

## **A Stable Peninsula in an Unstable World: How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Increases Korean Security**

**Tobias Dahlqvist and Sunwoo Paek\***

This article examines how Russia's invasion of Ukraine impacts peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. Drawing on some neorealist theories of international relations, the article argues that Russia's war in Ukraine has *reduced* the likelihood of military conflict between North and South Korea. This is because Russian aggression has rapidly accelerated a division between two security blocs in East Asia, one comprising South Korea, the United States, and Japan, and one comprising North Korea, Russia, and China, and this division contributes to regional stability in two ways. First, an unambiguous division of East Asia creates a bipolar region, and a balance of power between the two blocs can be maintained. Second, as North Korea is provided with an opportunity to strengthen its ties with Russia and China, it is more likely to adopt a catalytic nuclear posture, pursuing only a limited nuclear arsenal.

**Keywords:** Russia, North Korea, Ukraine war, Bipolarity, East Asia

---

\* Tobias Dahlqvist received his M.A. in International Studies at the Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University. He can be reached at [tobiasu@asia.com](mailto:tobiasu@asia.com). Sunwoo Paek is a research professor at the Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University. She can be reached at [siawitch@korea.ac.kr](mailto:siawitch@korea.ac.kr)

## I . Introduction

On March 2, 2022, just six days following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations General Assembly conducted its first vote on the matter. By a massive margin, the assembly condemned Russian aggression and called for Russia to comply with international laws by withdrawing its troops from Ukrainian territory. Among the member states present at the assembly, 141 voted in favor of the resolution, while 35 abstained. Only five states voted against the resolution: Russia, Belarus, Syria, Eritrea, and *North Korea*.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, among all the represented states, North Korea was one of only three besides Russia and Belarus that explicitly refused to denounce Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. Since the beginning of the invasion on February 24, 2022, it is clear that North Korea has adopted a strategy of alignment with Russia.

Many scholars and policymakers see Pyongyang's support of Moscow as a worrisome issue; North Korea has been acting more aggressively since it decided to side with Russia. In 2022, North Korea conducted more missile tests than it has in decades, even setting a new record for the number of missiles launched in a single day.<sup>2</sup> In one such provocation, a North Korean missile landed within the territorial waters of South Korea - something that has not happened since the end of the Korean War.<sup>3</sup> While it is difficult to prove causation between Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the noticeable surge in North Korean missile tests, there may at least be a correlation.

---

1 United Nations, "General Assembly Resolution Demands End to Russian Offensive in Ukraine," *UN News*, March 2, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113152>.

2 Carlotta Dotto, Brad Lendon, and Jessie Yeung, "North Korea's Record Year of Missile Testing is Putting the World on Edge," *CNN*, December 26, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/26/asia/north-korea-missile-testing-year-end-intl-hnk/index.html>.

3 Seung-woo Kang, "North Korea Fires Missile Toward South Korean Territory," *The Korea Times*, November 2, 2022, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/10/103\\_339068.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/10/103_339068.html).

In this light, this article tries to answer the question of how Russia's invasion of Ukraine impacts peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. Utilizing the theoretical framework of realism, and particularly the ideas presented by prominent neorealist scholars, this article argues that the likelihood of war on the Korean Peninsula has diminished following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This is because Russia's war of aggression has accelerated the division between two security blocs in East Asia: one involving South Korea, the United States, and Japan, and the other involving North Korea, Russia, and China. This growing divide contributes to regional stability in two ways. Firstly, the emergence of two identifiable security blocs in East Asia will render the region bipolar, allowing for a regional balance of power to emerge. Secondly, given an opportunity to strengthen its ties with Russia and China, North Korea has a stronger incentive to adopt a less aggressive *catalytic nuclear posture*<sup>4</sup> and only pursue a limited nuclear arsenal. Consequently, the likelihood of a full-scale conflict on the Korean Peninsula has decreased as a direct consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

This article is outlined as follows: Section two provides assumptions and necessary background information. Section three briefly surveys existing studies on how Russia's invasion of Ukraine impacts security on the Korean Peninsula and reviews some neorealist publications that can provide us with new perspectives. Section four explains how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has contributed to stability on the Korean Peninsula. Section five provides a summary of the arguments and some concluding remarks.

