

North Korea between Isolation, Dissociation and Integration

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The end of the East-West conflict, which was the structural conflict in international relations since 1945, has profoundly changed the international system. The actors in this system face new challenges and problems (beside the already existing ones) as well as new chances and opportunities. To adapt to the new environment they have to redefine their world political roles and identities—a process in the midst of taking place. It may well be that the repercussions of the collapse of the bipolar post-World War II order have been most dramatic in the Pacific region. Even more, one may predict that the most serious changes are still impending. In this context developments on the Korean peninsula will be among the most decisive.

Events on the Korean peninsula are of great importance for the future of the region and beyond; they are the focus of this article. Here, the East-West conflict produced a divided country. At the borderline between the two Korean countries the Western and the Eastern system faced each other in a way quite similar to the German case. After the collapse of the Soviet empire Kim Il Sung's North Korea increasingly appeared as one of a number of "crazy states" in the world that dispose of considerable chaos power, i.e. the capability to produce chaos and insecurity. The evident North Korean striving towards nuclear weapons caused

much of concern in the world's military and political headquarters. Pyongyang's refusal to permit IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites gave rise to a conflict that put the country to the center stage of world attention. Kim Il Sung's death and the Geneva Agreement opened up the opportunity of bringing an end to the East-West conflict on the peninsula by cutting through North Korea's policy of dissociation.

In the following article we discuss the Korean question and, in particular, the nuclear dispute. This empirical account of events will be put in the theoretical framework of non-integration (dissociation and isolation) and integration as foreign policy options of states and societies. We expect the number of non-integrated states to grow substantially in the international system after the end of the East-West conflict, because the possibilities for strategies of isolation and dissociation have widened. This implies a greater potential for turbulence in the international system as can be seen in the North Korean case. The discussion of non-integration and integration, then, is relevant for the theory and practice of foreign policy.

The Theoretical Framework: Globalization, Interdependence and Dissociation, Integration, Isolation

Our basic assumption is that globalization is the elementary process, the prime mover in international relation, and it is steadily gaining strength. This is independent of the respective world order, i.e., globalization was the principal driving force during the era of East-West confrontation and it is the driving force of the post-bipolar international system. All the actors in the international system—be they nation-state or non-state actors—have to respond to the challenges of globalization and, simultaneously, they are part of these globalization processes. This pressure for adjustment implicit in globalization increased even further after the East-West conflict faltered.

Globalization implies a shrinking of the world and growing interconnections because the effects of events in the various parts of the world can no longer be confined to the local, regional or even national level; instead, these events increasingly have repercussions on the trans-regional, trans-national, macro-regional and global levels. They create problematical situations for the actors involved which have to respond and react. These globalizing processes, then, are monitored or filtered by the structure of the international system which is characterized by the persistence of conflicts and the prevalence of the nation-state to date. Agreeing with the basic realist or neo-realist assumption we think that in a world governed by the "logic of anarchy,"¹ actors are subjected to the principle of self-help; even in an increasingly interdependent world the issue of area security reigns supreme although the major characteristics have changed over the last decades. As a consequence, the state still shapes the structure of the international constellation in the sense that *dominant* states determine the extent to which non-state actors, *all* non-state actors, may participate in international relations. In other words, globalization meets a kind of "filter" set by the nation-states, which actually shapes the concrete pattern of interdependencies, the concrete formation of interdependent relations between and among state and non-state actors.

Ideally, states have two options to choose from: integration or non-integration. Integrationist policies depart from the assumption that the conscious participation in the formation of interdependencies and the attempt to steer interdependencies is a strategy that pays; they respond positively to the challenges of globalization. Integrationist policy may be pursued in the fields of politics, economy and/or culture.

Non-integration falls into two sub-categories: dissociation and isolation. Dissociative policies try to circumvent and avoid the

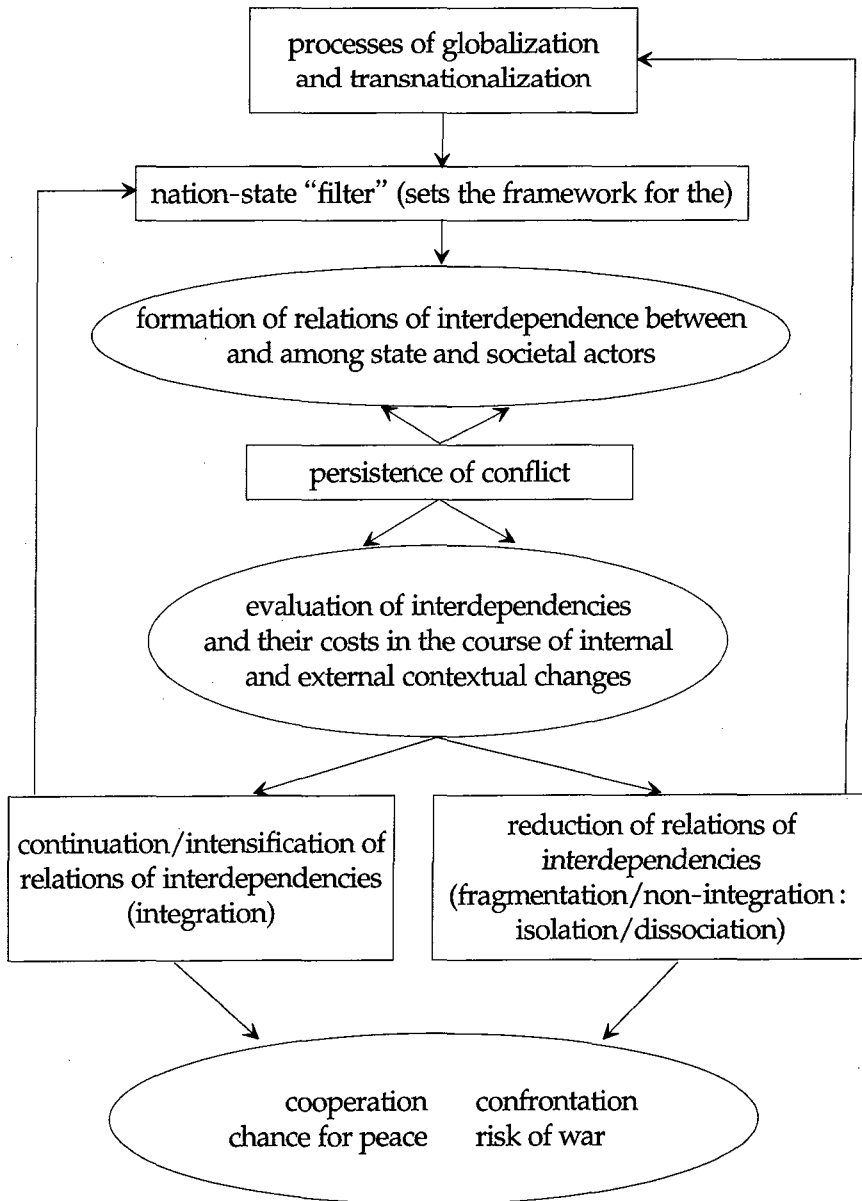
1 Barry Buzan, Jones and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: 1993).

costs of interdependencies, which are valued higher than the benefits of interdependencies through abstention from integration into patterns of interdependence; thus, they represent a negative reaction. Dissociation can be equated with self-isolation; here, interdependence is perceived as a threat and an encirclement. Dissociation may take place in certain issue areas like politics, economy or culture only, or it may assume the form of a comprehensive dissociation. In these cases, the predominant aim of dissociative policies is primarily the preservation of the current political regime.

From time to time the actors evaluate the patterns of interdependencies in which they have either participated or from which they have abstained. They do so when internal and external contextual changes have occurred. In terms of internal changes one may think of a decisive change of government or political system; regarding external changes an intensification of interdependencies or a major shift in international tectonics come to mind. Interdependencies are (again) judged by their potential, perceived, actual or experienced costs and benefits. Results of this cost-benefit analysis may differ largely: states that are already involved into constellations of interdependencies may (a) confirm their integration, (b) intensify it or (c) abandon their integrationist strategy in favor of dissociation; respectively, states that have opted for dissociative policies may (a) confirm their abstention from integrating into relations of interdependence, (b) intensify their dissociative strategy or (c) abandon dissociation and choose integrationist strategies.

As a result, then, international relations are characterized by both integration and dissociation/fragmentation. There are chances for cooperation and peace (some might also say civilization) as well as the threats of confrontation, regression and war. The following graph tries to illustrate what we have said.

The ambivalence of interdependence



In contrast to dissociative strategies as one form of non-integration, isolation does not stem only from impulses coming from within the actor. Isolation may be a foreign policy strategy of actors from outside; its goals range from the destruction of a state or political system to the alteration of the political leadership or the change of specific attitudes and behaviors. By isolating an actor, for instance, the isolating actor tries to gain the isolated actor's compliance or to influence his foreign policies in a certain direction. To achieve this it might turn to political, diplomatic, economic, military and/or socio-cultural means. Isolationist strategies make use of the patterns of interdependence or the promises of interdependencies. They use the interdependence susceptibility and the interdependence vulnerability of actors; they deny the advantages, the benefits and the promises of integration into interdependent relations to reach compliance.

Dissociation and isolation as two forms of non-integration depend upon the pattern of relevance between actor and environment. Non-integration is a result of the compatibility of their political and the socio-economic orders. If there is a low valence in both sectors, isolation and dissociation become possible. The lower the chances for linkages between political systems; the lower the extent of societal openness and inter-societal cooperation and the lower the degree of democratic political legitimization, the higher the chances for a state to become a non-integrated actor. This relationship is expressed in the following table:

Options for foreign policy and international action

relevance between actor and environment	compatibility of political and socio-economic systems	
	high	low
high	integration	antagonistic cooperation
low	cooperative disinterest	non-integration (isolation/ dissociation)

As will be seen by the North Korean case, both isolation and dissociation contain considerable potential for turbulences and dangers. This is even more the case since isolation and dissociation may overlap and mutually reinforce each other. Isolation may be a reaction to dissociation as dissociation may be a response to isolation. The potential for turbulence stems from the fact that isolation and dissociation not only increase the propensity to conflict (which to be sure also increases with integration), but also the propensity to violence. Non-integrated actors mostly dispose of a substantial chaos power which is paradoxically related to their mounting relevance for other actors because of globalization, interdependence and complex cross-border repercussions. The craving for recognition of these non-integrated actors becomes more important for the environment, if it takes the form of striving for regional dominance or sectoral supremacy rather than only a defensively motivated foreign policy designed to preserve identity. This was a crucial question during the North Korean nuclear crisis.

