean behavior.

What this research has shown, is the great influence historical developments have had on modern day North Korea. First and foremost, the Japanese occupation and the Korean War have been of significant importance when analyzing North Korea's position within the international state system, which is now perceived as a rouge state. Kim Il Sung could consolidate his rule over North Korea, because his ideas of self-reliance and Korean unification found hearing amongst the majority of the North Korean people. Especially his personal experience of fighting the Japanese occupation in Manchuria has profoundly influenced his understanding of political power and state order. If it had not been for the Japanese occupation, Kim Il Sung would not have been exposed to Chinese communism and Russian nationalism, which he merged into the philosophy of Juche. In order to avoid foreign interference, which hindered modernization in the past thirty-five years of occupation, North Korea needed to become self-reliant in political, economic and military sense. This has resulted in a highly secluded society in which the leadership culture and military mobilization of the populace is unmatched.

¹¹⁵ Reuters, 'Congress reaches deal on bill enabling sanctions against Russia, Iran and North Korea', *The Telegraph* (version 22 July 2017) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/22/congress-reaches-deal-sanctions-bill/> (16 August 2017).

¹¹⁶ Zachary Cohen and Barbara Star, 'North Korea promises nuclear strikes on US if regime is threatened', *CNN* (version 25 July 2017) <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/25/politics/north-korea-threatens-nuclear-strike-us/index.html> (16 August 2017).

In addition, Kim Il Sung instigated a war on the peninsula for the sake of Korean unification. Without American meddling, he would have triumphed over his South Korean opponent, fulfilling the wishes of many Koreans to be united. Although a North Korea that aims to unify Korea was at best no threat to another country and at worst a threat to regional stability, the United States, caught within Cold War rhetoric, completely leveled the country with its bombing campaigns. To rebuild and safeguard North Korea after the destructive outcome of the Korean War, Kim Il Sung initiated a nuclear programme that could deal with both economic and security concerns. The reason why Kim Il Sung positioned North Korea without the international system, thus, results from the extremely negative experiences with foreign interference during the Japanese occupation followed by the Korean War.

However, Kim Il Sung was not the sole actor defining North Korea's position in world politics. The United States has contributed to this extreme seclusion as well. During the Cold War the primary cause of the United States was to put a hold to communist expansion, which could fail if Korea would be united with Kim Il Sung in power. When the Soviet Union started to crumble, North Korea posed a threat to common security because the state wanted to obtain weapons of mass destruction in order to deal with new security threats. During this period the United States has tried to alter the behavior of North Korea by imposing economic sanctions and isolating its leadership diplomatically. An image of North Korea was held up as a rogue regime, arming itself with nuclear weapons while the ordinary people are neglected. In this, the United States used rogue state classification as a political means to force North Korea into compliance with nuclear non-proliferation. Although the concept of rogue states had shifted away from the way a state threatens its own people, the United States deliberately used North Korea's human rights record to invigorate its rogue state status. Meaning violations of human rights by the North Korean leadership were only brought to attention to create diplomatic leverage at the negotiation table. Therefore, it can be argued the United States needed to position North Korea in a distinct category of states within the international system to exercise control over its behavior regarding nuclear non-proliferation. Several attempts by Kim Il Sung to open up his country to moderated foreign interference,

from the *Agreed Framework* with the United States to inspections by the IAEA and Amnesty International, are ignored because it is not in the United States' interest to loosen control over North Korea. The United States, thus, only focused on parts of Kim Il Sung's domestic and foreign policies regarding security and human rights that would fit rogue state classification. By intentionally spreading a fragmented story about North Korea's intentions and meddling in a conflict between two parts of the same country, the United States may be the real rogue.

To learn more about North Korea and the concept of rogue states in relation to international relations further research is needed. Because rogue state classification is a process and the North Korean issues is still one of the most pressing issues in the world today, analyzing the developments under Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un will provide more insight in the reasons why North Korea is still considered a rogue state, while at some point president George W. Bush did remove North Korea from the list of states that sponsor terrorism sponsoring. Furthermore, the limited access to governmental documents and statements could improve when the language barrier is lifted. As this research has shown, it is unlikely North Korea will become less secluded at short notice, thus, other ways must be found to deal with the lack of transparency.

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