---

4 A nuclear posture which aims to secure military and/or diplomatic assistance from a third party when the nuclear power's interests are threatened. This posture requires the availability of a more powerful third-party patron. However, since the main goal is to catalyze the involvement of a third-party state, a limited nuclear arsenal will be sufficient.

## **II. Background and Basic Assumptions**

While neither the Ukraine War nor the tensions between North and South Korea require a lengthy introduction, some contextualization is necessary to understand the logic used in this article. First, the term “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” here refers to the full-scale attack that started in February 2022 and not the Russo-Ukrainian War that began with Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. The former is, of course, part of the latter. However, although Russia’s annexation of Crimea caused a limited outcry in the international community, one can only talk of a real paradigm shift in February 2022. Secondly, the term “peace and security on the Korean Peninsula” here refers to the absence of a full-scale war between North and South Korea, not inter-Korean tensions or even potential skirmishes. While skirmishes can have severe consequences, they do not threaten the survival of entire states. The only time this happens is when skirmishes develop into actual warfare.

Some necessary background information also includes a brief explanation of the assumptions made for the authors’ central argument. First, this article assumes that the regime in Pyongyang will remain in power for the foreseeable future. Should Kim Jong Un’s regime fall, will the Korean Peninsula would become unpredictable and dangerous, but there is no reason to anticipate such a development anytime soon. While there is limited insight into the internal politics of North Korea, history has shown that the regime in Pyongyang has demonstrated resilience even during times of crisis. The regime has survived two successful power successions and domestic disasters like the famine during the Arduous March in the mid-1990s. Additionally, Kim Jong Un is only in his early 40s, and he appears to have successfully consolidated his grip on power in North Korea. Although authoritarian regimes can unexpectedly fall, there is currently no reason to place significant emphasis on North Korean regime survival when calculating the risk of a potential war on the Korean Peninsula.

Secondly, even if Russia loses the war in Ukraine, Russia will not cease to exist or undergo substantial disintegration. When the Soviet Union collapsed, it fragmented into 15 sovereign states, one of which was the Russian Federation. Rather than a typical nation-state, the Russian Federation is the successor of the multiethnic empire originally inherited by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from Tsarist Russia.<sup>5</sup> Some experts have argued that the Russian Federation is likely to disintegrate further if Vladimir Putin's regime falls.<sup>6</sup> However, this argument ignores the facts that today, at least according to official statistics, over 70 percent of Russian citizens self-identify as ethnic Russians, and that these self-identifying ethnic Russians comprise the majority population in nearly all constituent entities of the Russian Federation.<sup>7</sup> Even if minor republics with strong national identities such as Chechnya or Dagestan in the North Caucasus were to declare independence, it would not mean a substantial change in territory for the Russian Federation as a whole. While Russia could potentially lose some minor republics during times of political chaos, Russia proper is here to stay.

Third, the deep rift between Russia and the West will likely take decades to repair, even if Russia suddenly withdrew its troops from Ukraine or if Vladimir Putin were removed from power. This includes the unlikely scenario of Russia again moving towards democratization. Some policymakers and scholars in the West seem to have high hopes that now-imprisoned Russian politician and opposition leader Alexei Navalny can move Russia in a democratic direction.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, many

---

5 Odd A. Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

6 For example, see Alexander J Motyl, "It's High Time to Prepare for Russia's Collapse," *Foreign Policy*, January 7, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/07/russia-ukraine-putin-collapse-disintegration-civil-war-empire/>.

7 Joshua R. Kroeker, "Rising Ethnic Tensions Won't Tear Russia Apart," *The Moscow Times*, September 29, 2023, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/09/29/rising-ethnic-tensions-wont-tear-russia-apart-a82609>.