Isolated and dissociating actors obviously do not participate in the processes of globalization and modernization to the same extent as do integrated ones. The North Korean backwardness is a case in point. The garrison state DPRK also substantiates that external influences and outside information are viewed through the filter of non-integration; i.e., isolation and dissociation largely determine the perception of exogenous factors. A correction of such a self-image and such a self-perception from outside is extremely difficult as non-integrated states develop a siege mentality. They create fantasy or dream worlds that are structured along the binary code of good versus bad, and a militarization of the respective societies follows. Closely connected to this is a tendency towards the militarization of foreign policy. Non-integrated actors often resemble a modern Sparta. They represent a factor of instability for the region and, increasingly, beyond. Thus, they are perceived as an actual or at least a

potential threat. This is also demonstrated by the North Korean case.²

Non-integration increases the chances of misinformation and misperception with unknown consequences. Such misperceptions can be observed on both sides, on the side of the non-integrated actor as well as of the environment. In such a constellation the reliability of the situation remains low and the issue area security assumes highest priority. From this, the well-known mechanisms of the security dilemma may be triggered. Worst-case thinking rules; arms races follow from this and the risk of military conflict increases. Again, North Korean dissociation is a case in point. In addition, indirect threats have to be taken into account, such as the non-integrated actors' cooperation with terrorist groups, their involvement in trading drugs and weaponry and their engaging in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to raise the funds to finance their non-integration.

Our proposition is that the number of non-integrated actors will increase after the end of the East-West conflict. International politics is no longer determined—as it was in the past—by a structural conflict that exerted conflict-constraining and disciplining functions. In addition, the leeway for individual actors has increased. Policies of isolation, then, could well become more attractive, because isolation may no longer be followed by integration into the opposite camp as was the case in the past. Dissociative strategies might also become more attractive. One argument here is the increasing complex cross-border repercussions and the turbulent state of international relations; another is that dissociation is less prone to criticism and opposition than in the past due to the lack of a disciplinary instrument such as

2 To significantly reduce these mutual threat perceptions confidence-building measures are required. For various approaches see the contributions in Robert E. Bedeski (Ed.), *Confidence Building in the North Pacific: New Approaches to the Korean Peninsula in the Multilateral Context* (Victoria, BC: 1996).

provided by the East-West conflict. As a result, then, isolation and dissociation may proliferate.

Both dissociation and isolation are phenomena that have been and are present in international politics and which often overlap. As "targets" for isolation in world politics and/or as actors pursuing strategies of dissociation, apartheid South Africa, Israel, Paraguay, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Taiwan, Burma, Cuba or the early Soviet Union can be cited.³

In our case North Korea, as well as in others both concepts, can be applied. As the DPRK is often regarded as a rogue, outlaw or crazy state, it is particularly worthwhile to explore to what extent isolatory policies can be an adequate response to such a situation.

North Korean Dissociation

The division of the Korean Peninsula along the 38th parallel is a product of the Korean War⁴ and as such of the East-West conflict, or, to be more precise, of the cold war as a distinct phase of the East-West conflict. Since this time, the two Korean states—separated from one another by a narrow strip of concrete seven centimeters in height at Panmunjom—have been facing each other full of distrust and suspicion. The history of this East-West conflict *en miniature* is full of attempts to prove one system's superiority over the other, and, sometimes, these actions even involved the resort to force as exemplified by the Rangoon incidence in 1983. A precarious balance had been secured by the presence of the great powers, the Soviet Union and China and the United States.

Whereas South Korea eventually chose a strategy of integration into the Western network in the 1970s and 1980s, North

3 See Deon Geldenhuys, *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge: 1990).

4 See Max Hastings, *The Korean War, 1950–1953* (London: 1987); Callum A. MacDonald, *Korea: The War before Vietnam* (Houndmills-Basingstoke: 1986).

Korea did not become fully integrated into the Eastern network. Although there was a period of strong orientation towards the Soviet Union and the brotherhood in arms with China, Pyongyang opted for a more or less autonomous and self-reliance path towards modernization. As a result, Pyongyang did not become a full-fledged member of the COMECON, but simply retained observer status; politically, it pursued a strategy of equidistance in relation to Moscow and Beijing without, however, breaking off these bilateral relations. To counter the advances of the South, Pyongyang remained dependent on Chinese and Soviet military and economic assistance. China and the USSR were needed as military allies in order to balance the South Korean-American alliance.

In domestic politics, North Korea became a hermit "kingdom." Kim Il Sung as the leader of the Manchurian⁵ Stalinist-style Korean Workers' Party not only eliminated his democratic element or bourgeois, but also his opponents from other socialist-communist groups such as the Maoist Yen-an faction within a decade after his accession to power. As a result, the DPRK became an extremely autocratic, even feudalist, centralized state. The masses were increasingly excluded from the political process, and from 1980 onwards there has not been a single party congress. In this first socialist dynasty Kim Il Sung tightly controlled the resources of political power including the Korean Workers' (communist) Party and the military. He—contrary to historical evidence—maintained that he was the savior of the country as he had liberated North Korea from Japanese rule and step by step he presented himself as an almighty father figure. The story of his life was newly written, glorified and mythologized. The resulting personality cult was successively broadened to include his family and, in particular, his son as his designated

5 This term stems from the guerilla-warfare against the Japanese in the Korean border regions. Sometimes the expression "Siberian" is used.

successor. In the consciously constructed environment of a mentality of siege this cult assumed quasi-religious characteristics. Kim Il Sung succeeded in presenting himself as the great leader (*suryong*) to the population, as a figure for identification and as the sole guarantor of order and development in a country that resembled some kind of modern Sparta.⁶

Consequently, the North Korean society has appeared highly uniform and monolithic well into our times—even more so since information has been almost thoroughly monopolized by radios and TVs that were and still are capable of receiving only North Korean frequencies. Some information trickled into the country through North Koreans who studied abroad (e.g. in the Warsaw Pact countries, but also in Western countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany) and through Koreans living in Japan, China and Russia, but their importance should not be overestimated.⁷

The international environment of the two Korean states changed fundamentally in the 1980s, however, and transformed the framework for North and South Korean foreign and domestic policies. Within the network in which North Korea had been partially integrated, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 strained relations with the USSR as much as the American-Chinese rapprochement of 1972 did relations to China. Now, the international parameters turned even more adversary. For one, Mikhail Gorbachev realized that the Soviet Union was an incomplete superpower and tried to retain political power in the hands of the Communist leadership by domestic reform and a foreign policy strategy of detente and cooperation with the US. For another, with Deng Xiao-ping ascended to power at the end of the 1970s the People's Republic of China began to open its

6 See Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: 1988).

7 One example for this is Jacques Decornoy, "Délicate fin de guerre dans la péninsule de Corée," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 23 November 1994, p. 22f.

economy for foreign economic activities and investments and implemented market-economic reforms. The political leadership in Pyongyang (as in Cuba or Albania at that time) perceived both developments as potentially destabilizing to the political system and as posing a real threat of loss of power. Soviet and Chinese politics, then, were regarded as a departure from pure ideological beliefs. The North Korean political elite responded to this by steadfastly clinging to the distinctly nationalist communist Juche Thought²⁰ although this ideology lacked any systematical and philosophical substantiation well into the 1980s. In addition, and even more important, Pyongyang more aggressively insisted upon political autonomy.

The significant shifts in the international roles of China and the USSR assumed the character of a perilous and existential threat with the collapse of the Soviet empire, the democratization processes in Eastern Europe and the German unification. Up to that time, the North Korean politics of dissociation had been semi-complete only because North Korea had been, at least partly, integrated into the Soviet and Chinese international networks. Now even this loose integration seemed to be crumbling and North Korean dissociation appeared to be turning into an almost full-scale dissociation. Pyongyang's power elite became encapsulated and tried to disentangle itself and the country from hostile events in the environment. In so doing, the government in a sense revived a tradition that had been prevalent in the Yi-dynasty (1392–1910). As a result, Kim Il Sung opted for a continuation and even intensification of dissociative and self-reliant development. This political decision was motivated by the assumption that the economic reforms in the two big socialist brother countries were suicidal as the collapse of the Soviet bloc

20 See Hans Maretzki, *Kim-ismus in Nordkora. Analyse des letzten DDR-Botschafters in Pjöngjang* (Böblingen 1991); Hyeong-Jung Park, "Zur Analyse des nordkoreanischen Phänomens", PhD dissertation, Marburg 1992, pp. 299–359.

and events at Tiananmen exemplified. For North Korea the costs of this political option consisted in a considerable (but not complete) loss of political, military and economic support from ideologically friendly states.

Facing complex economic and political problems Moscow took various measures.⁹ Since the late 1980s it reduced its military, nuclear, technological and civil assistance for North Korea until eventually it even suspended it. From 1991 onwards, Russia demanded bilateral trade to be conducted on a hard-currency basis. Exports of military goods such as the MiG-29 aircraft were drastically reduced. The importance of this move becomes clear when one takes into account that North Korean military imports totalled \$4.6 billion in the period 1987–1991, but that the value of such imports from the Soviet Union amounted to \$4.2 billion in the same period.¹⁰ Furthermore, since 1988 Moscow established working political and economic relations with North Korea's arch enemy Seoul in order to encourage South Korean companies to invest in Russian economic development. Two years later, the Soviet Union even supplied enriched uranium to Seoul. In late 1990, at last, Moscow and Seoul established official diplomatic relations despite vehement protests from Pyongyang, who responded by refusing to welcome Soviet Foreign Secretary Shevardnadze. The effect of this Soviet move on North Korea might be compared to the effect of the recognition of the German Democratic Republic by Western countries on the Federal Republic of Germany during the times of the Hallstein Doctrine. In mid-December 1990 the Soviet Union committed itself in the Moscow Declaration to a peaceful solution of the Korean question and thereby signalled to Pyongyang that it would remain

9 For details see Joachim Glaubitz, "Die Sowjetunion und die koreanische Halbinsel," *Außenpolitik*, Vol. 43, 1992, No. 1, pp. 82–91.

