

Seeing North Korea Clearly

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Two preconditions for effective foreign policy are accurate information about the politics, economics and society of foreign countries, and a clear understanding of the interests, perceptions and objectives of their governments. A variety of means are used to gather this information, including high-level government contacts, diplomatic missions, cultural and educational exchange programmes, support for the study of particular countries and regions, and intelligence collection and analysis. By developing multiple channels of information and building a cadre of individuals with detailed knowledge of other countries and their leaders, it is usually possible for a government to gather the raw information and develop the cultural awareness necessary to understand foreign countries and formulate effective policies towards them.

North Korea's closed society presents particular challenges for obtaining information and developing the understanding necessary for an effective foreign policy. Its international isolation and hostility to the United States make traditional methods difficult. North Korean citizens have very limited contact with the outside world. The Korean Workers Party controls the media and citizens are unable to access the outside world freely with telecommunications or the Internet. Travel inside North Korea is strictly controlled, with foreigners limited to Pyongyang and other showcase sites. Because the United States and North Korea do not have diplomatic relations, the US government has no diplomats based in North Korea who can report on conditions, build relations with North Korean officials, and develop a deeper understanding of the country.¹ Strong US ties with South Korea have provided opportunities for some Americans to learn Korean and become familiar with Korean culture, but 50 years of separation has created significant differences between the North and South that limit the value of this experience. US economic

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sanctions and North Korea's economic strategy of self-reliance have severely curtailed business contacts, cutting off a potentially important informal channel of information. Cultural and educational contacts have been similarly restricted.

As a result, the US government relies on second-hand information from countries that have diplomatic relations or direct contacts with North Korea and on information collected by the US intelligence community or shared by other intelligence services. Although these sources can provide valuable information, they typically have a narrow focus and necessarily provide an incomplete and distorted picture of what is actually happening in North Korea. Occasional US diplomatic contacts with North Korea are generally focused on narrow functional issues and are conducted in a formal, disciplined manner, with both US and North Korean officials sticking closely to their talking points.

Lack of information and the secretive nature of the North Korean regime have led many people to conclude that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il is a crazy or irrational leader whose miscalculations are likely to lead the Korean Peninsula into a devastating war.² There are widespread fears that North Korean brinksmanship could backfire and extinguish any hope for a peaceful resolution of the current nuclear crisis. While the US would take pains to prevent escalation in any pre-emptive military action, South Korea – whose capital is within North Korean artillery

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range – would be placed in serious jeopardy and regional stability could be severely disrupted. However, most Korea specialists believe the North Korean regime is neither irrational nor crazy, but rather has a distorted worldview and warped expectations about how other countries will respond to its actions. An effective US Korea policy needs to understand this worldview, the political and security environment within which decisions are made, and the North Korean leadership's decision calculus. Without such an understanding, foreign policy actions by other states – including the United States – are likely to have unexpected or counter-productive results.

The very real challenges in collecting sufficient information to understand North Korea and its leaders constitute a significant barrier to a better US Korea policy. The human tendency to compensate for poor information and uncertainty with cognitive shortcuts may ultimately be even more damaging.³ This paper identifies five sources of US misunderstanding of

North Korea and illustrates their negative impact on US Korea policy in recent years. These are: linguistic barriers; ideological barriers that distort interpretations of developments in North Korea; intellectual constructs that conceal important information; lack of imagination and a reluctance to acquire a deeper comprehension of the North Korean mindset; and deliberate misrepresentations for political or policy convenience. The resultant distorted picture of North Korea among US policymakers has produced confusion about the actual state of affairs in North Korea and has contributed to a number of policy miscues and missed opportunities.

If North Korea were strategically unimportant or if the United States had a dominant strategy for dealing with it, this lack of understanding might not matter. But the ongoing Korean nuclear crisis poses a major challenge to US security interests, to regional stability in northeast Asia, and to the future viability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. North Korea's nuclear weapons programme presents the United States with tough choices between risky alternatives. Effective diplomacy will be necessary for a successful outcome, and this will require a clear understanding of North Korea. It is important for US policymakers – and the broader policy community – to be conscious of existing barriers to understanding North Korea and make efforts to compensate for their effects.

Linguistic barriers: what is North Korea really saying?

Interpreting signals and statements from the North Korean regime is difficult. The vitriolic and apocalyptic tone routinely employed by the North Korean government and media discourages efforts to take North Korean statements seriously. However, dismissing these statements as propaganda means discarding one of the few sources of information on the leadership. Linguistic barriers caused by translation or interpretation mistakes may also cause US observers to misunderstand North Korean statements or to miss subtle yet vital nuances.

The October 2002 visit to Pyongyang by US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly to confront North Korea about its nuclear programme provides two examples of how interpretation issues have created confusion. First, North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Chu reportedly responded to Kelly's accusations by admitting that North Korea had a uranium enrichment programme. Although the American delegation included several Korean speakers, there appears to have been some uncertainty about exactly what Kang said. Over the next several months, the North Koreans circulated an account of the meeting that differed from the US version, causing some South Korean and Japanese analysts to question whether the US delegation had interpreted Kang's

remarks correctly. In early November, North Korean UN Ambassador Han Song Ryol stated that North Korea was willing to satisfy all US security concerns, including concerns about Pyongyang's uranium enrichment programme, and would consider allowing inspections of the nuclear facilities.⁴ In December, North Korean statements denied that Pyongyang had ever acknowledged having an uranium enrichment programme, saying this was 'arbitrary phraseology used by Kelly', and that 'Kelly is chiefly responsible for dreaming up the fiction of the DPRK's "development of nuclear weapons"'.⁵ Without access to detailed accounts of the meeting from both sides, it is impossible to determine the exact role that interpretation mistakes might have played. One possibility is that Kang admitted the existence of a uranium enrichment programme and that North Korea subsequently used the interpretation issue to sow doubts among US allies.

The second example involved a lack of familiarity with North Korean rhetoric. During the October meetings, the North Korean delegation reportedly told the Americans that Pyongyang had something even 'stronger than nuclear weapons'.⁶ Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage later told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that this statement:

threw us into a bit of a tizzy. We didn't understand what those weapons might be. We have subsequently learned, from foreign envoys who have gone to Pyongyang and talked to the North Koreans about that, that what they're referring to is the sole and the special affection of the Korean people for the army-first policy, united behind the direction of Kim Jong Il. So it just means the will of the people is united to reject any sort of aggression.⁷

US analysts initially concluded that the North Korean delegation was alluding to chemical and biological weapons.⁸ About one month after Kelly's visit to Pyongyang, Washington dispatched a team of officials to Seoul to convey that conclusion to South Korean officials.⁹ However, analysts more familiar with the Korean language and North Korean rhetoric immediately recognised the likely meaning of the North Korean statement.¹⁰ Despite the potential significance of a possible veiled North Korean threat to use chemical and biological weapons, it took US officials weeks or months to clarify the meaning of the North Korean delegation's statement by speaking with foreign envoys and the South Korean government. This misunderstanding likely damaged the credibility of Washington's threat assessments in Seoul.

