https://doi.org/10.33728/ijkus.2021.30.2.007

International Journal of Korean Unification Studies
Vol. 30, No. 2. 2021. 191~228.

North Korean Political Thinking as a Reflection of Regime Survival Strategy

Er-Win Tan and Hyun Chung Yoo*

The ascension of Kim Jong-un to the leadership of North Korea signifies the emergence of a unique political entity: a Communist regime led by, what is in effect, a hereditary monarchy. With the transition from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Il in 1994, and from Kim Jong Il to Kim Jong-un in 2011, the political philosophical outlook of the North Korean state has evolved in response to the leadership's identification of the challenges to its rule of the country. This is reflected in the adoption of *Juche* by Kim Il Sung, of *Songgum* as adopted by Kim Jong Il, and of *Byungjin* as adopted by Kim Jong-un. This paper will examine how these respective political philosophies may be seen as a reflection of the policy priorities of the North Korean state in its efforts to retain power amidst growing isolation and pressure from the international community.

Keywords: Juche, Songun, Byungjin, North Korea, Ideology

* Er-Win Tan is an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of International and Area Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Hyun Chung Yoo is an Associate Research Fellow at the Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS) in Seoul, South Korea.

Ⅰ. Introduction

The ascension of Kim Jong-un to the helm of the leadership in North Korean state signifies the emergence of a unique political entity: a regime that, whilst espousing an ostensibly Communist ideology, is also emerging as a hereditary monarchy insofar as the system of political leadership succession is concerned. With the transition from Kim Il-Sung to Kim Jong-Il in 1994, and from Kim Jong-Il to Kim Jong-un in 2011, the political philosophical outlook of the North Korean state has evolved in response to the leadership's identification of the challenges to its rule of the country. This is reflected in the adoption of 주체 (*Juche*) or "Self-Reliance" by Kim Il-Sung, of 선군 (*Songun*) or "Military First," by Kim Jong-Il, and of 병진 (*Byungjin*) or "Parallel Track" adopted by Kim Jong-un.[1]

Although other scholars have expounded on the ideological underpinnings of the successive generations of the Kim Family, these research tracts were published prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a backdrop was characterized by fairly predictable geostrategic assumptions for the Kim Family: continued hostility from the US, Beijing's deliberate turning of a blind eye to cross-border trade, and a veneer of civility in Sino-US relations that masked their underlying tensions. More recent developments have likely highlighted to the Kim Family the need to revisit the ideological assumptions of their rule. In particular, the convergent impact of the economic slowdown and diplomatic isolation that has resulted from North Korea's closure of its borders (including with China) to curb the spread of COVID-19 and the

1 Briefly, *Juche* reflected the efforts by Kim Il Sung to achieve autarky and self-reliance for North Korea, whilst attempting to reduce his regime's reliance on outside powers – in order words, China and the USSR – for regime survival. Kim Jong Il's *Songun* was marked by the privileged status of senior members of the North Korean military establishment. Under Kim Jong-un, *Byungjin* envisages the parallel development of North Korea's nuclear weapons program alongside efforts to revitalize the economy. The tenets of these stages in the evolution of North Korean political philosophy will be examined in more detail in the subsequent sections of this manuscript.

broader backdrop of escalating Sino-US antagonism, have likely underscored to the Kim Family the need to walk a fine line in avoiding excessive over-reliance on China's economic largesse on the one hand, and the continued threat of a US-initiated war of regime change on the other.

This analysis will accordingly be presented in the following five sections, beginning with a discussion of the historical backdrop that has led to the blend of paranoia, ethnic nationalism and fears for regime survival that have shaped the succeeding generations of the Kim family in Pyongyang. The second section will in turn review how these factors were reflected amidst the evolution of the North Korean Government's political ideology in the form of the adoption of the *Juche* doctrine under Kim Il-Sung. The third section will examine how Kim Jong-Il added his own ideological spin to *Juche*, beginning with his efforts during the 1970s to elevate himself to the status of his father's successor, as well as in the younger Kim's response to North Korea's increasing isolation in the post-Cold War world with the adoption of the *Songun* doctrine. The fourth section will bring the development of North Korean governing ideology to the present day by examining the factors that have led to the present Supreme Leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-un, adopting the *Byungjin* doctrine since his formal succession to power in 2012. The fifth, concluding section will consider the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the calculations of the North Korean leadership, based not only on the likelihood that the virus had entered North Korea, but also in further heightening Sino-US tensions, thence further complicating the North Korean leadership's attempts to maintain a balancing act in managing relations with Beijing and Washington.

II. Contextualizing the North Korean View of the World

In reflecting the personality cult that has come to surround the DPRK's Founding Father, Kim Il-Sung, and his descendants, a useful starting point is to consider the geographical and historical backdrop that framed Kim Il-Sung's early years. Particularly salient is the North Korean state's longstanding wariness of foreign powers that have sought to exercise their machinations against the Korean nationalist aspirations for a unified nation-state.[2] The Japanese surrender to the Allied Powers in August 1945 created a power vacuum on the Korean Peninsula that was exploited by the USSR and US.[3] Having fled to the USSR in 1940 to continue his anti-Japanese struggle from a guerrilla camp in the vicinity of Khabarovsk, Kim Il-Sung was seen by his Soviet patrons as a puppet who could lead a pro-Soviet puppet regime on the Korean Peninsula.[4] Concurrently, the Soviet invasion of Japanese-occupied Manchuria and Korea, along with the unexpected rapidity of the Japanese surrender, left the US unprepared for demarcating the post-war boundaries of Northeast Asia. Amidst increasing US wariness of Stalin's seizure of large tracts of Central and Eastern Europe, the Truman Administration was anxious to avoid Soviet imposition of a puppet state following the USSR's late entry into the war against Japan in August 1945.[5] With no US forces capable of reaching the Korean Peninsula in time to present Stalin with the *fait accompli* of a US military presence, the Truman Administration tasked two Pentagon officers, Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel – neither of whom had any background in Korean Peninsula affairs[6] - to draw a demarcation line that

2 Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea Through the Looking Glass* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2000), 149-50.

3 Vasilii Lebedev, "War and peace in liberated North Korea: Soviet military administration and the creation of North Korean police force in 1945," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 19, no. 1 (2021).

4 Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 72.

5 Alonzo L. Hamby, "Harry S. Truman: Foreign Affairs," University of Virginia Miller Center, accessed December 17, 202, https://millercenter.org/president/truman/foreign-affairs.

separated the Korean Peninsula into US and Soviet zones of occupation. Such an action was undertaken without consultation with Korean nationalists in exile,[7] or without reviewing past foreign geostrategic interests in the Korean Peninsula. During the late 19th century, Japan had previously proposed to Tsarist Russia the 38th Parallel as a dividing line between their respective spheres of influence.[8] Although there is no evidence to suggest that Rusk and Bonesteel were aware of this previous proposal to divide the Korean Peninsula, Don Oberdorfer speculated that their proposed division of the Korean Peninsula may have been seen by the USSR as an endorsement of a Soviet sphere of influence in the northern half of the peninsula.[9]

Furthermore, Kim Il-Sung saw the importance of exploiting Korean conceptions of social hierarchy[10] to consolidate his position of power against his rivals in Pyongyang, in particular through the promulgation of a personality cult surrounding himself and his line as destined to rule over a unified Korea.[11] This was combined with emphasis of the Kim Family's martial credentials in defending the Korean nation from foreign aggressors, beginning with claims that Kim Il-Sung's great-grandfather had led a force of Koreans to repel an intruding US ship, the *USS Sherman*, in 1866.[12] A similar pattern of state-orchestrated aggrandizement of Kim

6 Mark Barry, "The U.S. and the 1945 Division of Korea," *NK News*, February 12, 2012, accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.nknews.org/2012/02/the-u-s-and-the-1945-division-of-korea/.

7 Chung-Min Lee, *The Hermit King: The Dangerous Game of Kim Jong-un* (New York: All Points Books, 2019), 137-38.

8 Se-Hyun Ahn, "Russia's Great Game Stratagem toward the Korean Peninsula Revisited: Lessons from the Failure of Imperial Russia," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 26, no. 2 (2019): 64-65.

9 Don Oberdorfer and Robert Carlin, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 5.

10 Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 2006), 193.

11 Brian Reynolds Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How The Koreans See Themselves, And Why It Matters* (New York: Melville House, 2010), 75-113.