10 These data are given by Gerald Segal, "Managing New Arms Races in the Asia/Pacific," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 15, 1992, No. 3, pp. 83–101, p. 89.

neutral in the case of a Korean conflict. In effect, then, North Korea lost the shelter of the Soviet nuclear umbrella. The USSR also worked constructively to make possible inspections of the IAEA and a detente in the North-South Korean relations. Eventually, in 1992 Russia's Boris Yeltsin, de facto but not de jure, cancelled the pact of mutual assistance in order to express his disapproval of Pyongyang's position in the nuclear question.¹¹

Despite an ideological rapprochement in the wake of the Tiananmen incident Beijing markedly curbed the previous scope of Pyongyang's preferential treatment in the economic field. Beginning in 1990, North Korea had to pay for its imports from China in hard currency and since the end of 1990 Beijing has greatly reduced the supply of oil on credit terms. Cooperation in the field of nuclear technology had already been stalled in 1987. Even more important were political moves toward South Korea. In 1991, the Chinese leadership indicated to Seoul whose world political prestige had been greatly enhanced in the course of the Olympic Games in South Korea in 1988, that China would refrain from vetoing a South Korean application for UN membership. Since Moscow also preferred the South Korean proposal of two Koreas in the UN instead of the North Korean insistence on one Korean seat, Pyongyang had to give in and applied for separate membership. Accordingly, the two Koreas became members in September 1991. For Kim Il Sung and the political leadership in North Korea this was nothing less than a major diplomatic debacle. It dealt a deadly blow to the long-standing North Korean position of non-recognition of the South Korean government and meant a U-turn to the categorical rejection of the two-state solution to the Korean question. In a second move, then, China established diplomatic and economic contacts with Seoul in August 1992 as a means of gaining South Korean

11 The de jure cancellation of the treaty's articles referring to mutual assistance was to take place in September 1995. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 October 1995, p. 14.

investment in China's coastal regions. Obviously, this has been regarded as another insult in Pyongyang.

As a result, then, the significant reduction of Chinese and Soviet economic assistance in addition to the drying up of trade relations to these countries caused a whole series of economic problems for Kim Il Sung, particularly because the political elite gave undiminished priority to military armament which consumed about 25% of GDP according to Western estimates.¹² The decreasing oil supply, parts of which were reexported to gain hard currency, implied energy shortages and a crisis in production. Economic growth rates that had already markedly declined in the 1970s slackened even further. By the middle of the 1980s, the economy was characterized by stagnation and towards the end of the decade it began to shrink substantially.¹³ In 1993, then, the population suffered quite heavily from a famine that could be alleviated only with Chinese assistance. Since then, reports about the shortage of food in North Korea have proliferated and by 1997 the situation has become even worse: more people than ever are affected by the famine; the outlook for the 1997 harvest is dim and international aid insufficient.

Politically, North Korea's international position had been damaged due to increased pressure from China and the USSR. Simultaneously, arch enemy South Korea was able to improve its position not only economically, but also politically. As one of the four Asian dragons, South Korea has witnessed an enduring

12 Dalchoong Kim, "Die Nuklearfrage auf der koreanischen Halbinsel—Hemmschuh für Stabilität und Entwicklung," *Europa-Archiv*, Vol. 49, 1994, No. 10, pp. 290–298, p. 297. In 1996, North Korea is even reported to have spent \$5.6 billion or about 30% of its GNP on the military. Chung Kyu-sup, "A Reshuffle in the Power Hierarchy Under Kim Jong-il's Leadership, and an Analytic Study on Its Stability," *Korea Herald*, Vol. 20, 1997, No. 7. (<http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/nknews/nk0797/nk07sas0.html>)

13 1990 (-3,7%); 1991 (-5,2%); 1992 (-7,6%); 1993 (-8,5%); 1994 (-8,5%); 1995 (estimate -7,5%). See Hakjoon Kim, "North Korea after Kim Il-song and the Future of North-South Korean Relations," *Security Dialogue*, Vol 26, 1995, No. 1, pp. 73–91, p. 82.

economic progress since the 1960s which produced a GNP overshadowing by far that of the North and led to its inclusion into the OECD in 1996.¹⁴ In the 1980s, under pressure of a social protest movement, the military government opted for a cautious and gradual democratization from above. Following this course, in 1987–88 South Korea managed the transition from an authoritarian political system to a democratic one. Although it as yet cannot be regarded as a fully-fledged, consolidated democracy, the opportunities for political participation have substantially increased in the last decade. In the competition among the two Koreas, then, the North perceptibly fell behind. Seoul added to these problems when President Roh Tae Woo initiated a policy of detente and of change through rapprochement in mid-1988—a policy that was continued by his successor Kim Young Sam.

To find some way out of this malaise, Pyongyang engaged in arms trade. Weapons of mass destructions, parts for weapons, missile technology and nuclear technology were traded (partly for oil) with states such as Syria, Iran and Iraq.¹⁵ North Korea has sold advanced Scud-C missiles to nations in the Middle East: 90–100 to Iran in the late 1980s and 20–24 to Syria (including mobile launchers) after the Second Gulf War. Armaments goods were also sold to terrorist groups. In 1989 alone, North Korea exported armaments worth more than \$400 million.¹⁶ Accordingly, one aspect of the nuclear dispute was that to impose sanctions in order to achieve North Korean compliance might have meant nuclear proliferation on a large scale since the sale

14 See also OECD, *Economic Surveys 1993–1994 Korea* (Paris: 1994).

15 The states named are also “outsiders” in international politics. The cooperation between outsiders, then, poses the theoretically interesting question of the possibility of forming some kind of “alliance” of outsiders, i.e. a counter-integrative strategy to “mainstream” integration.

16 Segal, “Managing New Arms Races,” p. 85; Lee Sun-ho, “North Korea’s Development of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *Korea Focus*, Vol. 4, 1996, No. 2, pp. 39–49, p. 48.

of one nuclear bomb alone would have kept the country and its political system alive for about one more year.¹⁷

Besides engaging in proliferation Pyongyang tried to find some economic relief by—reluctantly—trying to improve relations with the South. While direct economic cooperation has been officially rejected, indirect bilateral trade and indirect South Korean investment via China have been rising since 1988. As a result, trade with the South increased from \$1 million in 1983 to \$232 million in the first eight months of 1994.¹⁸ Politically, North Korea signed the agreement on reconciliation and non-aggression in late 1991, which also contained provisions regarding the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

North Korean politics between dissociation and integration: The nuclear issue

Another way to find some compensation for these positional losses was to go nuclear. To deal with this issue, we have to go back to 1945. When the US dropped atomic bombs on Japan, Kim Il Sung was heavily impressed by this new weapon and never lost his admiration for the bomb. His own nuclear weapons program probably dates back to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 when Pyongyang learned that Moscow might not be a reliable ally. This assumption is supported by the evident connection

17 By contrast, David C. Kang, "Preventive War and North Korea," *Security Studies*, Vol. 4, Winter 1994/95, No. 2, pp. 330–364, p. 332, maintains that the danger of North Korean nuclear proliferation has been greatly exaggerated. However, the economic benefits of proliferation are substantial and thus the problem of proliferation has been real.

18 Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1994. Brinkmanship, Breakdown, and Breakthrough," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 35, 1995, No. 1, pp. 13–27, p. 26. For South Korean entrepreneurs, the attraction of any economic opening in North Korea is obvious: a common language and culture, a low-wage and putatively disciplined labor force and geographical proximity. Intra-Korean trade is still on the rise: Bates Gill, "The Divided Nations of China and Korea," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1996. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: 1996), pp. 133–159, p. 139.

between the strategy of self-reliance and autocentric development following from the *juche* ideology. Chajusong (independence) in military terms is a logical consequence of *juche* as well. Yet, there remain some uncertainties as to whether 1962 was the year in which it all began. At the latest, however, North Korea definitely started its own nuclear weapons program in the 1970s when South Korea was reported as engaging in a clandestine nuclear weapons development program. Throughout its existence, the North Korean program was conducted under the personal control of Kim Il Sung who primarily stressed its deterrent function.¹⁹

In the 1980s there was a rather intense nuclear cooperation with the Pakistani and the Iranian militaries which was known to the West. As early as mid-1987 already there were reports based on American and French satellite photos that near Yongbyon North Korea operated nuclear reprocessing facilities with explosion test devices near them. Since this was prone to easy detection, the Yongbyon facilities during the nuclear dispute were regarded as "a dummy plant erected for the facilitation of bargaining" while the real reprocessing complexes were supposed to be underground. Moreover, according to some sources, the DPRK even conducted a nuclear test in mid-1989.²⁰ While this is not yet fully certain, it is taken for granted that sometime between 1989 and 1991, the DPRK extracted and—possibly—reprocessed some plutonium from an indigenous five-MWT reactor commissioned in January 1986. According to a CIA estimate, North Korea produced six to nine

19 Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution and Future of the North Korean Nuclear Program," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 29, 1995, No. 1, pp. 40–66, p. 47, p. 49–51. Seoul abandoned this program in 1975 because of American pressure. Washington, then, agreed to covertly deploy tactical nuclear weapons in the South.

20 See Kim Byungki, "North Korea's Nuclear Policy in the Year 2000: Sources, Strategy and Implications for the Korean Peninsula," *Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 7, 1993, No. 1, pp. 32–57, p. 46–48, quotation p. 47f.

kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium, which may be sufficient to produce one or two nuclear devices. In 1993, a radio-chemical laboratory—a euphemism for a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant—was made operational and constituted the second-largest facility of that kind in the world after the US. In Yongbyon alone, there are more than one-hundred nuclear facilities.²¹

In the late 1980s Kim Il Sung supposedly came to realize the political utility and instrumentality of the nuclear issue. To be sure, North Korea had become a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985 due to Soviet pressure, but it never fully complied with its rules. Instead, the country resisted IAEA demands for inspection. Since 1989 Pyongyang made inspections contingent on the preceding withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from South Korea and an American declaration on the non-use of nuclear weapons against North Korea, which led Seoul to resume its missile program in 1990. In 1991, then, the North Korean nuclear ambitions were made public to the world in the course of prolonged recalcitrance by the Kim Il Sung regime.