Yet another example is that of a November 2002 North Korea radio broadcast. As a result of the announcer merging two short vowels, the world media reported that North Korea had declared it possessed nuclear weapons.¹¹ The content and context of the original broadcast should have

made it clear that Pyongyang had made no such announcement. Nevertheless, some analysts were quick to conclude otherwise.¹² Although the broadcast was filled with criticism of the Bush administration, the announcer also described Pyongyang's offer to conclude a non-aggression pact with Washington as a 'rational way to resolve the nuclear crisis'.

In early February 2003, several Western newspapers reported that North Korea had restarted a nuclear reactor in Yongbyon.¹³ These reports were based on an English-language report provided by the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 5 February 2003, which quoted a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman as having said, 'The DPRK is now putting the operation of its nuclear facilities for the production of electricity on a normal footing after their restart'.¹⁴ Reporters interpreted this statement as an official announcement that the 5MW(e) nuclear reactor in Yongbyon had already been restarted. However, the Korean-language version indicated that 'the DPRK was in the *process* of restarting its nuclear facilities, and in the process of normalising operations' [emphasis added].¹⁵ Although the translation error was on the North Korean side, the report produced considerable confusion in Washington. Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the next day, 'While we note what the North Koreans have said about the reactor start – it's not clear whether it has'.¹⁶ Three weeks later, however, the *Washington Post* was still reporting that Pyongyang had declared that the reactor had been restarted on 5 February.¹⁷ On 26 February, US officials, relying upon technical surveillance, said they had determined that the reactor had been restarted 'within the last 24 hours', *not* three weeks before.¹⁸

A more serious translation error came on 18 April 2003, when the KCNA published a statement by a Foreign Ministry spokesperson. According to the KCNA's English translation, the North Korean spokesman declared that North Korea was 'successfully reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods at the final phase as we sent interim information to the US and other countries concerned early in March after resuming our nuclear activities from December last year'. Several Western media sources, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* websites, reported this statement as an official declaration that North Korea had started to reprocess its 8,000 spent fuel rods. However, the original Korean text revealed that the KCNA's English translation was inaccurate and should have read, 'We are successfully making progress in the last stages towards the task of reprocessing the approximately 8,000 spent fuel rods'. The Korean text implies progress is being made in the final stages necessary to begin reprocessing, but does not specify what tasks remain to be completed before plutonium can be separated from the spent fuel rods.

While somewhat ambiguous, this text is *not* a straightforward declaration that reprocessing has started, which would be phrased very differently in Korean.¹⁹

In some cases, inaccuracies in translation produced policy debates based on false premises or incorrect interpretations

As these examples show, it is easy for messages to be distorted or misunderstood. This is especially true in some of the North Korean statements described above, which were probably deliberately intended to convey subtle and ambiguous signals. However, by the time the messages passed through the linguistic barriers of translation or interpretation, the meaning was easily lost. In some cases, inaccuracies merely produced temporary confusion in Washington; in others, they produced policy debates based on false premises or incorrect interpretations.

Ideological blinders

Another barrier to understanding North Korea is a tendency to view the country through ideological blinders. The North Korean economy has been in serious trouble since the end of the Cold War due to structural economic problems, severe energy shortages and the loss of foreign assistance. Famines in the mid-1990s killed at least one million North Koreans.²⁰ Bush administration officials have interpreted North Korean economic problems as the inevitable product of a repugnant political system. President George W. Bush told reporters, 'I loathe Kim Jong II. I've got a visceral reaction to this guy because he is starving his people'.²¹ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld blamed 'the viciousness of that dictatorship' as the fundamental source of Pyongyang's economic problems, contrasting North Korea's economic stagnation with the successful South Korean economy.²² The North Korean system bears primary responsibility for these economic failures, but distaste for the brutal regime in Pyongyang and a predilection for moral clarity run the risk of oversimplification. Ideological blinders can lead policymakers to neglect other contributing causes of famine, underestimate the regime's ability to endure severe economic hardship and overlook its efforts to adopt economic reforms.

The Korean Peninsula has experienced periodic spring famines for centuries due to mountainous terrain, limited arable land, and a relatively short growing season.²³ South Korea depended upon US food assistance for years after the Korean War. Despite President Park Chung Hee's agricultural policies and intensive market intervention, South

Korea was never able to achieve self-sufficiency in food production.²⁴ Seoul now avoids food shortages by exporting products that earn sufficient foreign exchange to import food.²⁵ Pyongyang's failure to produce exportable goods has made this option difficult, but the regime has recently signalled a desire to open its economy and increase exports. North Korean exports include fishery products, textiles, minerals, metallurgical products and manufactured goods (including armaments).²⁶ The unpleasant reality is that ballistic missiles are arguably North Korea's single most competitive export product.

Kim Jong Il realises that solving North Korea's food problems would improve his chances for staying in power. Upon formally taking power in September 1998, Kim replaced 16 of the country's 23 main economic bureaucrats.²⁷ He also approved plans for economic reforms that were finally implemented in July 2002.²⁸ In the spring of 2002, the North Korean government sent hundreds of bureaucrats throughout the country to inform managers of production units about the upcoming reforms.²⁹ So far, the government has lifted price controls, devalued the currency and changed microeconomic incentives for firms and individuals, but the country also desperately needs foreign capital, technology transfers and energy assistance. Access to international loans and financial assistance would help alleviate some of these problems, but as long as North Korea is on the US State Department list of state sponsors of international terrorism, Washington is legally bound to veto Pyongyang's membership in international financial institutions. Despite the unexpected nature of North Korean economic reforms – which are more ambitious than the early stages of China's economic reforms – they have received relatively little attention in the West and have already been labelled a failure by several outside observers.³⁰