8 Mark Trevelyan and Andrew Osborn, "Russia's Oscar-Winning Opposition Is Mired in Conflict," *Reuters*, March 15, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/>

Ukrainians remain skeptical, as they perceive Navalny as harboring similar ideas of Russian chauvinism as the Putin regime.<sup>9</sup> If Vladimir Putin were ousted from power, he would probably be replaced with a leader from the existing top leadership in the Kremlin. However, even seemingly progressive forces like Navalny are not likely to simply embrace the West, nor would the West readily accept a democratized Russia. Furthermore, the fundamental conflict of interests between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will likely persist. Thus, the analysis of the security situation on the Korean Peninsula as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine should be considered a long-term consequence.

### III. Literature Review

This section provides a brief survey of existing studies on the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the security of the Korean peninsula. It also introduces some neorealist publications that lay the theoretical foundation for the central arguments of this article. Previous studies analyzing the relationship between the war in Ukraine and security on the Korean Peninsula mainly argue that Russian aggression has negatively impacted stability in the region. In contrast, this article draws on neorealist theory to provide a more optimistic perspective.

#### 1. The Ukraine War and the Korean Peninsula

A 2022 article by Ha and Shin primarily focuses on the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Russia-North Korea relations. In the article, the authors argue that two power groups will be established in East Asia as a result of the new international order that has emerged

---

europe/russias-oscar-winning-opposition-mired-conflict-2023-03-15/.

9 Aleksander Palikot, "Oscars and Opposition: For Many in Ukraine, Award for Navalny Documentary Is Part of the Russia Problem," *RadioFreeEurope / RadioLiberty*, March 18, 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/oscar-outrage-ukraine-navalny-documentary/32324139.html>.

post-February 2022, with North Korea, China, and Russia constituting the “illiberal group”.<sup>10</sup> The authors assert that this will lead to a more confident and aggressive North Korea, which will further develop its nuclear program. As a result of this new regional order, the authors conclude that “overall, the Ukraine war will have brought insecurity, uncertainty, and instability at the international and regional levels, causing volatility in and around the Korean Peninsula.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, like this article, Ha and Shin predict that bipolarity will emerge in East Asia. However, Ha and Shin’s argument that a well-defined bipolarity in East Asia will bring instability to the Korean Peninsula runs counter to the authors’ conclusion.

A second article by Lim and Kim, also published in 2022, addresses the consequences of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine for regional order in East Asia. Without specifically focusing on inter-Korean relations, the authors argue that “the overall atmosphere of international society is shifting from cooperation to competition and the East Asia region is becoming the most unstable region in the world.”<sup>12</sup> Like Ha and Shin, Lim and Kim base their argument on the assumption that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is contributing to East Asia’s transition from multipolarity to bipolarity.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, regarding North Korea’s nuclear program, the authors believe that Russian nuclear threats have undermined trust in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), while the case of Ukraine should serve as a warning example of a state that abandoned its nuclear arsenal.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Lim and Kim assume that bipolarity is more detrimental to security in East Asia than multipolarity. This is a view that this article does not share.

---

10 Yong-Chool Ha and Beom-Shik Shin, “The Impact of the Ukraine War on Russian-North Korean Relations,” *Asian Survey* 62, no. 5–6 (2022): 893–919, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2022.1800092>.

11 *Ibid.*, 911.

12 Kyunghan Lim and Jaeho Kim, “Impacts of Russia-Ukraine War on East Asian Regional Order,” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 31, no. 2 (2022): 31–59, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.33728/ijkus.2022.31.2.002>.

13 *Ibid.*, 48.

14 *Ibid.*, 45.

Finally, an article by Weitz from 2022 focuses on the broader consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine for East Asia in general.<sup>15</sup> Like the previous two articles, Weitz points towards the many dangers facing the region. However, in his assessment of Korean security, his conclusion is less pessimistic. He writes that "the new ROK government will need to manage an exceptionally difficult security environment. Fortunately, the United States and other democracies including Japan are eager to support Seoul."<sup>16</sup> Like the authors of the two aforementioned articles, Weitz bases his argument on the assumption that China and Russia will deepen their cooperation in Northeast Asia, and North Korea will align with them. According to Weitz, this new security bloc will not only strengthen its capabilities but also show a greater tolerance for North Korean missile provocations.<sup>17</sup> While recognizing the growing threats to North Korea, Weitz argues that South Korea's relations with the United States and Japan, especially if strengthened, can mitigate these concerns. This article shares Weitz's view that emerging security concerns on the peninsula can be mitigated. However, unlike Weitz, the authors argue that the structure of the emerging order in East Asia rather than South Korea's alignments is the crucial factor.