His decision to play the nuclear card presumably had multiple facets. One aspect was to compensate for the weakening security-political bonds to Moscow and Beijing;²² another was to counter the advances South Korea had made in the past and to reestablish North Korea as a power to reckon with in the region. Also, US ambivalence must be mentioned since the Bush administration had thought of reducing American troops in the region and seemed to be stepping back from its leadership role. This

21 Mansourov, p. 43; Lee Sun-ho, p. 43. Lee Sun-ho (p.44) also stresses North Korea's capability to allocate the necessary financial means to achieve nuclear power status. For a list of North Korean nuclear related facilities, radio-chemistry laboratories, isotope processing facilities, waste storage sites, explosives test sites and support facilities see Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, 1994, No. 2, pp. 74–79.

22 Andrew Mack, "North Korea and the Bomb," *Foreign Policy*, No. 83, Summer 1991, pp. 87–104, p. 93.

draft of a modified US position in the Asian-Pacific region written by Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz could be interpreted as a reduction of the American commitment in the region.³⁵

Should Pyongyang succeed in its strife for the status as a nuclear power, a destabilizing shift in the pattern of the distribution of power in the region and a nuclear arms race could be expected. This apprehension in the world could be used by Kim Il Sung to secure his own position as supreme leader of the country and the prolonged existence of the political system he created as well as to extract concessions from the west. The mere announcement that it would admit IAEA inspections in 1991 was advantageous to Pyongyang both politically and economically. In the same year Washington, Seoul's military ally, withdrew its nuclear weapons from South Korean soil and cancelled the joint Team Spirit maneuver in 1992. Also, relations with Japan have improved since 1990. Tokyo was and still is interested in political stability on the peninsula and in opening opportunities for economic intrusion into North Korea and beyond, e.g. into Siberia. By intensifying relations to Pyongyang, Tokyo also tried to take precautions in case of a possible and, perhaps, anti-Japanese oriented³⁶ unification of the country and the power-political turbulences associated with such a unification. Thus, when the North Korean nuclear ambitions were revealed in 1991, Tokyo further intensified its relations to the country. A second boost in Japanese-DPRK relations occurred in 1993 after Pyongyang had tested its *Rodong* intermediate range missile, an

35 Sang Hoon Park, "North Korea and the Challenge to US-South Korean Alliance," *Survival*, Vol. 36, 1994, No. 2, pp. 78-91, p. 79; Bernard K. Gordon, "The Asian-Pacific Rim: Success at a Price," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, 1991, No. 1, pp. 142-159, p. 157. See also James A. Baker, III., "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, 1991, No. 5, pp. 1-18 for the new transpacific relations.

36 Kay Möller and Markus Tidten, "Nordkorea und die Bombe: Radikalisierung in der Isolation," *Aussenpolitik*, Vol. 45, 1994, No. 1, pp. 99-109, p. 103.

upgraded version of the Soviet *Scud* and *Frog* missiles which could be equipped with ABC-warheads and reach Japanese territory.²⁵

The Japanese policy towards North Korea became similar to an appeasement policy as Tokyo refrained from interrupting the substantial flow of money from the 100–250,000 Koreans living in Japan to their families in the DPRK—money that was becoming more and more important for the North Korean regime in the face of the given circumstances. Only in mid-1994 was Japan willing to cut these financial transactions, which are estimated to amount to \$600 to \$1,800 million per year.²⁶

At first, Pyongyang seemed to play according to the rules by signing the inspection agreement with IAEA officials in early 1992. In reality, however, it denied the IAEA inspection teams—either partly or completely—access to its nuclear sites. In the domestic psychological-political atmosphere of a garrison state, this move was destined to prove North Korean sovereignty to the perceived inimical international environment, to show strength and determinedness to the North Korean population and, thereby, to stabilize and affirm the political rule in the country.

In the international community, however, the policies Kim Il Sung pursued gave rise to sincere concerns and doubts about North Korean reliability and contractual fidelity. Moreover, they seemed to confirm that the DPRK already had nuclear weapons or was close to getting them. The US, South Korea, Japan and the

25 Osaka and Kyoto are within reach, and the missile bases in Myongchon and Hwadae of North Hamgyong Province have Okinawa within shooting range as KPA defector Sergeant Lee Chung-guk testified on 22 March 1994. See Mansourov, p. 49f.

26 According to more recent research, however, these figures are much too high. Eberstadt, e.g., generates a figure of under \$40 million per year for the years 1990–93. Nicholas Eberstadt, "Financial Transfers from Japan to North Korea. Estimating the Unreported Flows," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, 1996, No. 5, pp. 523–542, p. 539.

UN tried to pressure Pyongyang using a carrot-and-sticks policy in order to gain North Korean compliance to the IAEA inspection regime. On the one hand they promised economic assistance; on the other they underlined American deterrence capacities.²⁷ Despite this, Pyongyang announced its withdrawal from the NPT in March 1993. The resumption of the Team Spirit maneuvers and the perceived interference of the IAEA in domestic North Korean issues were cited to justify this move. The question for the powers involved, then, was how to respond to this. Hard, isolationist policies (economic sanctions, military deterrence) and soft, integrative policies (economic assistance, negotiations) were the alternatives at hand.

Despite vehement South Korean opposition, in April Washington indicated its interest in direct, bilateral talks with the Kim Il Sung regime thus opting for integration strategies that were recommended to the other involved powers as well. As a result of these talks, the US guaranteed its non-interference and non-aggression in June 1993. In a second round of talks, Pyongyang responded by promising to resume the inter-Korean dialogue. Washington, in turn, held out the prospect of American assistance in the switching from gas-graphite to light-water nuclear reactors. The nuclear dispute, however, could not be settled and in early November 1993 the UN General Assembly tried to put moral pressure on Pyongyang by demanding full compliance to the rules of the NPT treaty—without success.

As a result of these developments, Seoul and Washington resumed their yearly Team Spirit maneuvers with the field exercise Foal Eagle in mid-November. Pyongyang marked this as an unfriendly measure and called it the trigger for a second Korean war. Irrespective of this militant rhetoric, Pyongyang

27 Nicholas Eberstadt, "Can the Two Koreas be One?," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, 1992, No. 5, pp. 150–165, p. 159.

maintained and indicated a genuine interest in sustaining the established communication channels. There were even signs of a beginning North Korean perestroika, a cautious economic reform—leaving, of course, the political sector aside. Prime Minister Kang Son-san, for example, was quite frank when he described the awkward situation in economics in December 1993. The creation of special economic zones and invitations for foreign investment were also indicators of a nascent economic liberalization. The driving rationale behind these measures was, of course, the well-grounded fear of mounting social unrest in the wake of shortages and deficiencies in the supply of foodstuffs and in the face of a languishing and quickly declining industrial production, which was only working at thirty to fifty percent of its capacity because of scarcity of energy. Socio-economic pressure, then, demanded a continued interest in negotiations. As a result, Pyongyang underlined its willingness to reach a peaceful settlement of the inspection issue and re-announced their resumption in January 1994.

However, this permission covered the seven well-known nuclear sites only and not two secretly operated sites and some storage sites—the existence of which was revealed by American satellite photos documenting the measures that had been taken to camouflage them. When the inter-Korean talks failed in mid-March 1994 because of the nuclear issue, Seoul decided to buy the American anti-missile system *Patriot*. Despite the strictly defensive character of the *Patriot* system Pyongyang perceived this move as a military provocation and gathered an impressive amount of troops at the border. In turn, South Korean Defense Secretary Rhee Bjoung-tae put the South Korean military on the alert.

At the end of March North Korean obstructionism forced the IAEA to call upon the UN Security Council. However, different interests among the permanent members of the Security Council undermined any joint policy towards the “outlaw state” North Korea. China—the country with which Pyongyang has the most

contact²⁸—together with the non-aligned countries forestalled a resolution accusing Kim Il Sung's policies and threatening sanctions.²⁹ Instead, the Security Council could only agree on a non-binding declaration. China's motivation was to prevent an economic and political collapse of Kim Il Sung's regime, which presumably would lead to a Korean unification, and to preserve the DPRK as China's military forefield. Thus, in Beijing's view, to put pressure on Pyongyang was an inadequate strategy. Instead, negotiations were preferred as the best means to avoid a nuclear arms race in the region.³⁰ Beijing also tried to alleviate North Korean apprehensions about the malign political effects of economic liberalization and invited North Korean politicians to an inspection tour of the Chinese special economic zones.³¹ Moscow also recommended negotiations and proposed an international conference with the US, Japan, North and South Korea plus representatives of the IAEA and the UN.

In April, however, as he was about to leave for Seoul, American Secretary of Defense William Perry advocated a determined position vis-a-vis Pyongyang which did not exclude military means and referred to reports indicating the North Korean

28 B.C. Koh, "Trends in North Korean Foreign Policy," *Journal of North East Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, 1994, No. 2, pp. 61–74, p. 65.

29 June Teufel Dreyer, "Regional Security Issues," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 49, 1996, No. 2, pp. 391–411, p. 398f.

30 This is not to say that China completely refrained from pressure. In March 1993 China closed its border to North Korea and in May threatened to boycott the seaports Rajin and Chongjin. Also, it should be mentioned that the delivery of armaments to Pyongyang has been significantly reduced. Yong-Sup Han, "China's Leverages over North Korea," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 18, 1994, No. 2, pp. 233–249, pp. 243–245.

31 On the Chinese view of Pyongyang see Banning Garrett/Bonnie Glaser, "Looking Across the Yalu: Chinese Assessments of North Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 35, 1995, No. 6, pp. 528–545. At the end of 1991, Pyongyang created a special economic zone along Chinese lines around the seaports Rajin and Sonbong which are located in the Northeast of the country close to the Chinese border. By now, there are four SEZs in North Korea. Up to date, their infrastructure and industrial development has been very modest.

capability to produce up to five nuclear bombs.³² Others opted for a trade embargo including a quarantine and naval blockade or a sticks-and-carrots approach in which military action could be necessary.³³ Some even suggested preventive military strikes.³⁴ By contrast, President Clinton was determined to use the entire range of non-military means first. As a result, Washington announced joint military exercises with South Korea to exert pressure on Pyongyang; yet, at the same time the Patriot missile interceptors were supplied by ship to deescalate the situation. For some time, then, North Korean political moves appeared promising as in late April Pyongyang proposed to sign a peace treaty substituting for the armistice of 1953. Soon thereafter, however, Kim Il Sung ordered an exchange of nuclear fuel rods. By doing so, it became increasingly impossible to ascertain whether Pyongyang had extracted nuclear weapons-grade material and, if yes, the amount. Despite this or perhaps because of this, Washington confirmed its willingness to resume negotiations with North Korea at the end of May. Nevertheless, the exchange of nuclear fuel rods went on, and the Security Council responded by issuing a tough warning to Pyongyang. The mechanisms of escalation worked in this situation because Kim Il Sung threatened war in case of punitive measures.