12 Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Tactics*

Il-Sung's martial credentials framed the North Korean Founding Father's activities of anti-Japanese resistance, even if such an account of history conveniently omits the role of other Korean nationalists in fighting Japanese rule.[13] Likewise, North Korean state media went to great lengths to underscore Kim Il-Sung's martial credentials in fighting the US to a standstill during the Korean War, even though such an account neglects to mention that it was China's deployment of a million and a half troops into North Korea that saved Kim Il-Sung's regime from being toppled by McArthur's counter-invasion of North Korea in 1950.[14]

A further noteworthy characteristic of the North Korean state's worldview is that of ethnic nationalism. In attempting to suppress Korean nationalism and consolidate control, the Japanese colonial government had attempted to claim that Koreans and Japanese were of the same ethnic stock.[15] The resulting backlash was reflected by publication of 독사신론 (*Doksa Sillon*), or *A New Reading of History*, in 1908 by the Korean nationalist historian Sin Chaeho, who portrayed the Korean people as 단일민족 (*Danil Minjok*): a unique, pure-blooded race.[16] In turn, the North Korean propaganda machine has exploited this backdrop to further establish its leadership credentials. By portraying the Confucian-educated class of Yangban scholars of the Joseon Dynasty as decadent and corrupt, the North Korean propaganda machine was able to seize on a suitable scapegoat that could be blamed for the downfall of the Korean nation-state. Conversely, North Korean state media has consistently portrayed Kim Il-Sung and his line as exemplifying the characteristics of leadership that is not only the spiritual heir to *Tangun*, but which also embodies the blend of sageness, martial prowess, and benevolence to the people, as befitting an almost messianic personality capable of holding the Korean people together

(Washington: United States Institute of Peace 1999), 32.

13 Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, 31-78.

14 Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader*, 88-89.

15 Myers, *The Cleanest Race*, 26-27.

16 Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

through sheer force of will.[17] Furthermore, by contrasting such a portrayal of the North Korean state as a manifestation of the Korean nation with propaganda portrayals of the 'ideological contamination' of the US-occupied capitalist South,[18] the Kim Il-Sung regime further sought to elevate itself above the ROK in seeking the status of national legitimacy over the sovereignty of the Korean Peninsula.[19] Faced with the affluence of the contemporary ROK, North Korean state media has all the more reason to ramp up its propaganda machine in portraying the DPRK as the 'legitimate' Korea.[20]

Ⅲ. Kim Il-Sung Introduces *Juche*

Taken in sum, the impact of these factors on the political calculations of the North Korean leadership is evident in the nature of the governing philosophies that Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un espoused at critical points of their respective efforts to consolidate their succession to power. Kim Il-Sung's speech on 28 December 1955, formally known in North Korea as "*On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*," is generally considered to mark the formal unveiling of the *Juche* doctrine.[21]

The timing of the speech underscores the nature of the challenges Kim

17 Myers, *The Cleanest* Race, 104-06.

18 Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader*, 100-07.

19 Han S. Park, 'North Korean Perceptions of Self and Others: Implications for Policy Choices,' *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 4 (2000).

20 Andrei Lankov, "N Korea: Tuning into the 'hermit kingdom," *Al-Jazeera*, Jun. 10, 2014, accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/6/10/n-korea-tuning-into-the-hermit-kingdom.

21 Il-Sung Kim, *Sasangsa-eob-eseo gyojojuuiwa hyeongsigjuuileul toechihago jucheleul hwaglibhalde daehayeo*, 1955.12.28. [*On eradicating doctrines and formalism in thought business and establishing subjects*, 1955.12.28] in Kim Il-sung's Book 9. Pyongyang: chulpansa [Pyongyang: Joseon Publishing House, reprinted in 1980].

Il-Sung faced in attempting to consolidate his rule over North Korea. The Korean War had demonstrated the extent to which Kim was dependent on China and the USSR for the survival of his regime. It had been the delivery of Soviet military aid and the promise of Chinese military support (including China's release of several thousand ethnic Koreans from its ranks to form the cadre of Kim Il-Sung's forces)[22] that had led to Kim's calculation that an invasion of the ROK in June 1950 could have succeeded. Likewise, it had been the entry of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the clandestine deployment of Soviet pilots to operate MIG-15 fighters that had saved Kim's regime from McArthur's counter-invasion of North Korea in 1950.[23]

It is against this backdrop that Suh Dae-Sook suggests that Kim Il-Sung introduced *Juche* as an ideological counterweight to Chinese and Soviet influence in North Korean politics, whilst simultaneously imposing his self-identity onto the Workers' Party of Korea.[24] Much like the factionalism that Stalin faced in securing power for himself following the death of Lenin in 1924, Kim Il-Sung faced internal challengers to his ambitions to consolidate power, all the more so after 1953. Given that Kim Il-Sung's initiation of the invasion of the South in 1950 had failed to unify the Peninsula under his control but had instead led to a stalemate following the 1953 Armistice Agreement, it may be presumed that Kim was wary that his rivals could challenge his leadership credentials by harping on how his costly failure to unify the country had instead nearly led to the regime's collapse.[25]

Among these rivals was Pak Hon-Yong, who, in 1925, had been closely involved in founding the Korean Communist Party.[26] Particularly

22 Allan R. Millet, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas), 243-45.

23 Blaine Harden, *The Great Leader and the Fighter Pilot: The True Story About The Tyrant Who Created North Korea And The Young Lieutenant Who Stole His Way To Freedom* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2016), 101-05.

24 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 142-57.

25 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 123-26.

uncomfortable for Kim was the fact that, in the aftermath of Japan's surrender, the North Korean Communists had initially pledged allegiance to Pak.[27] Furthermore, amidst increasing disillusionment with Kim's handling of the Korean War, Yu Sung-Yop, one of Pak's lieutenants, had attempted to stage a coup against Kim in 1952.[28] Likewise, the leader of the Chinese-backed Yan'an faction, Kim Tu-Bong, was seen as a potential challenger to Kim Il-Sung's resolve to place himself at the top of the North Korean political hierarchy; it should be recalled that at the First Session of the Central Committee in August 1946, it had been Kim Tu-Bong, not Kim Il-Sung, who had been elected Chairman of the Korean Workers' Party.

This move was opposed by Kim Il-Sung, who argued that the Korean War had already demonstrated which members of the Korean Workers' Party had proven their loyalist credentials. If Kim Il-Sung's emulation of Stalin is anything to go by, it may be presumed that Kim saw Ho as a North Korean Trotsky whose precursor move to increase power at Kim's expense constituted a long-term threat. Moreover, the process of Destalinization in the USSR following Stalin's death in 1953 likely added to Kim Il-Sung's urgency of imprinting his own ideological signature onto North Korean politics. Whilst Stalin's brutality and the KGB enabled the late Soviet leader to rule through intimidation and terror during his lifetime, the resulting animosity towards Stalin's personality cult, manifesting itself amidst post-1953 Destalinization, underscored for Kim the need to assuredly eliminate any competing school of thought or political faction that could posthumously challenge his own brand of authoritarian power.[29]

---

26 Il-Sung Kim, *Joseon lodongdang je 3 cha daehoeeseo han jung-ang-wiwonhoe sa-eob chonghwabogo*, 1956.4.23 [*Report on the Project of the Central Committee at the 3rd Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea*, 1956.4.23] Pyongyang: chulpansa [Pyongyang:Joseon Publishing House, 1980].

27 Il-Sung Kim, *Joseon lodongdang je 3 cha daehoeeseo han jung-ang-wiwonhoe sa-eob chonghwabogo*.

28 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 129-30.

29 Kim, *Sasangsa-eob-eseo gyojojuuiwa hyeongsigjuuileul toechihago jucheleul hwaglibhalde daehaye.*

Such a backdrop thus underscores Kim Il-Sung's attempts to consolidate a domestic power base whose loyalty to him would be unquestioned. Kim's 1955 speech placed particular emphasis on criticizing Political Committee members whose writings marked them as being seen as too close to the USSR or China.[30] Concurrently, Kim's speech called for a more distinctly North Korean brand of Socialist governance to meet the objective of the "Korea revolution … the subject of our party's ideological work, all of which must be made to serve its interests."[31] Such a development, by implicitly distancing the guiding ideology of the Korean Workers' Party from the influence of the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, underscored Kim Il-Sung's resolve to forge a uniquely Korean brand of socialism that, being grounded in Korean nationalism, would allow him to credibly attack his pro-Beijing and pro-Soviet rivals as being 'insufficiently committed' to advancing the cause of *Danil Minjok* (even if Kim's underlying objective behind such nationalist rhetoric was to ensure his own primacy in the hierarchy of North Korean politics).