## 2. Neorealist Theory

### 1) The Stability of a Bipolar System

Kenneth Waltz has famously argued that *bipolarity*, rather than multipolarity or unipolarity, is the most stable composition of the international system.<sup>18</sup> According to Waltz, bipolarity, where the vast

---

15 Richard Weitz, "How the Ukraine War Transforms the Northeast Asian Security Agenda," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 31, no. 1 (2022): 189–224, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.33728/ijkus.2022.31.1.007>.

16 *Ibid*, 215–16.

17 *Ibid*, 196.

18 Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus* 93, no. 3 (1964): 881–909, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20026863>.



majority of power is distributed among two great powers, provides stability for at least four reasons. Firstly, a bipolar system lacks peripheries. Without peripheries in the international system, the division between friend and foe is lucid. The great powers can focus on the actions of their main adversary, while the lesser states will align themselves with either of the great powers. In this way, a bipolar world provides balance. Secondly, in a bipolar system, the range of factors the states compete over is both extended and intensified. This facilitates a system where the two great powers will mutually adjust to one another across this long range of factors, preventing asymmetric development, and accordingly, stability is preserved. Thirdly, the presence of constant pressure and the frequency of crises can, paradoxically, contribute to system stability. While a crisis can be dangerous, Waltz argued that the *absence* of crises in a conflictual situation may be even worse. If a crisis is avoided in the present, tensions will continuously accumulate and may later escalate into war. A crisis in a multipolar system does, however, not have the same pacifying effect, as interests and alignments among the great powers under multipolarity are often diffuse. Fourthly, the dominant power of the two great powers in the system also contributes to stability. Waltz believed that bipolar international systems best allow the great powers to fully comprehend and hopefully absorb revolutionary changes across the economic, political, and military spheres as the two great powers constantly move boundaries forward to check one another and restore stability.

Waltz is certainly not alone among neorealists in emphasizing the stability of a bipolar international system. John Mearsheimer, for example, shares Waltz's view.<sup>19</sup> He has argued that bipolarity trumps multipolarity in terms of stability for three main reasons. Firstly, a reduced number of conflict dyads means fewer arenas where conflict may emerge. Under bipolarity, there is one main conflict dyad available, while under multipolarity, the number of conflict dyads will quickly multiply.

---

19 John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 5–56, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981>.

Secondly, as bipolarity provides a balance of power between two blocs, effective deterrence is easier to pursue. Lastly, as the number of adversaries decreases while balance is constantly maintained, the risk of miscalculating the adversaries' power capabilities and the adversaries' resolve is effectively reduced. Mearsheimer does not only apply this logic to the international system as a whole but also uses it to explain the stability that emerged in post-1945 Europe.<sup>20</sup> In sum, the neorealist argument that bipolarity facilitates stability is multifaceted, and it is not necessarily limited to the conditions among the two great powers in the international system but can also be applied to a regional system like Europe, or in this case, to East Asia.

## 2) Nuclear Postures for Regional Nuclear Power

Vipin Narang is noted for his analysis of potential strategies for regional nuclear powers such as North Korea.<sup>21</sup> More specifically, he argued that there are three different nuclear postures for emerging nuclear powers to consider. First is the *catalytic nuclear posture*, which aims to secure military and/or diplomatic assistance from a third party when the nuclear power's interests are threatened. By threatening to use its nuclear capabilities, whether known or unknown, the emerging nuclear power ensures that a third-party state with an interest in regional stability will intervene to de-escalate the crisis. This posture requires the availability of a more powerful third-party patron. However, since the main goal is to catalyze the involvement of a third-party state, a limited nuclear arsenal will be sufficient.