32 Kang Myong Do, a North Korean defector, who was introduced as the son-in-law of Prime Minister Kang Song San by the South Korean secret service in late July 1994, confirmed this information. According to his testimony, North Korea owns five nuclear warheads. The North Korean press agency KCNA denied both Kang Myong Do's identity and his testimony.

33 Ronald F. Lehmann, II., "A North Korean Nuclear-Weapons Program. International Implications," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 24, 1993, No. 3, pp. 257–272, p. 271f.

34 For the opposite position see David C. Kang, p. 331. The American attack on Tuwaitha in January 1991 which left Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons program largely intact, could be cited to confirm doubts about preventive attacks. See Hyun Chung, "North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions and the Current Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," *Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 25, 1994, No. 3, pp. 229–257, pp. 246–248.

The fundamental problem for the international community's reaction was the lack of reliable data on the exact number of North Korean nuclear sites and their precise location. Obviously, some of them were underground. In addition, American military experts indicated that Kim Il Sung's troops might successfully execute a surprise attack and take Seoul, close to the inter-Korean border, as hostage. Consequently, preventive military strikes had to be excluded as a realistic alternative to the toilsome diplomatic approach. The DPRK represented both an "enemy state" and a "partner."³⁵ In mid-June 1994 former US president and emergency-approved mediator Jimmy Carter flew to Pyongyang—on North Korean request (!) which indicates the North Korean interest not to let relations break off. Consequently, his visit turned out to be successful. In discussions with Kim Il Sung he secured the great leader's promise to resume negotiations with Seoul and to cancel North Korea's nuclear program. As a further result, Kim Il Sung even proposed a North-South summit in Pyongyang, a novelty in inter-Korean relations, and indicated support for the American plan to switch from gas graphite to light-water reactors which are much less capable of producing nuclear-weapons-grade plutonium.

The sudden death of Kim Il Sung on 8 July 1994 interrupted this process of rapprochement; the North-South summit and the talks with the US were postponed. The suspected end of North Korean conciliatory policy towards the South, however, did not occur. By contrast, economic relations further improved and expanded. In mid-July, Pyongyang issued a law concerning the formation of joint ventures; a free-trade area close to the Tumen river at the border with China and Russia was discussed; and the North confirmed its determination to locate South Korean corporations in the seaport Nampo. Washington and Seoul moved to fortify the process of detente by offering economic assistance and assistance in the conversion of the nuclear reactors. North

35 Sang Hoon Park, p. 86.

Korean–American talks were resumed on 9 August in Geneva and both sides were heading for compromise. The Clinton administration was interested in coming to terms with Pyongyang in the nuclear dispute because not to reach an agreement with the North might have endangered the prolongation of the NPT scheduled for April 1995. A few days after Kim Jong-il was presented as the new leader of the country, a final agreement was reached in mid-October.

The Treaty and Its Implications

The Agreed Framework on the Nuclear Issue signed in Geneva on 21 October 1994, consisting of four pages plus a secret two-page appendix, has been celebrated as an optimal compromise solution.³⁶ In this accord, Pyongyang agreed to shut down the Russian gas graphite nuclear reactor in Yongbyon, to stop the ongoing construction of two more reactors of this kind and to permit IAEA inspections. In turn, the US promised to lift gradually the trade and investment sanctions and to supply two modern 1000-MWT-light-water-reactors of South Korean origin and up to 500.000 barrels crude oil per year. Three months after the signing of the treaty this supply was to begin; after three more months the supply of the light-water-reactors was to be contractually negotiated in detail. In addition to this, the US and North Korea agreed to establish liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang. "The Geneva accord," writes Manwoo Lee in conclusion, "rewards a rogue state for promising to become a responsible member of the international community."³⁷

The treaty could be interpreted as the means to overcome the impasse in socioeconomic development caused by the politics of

36 Byung Chul Koh, "Confrontation and Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula: The Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 6, 1994, No. 2, pp. 53–83.

37 Manwoo Lee, "North Korea: The Cold War Continues," *Current History*, Vol. 95, December 1996, pp. 438–442, p. 440.

dissociation. To give an illustration: In 1993 alone, the economy shrank by five percent and GNP was only eighty percent of 1989's GNP.³⁸ Economically and politically, then, the signing of the treaty benefitted Pyongyang considerably. On the one hand, the sovereignty and the equal status of the North Korean political system was re-confirmed internationally; on the other hand, substantial economic assistance loomed on the horizon because Washington and Seoul announced the lifting of the trade embargo and promised comprehensive economic cooperation. As a consequence, in the eyes of Pyongyang the Agreed Framework constituted an American guarantee for the North Korean political system; South Korea, Japan and the US, by contrast, viewed it as the prelude to the peaceful transformation of the North Korean regime.³⁹

For the US, moreover, the Geneva accord constituted a big step (at least ostensibly) to keep the DPRK within the NPT and thereby to enhance the chances for a prolongation of the non-proliferation regime in 1995. At the same time, the entire region was politically stabilized by de-capping an acute political storm center. Japan, Russia, and South Korea agreed to this. South Korea, in particular, was willing to pay a substantial price to reach a compromise with Pyongyang. Seoul was (and is) almost condemned to engage heavily in the process of opening and liberalization in North Korea in terms of financial and economic assistance. The rationale behind this is to prevent a mass exodus from the North because of economic plight and to avert a swift unification of the country resulting from it. A unification would pose economic problems to the South that would surmount even the substantial difficulties with German unification. As a conse-

38 Koh Il-Dong, "The Future of the Two Korean States: The Economy is the Key," *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, Vol. 1, 1994, No. 4, pp. 343-350, p. 345. See also the differing data in footnote 13.

39 Matthias Dembinski, Kay Möller and Markus Tidten, *Die koreanische Nuklearkrise und das Nichtverbreitungsregime*, unpublished manuscript, Ebenhausen 1995, p. 7.

quence, Seoul tries to handle these problems preventively through programs of cooperation and exchange and by encouraging South Korean investments in the North. In the South Korean design a Korean unification is to occur gradually, to begin with economics first and later to be extended to the political sector.⁴⁰ On this point—withstanding the domestic opposition forces in the South—the interests of the North and the South converge and form a bizarre alliance. Both opt for the maintenance of the status quo and thus for the two-state solution. It can be safely assumed, therefore, that there will be a peace treaty in the near future.

The Geneva accord meant—at least superficially—a considerable political stabilization for the countries in the region and, perhaps, marked the prelude to a deepening cooperation within and beyond the region. The degree of reliability and predictability of the situation in the region increased substantially and benefitted all the actors in the region. A dramatic nuclear arms race including China, Japan and South Korea could be prevented for the time being, the security dilemma in the region could be significantly reduced. This also benefitted extra-regional actors and the international community at large. At first sight, the non-proliferation regime could be strengthened as well. There were also promising signs of a nascent Chinese-American cooperation in security political matters because in November 1994 Beijing and Washington—for the first time since 1989—talked about disarmament, the stoppage of nuclear tests, the extension of the NPT and the production of uranium and plutonium.

Yet, looking at these promising points, one may be tempted to overlook more negative and gloomy signs. It may be possible that by signing the Geneva accord Kim Jong-il merely tried to

40 Government and opposition agree on this point. See e.g. the three-step plan (peaceful coexistence—peaceful exchange—peaceful unification) of Kim Dae Jung, "The Once and Future Korea," *Foreign Policy*, No. 86, Spring 1992, pp. 40–55, and Kim Young Sam's design (cooperation and reconciliation, economic union, political union) of 15 October 1994, as reported by Decornoy, p. 22f.

consolidate his grip of power. The accord implied stability and reliability in matters of foreign policy which enabled him to concentrate his resources to win the power political struggle within the regime, to establish himself as the political leader of the country. The accord also implied the recognition as a sovereign and equal actor in world politics and, as this recognition was extracted even from the long-standing enemy, Washington, this could also be a trump card in the domestic power struggle.⁴¹ Thus, short-term stability in the region may be transitory as a consolidated Kim Jong-il regime might turn to more aggressive politics again in the future.

An even gloomier aspect comes to mind when dealing with the sensitive question of whether the DPRK is actually disposing of nuclear weapons—whether it is close to having them or not. Reliable information will be at hand at the time when the IAEA is permitted to inspect the two North Korean nuclear storage sites. However, this will only happen after a few years' time when the main parts of the new light-water reactors have been supplied as set forth in the Geneva accord. This ambiguity⁴² in the accord was immediately criticized, for example by IAEA managing director Hans Blix. Others were more direct and concluded that "North Korea's nuclear weapons program has been and remains a serious security threat to the international community."⁴³

At present, the views on the nuclear capacities of the DPRK differ largely. Whereas Russian nuclear experts maintain that North Korea is not capable of producing nuclear weapons, American, Japanese and South Korean secret services report

41 Mansourov, p. 59.

42 See Byung-Joon Ahn, "Korea's Future after Kim Il-Sung," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 28, 1994, No. 3, pp. 442-472, p. 459.

43 Kathleen C. Bailey, "The Nuclear Deal with North Korea: Is the Glass Half Empty or Half Full?" *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 14, 1995, No. 2, pp. 137-148, p. 137.

Pyongyang as already producing nuclear warheads and thereby complementing its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction which also include chemical and biological weapons.⁴⁴ A friendly gesture for the new North Korean political leadership would be to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention in addition to the already signed Biological Weapons Convention. Another and even more important one would be voluntarily to permit an earlier inspection of the two nuclear storage sites. However, if the new regime does not move in this direction, one has to proceed from the assumption that Pyongyang already has nuclear weapons, especially when taking into account past experiences with North Korean foreign policies of equidistance and with its contractual fidelity. It can by no means be ruled out that Kim Il Sung's intention to establish normal and working relations with foreign countries and simultaneously to pursue the nuclear program will become reality. Consequently, The Economist and others suspected the Geneva accord to be detrimental to the prolongation of the NPT in the long run.⁴⁵ Other crazy or backlash states might use North Korean nuclear politics as a model to extract similar gains, and, moreover, states such as South Korea or Japan might go nuclear as well. Accordingly, Washington receives most of the blame for this precarious outcome by giving in to North Korean blackmail and having agreed to "an exchange of unequal concessions—Washington's maximal *quids* for Pyongyang's minimal *quo*."⁴⁶ Even, the term appeasement is used in the criticism of American diplomacy.⁴⁷

44 Ibid., p. 143; Lee Sun-ho, p. 46f.

45 "Storing up Trouble," *The Economist*, 22 October 1994, p. 20; Ronald F. Lehman, II., "Some Considerations on Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Question," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 6, 1994, No. 2, pp. 11–33, p. 12.