Kim Il-Sung's interest in cultivating a uniquely Korean brand of socialist thought that appealed to the North Korean masses was further reflected in his 1955 speech's emphasis on introducing self-interest into three spheres of the DPRK's model of governance: 자주 (*Chaju*) or independence in political affairs; 자립 (*Charip*) or economic self-sustenance, and 자위 (*Chawi*) or military self-defence.[32] Yet, given the geopolitical reality of North Korea – the lesser-populated half of the divided Korean Peninsula, facing the US-backed ROK – the uncomfortable reality for Kim Il-Sung was that he had little choice but to rely on Moscow and Beijing for his regime's survival. To this end, it is notable that Kim Il-Sung's introduction of *Juche* marked a selective application of some of the founding principles of Marxist-Leninist thought as a means of subtly

30 Kim, *sasangsa-eob-eseo gyojojuuiwa hyeongsigjuuileul toechihago jucheleul hwaglibhalde daehayeo.*

31 Kim, cited in Myers, *North Korea's Juche Myth* (Busan: Sthele Press, 2015), 49.

32 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 305-09.

reducing North Korea's ideological dependence on the USSR and China whilst symbolically proclaiming its loyalty to the socialist camp.[33] Such a strategy thence enabled the North Korean leader to play the Communist superpowers against each other amidst the increasing strains in relations between Beijing and Moscow, whilst simultaneously pressuring the Communist superpowers to compete against each other for more influence in Pyongyang through trade concessions and deliveries of military hardware to North Korea.

Concurrent to this, and presumably cognizant of the masses' yearning for unification with the southern half of the country and separated family members, the same speech made frequent references to 민족 (*Minjok*), or the notion of an ethnically pure Korean people: "Only when we educate our people in the history and tradition of their own struggle can we stimulate their national pride and rouse the broad mass of people to revolutionary struggle."[34] Finally, reflecting Kim's continued ambition to unify the country under his rule, the second half of his 1955 speech was focused on projecting a positive image of North Korea to the ROK, presumably in the hope that this would incite an uprising against Rhee Syngman's rule.[35] Closely intertwining the aforementioned tenets of Juche is the notion of Kim Il-Sung as 수령, or *Suryong*. Although the term means "Faction Leader" in the ROK, it is the highest level of honorific in North Korea, a title reserved only for Kim Il-Sung (but not his successors), and likely underscored Kim Il-Sung's resolve to place himself atop the North Korean political hierarchy.[36]

Whilst these actions marked Kim Il-Sung's resolve to center the North Korean political structure around himself and his family, it also aroused the concerns of the Chinese and Soviet-backed factions in Pyongyang which, although having earlier supported Kim Il-Sung's rise to power as

33 Myers, *North Korea's Juche Myth*, 51-55.
34 Kim, cited in Myers, *North Korea's Juche Myth*, 49.
35 Myers, *The Cleanest Race*, 41.
36 Myers, *The Cleanest Race*, 115.

an alliance of convenience,[37] now feared being displaced by the increasing centralization of power in Kim Il-Sung's hands. Furthermore, James Person has noted the extent to which both the USSR and PRC sought to meddle in North Korean internal affairs. Not only was the Soviet side openly disdainful of Kim Il-Sung's claims to represent an independent North Korean state, the USSR saw North Korea as a small entity that could be intimidated into granting increased mining concessions to Soviet interests.[38] Moreover, Kim Il-Sung believed that Mao Zedong sought to reduce North Korea into a modern-day vassal-state of China.[39] Matters came to a head during what has become known as the 1956 August Faction Incident, which is also referred to officially in Pyongyang circles as "The Second Arduous March."[40] Amidst the process of Destalinization, Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev invited Kim Il-Sung to Moscow, in a bid to bring the North Korean leader in line with the USSR's new ideological line.

In Kim's absence, Pak Chang-Ok and Choe Chang-Ik, the respective leaders of the Soviet and Yan'an Factions in Pyongyang at the time, plotted to use the forthcoming plenum of the Central Committee as an opportunity to attack Kim's leadership credentials and his failure to bring about the unification of the Korean Peninsula.[41] Moreover, seeking to mobilze North Korea for a renewed effort to unify the Peninsula under his rule, Kim exploited the 1960 Sino-Soviet Split by alternating between favouring ties

37 Tertitsky, 'A history of North Korea's party congresses – what should we expect?,' *Guardian*, May 5, 2016, accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/05/north-korea-workers-party-congress-kim-jong-un-what-to-expect.

38 James F. Person, 'Narrating North Korean History through Socialist Bloc Archives: Opportunities and Pitfalls,' *Journal of Korean Studies* 26, no. 2 (2021): 244-47.

39 Person, 'Narrating North Korean History through Socialist Bloc Archives,' 244-47.

40 Jae-Jung Suh, *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development* (New York: Lexington Books, 2013), 97.

41 David Hall, 'The 1956 August Plenum Incident: An Historiographical Analysis,' *North Korea Review* 16, no. 2 (2020): 101-110.

with Beijing and Moscow,[42] in a bid to persuade the PRC and USSR to complete for influence in Pyongyang through arms sales and economic aid.[43]

Here again, the ethnic dimension of Korean nationalism that had first emerged amidst the nationalist backlash against Japanese colonial rule provided Kim Il-Sung with a ready-made tool – the newly-enunciated *Juche* ideology - with which he could portray himself as a protector of the Korean people whilst simultaneously securing his line against his Chinese and Soviet-backed rivals. Hearing of the plot, Kim counter-plotted by delaying the plenum and consolidating support from his own clique of supporters;[44] this measure bought time for Kim Il-Sung's promotion of himself as the one true leader of the Korean people (as exemplified by significantly increased extravagance in the portrayal of Kim's personality cult during the summer of 1956).[45] It is also logical that, in seeking to ensure the further consolidation of his power against potential future challengers, Kim would have needed to invoke the image of a clearly-identifiable foe that he could use to rally his people under his leadership.[46]

Kim Il-Sung's strategy took the form of two parts: first, the promotion of a distinctly Korean interpretation of socialism that portrayed North Korea as a safe haven for the Korean people from a hostile outside world; to this, a selective, cherry-picking approach to the history of the Korean War was adopted that emphasized Kim Il-Sung's growing personality cult and supposed martial prowess (and conveniently leaving out the

42 Nobuo Shimotomai, 'Kim Il-Sung's Balancing Act Between Moscow and Beijing, 1956-1972,' ed. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

43 Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.

44 Memorandum of Conversation with Premier Kim Il-Sung, from the diary of The Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK Comrade Ivanov V.I.29 August – September 14, 1956, accessed via the Woodrow Wilson Center's North Korea International Documentation Project, accessed December 17, 2021, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114136.

45 Myers, *North Korea's Juche Myth*, 64-66.

46 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 141-57.

intervention of China and the USSR as well as the continued division of the Korean Peninsula).[47] Second, (and given the concurrent need to absolve himself of blame for the continued division of the Korean Peninsula as well as the continued US military presence in the South), Kim's propaganda machine has repeatedly sought to cast the US as an existential threat to the people of Korea. This strategy went so far as to portray the people of the South as, having been 'ethnically contaminated' by their association with the US and its embrace of capitalism, incompatible with the values of a "pure Korean people."[48]

These two strategies complemented one another; by casting the US as the aggressor responsible for the division of the Korean Peninsula and the 'occupation' of the South, Kim Il-Sung was able to hold up a clearly identifiable, high-profile bogeyman whose existence not only threatened the people of Korea, but was also (in the North Korean narrative) responsible for the ethnic decadence and poverty of the Korean peoples' southern brethren.[49] Concurrently, by reenforcing the place of Kim Il-Sung as a strong leader capable of uniting the Korean people against an external aggressor, such a maneuver placed Kim in a position to portray himself as a hero of Korean nationalism[50] and legitimate heir to a unified Korean Peninsula,[51] whilst simultaneously designating all future challengers to his rule as enemies to the Korean people and therefore liable to face liquidation.

Kim Il-Sung's efforts to promote his own brand of martial credentials provides a backdrop that accounts for the renewal of low-level border skirmishes with the ROK during the 1960s. The outbreak of the April 1960 Revolution in Seoul that toppled ROK President Rhee Syngman and Park

47 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 155.

48 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 153-57.

49 Myers, *The Cleanest Race*, 152-59.

50 John Everard, *Only Beautiful: A British Diplomat in North Korea* (Stanford: Walter Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, 2012), 182-83.

51 Suh, *Kim Il-Sung*, 256-57.

Chung-Hee's subsequent coup were taken by Kim Il-Sung as evidence of the disunity in the South.[52] Furthermore, with the US increasingly bogged down in the quagmire of counter-insurgency operations in the Vietnam War, Kim Il-Sung came to believe that a campaign of prolonged, low-intensity border skirmishes would sap US willpower to maintain a presence on the Korean Peninsula.[53] It is likely that Kim Il-Sung sensed a new opportunity to unify the peninsula under his rule.[54]

Ⅳ. Kim Jong-Il and *Songun*

Whilst it remains debated as to whether Kim Il-Sung had intended to be succeeded by his son at the time of the founding of the DPRK,[55] there is some evidence to suggest that the younger Kim saw hereditary succession as being in his interest. It should be recalled that although the younger Kim was the oldest son of Kim Il-Sung, the certainty of Kim Jong-Il's place in the North Korean political hierarchy was undermined by the death of his mother, Kim Jong-Suk, in 1949. Around the same time, Kim Il-Sung took a second wife, Kim Song-Ae, who gave birth to Kim Jong-Il's half-brother, Kim Pyong-Il, in 1954. With her newfound position of privilege and influence, Kim Song-Ae began the process of political machinations to rally senior members of the North Korean political establishment and thus ensure that her own son, not Kim Jong-Il, would succeed Kim Il-Sung.[56]

---

52 Lankov, *The Real North Korea*, 27.

53 *Scenes from an Unfinished War: Low intensity conflict in Korea 1966–1969* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1991), 35.