The conventional wisdom in the United States is that North Korea's Stalinist political system will prevent serious efforts at economic reforms because dramatic market reforms or a major economic opening would cause the regime to collapse. (It is worth noting that Chinese government officials and analysts believe their gradualist approach to economic reform is a viable model for North Korea, allowing the regime to adopt economic reforms without undermining itself). The North Korean leadership has taken some significant steps to try to resolve the country's food shortages and economic problems. Many North Koreans resent what they view as US efforts to obstruct North Korea's economic recovery and development. Despite high-level statements that Washington would not use food as a weapon to pressure the North Korean government, 'competing priorities' and the ongoing nuclear crisis have produced a substantial reduction in food aid that appears inconsistent

with President Bush's stated concerns about the welfare of the North Korean people.³¹ Despite US pledges to contribute food aid this year, the World Food Program has estimated that North Korea will need an additional 325,000 tonnes from the international community.³²

An ideological perspective that blames all economic problems on the North Korean political system can hinder predictions of possible future developments and provide an inadequate basis for long-term strategic policy. This view underestimates the ability of the North Korean government and society to bear tremendous privations (and probably significantly overestimates the chances of near-term regime collapse). Most observers expected North Korea to implode quickly after the end of the Cold War and following the famines in the mid-1990s, but the regime has managed to survive.³³ A second problem is that this ideological perspective underestimates the possibility of internal economic changes that could sustain the regime without fundamental political reform. Few outside observers expected China's economic reform programme to be so successful or far-reaching. Although North Korea's initial efforts at market reforms do not appear promising, there may be more room for experimentation and better prospects than most outsiders expect. Most American analysts probably slightly overstate the political system's responsibility for North Korea's economic problems, while North Korean officials appear to greatly exaggerate the negative impact of current international economic barriers. Even if Kim Jong Il is removed from power, a replacement regime might not be any easier to deal with. One possible form of regime change is a military coup, which would probably bring an even more hard-line leadership to power.

Successful reforms and integration into the international economy will give North Korea a greater stake in the international system and might facilitate the gradual process of reunification, as hoped for by the South Korean government. Bellicose behaviour and regional instability would be more costly to a North Korea with an open economy because Pyongyang would be wary of scaring away foreign investors and would be more vulnerable to retaliatory sanctions. Economic integration with the outside world could also be a binding mechanism to help ensure Pyongyang's commitment to any future arms-control agreements.³⁴ For example, offering alternative outside employment for North Korean technical experts – as in successful US cooperative threat reduction programmes with Russia – would both provide an incentive for Pyongyang to agree to abandon its weapons programmes and help preclude a 'brain drain' of WMD expertise to other countries. However, a fixed ideological view of the North Korean regime has obscured enduring geographical factors that contribute to famine and caused US

policymakers to neglect potentially significant economic reforms and to miss an important opportunity to support North Korean movement in a positive direction.³⁵

Misleading intellectual constructs

Misleading intellectual constructs – though driven more by a desire for policy clarity and consistency rather than by ideological bias – have also had a negative impact on the US debate about Korea. Prominent among these is the ‘rogue state’ concept, initially popularised by the Clinton administration as part of an effort to identify threats to American security in the post-Cold War era.³⁶ The definition of a rogue state varied, but was generally understood to include states pursuing weapons of mass destruction, defying international norms and using terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Although the rogue state concept was useful in mobilising domestic and international support for US policy toward states such as Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya, Cuba and Syria, the criteria were unclear, inherently political and inconsistently applied.³⁷ Robert Litwak has correctly noted the term’s analytical fuzziness and lack of international legal standing, high costs in terms of alliance relations and ‘one size fits all’ nature that inhibited the adjustment of policy to changing circumstances in individual countries.³⁸

The ‘rogue state’ construct obscures important differences between countries lumped together as rogue states. Iran is a peculiar mixture of electoral democracy and unaccountable theocratic leaders who control key policy arenas (including security policy and Iran’s WMD programmes). Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was a secular dictatorship dominated by the Ba’ath Party. North Korea is an Asian Leninist dynasty with an unusually isolated leadership and population that faces complex security issues due to Korea’s division and the legacy of the Cold War. Given these fundamental differences, one would not expect these three countries to behave in similar ways or to cooperate on the basis of shared values or ideology. A US foreign policy that lumps such disparate states together and dismisses them as rogues sets itself up to overlook important differences that could provide foreign policy opportunities.

The ‘rogue state’ construct obscures important differences between rogue states

The rogue state construct implies that these states will never moderate their behaviour.³⁹ Because the leaders of rogue states are demonised as evil dictators, regime change is assumed to be the only permanent way of

changing their behaviour. Yet North Korea's efforts to improve relations with the United States and Japan (and similar efforts by Iran, Libya and Syria) suggest that rogue states can moderate their international behaviour. The rogue state construct also implies that force and threats are the only appropriate way to deal with fundamentally unreasonable countries. This discourages any attempts to understand (much less address) the security needs of countries such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea. Attempts to engage or negotiate with them make US officials vulnerable to accusations of appeasement. An antagonistic relationship with the United States, the most powerful country in the world, creates its own security challenges for these countries. In the case of North Korea, this antagonistic relationship is at least partly the result of US hostility.

These shortcomings explain the Clinton administration's abandonment of rogue state terminology in favour of the blander term 'states of concern'. During the 2000 presidential campaign, however, Bush advisors pointedly revived the label to distinguish their foreign policy from that of the Clinton administration. Threats from unpredictable rogue states armed with weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles figured prominently in Bush's arguments on the campaign trail about why the United States needed to develop and deploy missile defences. Once in office, Bush administration officials routinely referred to threats from rogue states in discussions of regional security and missile defence plans. Of the rogue states, North Korea was deemed most likely to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States.⁴⁰

The 11 September attacks on New York and Washington reoriented US security concerns away from rogue states and a future threat from China and towards the immediate threat of terrorism. The rogue state concept did not explain (much less predict) the emergence of al-Qaeda as a major threat to American security, since the al-Qaeda organisation predated the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and derived its financial support largely from wealthy individuals and non-governmental groups rather than state sponsors. Nevertheless, Bush administration officials quickly drew clear distinctions between states on the right side in the war on terrorism and those that supported or tolerated terrorist groups.

North Korea has an undeniable history of terrorist activities, some of which were reportedly approved personally by North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. In January 1968, 31 North Korean commandos crossed the demilitarised zone in an attempt to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung Hee, which ended in a gun battle near the presidential residence, in which all but one of the commandos were killed.⁴¹ In October 1983, North Korea attempted to assassinate President Chun Du Hwan. This attack was carried out in Burma with a remote-controlled bomb that killed

21 people, including four South Korean cabinet ministers. The bomb went off before Chun arrived.⁴² In November 1987, two North Korean agents planted a bomb on a Korean Air jet that caused the aircraft to crash over the Andaman Sea.⁴³ Despite this past deplorable record, the North Korean government has not engaged in any terrorist attacks for 15 years and has no known connection with transnational Islamist terrorist groups. The best evidence of 'active' North Korean support for terrorism presented by the US government is the continued presence on North Korean soil of a handful of Japanese Red Army terrorists wanted by the Japanese government.