46 Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1994," p. 20.

47 J. D. Crouch II., "Clinton's 'Slow Boat to Korea'," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 14, 1995, No. 1, pp. 35–44, p. 36; Bailey, p. 138.

Yet, to date North Korean policy is in line with the accord. In early November 1994, Pyongyang announced the stoppage of construction at two nuclear power stations and the shutdown of another. Clearly, this could be taken as a strong sign for the North's profound interest in implementing the treaty. On 28 November the IAEA publicly stated that its team visited the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon and Taechon and confirmed that these facilities were not in operation and that construction work had stopped. As a result, on 16 December the US, South Korea and Japan agreed to create the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), an international consortium eventually coming into existence on 9 March 1995, to process the supply of the light-water reactors. Pyongyang then eased trade restrictions in mid-January 1995 and the US responded by alleviating some trade sanctions in place since 1950. Nevertheless, some frictions remained and still remain. Establishing the liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang proves to be time-consuming and is well beyond the time schedule. In addition, North Korea opposed Seoul as the supplier of the reactors in the first half of 1995. In mid-June, however, Pyongyang accepted this point in the negotiations with the US in Kuala Lumpur.⁴⁸ Most recently, at the end of July 1997, the construction (by KEDO) of two nuclear power plants in Sinpo was initiated. Consequently, the implementation of the Geneva Accord is gradually progressing despite certain setbacks.

Time, then, is the crucial factor. Both North Korea and the US play for time and expect a future improvement of the situation in their favor. The US calculation, however, seems more realistic. In addition, the North Korean regime is subjected to a power-

48 Jhe Seong-ho, "North Korea's Rapprochement with U.S. and Japan," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 4, 1996, No. 4, pp. 64-75, p. 69f.; Manfred Pohl, "Atompoker und wirtschaftlicher Niedergang: Nordkorea nach dem Tode Kim Il Sung," in: Joachim Betz and Stefan Brüne (Eds.), *Jahrbuch Dritte Welt 1996. Daten-Übersichten-Analysen* (München: 1995), pp. 230-238. See also "Turbulence in the Koreas," *IISS: Strategic Survey 1996/97* (London: 1997), pp. 182-191.

political logic. If Pyongyang should spoil the accord in the years to come, the North Korean position would surely deteriorate. This substantiates reasonable hopes that the Agreed Framework will be comprehensively implemented.

How to Explain North Korean Politics

American disengagement from South Korea seems not to have been the main goal of Kim Il Sung although the US was perceived as highly inimical by Pyongyang. Instead, it seems more plausible that North Korea's policies stiffened because in the wake of the faltering East-West conflict the process of detente was interpreted as a thorough menace to the very existence of the North's political system. In pursuing these more aggressive foreign policies, Kim Il Sung rightly counted on the Chinese determination not to permit intervention in an area so close to the Chinese border. The nuclear bomb, then, was not primarily an instrument for re-integration into the international community and a means to extract economic concessions and political respect from the West.⁴⁹ These were secondary goals. The prevailing aim was to secure the continued existence of Kim Il Sung's political system. North Korea's overriding interest has been *regime security*—even if this might be detrimental to *national security*.⁵⁰

Thus, the nuclear program might objectively contain primarily defensive purposes. In armaments, Pyongyang has increasingly fallen behind the South. Whereas South Korea build up a modern high-tech army, the North Korean army, though impressive in terms of absolute numbers and manpower, is outdated and

49 Jürgen Scheffran et. al., "Nichtverbreitung mit militärischen Mitteln? Nordkoreas Nuklearprogramm und die Strategie der Counterproliferation," *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, Vol. 39, 1994, No. 7, pp. 834–847, p. 835.

50 James Cotton, "North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions," in: IISS, *Asia's International Role in the Post-Cold War Era*, Part I, *Adelphi Paper* 275, (London: 1993), pp. 94–106, p. 94f.; Denny Roy, "The Myth of North Korean 'Irrationality'," *Korean Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 25, 1994, No. 2, pp. 129–45, p. 137.

old-fashioned; for most of the equipment the electronic revolution did not gain substantial ground. In terms of military expenditures the differences are equally striking. Whereas Seoul's defense budget increased from \$10.62 to \$12.06 billion between 1990 and 1993, the North's budget fell from \$5.23 to \$2.19 billion. In addition, Moscow de facto removed the nuclear umbrella from the North. From this point of view, Pyongyang went nuclear not to challenge, but to sustain the military balance in the region and especially towards South Korea.⁵¹ Following this logic, then, North Korean nuclear weapons could be a factor for stability in the region.⁵²

The problem with this argument is the common perception of the DPRK as a crazy state. This madman image might to a certain extent be a product of misunderstanding and propaganda because the policies of Pyongyang seem to be quite "rational" given their specific interests of regime survival. Nevertheless, the outside perception is as it is, and not without reason. Moreover, North Korea has even played upon this image as an irrational and reckless actor in the nuclear dispute. By doing so, it successfully intimidated the US and extracted as many concessions as possible. In the long run, however, this madman theory might be damaging, not only for North Korea and South Korea, but for the region and even the world.⁵³

Since the end of the 1980s, the North Korean leadership has been facing a dilemma that can be termed as *dissociation from* versus *integration into* patterns of interdependence. Both alterna-

51 Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1994," p. 21. See also David C. Kang, p. 341. According to other sources, Pyongyang's military expenditures—though far behind Seoul's military budget—have steadily increased in the 1990s. Paul George et al., "Military Expenditure," *SIPRI Yearbook 1996*, pp. 325–380, p. 362. The authors provide data up to 1994. For more recent data see Chung Kyu-sup.

52 David C. Kang, p. 352.

53 Denny Roy, "North Korea and the 'Madman' Theory," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 25, 1994, No. 3, pp. 307–319, p. 307, 309, 311.

tives were unattractive, even dangerous to Kim Il Sung and constituted a Catch 22.⁵⁴ Should he choose the prolongation of dissociative strategies even though their limitations could already be perceived, this concept of socioeconomic development would be more forcefully revealed. Socioeconomic problems could be expected to intensify more sharply. For a limited time they could be handled by increasing repression, but in the long run they would destroy the social basis of the government and lead to its overthrow. Should he opt for liberalization and opening towards the outside world and thus for a re-integration into networks of international interdependence, a whole bunch of political, economic, cultural and ideological impulses would influence the country and its population. In this case, a contamination of broad societal groups through external impulse could be expected, something like a cultural shock. This, in turn, might also lead to the collapse of Kim Il Sung's political rule. Accordingly the preservation of his political power, and the long-term survival of the political system he created, reigned supreme in his policy decisions. A growing ossification of the political system and an increasing incapacity for introducing reforms within the system followed.

In practice, Kim Il Sung's policy of dissociation faced mounting problems of legitimacy and led to a reluctant and cautious departure from this strategy. The turning point could be dated back to the spring of 1993 when—because of the impending American-North Korean talks and social unrest in the country—Kim Il Sung decided to pause the nuclear program and for the first time publicly conceded the economic plight of the country. In this situation, as in the past, foreign countries did not opt for a policy of isolation and pressure towards the DPRK. The West as well as China and Russia did not take isolating measures to

54 Barry K. Gills, "Prospects for Peace and Stability in Northeast Asia: The Korean Conflict," *Conflict Studies* 278, (London: 1995), p. 25.

gain Pyongyang's compliance because of the danger that this might foster North Korean dissociation involving the risk of its uncontrolled and uncontrollable foreign policy behavior as well as the risk of nuclear escalation. Instead they responded to the weakening dissociative policy of Pyongyang with the proposal of integration, while at the same time taking North Korean security interests sincerely in order to avoid an escalation. In addition, this approach was supported by the growing and reasonable belief that time was on the side of the West.

Possible Future Developments

Whether the nascent opening towards the world and the beginning of integration into the world market continue depends on the future political development in North Korea. Whereas some perceive North Korea as "the land that never changes,"⁵⁵ Richard Grant refers to the famous dictum of Louis XIV "*L'état, c'est moi*," as having been truly realized by Kim Il Sung and thus predicts that with "Kim's demise, this system cannot survive."⁵⁶

Since Kim Il Sung's death which plunged the population in a massive, deep and authentic grief resulting in numerous pilgrimages to his memorial in Kaesong and which amounted to the loss of the country's father figure, North Korea is in a phase of limbo and transition. There were indications that within the political leadership a power struggle occurred on the question of succession. The party and the military, however, backed Kim Jong-il, who is supreme commander of the military. Despite this, doubts that he does not have its full support remain because since 1991 there have been repeated reports of opposition within the ranks.

55 Kim Yong-Ki (Ed.), *North Korea: The Land That Never Changes. Before and After Kim Il Sung* (Seoul: 1995).

56 Richard L. Grant, "Juche's Last Gasp," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 6, 1994, No. 2, pp. 131-144, p. 131. See also Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1994," p. 26.

Indications of this opposition date back to the early 1970s. Furthermore, there were reports about opposition within the political and economic elites of the country as expressed in various leaflets distributed in the privileged areas in Pyongyang.

In addition, although a movement towards democracy as that seen in Eastern Europe seems quite improbable because there the mechanisms of social self-checking obviously worked very well (extreme political repression was not needed for a very long time), the regime seems to be losing ground amongst the population. For the masses, starvation may be the major reason. In addition, there are further indications of growing discontent. In the recent past, the number of political prisoners is reported to have risen considerably. Human rights organizations such as Asia Watch estimate their number to amount to about 200,000. The hope for a human and just future of mankind along the lines of Kim(ilsung)ism seems increasingly to be replaced by disillusionment in the DPRK; quiet alienation and combat fatigue seem to be the prevailing mood in country. Problems of legitimacy are indirectly conceded by Pyongyang when one looks at the government's classification of the population: Only 27% of the population belong to the core group of the most loyal; 22% are considered as waverers, and more than half of the population (51%) are deemed "incorrigible heretics."⁵⁷ This legitimacy crisis is further illustrated by the increasing number of intellectual defectors in recent years. In 1997, the "domino effect of defections"⁵⁸ also reached high-ranking officials as the example of Hwang Jang-yop shows.