54 Fyodor Tertitskiy, 'How the Kim cult of personality came to dominate North Korean life,' *NK News*, Dec. 7, 2018, accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.nknews.org/2018/12/how-the-kim-cult-of-personality-came-to-dominate-north-korean-life/.

55 Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader*, 194.

56 Jin-Sung Jang, *Dear Leader: North Korea's Senior Propagandist Exposes Shocking Truths Behind the Regime* (London: Random House, 2014), 130.

It is thus not surprising that Kim Jong-Il began his counter-moves against his step-mother and step-brother at an early age. Kim Song-Ae and her allies made the blunder of consigning Kim Jong-Il to what they apparently considered a lowly position in the Propaganda and Agitation Department (PAD) in 1966. From his post in the PAD, Kim subtly manipulated the existing *Juche* Doctrine that had been laid down by his father in order to prepare for his struggle to surpass Kim Pyong-Il and elevate himself as the aging Kim Il-Sung's successor. Particularly notable was Kim Jong-Il's amendment of *Juche* to become a "Suryongist" ideology centered on the personality cult that Kim Il-Sung had built around himself. This was evident in Kim Jong-Il's introduction of the 'Ten Principles for the Establishment of the Juche Idea' in 1967, and declared official state doctrine in 1974.[57] Such a strategy was reminiscent of how Stalin delivered the "Foundations of Leninism" series of lectures at Sverdlov University after Lenin's death that, whilst projecting the image of himself as a dedicated Leninist, was really intended to maximize his leverage in seeking power.[58] In the North Korean context, Kim Jong-Il outlined the theory of 'Kim Il Sungism' that established that the Supreme Leader – Kim Il-Sung - led the Party, and the Party led the people.[59] Such an act, whilst conveying an impression of devoted filial piety, was critical in elevating Kim Jong-Il into his father's favour, with the younger Kim securing his status as his father's official heir by the time of the Sixth Party Congress in 1980.[60]

Nor did Kim Jong-Il cease his efforts to consolidate power at this point. Jang Jin-Sung (a pseudonym), a psychological warfare officer in the Korean Worker's Party's United Front Department who defected to the ROK in 2005, wrote that as early as the 1970s, Kim Jong-Il had already begun to quietly maneuver key allies and associates into positions of power within

57 Jong-Seok Woo, 'Songun Politics and the Political Weakness of the Military in North Korea: An Institutional Account,' *Problems of Post-Communism* 63, no. 4 (2016): 253-262.

58 Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (New York and London: Penguin, 1991).

59 Jang, *Dear Leader*, 132-33.

60 Jang, *Dear Leader*, 136-37.

Pyongyang.[61] By Jang's account, during the 1970s, Kim Jong-Il established the United Front Department to implement a strategy of 'Localization' to affirm the Korean Workers' Party's authority over the North Korean military on the matter of inter-Korean relations. In contrast to the North Korean military's preference to recruit spies from southerners who had defected to the North, the localization strategy involved the kidnapping of South Korean and Japanese nationals in order to train North Korean spies in infiltration.[62] Likewise, the 1983 Rangoon assassination attempt on South Korea's President, Chun Doo-Hwan, was likely instigated by Kim Jong-Il to underscore that, his youth at the time of the Korean War notwithstanding, he had the necessary martial prowess and anti-South hawkishness to succeed his father.

The implication of this thesis is that, even before assuming power, Kim Jong-Il had already come to see the North Korean military as his personal instrument for ensuring regime security against external and internal threats. Whilst the former was reflected in the continued post-Cold War US military presence in the South and the ROK's growing technological military prowess, the latter increasingly became a concern for Kim Jong-Il during the late 1980s onwards, when the collapse of the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the USSR demonstrated the fragility of authoritarian rule against public dissent. The circumstances surrounding the collapse of the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe are worth noting – the brutality and intrusive surveillance of organizations such as the East German Stasi Secret Police were simply not heavy-handed enough to suppress public demands for better living standards and food security. Such dynamics, transplanted into the Korean context, doubtless underscored to Kim Jong-Il the fragility of his own grip on power, as the growing food shortages and famine in North Korea during the 1990s took place alongside the growing prosperity of the South.

Amidst such a backdrop, Kim Jong-Il's strategy to ensure regime

61 Jang, *Dear Leader*, 137-38.
62 Jang, *Dear Leader*, 155-56.

survival was to take a leaf from his existing playbook – entrusting that the military of North Korea was answerable to him, and to him alone – thereby ensuring a monopoly of armed violence and combat-trained personnel against any internal challengers for power.[63] This was evident in Kim Jong-Il's enunciation of the *Songun* doctrine that elevated the status of the North Korean military in North Korean politics and society.[64] Beginning in 1995, North Korean state media espoused *Songun* as "emphasizing the perfect unity and the single-hearted unity of the party, army and the people, and the role of the army as the vanguards."[65] In so elevating the status of the military in the North Korean hierarchy, it is likely that Kim Jong-Il sought to ensure that its members would realize that their own interests lay in ensuring the Kim Family's continued position of power and privilege. After his defection, Jang recounted witnessing a farmer executed for stealing food; Jang observed "as the country was ruled according to the *Songun* policy ⋯ all rice in the nation belonged to the military, and even petty crimes were dealt with according to martial law."[66] It is likely that the incorporation of such harshness served a dual purpose. First, by ensuring that members of the military would be among the first in line for scarce handouts of food, it would further underscore that their own well-being was dependent on their loyalty to the regime. Second, by empowering members of the military to take such punitive actions against their fellow Koreans, it further underscored their culpability in the brutality of the Kim Family. By bloodying their hands in the execution of harsh measures against the North Korean masses, it underscored that the fall of the Kim

63 Daniel Byman and Jennifer Lind, 'Pyongyang's Survival Strategy: Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea,' *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 44-74.

64 Han S. Park, 'Military-First Politics (Songun): Understanding Kim Jong-il's North Korea,' *Korea Economic Institute Academic Paper Series* 2, no. 7, Sept. 2007, accessed September 24, 2021, https://keia.org/publication/military-first-politics-songun-understanding-kim-jong-ils-north-korea/.

65 Robert L. Worden, *North Korea: A Country Study: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2011), 189.

66 Jang, *Dear Leader*, 58.

Family from power would leave senior members of the North Korean military vulnerable to reprisals from any post-Kim regime, thus giving the military all the more incentive to ensure that the Kim Family remains in power.[67]

Likewise, Kim Jong-Il's commitment to the North Korean nuclear program served the purpose of ensuring a clique of pro-regime loyalists. Whilst there is some debate over the willingness of the North Korean leadership to voluntarily dismantle its nuclear weapons program following the signing of the Agreed Framework in 1994, the pace with which Pyongyang stepped up its nuclear program from 2003 onwards points to the increased prominence of pro-nuclear voices during Kim Jong-Il's last years, which has very likely carried over into the transition to the Kim Jong-Un era. Leon Sigal, a prominent proponent of the peaceful denuclearization of North Korea, argued that North Korea's 1998 Taepodong missile test and its undertaking of the Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) program the same year reflected North Korea's concern that the Clinton Administration was not sincere in its implementation of the Agreed Framework, under which circumstance the North Korean leadership likely sought to hedge against the possibility of long-running US hostility.[68]

Whilst Sigal's account provides a fair assessment of the possibility of a negotiated denuclearization of North Korea during the second half of the 1990s and early 2000s, Sigal's argument is less convincing after 2005, and even less so from 2009 onwards, at the time of Barack Obama's succession to the White House. The 2003 US invasion of Iraq and downfall of Saddam Hussein was a reminder of the fate that could befall any non-nuclear armed authoritarian leader on poor terms with the US; such a North Korean view of the vulnerability of non-nuclear adversaries of the US has doubtless been further reinforced by the subsequent US toppling of Gadaffi of Libya

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

68 Leon V. Sigal, 'Bad History,' *38 North*, Aug. 22, 2017, accessed October 19, 2021, https://www.38north.org/2017/08/lsigal082217/.

in 2011 and multiple US threats of war against Iran.