Second, the *assured retaliation posture* follows the principles of deterrence-by-punishment. As it deters nuclear attacks and nuclear coercion through a promise of assured retaliation, an emerging nuclear

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Vipin Narang, "Nuclear Strategies of Emerging Nuclear Powers: North Korea and Iran," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2015): 73–91, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660x.2015.1038175>.

power adopting this posture must have survivable second-strike capabilities. In this posture, possessing tactical nuclear weapons is not a necessity. Similarly, the support of a third-party patron is not required.

Third, the *asymmetric escalation posture* is used to deter conventional attacks by the adversaries' ground forces by promising rapid first-use of nuclear weapons against military and/or civilian targets. This posture can include aspects of both deterrence-by-punishment and deterrence-by-denial, and the state must have the ability to deploy nuclear assets quickly and may combine the use of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. Given that this posture relies on a promise of first-use of nuclear weapons, it is the most aggressive option of the three postures. To make the threat credible, this posture requires transparency about a state's nuclear capabilities.

#### **IV. Russian Aggression and Stability on the Korean Peninsula**

Since February 2022, we have observed a significant movement towards the formation of two security blocs in East Asia. One bloc comprises status-quo states such as South Korea, the U.S., and Japan, while the other bloc comprises revisionist states North Korea, Russia, and China. This section aims to explain how this division of East Asia into two blocs reduces the likelihood of a military confrontation between North and South Korea. Firstly, a definite split between the two security blocs will create a bipolar region, which, according to neorealist theory, would increase regional stability. Secondly, North Korea, belonging to a security bloc with Russia and China, has less incentive to pursue the asymmetric escalation nuclear posture. Instead, it might opt for the less aggressive catalytic nuclear posture, pursuing only a limited nuclear arsenal.

## 1. Regional Bipolarity: South Korea, the U.S., Japan vs. North Korea, Russia, China

### 1) South Korea, the U.S., and Japan

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, who assumed office in May 2022, has been working actively to strengthen South Korea's partnership with the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region. In December 2022, South Korea published its first-ever official Indo-Pacific strategy. In this document, the Yoon government explicitly expresses its commitment to strengthening South Korea's alliance with the U.S., since the alliance is the "linchpin for peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific."<sup>22</sup> The document also emphasizes that South Korea upholds the "universal values" of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, something that aligns well with the values emphasized by the Biden administration. Commitment to U.S.-South Korean alignment was further reaffirmed in April 2023, when President Biden hosted President Yoon for a state visit. In a joint statement, the two presidents described the U.S.-ROK alliance as a "global comprehensive strategic alliance" that "has grown far beyond the Korean Peninsula, reflecting the vital role of our two countries as global leaders in advancing democracy, economic prosperity, security, and technological innovation."<sup>23</sup>

To address South Korean concerns about the U.S. commitment to Korean security, the two parties have also issued the so-called "Washington Declaration." This document states that the U.S. "commits to make every effort to consult with the ROK on any possible nuclear

---

22 The Government of the Republic of Korea, "Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region," December 2022, accessed March 20, 2023, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5676/view.do?seq=322133](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=322133).

23 The White House, "Leaders' Joint Statement in Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Alliance between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea," April 26, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/leaders-joint-statement-in-commemoration-of-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-alliance-between-the-united-states-of-america-and-the-republic-of-korea/>.

weapons employment on the Korean Peninsula” and reaffirms that “any nuclear attack by the DPRK against the ROK will be met with a swift, overwhelming and decisive response.”<sup>24</sup> The two presidents also announced the creation of a new Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) to strengthen extended deterrence against the North Korean threat to the non-proliferation regime.

Beyond the U.S.–ROK alliance, South Korea has ambitiously approached Japan to defrost relations with its southeastern neighbor. In spring of 2022, only months after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, leadership in Seoul and Tokyo restored the previously suspended “shuttle diplomacy” of regular and mutual visits by leaders from the two countries.<sup>25</sup> On September 21, 2022, President Yoon and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio met again at the NATO Summit in Madrid, Spain. The two leaders declared that they “shared serious concerns over North Korea’s nuclear program involving the nuclear test and the new law on nuclear forces policy.”<sup>26</sup> In addition, South Korea repeatedly stresses the need for improved relations with Japan in its Indo-Pacific Strategy. In the document, South Korea declares that it “will seek a forward-looking partnership with Japan” because “improved relations with Japan is essential for fostering cooperation and solidarity among like-minded Indo-Pacific nations.”<sup>27</sup>

Improved relations between Seoul and Tokyo is welcomed by the U.S., as the Biden administration seeks to strengthen U.S. alliances with “like-minded countries to support a rules-based international order in the

---

24 The White House, “Washington Declaration,” April 26, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/washington-declaration-2/>.