However, there are signs that Kim Jong-il is consolidating his power position. He did not officially take over the political

57 Grant, p. 139.

58 Do Heung-yul, "North Korea: Teetering on the Edge?" *Korea Focus*, Vol. 4, 1996, No. 4, pp. 47-55, pp. 52-54.

leadership of the country immediately after his father's death; instead, he allowed himself a longer period of mourning which has not yet come to an end even by now.⁵⁹ This can be seen as a clear signal of Kim Jong-il's confidence and security in his hold on power: "the death of Kim Il-song merely marked North Korea's transition from an era of Kim Chong-il's rule in the presence of Kim Il-song to an era of Kim Chong-il's rule in the absence of Kim Il-song."⁶⁰

Indeed, this view is nourished by official North Korean information policies which ascribe to Kim Jong-il the decisive political driving force for signing of the two inter-Korean agreements of 1991, the Basic Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Exchange and Cooperation and the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.⁶¹ This view of Kim Jong-il as already having secured his power political position within the regime is supported if one looks at Kim Jong-il's impressive and thematically comprehensive and socially broad power base located in the fields of propaganda, the economy and the military. Starting with propaganda and cultural-ideological affairs where he formalized his father's ideological considerations (*juche sasang*) into Kimilsungism (*Kim Il Sung chuui*), he soon moved to the highest echelons of institutions of economic planning. There the Red Flag movement increased his influence over local political, administrative and economic organs throughout North Korea. Kim Jong-il—having a comprehensive overview on the situation of the economy in the country—is then

59 Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1994," p. 16; Dong-Bok Lee, "Kim Jong-il's North Korea. Its Limitations and Prospects," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 18, 1994, No. 3, pp. 421–441, p. 427. At the time of writing, however, there is reason to assume that after a three-year mourning period and on one of the two anniversaries—on 9 September (state foundation) or on 10 October (party foundation)—Kim Jong-il will officially take over the positions of his father.

60 Hakjoon Kim, p. 76. See also p. 82.

61 Dong-Bok Lee, p. 430.

reported as having initiated remarkable reforms in the economy (foreign trade, joint venture law, independent accounting system for enterprises, increase of consumer goods production). In the military field, a major triumph dates back to April 1992 when he was assigned the rank of marshal (*wonsu*) to be outranked by only his father as generalissimo (*taewonsu*).⁶²

He enjoys the almost full support of the graduates of the Mjangjondae Revolutionary Academy, a national cadre institution. In addition, he is backed by an impressive number of technocrats and bureaucrats and—perhaps even more important as could be seen by the massive military parade held on the occasion of the anniversary of the Korean Workers' Party in October 1995 or at Kim Jong-il's fifty-fifth birthday celebration—by high-level military men such as Oh Chin U, Oh Guk Ryol and Choe Gwang.⁶³ The deaths not only of Oh Chin U in February 1995 and, two years later, of his successor, Choe Gwang, but of no less than about fifty influential persons since Kim Il Sung's death have given his son the opportunity to make a major reshuffle in the power hierarchy and to appoint even closer confidants to the respective positions. Also, the replacement of Prime Minister Kang Song San can be seen as indicating the consolidation of Kim Jong-il's power position.⁶⁴

Regarding the question of regime legitimacy, then, the outlook may be not that gloomy. Although regime legitimacy in the past has been basically based on charismatic—i.e. irrationally grounded—legitimacy which led Scalapino to conclude that Kim

62 Koh Byung-Chul, "Politics of Succession in North Korea: Consolidation or Disintegration?" *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 7, 1993, No. 1, pp. 58–78, pp. 68–72, p. 62.

63 Taeho Kim and Young Koo Cha, "Prospects for Political Change and Liberalization in North Korea," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 15, 1993, No. 3, pp. 155–169, pp. 162–165; Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1995. The Crucible of 'Our Style Socialism'," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, 1996, No. 1, pp. 61–72, p. 62.

64 For details see Chung Kyu-sup.

Il Sung's charisma could not be transferred to his son,⁶⁵ there are reasons to assume that a transfer of charismatic power is possible in the North Korean case. Chung Joong-Gun maintains that Kim Il Sung cleverly proceeded with the purpose of institutionalizing his charisma and to extending it to his family—in particular to his son. Kim Il Sung planned the succession well in advance leaving years to build up Kim Jong-il's image and to demonstrate his unparalleled closeness to the great leader. Accordingly, Kim Jong-il had his official endorsement of the charismatic leader, even more: the accession is the great leader's personal will. This transfer of charisma to the dear leader will be of utmost importance in the initial stages of his rule. Later on, however, it will have to be more and more supplemented by rational and performance-oriented elements of legitimacy.⁶⁶ Ultimately, the duration of Kim Jong-il's rule will be critically dependent on his ability to rejuvenate the stumbling economy and to improve the living standard of the North Korean people.⁶⁷

Here, the prospects are meager because of the regime's growing inability to feed its citizens. In the wake of the chronic food shortage the number of people committing suicide has risen dramatically as well as those who starve to death; soldiers increasingly rampage through the country; theft, corruption and social disorder are mounting.⁶⁸ Estimates on the North Korean migration potential due to starvation expect up to 6.5 million people who might be willing to leave the country. China has

65 Robert A. Scalapino, "The United States and Asia: Future Prospects," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, 1991, No. 5, pp. 19–40, p. 34.

66 Chung Joong-Gun, "Charisma and Regime Legitimacy: Political Succession in North Korea," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 7, 1993, No. 1, pp. 79–115. For the building up of Kim Jong-il see in detail Koh Byung-Chul.

67 Koh Byung-Chul, p. 69.

68 *International Herald Tribune*, 17 April 1997, p. 1 and p. 7.

apparently already established migration camps near Yanji, Dandong, Congshen and Tumen. Paradoxically, this situation has obviously not yet led to widespread social unrest, which may be attributed to the strong loyalty of the people towards Kim Il Sung. However, there are reports that Pyongyang did acquire considerable amounts of riot control equipment, indicating a sense of insecurity among the ruling elite.⁶⁹

Initiating substantial economic reform to improve the situation seems not to be an option for Kim Jong-il because of the fear of a potential collapse of the regime in its wake. To date, major steps towards economic and—even less—political reform have not been undertaken; instead there are signs of an increasing ideological orthodoxy (media campaigns against ideological laxity and lethargy).⁷⁰

As a result, a number of scenarios for the future of the country are conceivable and all of them will have major foreign policy implications. Kim Jong-il's rule could turn out to be quite long lasting—especially since he is strongly backed by the military. Indeed, there is good reason to see a military regime rising in North Korea. Should Kim Jong-il increasingly face legitimacy crises, his rule could also be transitory—involving, to be sure, the specter of his desperately resorting to outward-directed force in order to maintain his position. This apprehension is nourished, e.g., by the advance of North Korean troops into the DMZ in April 1996, the intrusion of a submarine into South Korean waters in September 1996, by the reports of various defectors (most recently by high-ranking Hwang Jang-yop), and by Pyongyang's persistent militant rhetoric towards the South and talk of a decisive battle.⁷¹

69 Manwoo Lee, p. 439.

70 Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea in 1995"; Do Heung-yul. Some analysts argue that once a peace treaty will have been signed, North Korea may seriously embark economic reform. Manwoo Lee, p. 442. The growing ideological rigidity is also reflected in the appointment of representatives of the "orthodox" camp to influential political and military positions.

In the case of such a legitimacy crisis, his regime might give way to an outright military dictatorship, a reformist coalition or a messy breakup. A military dictatorship could lead to the re-intensification of the politics of dissociation and autarky. In this case, Pyongyang's chaos power would remain substantial as it would have to return to the nuclear option and the policies of proliferating nuclear and missile technology in order to uphold the system. Yet, the military government as a developmental dictatorship supported by the bureaucracy could also opt for a strategy of cautious integration which would not eliminate North Korea's chaos power, but which would turn North Korea into a much more reliable international actor. In this scenario, some form of imitation of the Chinese model of opening from above can be expected.⁷²

Moreover, unification of the Korean peninsula is conceivable. *The Economist* writes: "The question about Korea is not whether unity will come, but when—and whether it can somehow be managed peacefully."⁷³ In an optimistic interpretation "the world will be enriched by a democratic, prosperous, and united Korea" at some point in the next century.⁷⁴

71 There are counter-arguments to such a fear: the number of North Korea's military exercises has been unusually low in recent years, there are no indications of major troop mobilizations and the equipment is of poor standard. Yet, the obvious North Korean perception of Western policy in relation to the famine and to food aid (the US and South Korea make aid contingent upon the North Korean acceptance of formal negotiations of a peace treaty) is that it is a conscious attempt to infiltrate the North—in June 1997 Kim Jong-il in KCNA warned his countrymen that the "help of the imperialists" is directed towards subjecting the country. It serves as a reminder that the possibility of an irrational move of the North can by no means be completely ruled out. These perceptions may trigger the self-fulfillment of the regime's rhetoric. On the other hand, by the end of June 1997 Pyongyang has expressed its willingness to enter preparatory negotiations over a peace treaty in exchange for increased Western food aid. Thus, the conclusion of a peace treaty in the near future seems quite likely.

72 Byung-Joon Ahn, p. 447, 449.

73 "The Koreas Into One," *The Economist*, 15 January 1994, p. 19.

74 Grant, p. 144.

Unification would inevitably take the form of adjusting the North to the South Korean model and would potentially lead to the emergence of an economically prospering Korea as a nuclear power commanding a domestic market of seventy million consumers. However, referring to the German case, there are massive doubts in South Korea about whether Seoul's capabilities and resources could bear the costs of such a unification. Nevertheless, despite the detailed plans for a gradual unification of the country, unification might simply happen because of a rapidly deteriorating situation in the North, which would create a whole series of new problems. Korean unification would run counter to the interests of almost all relevant actors in the region, with the notable exception of the US. Neither China nor Russia nor Japan nor the political leaderships in Seoul and Pyongyang would be delighted in such a case—despite all the rhetoric to the contrary. In a sense, they share the long-standing French attitude towards Germany: they are so fond of Korea that they are pleased to have two of them. Although they try to avert unification as the direction to which the inter-Korean detente points, developments in the course of the North Korean opening and liberalization might wash these efforts aside. In the same vein, a potential complete breakdown of the North's economy resulting in immense social upheaval might lead to unification.