Concurrent to this, it is likely that the North Korean leadership sees the increased reluctance of the US to militarily confront North Korea since 2006 as vindication that its newfound nuclear arsenal constitutes a formidable source of negotiating leverage that offsets US military superiority. Prior to the October 2006 North Korean nuclear test, the Bush Administration had insisted on North Korean denuclearization as a precondition for any negotiation with Pyongyang;[69] from 2007 onwards, the Bush Administration adopted a significantly more flexible negotiating posture. Whilst Bush was likely driven by other factors to adopt a more flexible negotiating posture, such as the loss of Republican control of the US Congress and the need to address the ongoing quagmire in Iraq, the fact that the previously hawkish US President had now begun treating North Korea as a negotiating equal was an important symbolic victory for hardliners in Pyongyang in demonstrating how the *fait accompli* of North Korea's nuclear power status had enabled Pyongyang to defy the US. The fact that North Korea undertook further missile and nuclear tests almost immediately following Obama's succession to the White House in early 2009 – after an election campaign that had included a pledge to hold talks with Kim Jong-Il without preconditions - suggests that by 2009, the North Korean leadership had come to see its nuclear arsenal as being not up for negotiation.[70]

V. Kim Jong-Un and *Byungjin*

It is against this backdrop of the Kim Family's increasingly militarized character and its commitment to its nuclear arsenal as an instrument of regime security that saw the succession of Kim Jong-Il's third son, Kim Jong-Un, in December 2011. As with the circumstances surrounding his

69 Charles L. Pritchard, *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007), 102-06.

70 Oberdorfer and Carlin, *The Two Koreas*, 431-33.

father's succession to power, Kim Jong-Un faced challengers within the family to his succession, in the form of his half-brother, Kim Jong-Nam, and his older brother, Kim Jong-Chul. Kim Jong-Un's comparative youth notwithstanding, his older rivals were beset by a number of factors that undermined their worthiness as successors in Kim Jong-Il's eyes. It was initially assumed that Kim Jong-Nam, as Kim Jong-Il's oldest son, would succeed him as Supreme Leader. A number of developments, however, undermined Kim Jong-Nam's claims, ranging from his being born to Song Hye-Rim, a mistress, rather than a spouse, of Kim Jong-Il, to an embarrassing incident in 2001 when he attempted to enter Japan with a forged Dominican passport bearing a Chinese name in an attempt to visit Disneyland.[71] Kim Jong-Chul's standing was also tarnished by his inability to demonstrate a clear-cut martial commitment to the standing of the Kim Family. Kenji Fujimoto, who served as the Kim Family's sushi chef, claimed that Kim Jong-Il saw his oldest son as "no good because he is like a little girl,"[72] a characterization that is presumably less than impressive for the purpose of underscoring the martial credentials of the next Supreme Leader.

Amidst the lack of martial prowess demonstrated by Kim Jong-Il's older sons, two particular skirmishes on the Northern Limit Line – the Inter-Korean maritime demarcation on the west coast – are notable in underscoring Kim Jong-Un's martial credentials, these being the sinking of the ROK corvette *Cheonan*, and the bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island in March and November 2010 respectively. Given the explicit nature of such direct attacks on the armed forces of the ROK, the authorization for these actions could have come only from a very high-ranking member of the North Korean Government. It is notable that, in the immediate run-up to both incidents, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un visited the North Korean military units believed responsible for the attacks on the ROK's military.[73]

71 Lee, *The Hermit King*, 72-73.

72 Fujimoto, cited in *BBC*, "North Korea's secretive 'first family'," Dec. 13, 2013, accessed October 26, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11297747.

Like his father before him, Kim Jong-Un did not have the benefit of participation in armed conflict to demonstrate the martial prowess befitting the next Supreme Leader. Under such circumstances, it was presumably necessary for the younger Kim to demonstrate the martial worthiness of the next Supreme Leader.

A similar rationale likely accounts for actions that have been undertaken by Kim Jong-Un since his official succession as Supreme Leader of North Korea. Shortly after Kim Jong-Il's death, the Obama Administration dispatched Special Envoy Glyn Davies for direct talks with the North Korean Government, presumably in the hope that the Swiss-educated Kim Jong-Un would be more amenable to improving relations. Under the terms of the resulting "Leap Year" Agreement of 29 February 2012, Pyongyang agreed to suspend any further missile and nuclear testing as a quid pro quo for US humanitarian aid; just two months later, North Korea went ahead with yet another missile test.[74] Although the April 2012 missile test was a failure, a further missile test in December 2012, combined with a barrage of belligerent rhetoric and threats of war against the ROK and the US in the spring of 2013, highlighted Pyongyang's continued hostility towards the ROK and US.[75]

Given this backdrop, it is likely that North Korea's sabre-rattling in 2012-13 had a dual purpose: first, in line with the overall pattern of demonstrations of North Korea's brinkmanship diplomacy, such actions

---

73 Jean H. Lee, 'Cheonan attack may be tied to North Korean succession,' *Christian Science Monitor*, May 27, 2010, *Associated Press*, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.csmonitor.com/From-the-news-wires/2010/0527/Cheonan-attack-may-be-tied-to-North-Korean-succession.

74 Ankit Panda, "A Great Leap to Nowhere: Remembering the US-North Korea 'Leap Day' Deal," *The Diplomat*, Feb. 29, 2016, accessed March 22, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/a-great-leap-to-nowhere-remembering-the-us-north-korea-leap-day-deal/.

75 Ewen MacAskill, 'US warns North Korea of increased isolation if threats escalate further,' *Guardian*, Mar. 29, 2013, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/29/us-condemns-north-korea-threats.

were likely intended by Kim Jong-Un to signify a martial signature to define his legacy as Supreme Leader and thus ensure the loyalty of senior members of the military to his rule. Given the increased prominence of economic reform in Kim Jong-Un's *Byungjin* doctrine – including the tacit tolerance of an underground free market economy to improve North Korean standards of living[76] - it is probable that the new Supreme Leader sought to dispel concerns by senior members of the North Korean military that they risked losing their position of status and privilege under his rule. Second, it was also likely that the later demonstrations of North Korea's military capabilities were intended to 'make up' for any possible impressions of North Korean military weakness resulting from the failure of the April 2012 missile test.

In conjunction with the military aspects of *Byungjin*, the latter's economic component marks an acknowledgement by Kim Jong-Un that authoritarian repression does not suffice in ensuring regime survival, a point driven home by the outbreak of the Arab Spring since 2011. As Hyung-Gu Lynn noted, "even dictators need to provide sufficient public goods in order to mobilize labor, retain societal control, and foster loyalty."[77] Even whilst acknowledging the need for economic reform to forestall public dissent, Kim Jong-Un is concurrently wary of the risk of losing control of the process of economic reform. Kim Jong-Un is doubtless mindful of how Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* economic reforms inadvertently unleashed public dissent that brought about the collapse of the USSR. Similarly, Kim Jong-Un is aware that the Chinese economic model is limited in what it can offer his regime's grip on power given the significant differences between the economic circumstances of China and North Korea. It is thus notable that the economic reform that has been

76 Lankov, 'NK is no Stalinist country,' *The Korea Times*, Oct. 9, 2011, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/10/304_96327.html.

77 Hyung-Gu Lynn, 'Assessing Political Stability in Post-Kim Jong-il North Korea,' *Korea Economic Institute*, Dec. 4, 2012, accessed March 14, 2021, http://www.keia.org/sites/default/files/publications/hyung-gu_lynn_paper.pdf.

carried out under the auspices of Byungjin have been extremely limited in their scope.[78] As North Korea's poverty and isolation stands in marked contrast to the prosperity and widespread international recognition of the ROK, Kim Jong-Un is doubtless aware that exposing North Korea to the extent of economic forces that have propelled China's economic growth would spell the end of the Kim Family's grip on power. By extension – and given that North Korean proponents of Chinese-styled economic modernization constitute possible challengers to Kim Jong-Un's leadership – the logical implication is to ensure that any departure from the ideological tenets of *Byungjin* constitute grounds for pre-emptive liquidation.