In 2000, North Korea and the United States held three rounds of anti-terrorism talks and issued a joint statement on international terrorism just before the October visit of Marshal Cho Myong Rok, first vice chairman of the North Korean National Defence Commission, to the White House.⁴⁴ In the joint communiqué, the North Korean government renounced terrorism and agreed that 'terrorism is an unacceptable threat to global security and peace, and that terrorism should be opposed in all its forms, including terrorist acts involving chemical, biological, or nuclear devices or materials'.⁴⁵ In November 2001, North Korea signed two UN anti-terrorism conventions, and subsequently expressed a willingness to sign five additional conventions.⁴⁶ These statements and actions are evidence of North Korean efforts to place itself on the right side of the war on terrorism and to improve relations with the United States.⁴⁷ But North Korea's status as a rogue state impeded recognition or positive responses to these signals by the Bush administration.

Instead, President Bush's January 2002 State of the Union address enshrined Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an 'axis of evil.' Bush administration officials invoked the rogue state concept to argue that those three countries might provide terrorist groups with weapons of mass destruction. In the post-11 September strategic context, this is certainly a understandable fear. But focusing on those three regimes could skew terrorist threat assessments away from more likely potential sources of WMD. According to expert consensus, the most likely way for al-Qaeda to acquire nuclear or radiological weapons material would be from non-state actors in Pakistan or the former Soviet Union, rather than from states that would fear retaliation if they supplied a terrorist group with WMD that were subsequently used against the United States. Even so, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 2003 that North Korea was likely to sell any plutonium it might reprocess from the 8,000 spent-fuel rods in Yongbyon.⁴⁸ Although North Korea's economic problems give the regime strong economic incentives to sell nuclear materials and technologies, no one has produced evidence to suggest that Pyongyang has ever attempted to sell

No one has produced evidence to suggest that Pyongyang has ever attempted to sell nuclear material to terrorist groups

nuclear material to terrorist groups.⁴⁹ Given North Korea's international behaviour in areas such as drug smuggling and missile proliferation, this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. But in any case, Pyongyang would be unlikely to part with any of its plutonium until its nuclear facilities are operating and producing large quantities of fissile material.

The rogue state construct and 'axis of evil' formulation have proved useful to the Bush administration in mobilising domestic public support for aggressive efforts to attack terrorist groups and to improve American defences. On the other hand, the administration's efforts to exaggerate the links between the three members of the 'axis of evil' and al-Qaeda, and its expansion of the rogue state concept to justify a preventive war against Iraq, have generated international opposition to US policies, including from US allies in Europe.⁵⁰ To the extent that Bush administration policymakers believe their own rhetoric about connections between evil regimes, the rogue state concept will impede a clear assessment of North Korean motivations and hinder an open debate that considers all available policy instruments. It may also cause the United States to miss potential opportunities such as North Korea's efforts to reposition itself in the war on terrorism.

Failure of imagination

Given that US officials view their motives as good, they have difficulty understanding how any reasonable state could view US power or US actions as threatening. This lack of serious effort to understand the security perspectives of other states can be a major source of misperceptions. US officials tend to view efforts by rogue states to improve their military capabilities as *prima facie* evidence of offensive or hostile intent, while regarding US efforts to improve its own military capabilities as benign. Rogue states are assumed to pursue WMD to support illegitimate ambitions such as territorial conquest or regional dominance rather than legitimate security concerns that might be satisfied by security assurances. Of course, this assumption may sometimes be correct, but it should be tested rather than assumed *a priori*.⁵¹

In the case of North Korea, the regime perceives itself to be facing a highly threatening and deteriorating security environment. As the North Korean economy has shrunk, the regime's resources have become more limited while US economic and military power has grown. The Bush

administration demonstrated the willingness to put its pre-emptive national security doctrine into practice in Iraq, and has pointedly not ruled out pre-emption with respect to North Korea. North Korean officials and media have frequently expressed concerns that the US will use pre-emptive military strikes against their country.⁵² North Koreans often cite the *Nuclear Posture Review*⁵³ and the DPRK's inclusion in Bush's 'axis of evil' as evidence that Pyongyang has been targeted for military action by the United States. The US preventive war in Iraq has intensified these fears.⁵⁴ During US military operations in Iraq, the United States sought to deter any potential offensive actions by North Korea by deploying F-117 stealth fighters to South Korea and nuclear-capable B-52 and B1 bombers to Guam.⁵⁵ While expressing a desire for a diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis, the Bush administration has refused to take the use of force off the table. Indeed, when Secretary of State Colin Powell suggested that the use of force was not an option in Korea, the Bush administration deliberately took actions to suggest that force might be used if necessary. In discussing North Korea prior to South Korean President Roh's May visit to the US, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice pointedly stated that 'all options are open'.⁵⁶

Although military threats can reinforce diplomacy, they can also sometimes be counter-productive. North Korea's situation can be understood through the prism of the security dilemma, where US efforts to enhance its security are viewed by Pyongyang as highly threatening actions that require efforts to enhance the regime's military capabilities. A number of analysts have expressed concerns that US military threats designed to reinforce deterrence may have the unwanted effect of persuading North Korea that nuclear weapons are necessary to insure regime survival.⁵⁷ In June 2003, a Korean Central News Agency editorial declared that Pyongyang 'has no intention to have a nuclear deterrent force without any reason ... but will have no option but to build up a nuclear deterrent force unless the US drops its hostile policy'.⁵⁸ More serious efforts to understand how North Korean leaders perceive their security situation might increase US awareness that some policy measures might be misperceived by North Korea. For lack of a better word, empathy is required. Empathy, of course, does not mean sympathy. Efforts to understand the world as viewed from Pyongyang do not require the United States to respond positively to Pyongyang's demands and concerns. However, a lack of effort to understand the worldview and motivations of North Korean leaders is likely to produce a sub-optimal policy at best, and may produce an inadvertent war at worst.