In the case of unification it will be of utmost importance (1) to tame Pyongyang's chaos power including the nuclear issue in the process of North Korea's decomposition and (2) to embed unification in a two-plus-two process,⁷⁵ possibly including Japan, Russia (e.g., in the Northeast Asian Cooperation Council) and/or the UN⁷⁶ in order to create a Korea that is a "major force

75 China supported the South Korean-American proposal of a four-power conference since the autumn of 1994. In mid-April 1996 Presidents Kim Young-Sam and Bill Clinton undertook a new initiative. See also Kim Yong-ho, "Future of Kim Jong-il Regime and Four-Way Talks," *Korea Focus*, Vol. 4, 1996, No. 4, pp. 56–63.

76 Donald S. Macdonald, "The Role of the Major Powers in the Reunification of

for peace and growth in the Pacific world."⁷⁷ The likely scenario of a unified Korea as a nuclear power and as a major economic power with a huge internal market of roughly seventy million people could be a stabilizing factor in the region, and it is this outlook that is needed to sell unification to the involved powers. Such benign effects of unification can be assumed if Korea would disclaim the nuclear option or, more precarious, if other regional actors, especially Japan, be assigned nuclear power status in order to achieve rough military balance in the region. At the same time, these states would have to become members of the NPT.

Besides the actors in the region, the West and the world at large have a substantial interest in future developments on the Korean peninsula and in North Korea in particular. This is a result of Pyongyang's armaments' program as regards missile development and its nuclear potential, which consists of somewhere in the range of one to seven operational nuclear bombs according to American intelligence reports. North Korea's intermediate range missile Nodong-1 is able to reach South Korean, Japanese, Russian and Chinese territory. Japan would seem to be the primary goal of North Korean (nuclear) warheads, because a nuclear attack on South Korea is rightly perceived as detrimental to the North's image within the Korean population.

In addition, Pyongyang is currently developing missiles with a range of 2,000–3,500 km, the *Taep'o-dong-1* and the *Taep'o-dong-2*. Offsetting the risks and the turbulences following from this armament program and stabilizing the peninsula is a main foreign policy goal of the neighboring actors as well as of the world. Since the formation of multilateral international institutions in the fields of politics and security politics is underdeveloped, which means that there are almost no institutional mechanisms to cope productively with the transformation pro-

Korea," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 15, 1992, No. 3, pp. 135–153, p. 150.

77 John Q. Blodgett, "Korea: Exploring Paths to Peace and Reunification," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 15, 1992, No. 3, pp. 171–181, p. 172.

cesses on the peninsula, the presence of extra-regional actors such as the US and Canada is necessary. European initiatives are also welcome. In this regard, the visit of a German delegation of businessmen to North Korea in November 1994 was a positive sign.

Western engagement, thus the essence of our thoughts, is indispensable both in case of the continued existence of two Korean states or in case of a Korean unification. The North Korean transformation has to be militarily, economically and politically cushioned by offering integration while simultaneously upholding a sufficient deterrent potential to preserve the balance on the peninsula. In case of unification, this process has to be shaped sensitively in order to alleviate apprehensions about the balance among China, Japan and Korea resulting from the emergence of a unified, economically and power-politically significant actor. Hopes to reach a military balance on a low level seem to be premature for the time being because the enduring security dilemma within in the region prevents quick disarmament steps. The massive regional potentials for turbulence which stem from political, economic, territorial, military and ethnic factors have produced an accelerating arms race in the region in recent years. This area, then, one of the most heavily armed regions in the world, is itself threatened by these armaments. In addition, such an area full of weaponry represents a threat to world security as well. These armaments absorb a substantial amount of the region's resources which are then, of course, missing for socioeconomic development. At best, they indicate a precarious stability. A destabilization of the situation would have repercussions beyond the region because of the mounting interdependence in the world stemming from the processes of globalization which leave the individual actors more vulnerable and susceptible to external influences. The effects are hardly assessable. Thus, regional as well as extra-regional actors have to uphold their integrationist strategies towards the North as well as towards a possibly unified Korea.

In this context it is important to note the marked increase of intra-regional trade in recent years. This humming economic intercourse is likely to increase in the future and may contribute to an easing of the political tensions in the region. The formation of a regional free trade area under the auspices of AFTA or APEC is as yet in its nascent period. The same applies to Kim Young Sam's proposal of March 1994 to establish a Yellow Sea economic zone. But the fact that such projects are discussed has politically stabilizing effects. For East Asian and Southeast Asian countries economic growth is of highest priority and therefore the countries in the region—including the DPRK—try to foster political stability. Without a doubt, this is by no means a unilinear development. A simple "econophilia"⁷⁸ counting on the political and peace-strategic effects of economic relations tends to under-rate the potential for instability in the region. Economic development is far ahead of political development, but it cannot be taken for granted that politics will automatically follow the economy. Many phenomena in the region such as the territorial and maritime disputes in East Asia remind the observer of the nineteenth century. As a consequence, relations of political cooperation are far less pronounced than cooperative economic relations. To a certain extent, the coexistence of various political systems in the Pacific region means a lack of symmetry in the political systems, and symmetry is advantageous for the creation of sustained cooperative and multilateral structures. Compared to Europe or North America, for example, the degree of reliability is quite modest in the region. Area security still ranges supreme as an issue in the foreign policy agendas of the regional actors. Accordingly, one can presume a constant and possibly still increasing level of military expenditures and armaments for the foreseeable future.

78 Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, "Rethinking East Asian Security," *Survival*, Vol. 36, 1994, No. 2, pp. 3-21, p. 11.

However, if sufficient stabilization in the issue area security can be accomplished over time—even on a quantitatively and qualitatively high level of armaments—and if economic relations still multiply, the recent wave of democratization in the world which initiated a process of reducing (but not of convergence of!) the range of political systems in the region⁷⁹ may incrementally contribute to the creation of greater symmetry and enhance the chances for establishing multilateral and cooperative relations of interdependence. Until then, one has to confine oneself to a security-political a-la-carte approach that deals with critical situations as they occur.⁸⁰ At the same time it is necessary to work constantly for the maintenance and successive institutionalization of multilateral platforms for dialogue.⁸¹ To reach this, extra-regional actors including Canada, the European countries and, in particular, the US with its permanent political and military presence in the region are requested to engage in this business.⁸²

Conclusion

International politics in East Asia, on the Korean peninsula and with regard to North Korea, then, leads to the question as to whether non-integration constitutes an adequate foreign policy behavior in an era of forcefully advancing interdependence and globalization. Policies of isolation are only superficially more promising. In fact, they have become more difficult because the number of actors needed to implement a successful isolation has

79 Scalapino, p. 24f.

80 Gerald Segal, "North-East Asia: Common Security or la Carte?," *International Affairs*, Vol. 67, 1991, No. 4, pp. 755–767.

81 The Canadian proposal for a North Pacific Security Cooperation Conference for the first time put forward in 1991 seems to be an effective solution and should be elaborated upon.

82 Buzan and Segal, p. 16; William J. Crowe and Alan D. Romberg, "Rethinking Security in the Pacific," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, 1992, No. 2, pp. 123–140.

increased. Furthermore, a policy of isolation may be counteracted by more actors than existed the past. In addition, isolation may cause the opposite of what was intended because an isolated actor might turn to dissociation. Thus, the politics of isolation may be conducive to the survival of authoritarian systems. Accordingly, one may ask whether offers of integration and positive incentives are more promising than isolation. In some instances isolation may still be an adequate policy to gain an actor's compliance. In order to be successful in such a case, isolation must be multilaterally implemented and supported by powerful actors. This point is important in case of future North Korean misbehavior.

To opt for dissociation may be a rational political decision when underlying interests are considered. In most cases, dissociation is chosen by a given political leadership to preserve its political rule. This leadership is using multiple and at least for some time successful means to equate its own interests with the interests of society as such. At the same time, however, by choosing dissociation the political leadership is responsible for subtracting important resources for socio-economic development in order to finance dissociation. The whole society pays the price as the Korea of the two Kims shows. As a result, dissociated actors lag behind the general development. Although one may safely assume that economic growth is increasingly to be realized only in the OECD-world, dissociation can be legitimized and rationalized in society by pointing to self-reliance in development, to preservation of one's cultural identity and to political self-determination. Dissociated actors tend to trigger the mechanisms of the security dilemma and thereby not only constrain their own developmental opportunities, but the development of the region as a whole or even of extra-regional actors. The reason is that the actors involved have to invest more resources in armaments. As a consequence, it seems reasonable to respond to dissociation not by means of isolation because this may escalate the situation, but, if possible, by offers of re-integration.

On the whole, non-integration is a transitory phenomenon; cases generally exist in short- or medium-term time spans. Because the societies in non-integrated states lag behind the overall development, they and the dissociated actors in particular do not represent a valid alternative model to the interdependent world, only its temporary negation. At the same time, these actors often wield considerable chaos power. Non-integrated and especially dissociated actors are the opposite of the modern transnational states who determine world political development. To gain global political influence under conditions of complex interdependence, actors have to choose integrationist and cooperative strategies. Less and less, national interests can be unilaterally implemented. To pursue national interests in modern times is more and more dependent upon an actor's capacity to steer interdependencies. The creation of structures of interdependencies in which interests are cooperatively pursued is facilitated by a high degree of openness of and symmetry between societies; the more homogeneous political and economic systems are, the higher the chances for cooperative and integrationist behavior.

Following these arguments we come to a conclusion by agreeing with Karl W. Deutsch that "growth, the capability for adaptation and the capability to learn are essential preconditions for the survival of societies and cultures."⁸³ Nevertheless, societies do and will respond to the challenges of globalization and interdependence in different ways. The ambivalence of interdependence remains; non-integration, fragmentation, dissociation and isolation will further accompany the processes of globalization. Turbulence will persist.

83 Karl W. Deutsch, *Politische Kybernetik. Modelle und Perspektiven*, 2nd, ed., Freiburg i. Br. 1970, p. 331.