25 “(Lead) Japanese PM Arrives in S. Korea for Summit with Yoon,” *Yonhap News Agency*, May 7, 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230506002451315>.

26 Mitch Shin, “South Korea’s Yoon Suk-yeol Finally Meets Japan’s Prime Minister,” *The Diplomat*, September 22, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/south-koreas-yoon-suk-yeol-finally-meets-japans-prime-minister/>.

27 “Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region,” 9.

face of growing authoritarianism.”<sup>28</sup> This cordial mood was manifested through the Camp David US-Japan-Korea Trilateral Summit held in August 2023.<sup>29</sup> According to a joint statement, the three leaders declared that they “are determined to align our collective efforts because we believe our trilateral partnership advances the security and prosperity of all our people, the region, and the world.”<sup>30</sup> The three leaders also published a Statement of Principles, reaffirming the three countries’ commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the three leaders committed to conducting annual military exercises and exchanging real-time information on North Korean missile launches by the end of 2023.<sup>32</sup> While there are still numerous obstacles for South Korea and Japan to overcome before a formal trilateral alliance can be established, and while such an alliance might not be attainable in the near future, the recent cooperative activities between Seoul and Tokyo indicate that South Korea, Japan, and the U.S. are strengthening their military alignment vis-à-vis their revisionist rivals in the region.

---

28 Scott A. Snyder, “Yoon Is Revitalizing a Seventy-Year-Old Alliance by Taking Political Chances,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/yoons-revitalizing-seventy-year-old-alliance-taking-political-chances>.

29 Aamer Madhani, “At Camp David, Biden Aims to Nudge Japan and South Korea toward Greater Unity in Complicated Pacific,” *AP News*, October 11, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/biden-japan-south-korea-camp-david-summit-2421359ebcd5973b6252fa284cfb25ff>.

30 The White House, “The Spirit of Camp David: Joint Statement of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States,” August 18, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/the-spirit-of-camp-david-joint-statement-of-japan-the-republic-of-korea-and-the-united-states/>.

31 The White House, “Camp David Principles,” August 18, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/camp-david-principles/#:~:text=We%20are%20unflinching%20in%20our,undermines%20respect%20for%20them%20everywhere.>

32 Laura Bicker, “US-Japan-S Korea Summit a Coup for Biden but Will Détente Last?” *BBC*, August 19, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-66543514>.

## 2) North Korea, Russia, and China

Since February 2022, North Korea has consistently defended Russia's justification for its "special military operation" in Ukraine, and the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs has released an official comment stating that "the root cause of the Ukraine crisis totally lies in the hegemonic policy of the U.S. and the West which indulge themselves in high-handedness and arbitrariness towards other countries."<sup>33</sup> This statement reiterates Moscow's official stance on Russia's conflict with Ukraine and the West, and President Putin has partially justified the invasion of Ukraine by criticizing "the eastward expansion of NATO."<sup>34</sup> In April 2023, Vice Foreign Minister of North Korea, Im Chon-il, issued a statement, confirming "mutual support and solidarity" between the two countries.<sup>35</sup> During a meeting with President Putin on September 13, 2023, Kim Jong Un stated that North Korea provides its "full and unconditional support" for Russia's "sacred fight" to defend its security and that North Korea will always support Russia on the "anti-imperialist" front.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, North Korea was one of only three countries endorsing both the declaration of independence and later the Russian annexation of the Luhansk and Donetsk Republics, as well as Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblast.<sup>37</sup>

---

33 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, "Answer of Spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK," *Korean Central News Agency*, February 22, 2022, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://kcnawatch.xyz/newstream/1646055083-689030505/answer-of-spokesperson-for-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-dprk/>.