This failure of imagination may impede a possible deal to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis. One of North Korea's consistent demands

has been for a security guarantee or non-aggression pact from the United States. For US policymakers, the demand for a formal security guarantee makes little sense, given that the United States has no intention of invading North Korea. (US policymakers also doubt that statements of good intentions such as non-aggression pacts have any real utility, given their lack of verification measures and the difficulty of binding powerful countries when international circumstances change.) US policymakers have suggested a willingness to address North Korean security concerns at an appropriate time (after North Korea has given up its nuclear weapons programme) and in an appropriate way (that is, by some means other than a treaty). Yet if the United States hopes to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons programme (and future nuclear weapons potential), it will be imperative to take on board North Korean security concerns and to consider how the United States can address them without compromising its own security interests.

Deliberate misrepresentation

A final barrier to a better Korea policy involves deliberate distortion or misrepresentation for political or policy convenience. Even if government officials promulgate misleading messages with full knowledge that their statements are misleading or inaccurate, these distortions can shape the public debate in ways that impede effective policymaking and policy implementation. The Bush administration's apparently tendentious use of intelligence to establish the imminence of Iraq's WMD threat is a prominent recent example,⁵⁹ and the administration's efforts to label North Korea a 'terrorist state actively engaged in terrorism' arguably also fall into this category.⁶⁰ North Korea's past record of terrorist acts deserves condemnation, but labelling North Korea an active sponsor of terrorism and part of an 'axis of evil' that supports international terrorism is a serious misrepresentation. This is not merely a matter of semantics. The Bush administration's accusations not only showed US hostility toward North Korea, but may also have missed an opportunity to enlist Pyongyang's assistance in the war against terrorism.⁶¹ The net result has been to aggravate the Korean nuclear crisis without advancing US policy goals.

Ambiguity and the policy process

The difficulty of obtaining reliable information about North Korea and the five barriers to understanding described above greatly complicate the task of formulating an effective policy. The resulting ambiguity about North Korean intentions and motivations – sometimes deliberately created by North Korean leaders to increase their bargaining power – means that plausible competing (and sometimes

contradictory) assessments of North Korean motivations and behaviour coexist among policymakers.⁶² The best way to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity is to keep an open mind about different possible interpretations of an adversary's intentions. Policymakers should test different possibilities and be willing to update their assessments of North Korean motivations as new information and direct experience in dealing with North Korean leaders become available. Unfortunately, cognitive shortcuts make it difficult for policymakers to maintain an open mind, colouring their interpretation of new information (and even their willingness to consider any new information). 'Cognitive consistency' can cause policymakers to be especially receptive to information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and to ignore or downplay information that contradicts those beliefs.⁶³

Lack of information and ambiguity have an even more pernicious impact when considered in the context of the bureaucratic and political processes that produce foreign policy decisions. Ambiguity allows internal disputes about North Korean intentions to remain unresolved and greatly complicates the problem of reaching a consensus that can serve as a basis for a sustainable policy. The Bush administration appears divided between one group that believes a verifiable deal to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons is possible, and another group that believes North Korea will never give up its nuclear ambitions while the current regime remains in power.⁶⁴ When effective policy implementation requires cooperation within the executive branch or significant resources from Congress – as was the case with the 1994 Agreed Framework – lack of consensus can make the task of formulating and implementing an effective policy virtually impossible. Moreover, policymakers who cope with lack of information and ambiguity by remaining open to alternative assessments may find themselves at a disadvantage when debating other government officials who hold fixed views.

The public and Congress need to be educated about the situation on the Korean Peninsula and what compromises may be necessary to halt Pyongyang's nuclear programme. The Bush administration's use of hyperbolic rhetoric has served instead to distort the issue, obscuring the trade-offs between competing goals of the United States and its allies, and misleading the public about the reality of the potential threat from North Korea. There is always a temptation to oversimplify complex problems and to use rhetoric to mobilise political support. However, this can make it harder to evaluate the situation objectively or to consider alternative policies rationally. It may also create a domestic political environment that constrains policy choices and make a difficult situation even worse.

Better understanding, lower risks

Good foreign policy begins with an accurate understanding of the capabilities, interests, perceptions and objectives of other governments. In the case of North Korea, lack of reliable information and the regime's deliberate efforts to exploit ambiguity and brinkmanship to improve its negotiating position greatly complicate this task. The barriers to an accurate understanding of North Korea described above have had a real impact on the Bush administration's policy toward North Korea. In some cases, linguistic and cultural barriers have merely produced temporary confusion in Washington about what North Korea is saying and doing. In other cases, misperceptions and misunderstandings have exerted a larger and lasting influence on US policy and on public understanding of North Korea. When policymakers are forced to make important foreign-policy decisions with incomplete information and in ambiguous circumstances, cognitive simplifications are often used to compensate for uncertainty. Barriers to understanding North Korea greatly complicate the task of formulating an effective US policy.

Policymakers need to be aware of these barriers and be open to alternative interpretations of North Korean behaviour. In policy terms, this suggests the importance of testing North Korea intentions through dialogue rather than making assumptions based on ideology or abstract models. Despite proclamations of its willingness to meet North Korea 'anytime, any place, without preconditions', the Bush administration has appeared reluctant to have serious discussions with Pyongyang. When substantive meetings have occurred (in Pyongyang in October 2002 and in Beijing in April 2003), US diplomats have been shackled by talking points that emphasise delivering strong messages to Pyongyang rather than engaging in open discussion.

North Korea presents a major challenge to US security, to stability in northeast Asia and to nuclear non-proliferation. Given the unattractive policy options, Washington needs to view the nuclear crisis more broadly. US policymakers should listen carefully and critically to what Pyongyang says and be willing to challenge their own assumptions about North Korea's objectives and what solutions would be acceptable. Seeing North Korea clearly is the first step toward a more effective US policy.