Such a backdrop may account for Kim Jong-Un's purge of his uncle, Jang Song-Thaek, and half-brother, Kim Jong-Un, in 2013 and 2017 respectively. The brutal nature with which these rivals to Kim Jong-Un were purged is noteworthy – Jang Song-Thaek was executed by being shot with a large-calibre anti-aircraft gun, whilst Kim Jong-Nam was poisoned with the VX nerve agent. The brutal nature of these purges was likely deliberate and presumably intended to signal to other would-be challengers to Kim Jong-Un that any rivalry to the Dear Leader would result in a painful death. Jang, who had served as Kim Jong-Il's deputy in the National Defense Commission, had been a proponent of emulating China's 1980s model of economic development for North Korea.[79] Jang's survival strategy had been to ingratiate himself in advancing Kim Jong-Il's plan for regime survival by borrowing elements of China's 1980s-styled economic modernization. Such a strategy would have succeeded only as long as the reigning member of the Kim Family saw emulation of China as instrumental to its own interests. In so doing, however, Jang's power and influence within Pyongyang during the Kim Jong-Il reign turned out to be

78 Tertitsky, 'A history of North Korea's party congresses.'

79 Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, 'Wen Jiabao Meets with DPRK Delegation of the Joint Steering Committee for Developing Two Economic Zones,' August 17, 2012, accessed March 21, 2021, http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zgyw/t962140.htm.

his own undoing, following the leadership transition to Kim Jong-Un. By getting involved in the promotion of Chinese-styled economic reforms in North Korea, it is likely that Jang and his allies were receiving a significant cut of the profits of Sino-North Korean border trade, which would have enabled him to bribe senior members of the North Korean military into supporting him.[80] Whilst it would have been unnecessary (indeed, unwise) for Jang to play such a card during the Kim Jong-Il era given his position of privilege at the time, that exact same position, so close to the circles of power in Pyongyang, was almost certain to be seen by Kim Jong-un as a challenge to his power in the aftermath of his father's death.[81]

Similar circumstances offer a plausible account for the assassination of Kim Jong-Nam at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia, in 2017. Prior to his loss of favour arising from his 2001 attempt to visit Japan on a forged passport, Kim Jong-Nam had been set to succeed his father and had, with the concurrence of Jang, been involved in attempting to expand the Information Technology sector to promote North Korea's economic growth.[82] Following his 2001 fall from Kim Jong-Il's graces, Kim Jong-Nam took up residence in the Macau Special Administrative Region – under Chinese sovereignty – in 2003, an arrangement that was presumably 'tolerated' by Beijing to ensure that it had in its pocket a member of the Kim Family that the PRC could install as a reliable, pro-Beijing puppet at short notice in the event of internal instability leading to a power vacuum in Pyongyang.[83]

---

80 Lee, *The Hermit King*, 128.

81 Lee, *The Hermit King*, 155.

82 Julian Ryall, 'Profile: Who was Kim Jong-nam, the exiled half-brother of North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un?,' *The Telegraph*, Feb. 14, 2017, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/14/profile-kim-jong-nam-exiled-half-brother-north-korean-dictator/.

83 John Power, 'What Does the Kim Jong-Nam Assassination Mean for China?,' *The Diplomat*, Feb. 17, 2017, accessed March 24, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/what-does-the-kim-jong-nam-assassination-mean-for-china/.

From his exile, Kim Jong-Nam voiced his scepticism of the longevity of the Kim Family's grip on power following the death of his father.[84] As with Jang's attempts to emulate Chinese-styled economic reform, such a strategy amounted to a half-measure for surviving the 'Game of Thrones' in Pyongyang, particularly once Kim Jong-Nam had outlived his usefulness to both Beijing as well as the Kingmakers in Pyongyang. Particularly notable was that Kim Jong-Nam was travelling alone at the time of the assassination. It may be presumed that, so long as he was a potentially useful 'pro-Beijing puppet in waiting,' the Chinese Communist Party would have had reason to provide bodyguard protection for such a potential asset. It is thus worth speculating if the Chinese Communist Party, having calculated that with Kim Jong-Un's consolidation of power in Pyongyang, Beijing no longer had any need for the continued existence of Kim Jong-Nam and may have thus terminated his bodyguard detail.[85] Such an action on the part of China may have been meant as a subtle 'peace offering' to Kim Jong-Un: although Beijing was paying lip-service to US demands to impose sanctions on North Korea, China's underlying priority was to ensure the continued existence of a pro-Beijing regime in Pyongyang.

Even as Kim Jong-Un continued his efforts to consolidate his leadership succession through inheriting the personality cult built up by his father and grandfather, a series of convergent challenges underscore the narrowness with which Kim Jong-Un has to navigate his leadership of North Korea. Within Pyongyang, the youth at which Kim Jong-Un took up the position of Supreme Leader (he was in his late 20s or early 30s at the time of his father's death in 2011)[86] poses awkward questions with regards

84 Kyung Lah, 'Kim Jong Il's other son expects North Korean regime to fail, journalist says,' *CNN*, Jan. 17, 2012, accessed March 25, 2021, https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/17/world/asia/north-korea-kim-other-son/index.html.

85 Georgy Toloraya, 'Kim Jong Nam's Assassination: What Lies Beneath?,' *38 North*, Mar. 20, 2017, accessed March 26, 2021, https://www.38north.org/2017/03/gtoloraya030717/.

86 Jung H. Park, 'The Education of Kim-Jong-Un,' *Brookings Institution*, Feb., 2018, accessed March 24, 2021,

to the emerging pattern of leadership from father to son established by his predecessors. This is evident given the haste with which Kim Jong-Il arranged for his son's marriage to Ri Sol-Ju after suffering a stroke in 2008, presumably in a bid to provide an heir if any ill fate befell Kim Jong-Un.[87] Yet, even if such an arrangement had produced any offspring – a *BBC* report in 2018 claims that Ri had recently given birth to their third child[88] - this would be of little usefulness in continuing the Kim Family line for at least a decade as this manuscript goes to press. In the meantime, given the 'dog-eat-dog' world of North Korean politics described in this manuscript as well as reports of Kim Jong-Un's ill health[89] - he was reported missing for some three weeks in 2020[90] - the potential for a power vacuum likely contributed to his appointing his younger sister, Kim Yo-Jong, to a series of powerful positions in Pyongyang. These include the position of Deputy Director of the Propaganda and Agitation Department between 2014 and 2019, and Deputy Director of the United Front Department since 2019. Moreover, like her brother and father before her, it is apparent that Kim Yo-Jong has seen the need to undertake armed provocations against the ROK to demonstrate her martial worthiness as a potential successor to the post of Supreme Leader (a difficult task, given the rigid, conservative casting of gender roles in North Korean society).[91] Such an account provides a probable explanation for the North Korean destruction of the

https://www.brookings.edu/essay/the-education-of-kim-jong-un/.

87 *BBC*, 'North Korea leader Kim Jong-un married to Ri Sol-ju,' Jul. 26, 2012, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18986249.

88 *BBC*, 'Keeping up with the Kims: North Korea's elusive first family,' Feb. 7, 2018, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41081356.

89 Justin MacCurry and Enjoli Liston, 'North Korea admits to Kim Jong-un's ill-health for first time,' *Guardian*, Nov. 30, 2017, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/26/north-korea-kim-jong-un-ill-health.

90 Cynthia Kim, 'Kim Jong-un makes first public appearance in 22 days amid virus outbreak,' *Reuters*, Feb. 16, 2020, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-anniversary-idUSKBN2090TE.

91 Lee, *The Hermit King*, 153-56.

Inter-Korean Liaison Office in Kaesong in 2020, an action that Kim Yo-Jong was closely involved in.[92] Also in 2021, Andrei Lankov noted that the creation of the new post of First Secretary of the Workers Party of Korea is likely intended to facilitate the appointment of Kim Yo Jong as a de facto deputy head of state to prevent a power vacuum in the event of Kim Jong-Un's incapacitation.[93]

Ⅵ. Conclusion: North Korean Ideology in the Post-COVID Era?

The patterns of North Korean political thought discussed in this manuscript are a shadowy reflection of the paranoia with which the Kim Family sees a hostile world (both among rivals for power within Pyongyang, and from outside North Korea). Such paranoia has presumably increased in response to what the Kim Family likely perceives to be significantly narrowed room for maneuver in its efforts to ensure regime survival. This is evident due to the following three developments.

The first issue concerns the probability that the COVID-19 pandemic in China had spread into North Korea in early 2020, likely via Chinese traders at the 장마당 (*Jangmadang*) markets on the Sino-North Korean border. Although North Korean state media has denied the existence of the virus within its territory, such a claim is not particularly convincing, given the extent of the extraordinary public health measures that Pyongyang adopted in early 2020, including the closure of the border with China and mandating the cremation of all newly-deceased persons.[94] Given the

92 *BBC*, 'North Korea blows up joint liaison office with South in Kaesong,' Jun. 16, 2020, accessed March 25, 2021, http://bbc.com/news/world-asia-53060620.

93 Lankov, 'North Korea's ruling party rule revisions presage trouble at the top,' *NK News*, Jun. 16, 2021, accessed December 17, 2021, https://www.nknews.org/2021/06/north-koreas-ruling-party-rule-revisions-presage-trouble-at-the-top/?t=1639595068127.