34 "Transcript: Vladimir Putin's Televised Address on Ukraine," *Bloomberg*, February 24, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/full-transcript-vladimir-putin-s-televised-address-to-russia-on-ukraine-feb-24#xj4y7vzkg>.

35 Soo-yeon Kim, "N. Korea Vows Strong Ties with Russia on Leaders' Summit Anniversary," *Yonhap News Agency*, April 25, 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230425007600325>.

36 "Kim promises Putin North Korea's full support for Russia's 'sacred fight,'" *AP*, September 13, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230913-putin-welcomes-north-korea-s-kim-with-a-tour-of-russian-space-centre>.

37 "N. Korea supports Russia's proclaimed annexation of Ukrainian territory,"

Furthermore, North Korea and Russia have strengthened ties across their respective military sectors. Although clear evidence is yet to be seen, North Korea has likely provided Russia with weapons to be used in Ukraine. North Korean arms exports are prohibited by resolutions adopted at the UN Security Council due to the country's nuclear and missile programs. Despite this, U.S. officials have claimed that North Korea has been engaged in the sale of "millions of rockets and artillery shells to Russia for potential deployment on the Ukrainian battlefield."<sup>38</sup> In a joint statement, the U.S., South Korea, and Japan have condemned these deliveries.<sup>39</sup> North Korea, however, has consistently denied all allegations regarding exports of military equipment. Additionally, Russia and North Korea have intensified their military cooperation since February 2022. When Kim Jong Un visited the *Vostochny Cosmodrome Space Center* during an official visit to Russia in September 2023, he was allegedly offered various opportunities for military cooperation with Russia.<sup>40</sup> Washington and South Korea are concerned that Russia is likely to acquire more ammunition from North Korea while North Korea could receive technological support for its satellite and missile programs, and U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller stated that "any transfer of arms from North Korea to Russia would violate multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions."<sup>41</sup> President Putin seems to officially

---

*Yonhap News Agency*, October 4, 2022, <https://m-en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20221004002600325>.

38 Gawon Bae and Brad Lendon, "Putin Thanks North Korea for Supporting Ukraine War as Pyongyang Displays Its Nukes in Parade," *CNN*, July 28, 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/28/asia/putin-north-korea-ukraine-parade-intl-hnk/index.html>.

39 Hyung-jin Kim, "South Korea, US and Japan condemn North Korea's alleged supply of munitions to Russia," *AP News*, October 26, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/korea-us-japan-russia-munitions-ukraine-9e3b0195330581779ae69cd47da1d818>.

40 Cynthia Kim and Hyonhee Shin, "South Korea urges Russia to halt military cooperation with North Korea," *Reuters*, September 19, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/south-korea-urges-russia-halt-military-cooperation-with-north-korea-2023-09-19/>.

41 Nike Ching, "Russia-North Korea Military Cooperation Concerns US," *Voice*



acknowledge this point, declaring that “there are certain limitations” to Russia’s military cooperation with North Korea.<sup>42</sup> However, given that North Korea shares a land border with Russia, the possibility of unofficial and illegal exchanges of military equipment and technology between the two countries remains high.

China and Russia, which went from friends to foes during the Cold War, have also displayed tightening relations. Unlike North Korea, China has not directly supported Russia’s war in Ukraine. China has, however, consistently avoided condemning Russian aggression, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has given a statement that “given five consecutive rounds of NATO’s eastward expansion, Russia’s legitimate security demands should be taken seriously and properly addressed.”<sup>43</sup> The Sino-Russian friendship was officially expressed when President Xi Jinping visited President Putin in Moscow in March 2023. During the visit, the two leaders called each other a “dear friend” and hailed relations between the two countries as a “no limits friendship.”<sup>44</sup> A joint statement by the two leaders also included accusations that the U.S. is undermining global stability.<sup>45</sup> The “no limits friendship” between China and Russia was again confirmed when President Putin made a state visit to China in

---

of America, September 13, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/north-korean-leader-vows-unconditional-support-for-all-decisions-by-putin-/7266310.html>.