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Notes

- ¹ North Korea's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York provides a channel for Washington to communicate with Pyongyang, but these contacts do not give US diplomats opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of North Korean leaders and society.
- ² For example, see The Institute for South-North Korea Studies, *The True Story of Kim Jong-Il* (Seoul: Korea Herald, 1993); Peter S. Goodman, 'Brinkmanship: A Family Trait; Like His Father, N. Korean Leans Toward Confrontation', *Washington Post*, 6 January 2003, p. A1; Richard Halloran, 'Leaving N. Korea for Later', *Baltimore Sun*, 6 February 2003, p. 17A; Christopher Torchia, 'Is North Korean Nuclear Development a Crisis? Washington Says No, but the Signs Are There', Associated Press, 7 January 2003.
- ³ The classic work in the field of international relations is Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
- ⁴ Philip Shenon, 'North Korea Says Nuclear Program Can Be Negotiated', *New York Times*, 2 November 2002, p. 1.
- ⁵ 'Operation and Building of Nuclear Facilities to Be Resumed Immediately', Korean Central News Agency, 12 December 2002, <http://www.kcna.co.jp>; 'KCNA Urges US to Sincerely Approach Dialogue', Korean Central News Agency, 17 January 2003.
- ⁶ David E. Sanger, 'North Korea Says It Has a Program on Nuclear Arms', *New York Times*, p. A1, 17 October 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Oh Young-hwan, 'North Continued Nuclear-Arms Project', *Joongang Ilbo*, 18 October 2002, <http://english.joins.com>
- ⁷ 'Panel One of the Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Federal News Service, 4 February 2003.
- ⁸ Roland Watson and David Charter, 'US Fears Pyongyang Has Nuclear Weapons', *The Times* (London), 18 October 2002; Thomas Omestad and Mark Mazzetti, 'North Korea Breaks a No-Nukes Deal', *US News & World Report*, Vol. 133, No. 16, 28 October 2002, p. 22.
- ⁹ Lee Kyo Kwan, 'Puk, Hwahangmugi Chonbangbudae Paech'i Wollyo' [North Korea Has Completed the Deployment of Chemical Weapons to Bases in Forward Areas], *Chosun Ilbo*, 5 November 2002, <http://nk.chosun.com>
- ¹⁰ For example, see Daniel A. Pinkston, 'Collapse of the Agreed Framework?', CNS Research Story of the Week, 21 October 2002, <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/pdf/nkpaki.pdf>; Lee Yong Chong, '[Pukhan Haek P'amun] Pukhan 'To Kangnyokhan mugu'nmn Muot, [North Korean Nuclear Repercussions] What Are North Korea's 'More Powerful Weapons', *Joongang Ilbo*, 18 October 2002, <http://www.joins.com>; Korean Central Broadcasting Station, 19 August 2002, in 'DPRK Warns of "Fully Ready Combat Posture"; Says Ready for "Both War, Talks"', FBIS Document ID: KPP20020819000083; Korean Central Broadcasting Station, 25 July 2002, in 'DPRK Decries "Axis of Evil" Remark, US Attempt To Launch "Preemptive Strike"', FBIS Document ID: KPP20020725000138; Korean

Central Broadcasting Station, 25 June 2002, in 'DPRK Urges US To Withdraw Preconditions Before Dialogue', FBIS Document ID: KPP20020625000110; Chon Song-ho, *Rodong Sinmun*, 21 April 2002, in 'DPRK Political Essay Marks Founding of Korean People's Army', FBIS Document ID: KPP20020426000034.

¹¹ For example, see Howard W. French, 'North Korean Radio Asserts Country Has Nuclear Arms', *New York Times*, 18 November 2002, p. A12.

¹² For example, see 'Special Reports: DPRK Acknowledges Possession of Nuclear Weapons, Confirming Consistent GIS/DFA Reporting,' *Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily*, Vol. 20, No. 194, 19 November 2002; Henry Sokolski, 'All Deals Are Off? Contending with a Nuclear North Korea', 19 November 2002, <http://www.npec-web.org/projects/deals.htm>

¹³ Howard W. French, 'North Korea Restarts Plant with Ability to Fuel Arms', *New York Times*, 5 February 2003; Doug Struck, 'Reactor Restarted, North Korea Says', *Washington Post*, 6 February 2003, p. A31; Andrew Ward, 'N Korea Raises Stakes as Reactor Starts', *Financial Times* (London), 6 February 2003, p. 9.

¹⁴ 'US Anti-DPRK International Pressure Campaign Assailed', Korean Central News Agency, 5 February 2003, <http://www.kcna.co.jp>

¹⁵ The Korean sentence included a conjunction linking two verb phrases that were in the progressive tense. There was nothing in the sentence to suggest the completion of any action or activity. The original Korean is 'Uriga Chollyoksaengsan'ml Wihan Haekshisoltml'mi Kadong'ml Chaegaehago Unyong'ml Chongsanghwahago Ittnmnde...', See 'Choson'oemusong Taebyon'in Yu'en'anbori'nmn Mi'gmg'mi

Ch'aeg'imdo Kongjonghage Ttajyoya Handa,' Korean Central News Agency, 5 February 2003, <http://www.kcna.co.jp>

¹⁶ Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Federal News Service, 6 February 2003.

¹⁷ On his flight home from Seoul, Colin Powell told reporters that North Korea had not restarted the nuclear reactor. Although US intelligence was able to confirm the operational status of the reactor, observers still adhered to the earlier misinterpretation. See Doug Struck, 'Powell Makes Few Gains on Asia Tour', *Washington Post*, Wednesday, 26 February 2003, p. A16.

¹⁸ Paul Eckert and Tabassum Zakaria, 'N. Korea Restarts Reactor, Raises Crisis Stakes', Reuters, 26 February 2003.

¹⁹ After the Foreign Ministry statement was released, a US official told Reuters the United States had 'no information to indicate that North Korea has begun reprocessing'. KCNA issued a corrected, though still ambiguous, English translation a few days later. For a detailed analysis of the text, see Center for Nonproliferation Studies, 'Factsheet on North Korean Nuclear Reprocessing Statement', 23 April 2003, <http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/repro.htm>. North Korean officials have since declared that reprocessing had started, but US intelligence has not detected large-scale reprocessing.

²⁰ Some estimate that as many as 2–3 million North Koreans may have died in the famines. See Andrew Natsios, 'The Politics of Famine in North Korea,' United States Institute of Peace Special Report, 2 August 1999, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr990802.html>

²¹ Bob Woodward, 'A Course of 'Confident Action'; Bush Says Other Countries Will Follow Assertive US in