94 Tae-Jun Kang, 'North Korea's Bizarre Strategies for Tackling the Coronavirus Outbreak,' *The Diplomat*, Feb. 14, 2020, accessed March 19, 2021, https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/north-koreas-bizarre-strategies-for-tackling-

existing shortages of food and medical supplies to the North Korean masses, the impact of COVID in North Korea can only be speculated. Whilst the Kim Family is not likely to be moved by the death toll itself, it is aware that the closure of the border with China, by stunting commerce and intensifying food shortages in the country,[95] has increased the potential for internal unrest among the masses. This points to the probability of the Kim Family taking further steps to ensure the continued status of privilege and power enjoyed by senior members of the North Korean military, along with the extensive apparatus of internal surveillance and secret police. Moreover, given the economic fallout that has resulted from North Korea's closure of its borders since the outbreak of COVID, the Kim Family, aware of the potential for public discontent, has further enhanced its powers of internal surveillance and control,[96] in particular against the soft power image of South Korea's political liberalization and economic prosperity.[97] Yet, such measures can only go so far. The Kim Family's ability to continue to grant the stream of luxury goods to its clique of loyalists has depended on its ability to generate foreign exchange reserves through remittances from North Korean expatriate workers,[98] the sale of contraband items such as firearms,[99] and methamphetamines,[100] the pre-COVID fledgling tourist

---

the-coronavirus-outbreak/.

95 Laura Bicker, 'As winter looms, reports of starvation in North Korea,' *BBC*, Nov. 5, 2021, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59144712.

96 Leonid Petrov, 'COVID-19 in North Korea,' Asia and the Pacific Policy Society, Apr. 7, 2021, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.policyforum.net/covid-19-in-north-korea/.

97 Dafna Zur, 'North Korean Fears of South Korean Culture,' Korean Economic Institute, Sept. 22, 2021, accessed December 16, 2021, https://keia.org/the-peninsula/north-korean-fears-of-south-korean-culture/.

98 Simon Mundy, 'North Korean workers exploited abroad to pay Pyongyang's bills,' *Financial Times*, May 8, 2015, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.ft.com/content/e84af180-e0f7-11e4-8b1a-00144feab7de.

99 'The North Koreans Are Better Gunrunners Than You Might Think,' *Foreign Policy*, Jul. 17, 2013, accessed December 16, 2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/07/17/the-north-koreans-are-better-gunrunners-than-you-might-think/.

industry,[101] and the forging of US dollars.[102] Given the extensive impact that the COVID pandemic has had on the world economy, it is necessary to consider the extent to which the Kim Family will be able to continue to draw on these sources of revenue.

A second issue concerns the triangular rivalry between US and its allies on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other. Even whilst depending on superpower patronage from Beijing and Moscow, Kim Il-Sung had simultaneously sought to play China and the USSR against each other.[103] Apart from the Korean War, Pyongyang had been able to play such a strategy whilst simultaneously avoiding the onset of great power conflict. In more recent times, however, China's rapid ascendance as a rising superpower - a development that Pyongyang has no control over – has brought to the forefront the possibility of a Cold War-like confrontation between Beijing and Washington. Were such a standoff to escalate into an armed conflict, it is inevitable that North Korea will be unable to remain aloof, even if China and the US were to come to blows over issues not related to the Korean Peninsula, such as Beijing's ambition to regain control of Taiwan.

Furthermore, Russia is the only other major power that Pyongyang can turn to, both as a great power that is willing to threaten armed intervention against the prospective scenario of a US-led war regime

100 Mike Ives, 'Crystal Meth Is North Korea's Trendiest Lunar New Year's Gift,' *The New York Times*, Feb. 12, 2019, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/12/world/asia/north-korea-crystal-meth-methamphetamine-drugs-.html.

101 Jeremy Howell, 'Selling North Korea as a tourist destination,' *BBC*, Nov. 3, 2014, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-29889023.

102 Tara Francis Chan, 'A $100 counterfeit 'supernote' found in South Korea could have been made in North Korea,' *Business Insider*, Dec. 14, 2017, accessed December 16, 2021, https://www.businessinsider.com/counterfeit-supernote-found-in-south-korea-2017-12.

103 Shimotomai, 'Kim Il-Sung's Balancing Act Between Moscow and Beijing.'

against Pyongyang, as well as a source of food and foreign exchange reserves in providing a lifeline for the Kim Family's regime security. Barring a dramatic change in the governance of Beijing and Moscow and their relations with the Biden Administration and his successors, it is likely that China and Russia will become increasingly assertive against the US in the Northeast Asian region, as reflected in how the joint Sino-Russian aerial overflight over Dokdo in 2019 was likely intended to highlight the willingness of both China and Russia to be a 'spoiler' against any US-brokered denuclearization deal that failed to acknowledge Chinese and Russian interests in a stable North Korea.

Such a backdrop points to the likelihood of the Kim Family continuing to face the challenge of juggling the internal dynamics of political factionalism in Pyongyang alongside the machinations of foreign powers. If the overall pattern with which the succeeding Supreme Leaders of North Korea have sought to consolidate their leadership transition is anything to go by, the authors anticipate efforts by the Kim Family to brandish their self-proclaimed martial credentials as defenders of the North Korean people. In the present context, and taking into account the extent of the paranoia of the Kim Family, this is likely to translate into a long-term commitment by the Kim Family to the North Korean nuclear weapons program, both to stave off the prospect of a US-led war of regime change, as well as in ensuring the continued loyalty of senior members of the military to the Kim Family.

■ Article Received: 11/10 ■ Reviewed: 12/13 ■ Revised: 12/20 ■ Accepted: 12/21

Bibliography

Books

Scenes from an Unfinished War: Low intensity conflict in Korea 1966-1969. Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1991.

Conquest, Robert. *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*. New York and London: Penguin, 1991.

Everard, John. *Only Beautiful: A British Diplomat in North Korea*. Stanford: Walter Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, 2012.

Harden, Blaine. *The Great Leader and the Fighter Pilot: The True Story About The Tyrant Who Created North Korea And The Young Lieutenant Who Stole His Way To Freedom*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2016.

Jang, Jin-Sung. *Dear Leader: North Korea's Senior Propagandist Exposes Shocking Truths Behind the Regime*. London: Random House, 2014.

Kim Il-Sung. *Joseon lodongdang je 3 cha daehoeeseo han jung-ang-wiwonhoe sa-eob chonghwabogo*, 1956.4.23 [*Report on the Project of the Central Committee at the 3rd Conference of the Workers' Party of Korea*, 1956.4.23] Pyongyang: chulpansa [Pyongyang: Joseon Publishing House, 1980].

Kim, Il-Sung. *Sasangsa-eob-eseo gyojojuuiwa hyeongsigjuuileul toechihago jucheleul hwaglibhalde daehayeo*, 1955.12.28 [*On eradicating doctrines and formalism in thought business and establishing subjects*, 1955.12.28], in Kim Il-sung's Book 9. Pyongyang: chulpansa [Pyongyang: Joseon Publishing House, reprinted in 1980].

Lankov, Andrei. *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Lee, Chung-Min, *The Hermit King: The Dangerous Game of Kim Jong-un*. New York: All Points Books, 2019.

Martin, Bradley K. *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty*. New York: St Martin's Griffin, 2006.

Millet, Allan R. *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas.

Myers, Brian Reynolds. *North Korea's Juche Myth*. Busan: Sthele Press, 2015.

Myers, Brian Reynolds. *The Cleanest Race: How The Koreans See Themselves, And Why*

It Matters. New York: Melville House, 2010.

Oberdorfer, Don and Robert Carlin. *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

Oh, Kongdan and Ralph C. Hassig. *North Korea Through the Looking Glass*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 2000.

Pritchard, Charles L. *Failed Diplomacy: The Tragic Story of How North Korea Got the Bomb.* Washington: Brookings Institution, 2007.

Shin, Gi-Wook. *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics and Legacy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Snyder, Scott. *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Tactics*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace 1999.

Suh, Dae-Sook. *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Suh, Jae-Jung. *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development*. New York: Lexington Books, 2013.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

Shimotomai, Nobuo. 'Kim Il-Sung's Balancing Act Between Moscow and Beijing, 1956-1972.' Edited by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Periodicals

Ahn, Se-Hyun. 'Russia's Great Game Stratagem toward the Korean Peninsula Revisited: Lessons from the Failure of Imperial Russia.' *Journal of International and Area Studies* 26, no. 2 (2019).

Byman, Daniel and Jennifer Lind. 'Pyongyang's Survival Strategy: Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea.' *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 44-74.

Hall, David. 'The 1956 August Plenum Incident: An Historiographical Analysis.' *North Korea Review* 16, no. 2 (2020): 101-110.

Lebedev, Vasilii. 'War and peace in liberated North Korea: Soviet military

administration and the creation of North Korean police force in 1945.' *International Journal of Asian Studies* 19, no. 1 (2021): 117-133.