- Combating Terror,' *Washington Post*, 19 November 2003, p. A1; Bill Sammon, 'Bush Has "No Heart" for North Korean; Accuses Kim of Starving People', *Washington Times*, 3 January 2003, p. A1.
- ²² Bill Sammon, 'N. Korea "Solution" A Market Economy: Rumsfeld says it would end famine', *Washington Times*, 14 May 2003, p. 1.
- ²³ Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 50–51. About 14% of North Korean land is arable, compared to about 17.5% of South Korea's land. Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2002*, <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html>
- ²⁴ Park led the 'Supreme Council for National Reconstruction' or military junta from May 1961 to December 1963, and the Third Republic from 1963 to 1972. During this period, Park actually promoted exports for the agricultural and livestock sectors, but these policies failed and the government then sought food self-sufficiency as a policy goal.
- ²⁵ From 1998 to 2000, large government subsidies enabled South Korea to maintain self-sufficiency in rice, but imports account for 100% of corn consumption, 99% of wheat consumption, 92% of soybean consumption, 40% of beef consumption, 42% of barley consumption, 16% of dairy product consumption and 14% of poultry consumption. See John C. Beghin and Jean-Christophe Bureau, 'The Cost of Food Self-Sufficiency and Agricultural Protection in South Korea', *Iowa Ag Review*, Winter 2002, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 5, http://www.card.iastate.edu/iowa_ag_review/texts/iowa_ag_review_winter_02.pdf
- ²⁶ Despite recent efforts to increase exports and foreign exchange earnings, North Korean trade is less than one percent of South Korean trade volume in dollars. See the Bank of Korea, '2001 Nyon Pukhan GDP Chujong Kyolgwa' [Estimate of the North Korean GDP for 2001], May 2002, <http://www.bok.or.kr>; Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2002*, <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html>.
- ²⁷ Kim Kwi Kmn, 'Pukchidobu Chollyakchok Shilyongjumi Hwaktae' [The Northern Leadership's Strategic Pragmatism Expands], Yonhap News Agency, 24 February 2003, <http://bbs.yonhapnews.net>
- ²⁸ Personal interview data; Doug Struck, 'A Taste of Capitalism in N. Korea; Prices, Wages Skyrocket as Many State Subsidies End', *Washington Post*, 13 September 2002, p. A1; Don Kirk, 'North Korean Ending Rationing, Diplomats Report', *New York Times*, 20 July 2002; Kang Chol-hwan, 'North Korea Undergoing Economic Reform', *Chosun Ilbo*, 25 July 2002, <http://english.chosun.com>; Brent Choi, 'N.K. Enforces Reform in Payrolls, Consumer Price', *Joongang Ilbo*, 12 July 2002, <http://english.joins.com>
- ²⁹ Ch'oe Chok Ho, 'Puk, Chuyo San'Opch'e'e 'Kyongjejidowon' Subaengmyong P'ag'yon' [Hundreds of 'Economic Guides' Dispatched to Important Industries], Yonhap News Agency, 25 July 2002, <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr>
- ³⁰ John Pomfret, 'Reforms Turn Disastrous for North Koreans; Nuclear Crisis May Have Roots in Economic Failure', *Washington Post*, 27 January 2003, p. A1; James Brooke, 'Trial Runs of a Free Market in North Korea', *New York Times*, 11 March 2003.
- ³¹ Bush administration officials are concerned that food aid has been or could be diverted to the Korean People's Army. The North Korean

government reportedly requires six-days notice before World Food Program (WFP) monitors are permitted to visit distribution sites, and denies access to about 20% of all North Korean counties (Kun). See 'Prepared Statement of Richard L. Armitage Deputy Secretary of State before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee', Federal News Service, 4 February 2003; 'Armitage Says Normal Relations Start with North Korea's End of 'Self- (sic),' *Regulatory Intelligence Data*, 4 February 2003, in Lexis-Nexis, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>. During Secretary of State Powell's trip to South Korea in February 2003, Powell said that the US did not want to use food as a 'political weapon' against Pyongyang, and that Washington would provide 100,000 tonnes of food aid this year. See 'US Announces New Food Aid to DPRK', Xinhua News Agency, 25 February 2003, available on Lexis-Nexis; Jong-Heon Lee, 'Powell: US to Resume Food Aid to N. Korea', United Press International, 25 February 2003, available on Lexis-Nexis.

³² 'UN Agency Welcomes North Korean Food Aid, but Warns More is Needed', Agence France Presse, 4 March 2003, available on Lexis-Nexis.

³³ Marcus Nolan, *Avoiding the Apocalypse: The Future of the Two Koreas* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2000).

³⁴ All authoritarian governments face commitment problems because the leadership, which is less constrained than those in democratic countries, can more easily renege on agreements. However, it could be argued that deep linkages to the international economy make an authoritarian leader vulnerable to economic sanctions and the potential domestic social and economic turmoil that could threaten the leadership after sanctions have been imposed.

Arguably, leaders such as Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore and Park Chung Hee of South Korea surmounted the commitment problem by opening their economies.

- ³⁵ This neglect partly reflects the preference of some Bush administration policymakers for the North Korean regime to collapse. South Korea, which would prefer a gradual process of unification rather than regime collapse, has been much more conscious (and perhaps overly so) of signs of North Korean economic reforms.
- ³⁶ See Anthony Lake, 'Confronting Backlash States', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (March/April 1994), pp. 45–55.
- ³⁷ Lake's original article cited pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy, and regimes that constitute regional threats to US interests as the criteria.
- ³⁸ Robert S. Litwak, 'What's in a Name? The Changing Foreign Policy Lexicon', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 375–392. Also see Robert S. Litwak, *Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment After the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).
- ³⁹ It differs in this respect from George Kennan's original formulation of containment, which predicted a 'mellowing' of Russian behaviour over time.
- ⁴⁰ Indeed, some critics suggested that the Bush administration abandoned the Clinton administration's efforts to negotiate a deal to stop North Korean exports of missiles and missile technology and to limit North Korea missile capabilities because it preferred to have North Korean missiles as a justification for US missile defenses. See Toby F. Dalton, 'Bush's Real North Korea Policy: I Want A Missile Defense', Institute for