Park, Han S. 'North Korean Perceptions of Self and Others: Implications for Policy Choices.' *Pacific Affairs* 73, no.4 (2000): 503-516.

Person, James F.. 'Narrating North Korean History through Socialist Bloc Archives: Opportunities and Pitfalls.' *Journal of Korean Studies* 26, no. 2 (2021): 229-249.

Woo, Jong-Seok. 'Songun Politics and the Political Weakness of the Military in North Korea: An Institutional Account.' *Problems of Post-Communism* 63, no.4 (2016): 253-262.

Reports and Working Papers

Barry, Mark. 'The U.S. and the 1945 Division of Korea.' *NK News*, Feb. 12, 2012. Accessed 17 December, 2021. https://www.nknews.org/2012/02/the-u-s-and-the-1945-division-of-korea/.

Cathcart, Adam. 'Songun, Tangun, Son of Paektu, etc.: Kim Jong-Un Documentary.' *Sino-NK*, Jan. 9, 2012. Accessed 20 October, 2021. https://sinonk.com/2012/01/09/songun-tangun-son-of-paektu-etc-kim-jong-un-documentary/.

Groll. 'The North Koreans Are Better Gunrunners Than You Might Think.' *Foreign Policy*, Jul. 17, 2013. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/07/17/the-north-koreans-are-better-gunrunners-than-you-might-think/.

Kang, Tae-Jun. 'North Korea's Bizarre Strategies for Tackling the Coronavirus Outbreak.' *The Diplomat*, Feb. 14, 2020. Accessed 19 March, 2021. https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/north-koreas-bizarre-strategies-for-tackling-the-coronavirus-outbreak/.

Lankov, Andrei. 'North Korea's ruling party rule revisions presage trouble at the top.' *NK News*, Jun. 16, 2021. Accessed 17 December, 2021. https://www.nknews.org/2021/06/north-koreas-ruling-party-rule-revisions-presage-trouble-at-the-top/?t=1639595068127.

Lynn, Hyung-Gu. 'Assessing Political Stability in Post-Kim Jong-il North Korea.' *Korea Economic Institute*, Dec. 4, 2012. Accessed 14 March, 2021. http://www.keia.org/sites/default/files/publications/hyung-gu_lynn_paper.pdf.

Panda, Ankit. "A Great Leap to Nowhere: Remembering the US-North Korea 'Leap Day' Deal." *The Diplomat*, Feb. 29, 2016. Accessed 22 March, 2021. https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/a-great-leap-to-nowhere-remembering-the-us-north-korea-leap-day-deal/.

Park, Han S. 'Military-First Politics (Songun): Understanding Kim Jong-il's North Korea.' *Korea Economic Institute Academic Paper Series* 2, no. 7, September 2007. Accessed 24 September, 2021. https://keia.org/publication/military-first-politics-songun-understanding-kim-jong-ils-north-korea/.

Park, Jung H. 'The Education of Kim-Jong-Un.' *Brookings Institution* (February, 2018). Accessed 24 March, 2021. https://www.brookings.edu/essay/the-education-of-kim-jong-un/.

Petrov, Leonid. 'COVID-19 in North Korea.' Asia and the Pacific Policy Society, Apr. 7, 2021. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://www.policyforum.net/covid-19-in-north-korea/.

Power, John. 'What Does the Kim Jong-Nam Assassination Mean for China?.' *The Diplomat*, Feb. 17, 2017. Accessed 24 March, 2021. https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/what-does-the-kim-jong-nam-assassination-mean-for-china/.

Sigal, Leon V. 'Bad History.' *38 North*, Aug. 22, 2017. Accessed 19 October, 2021. https://www.38north.org/2017/08/lsigal082217/.

Toloraya, Georgy. 'Kim Jong Nam's Assassination: What Lies Beneath?.' *38 North*, Mar. 20, 2017. Accessed 26 March, 2021. https://www.38north.org/2017/03/gtoloraya030717/.

Worden, Robert L. *North Korea: A Country Study: A Country Study*. Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2011.

Zur, Dafna. 'North Korean Fears of South Korean Culture.' Korean Economic Institute, Sept. 22, 2021. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://keia.org/the-peninsula/north-korean-fears-of-south-korean-culture/.

Media Sources

'North Korea blows up joint liaison office with South in Kaesong.' *BBC*, Jun. 16, 2020. Accessed 25 March, 2021. http://bbc.com/news/world-asia-53060620.

'Keeping up with the Kims: North Korea's elusive first family.' *BBC*, Feb. 7, 2018.

Accessed 22 March, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41081356.

"North Korea's secretive 'first family.'" *BBC*, Dec. 13, 2013. Accessed 26 October, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11297747.

'North Korea leader Kim Jong-un married to Ri Sol-ju.' *BBC*, Jul. 26, 2012. Accessed 24 March, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18986249.

Bicker, Laura. 'As winter looms, reports of starvation in North Korea.' *BBC*, Nov. 5, 2021. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59144712.

Chan, Tara Francis. 'A $100 counterfeit 'supernote' found in South Korea could have been made in North Korea.' *Business Insider*, Dec. 14, 2017. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://www.businessinsider.com/counterfeit-supernote-found-in-south-korea-2017-12.

Howell, Jeremy. 'Selling North Korea as a tourist destination.' *BBC*, Nov. 3, 2014. Accessed 16 December 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-29889023.

Ives, Mike. 'Crystal Meth Is North Korea's Trendiest Lunar New Year's Gift.' *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 2019. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/12/world/asia/north-korea-crystal-meth-methamphetamine-drugs-.html.

Kim, Cynthia. 'Kim Jong-un makes first public appearance in 22 days amid virus outbreak.' *Reuters*, Feb. 16, 2020. Accessed 24 March, 2021. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-anniversary-idUSKBN2090TE.

Lah, Kyung. 'Kim Jong Il's other son expects North Korean regime to fail, journalist says.' *CNN*, Jan. 17, 2012. Accessed 25 March, 2021. https://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/17/world/asia/north-korea-kim-other-son/index.html.

Lankov, Andrei. "N Korea: Tuning into the 'hermit kingdom." *Al-Jazeera*, Jun. 10, 2014. Accessed 17 December, 2021. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/6/10/n-korea-tuning-into-the-hermit-kingdom.

Lankov, Andrei. 'NK is no Stalinist country.' *The Korea Times*, Oct. 9, 2011. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/10/304_96327.html.

Lee, Jean H. 'Cheonan attack may be tied to North Korean succession.' *Christian*

Science Monitor, May 27, 2010, *Associated Press.* Accessed 22 March, 2021. https://www.csmonitor.com/From-the-news-wires/2010/0527/Cheonan-attack-may-be-tied-to-North-Korean-succession.

MacAskill, Ewen. 'US warns North Korea of increased isolation if threats escalate further.' *Guardian*, Mar. 29, 2013. Accessed 24 March, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/29/us-condemns-north-korea-threats.

MacCurry, Justin, and Enjoli Liston. 'North Korea admits to Kim Jong-un's ill-health for first time.' *Guardian*, Nov. 30, 2017. Accessed 24 March, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/26/north-korea-kim-jong-un-ill-health.

Mundy, Simon. 'North Korean workers exploited abroad to pay Pyongyang's bills.' *Financial Times*, May 8, 2015. Accessed 16 December, 2021. https://www.ft.com/content/e84af180-e0f7-11e4-8b1a-00144feab7de.

Ryall, Julian. 'Profile: Who was Kim Jong-nam, the exiled half-brother of North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un?.' *The Telegraph*, Feb. 14, 2017. Accessed 22 March, 2021. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/14/profile-kim-jong-nam-exiled-half-brother-north-korean-dictator/.

Smith, Josh and Jeongmin Kim. 'North Korea's box of bones: A mythical king and the dream of Korean unification.' *Reuters*, Oct. 21, 2018. Accessed 26 March, 2021. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-southkorea-unification-myt-idUSKCN1MV022.

Tertitsky, Fyodor. 'A history of North Korea's party congresses – what should we expect?.' *Guardian*, May 5, 2016. Accessed 17 December, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/05/north-korea-workers-party-congress-kim-jong-un-what-to-expect.

Archived Materials

Hamby, Alonzo L. 'Harry S. Truman: Foreign Affairs.' University of Virginia Miller Center. Accessed 17 December, 2021. https://millercenter.org/president/truman/foreign-affairs.

Memorandum of Conversation with Premier Kim Il-Sung, from the diary of The Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK Comrade Ivanov V.I.29 August – 14 September 1956. Accessed via the Woodrow Wilson Center's North Korea International Documentation Project. Accessed 17 December, 2021.

https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114136.

Government Documents

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America. 'Wen Jiabao Meets with DPRK Delegation of the Joint Steering Committee for Developing Two Economic Zones.' August 17, 2012. Accessed 21 March, 2021. http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zgyw/t962140.htm.