- Far Eastern Studies, IFES forum, 27 February 2002.
- ⁴¹ Chuck Downs, *Over the Line* (Washington DC: AEI Press, 1999), pp. 121–122; 124.
- ⁴² Don Oberdorfer, 'Blast Kills Top Aides to South Korean President: Tensions Likely to Rise', *Washington Post*, 10 October 1983, p. A1; Anne Charters and Chris Sherwell, 'Burma Bomb Kills Four Key Members of South Korean Cabinet', *Financial Times* (London), 10 October 1983, p. 1; 'North Korean Statement on Rangoon Bombing', Korean Central News Agency, 12 October 1983, in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 13 October 1983; Chit Tun, 'North Koreans Sentenced to Death for Burmese Bombing', United Press International, 9 December 1983.
- ⁴³ Spencer Sherman, 'KAL Flight 858: A Life Raft, a Corpse and a Mystery Woman', United Press International, 10 January 1988; 'S. Korea Steps Up Security after Bomb Revelation', United Press International, 18 January 1988; Douglas Thompson, 'The Making of a Terrorist', *Toronto Star*, 24 July 1988, p. E1.
- ⁴⁴ Jim Mann, 'US and North Korea Vow to Improve Ties', *Los Angeles Times*, 13 October 2000, p. A1; *Chosun Ilbo*, 11 October 2000, in 'DPRK Proposes Dropping Missile Project During Meeting With Clinton', FBIS Document ID KPP20001011000098; Chu Yong Chung, 'O'nml KongdongsOngmyOng MuOl Tam'mlkka/Mi-Puk 'Shil'ikch'aenggigi' Hab'mimun Shin'gyOngjOn' [What Will be Included in Today's Joint Communiqué/US-North Korea War of Nerves over 'Managing the Benefits'], *Chosun Ilbo*, 12 October 2000, p. 3, in KINDS, <http://www.kinds.or.kr>
- ⁴⁵ Joint US–DPRK Statement on International Terrorism, 6 October 2000, <http://secretary.state.gov/www/briefings/statements/2000/ps001006.html>
- ⁴⁶ The two protocols were related to the funding of international terrorism and the taking of hostages. See Hwang Jang-jin, 'North Willing to Sign 5 More Anti-Terror Pacts: Swedish Diplomat', *Korea Herald*, 11 December 2001; Ryu Chae Hun, 'Puk 'Pant'erO' Panbo ChinjOn' [North Korea's Partial Progress in Anti-Terrorism], *Hankyoreh Shinmun*, 11 December 2001, p. 3, in KINDS, <http://www.kinds.or.kr>
- ⁴⁷ North Korea has also taken some steps to atone for its past abduction of Japanese citizens. This included an unprecedented apology from Kim Jong Il during a September 2002 summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.
- ⁴⁸ 'Panel One of the Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,' Federal News Service, 4 February 2003.
- ⁴⁹ We believe that Li Gun's reference to North Korea possibly selling nuclear material in the March 2003 Beijing talks should be interpreted as an attempt to pressure the United States into reaching a negotiated settlement of the nuclear crisis rather than a serious statement of North Korean intentions.
- ⁵⁰ The Bush administration's inability (to date) to produce hard evidence of large Iraqi stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction or Iraqi government links with al-Qaeda has damaged the credibility of US accusations against North Korea and Iran.
- ⁵¹ State interests can also change with circumstances. One factor behind former South Korean President Kim Dae Jung's 'sunshine policy' towards the North was a shift in South Korean preferences away from rapid German-style reunification toward a more gradual, negotiated transition. President Roh Moo Hyun is

committed to continuing Kim Dae Jung's policy of engagement with Pyongyang, but Roh has labeled his approach as the 'policy of peace and prosperity.'

- ⁵² Mark Seddon, 'The Land that Time Forgot,' *The Guardian* (London), 11 March 2003, p. 2; Central Broadcasting Station, 12 February 2003, in 'North Korea Says Bush's State of the Union Speech 'Confrontational', BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 13 February 2003; 'North Korean Official Says US Regional Buildup Threatens War', Deutsche Presse-Agentur, in Lexis-Nexis; 'US Intention to Launch Nuclear War in Korea under Fire', Korean Central News Agency, 3 April 2003, <http://www.kcna.co.jp>; 'DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman on US Start of Iraqi War', 21 March 2003, Korean Central News Agency; 'KCNA Dismisses Large-Scale US War Maneuvers as Alarming Development', 21 March 2003, Korean Central News Agency.
- ⁵³ Excerpts of the classified 'Nuclear Posture Review' leaked in March 2002 revealed that the Bush administration had directed the military to develop contingency plans for the use of nuclear weapons in the event of a North Korean attack on South Korea. Paul Richter, 'US Works Up Plan for Using Nuclear Arms', *Los Angeles Times*, 9 March 2002; and William M. Arkin, 'Secret Plan Outlines The Unthinkable', *Los Angeles Times*, 10 March 2002, p. M1.
- ⁵⁴ 'Statement of FM Spokesman Blasts UNSC's Discussion of Korean Nuclear Issue', Korean Central News Agency, 6 April 2003, <http://www.kcna.co.jp>
- ⁵⁵ Barbara Demick, 'US Flexes Muscles Before The Korea', *Los Angeles Times*, 21 March 2003; David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, 'US Sending 2 Dozen Bombers In Easy Range Of North Koreans', *New York Times*, 5 March 2003, p. 1.
- ⁵⁶ Carol Giacomo, 'US Exploring Ways to Deal with N. Korea Exports', Reuters, 12 May 2003, <http://www.reuters.com>.
- ⁵⁷ For example, Peter Hayes has argued that the US deployment of nuclear weapons to South Korea during the Cold War 'over-deterred' North Korea and caused Pyongyang to believe that nuclear weapons are necessary for its security. See Peter Hayes, *Pacific Powderkeg: American Nuclear Dilemmas in Korea* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991).
- ⁵⁸ 'KCNA on DPRK's Nuclear Deterrent Force', Korean Central News Agency, 9 June 2003, <http://www.kcna.co.jp>
- ⁵⁹ For examples, see Spencer Ackerman and John B. Judis, 'The First Casualty', *The New Republic Online*, 19 June 2003, <http://www.tnr.com>; Bruce B. Auster, Mark Mazzetti and Edward T. Pound, 'Truth And Consequences: New Questions about US Intelligence Regarding Iraq's Weapons of Mass Terror', *US News & World Report*, 9 June 2003; Evan Thomas, Richard Wolffe and Michael Isikoff, 'Where Are Iraq's WMDs?' *Newsweek*, 9 June 2003; and Walter Pincus, 'Weapons Linked to "Dual Use" Facilities in Iraq', *Washington Post*, 2 June 2003, p. 14.
- ⁶⁰ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has referred to North Korea as a 'terrorist state'. For example, see 'Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee', Federal News Service, 13 February 2003; Howard W. French, 'Heightened Tensions Touch South Korea Troops', *New York Times*, 23 February 2003, p. 16; James Dao, 'Bush Administration Defends Its Approach on North Korea', *New York Times*, 7 February 2003, p. A13.
- ⁶¹ We are indebted to Peter Hayes for his discussion of the possible opportunity to have gained North

Korea's active participation in the war against terrorism.

- ⁶² For a review of North Korean nuclear intentions, see Phillip C. Saunders, 'Confronting Ambiguity: How to Handle North Korea's Nuclear Program', *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (March 2003), pp. 11–15, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_03/saunders_mar03.asp
- ⁶³ Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, pp. 117–202; Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 101–119.
- ⁶⁴ Sebastian Harnisch, 'US–North Korean Relations under the Bush Administration', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (November/December 2002), pp. 863–874.