42 Tessa Wong, “Vladimir Putin Says Military Cooperation with Kim Jong Un a Possibility,” *BBC*, September 14, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-66783384>.

43 Michael Martina, “China Says It Respects Ukraine’s Sovereignty and Russia’s Security Concerns,” *Reuters*, February 26, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/china-says-it-respects-ukraines-sovereignty-russias-security-concerns-2022-02-25/>.

44 James Robinson, “Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping Praise ‘No Limits Friendship’ during Chinese President’s Trip to Russia,” *Sky News*, March 21, 2023, <https://news.sky.com/story/vladimir-putin-and-xi-jinping-praise-no-limits-friendship-during-chinese-presidents-trip-to-russia-12839120>.

45 “Putin, Xi Pledge Friendship but Talks Yield no Ukraine Breakthrough,” *Reuters*, March 25, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-meets-dear-friend-xi-kremlin-ukraine-war-grinds-2023-03-20/>.

October 2023.<sup>46</sup>

While China and Russia have declared a stronger friendship, the two have also expressed a unified approach towards the North Korean nuclear issue. It is important to remember that, due to their historic opposition to the North Korean nuclear program, both Russia and China supported nine packages of sanctions against Pyongyang between 2006 and 2017.<sup>47</sup> Clearly, in their desire to keep the nuclear club as exclusive as possible, Beijing and Moscow were able to bridge their disagreements with the Western powers at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the non-proliferation unity among the permanent five at the UNSC seems to have ended. Already in May 2022, the UNSC failed to further tighten sanctions on North Korea due to a veto from both China and Russia.<sup>48</sup> In turn, this sudden change in behavior led the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, to accuse China and Russia of obstructing further UN action against Pyongyang.<sup>49</sup> The story repeated itself in June 2023 when North Korea attempted to launch a satellite, but both Russia and China ignored the U.S. call for UNSC action.<sup>50</sup> These examples represent a profound shift for North Korea. In the new world order that has emerged after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, can North Korea act aggressively without suffering further sanctions and condemnation by the UNSC?

---

46 Ryan Woo, "Putin visits 'dear friend' Xi in show of no-limits partnership," *Reuters*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-visits-dear-friend-xi-show-no-limits-partnership-2023-10-17/>.

47 "Fact Sheet: North Korea Sanctions," *Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, May 11, 2022, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-north-korea-sanctions/>.

48 "Security Council Fails to Adopt Resolution Tightening Sanctions Regime in Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as Two Members Wield Veto," *United Nations*, May 26, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14911.doc.htm>.

49 Edith M. Lederer, "US Says China and Russia Blocking UN Action on North Korea," *AP News*, March 20, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/north-korea-mis-siles-us-china-6ce477f7e6267aba412cd4020f0bd263>.

50 Duk-kun Byun, "U.S. calls for UNSC action against N. Korean satellite launch, says China, Russia's opposition is 'troubling'," *Yonhap News Agency*, August 26, 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230826000300325>.

## 2. North Korea Moving Toward a Catalytic Nuclear Strategy?

Until recently, several scholars and policymakers concluded that North Korea is adopting an asymmetric escalation posture because Pyongyang lacked a reliable security patron.<sup>51</sup> It is important to remember that North Korea has been an outcast in the international community for decades. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union saw North Korea as an independent communist party-ruled state, meaning that North Korea was not under the same direct influence from Moscow as the communist states in Eastern Europe.<sup>52</sup> Following the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, this independence also meant that North Korea had to carefully manage its relations with both Moscow and Beijing.

The end of the Cold War, however, meant abandonment and isolation for North Korea, while many of its former communist allies in the Eastern Bloc abandoned authoritarianism and planned economies for democracy and free market principles. Shortly after the Cold War, both Russia and China established diplomatic relations with South Korea, and unlike North Korea, they opened up their economies to the outside world. North Korea felt betrayed and partially ignored by its former communist patrons. It should be no surprise that the 1990s was the decade when North Korea put greater efforts into its nuclear program. The post-Cold War era has been an uncertain and vulnerable time for North Korea, and it was a time when the need for self-help became more evident than ever.

China is often viewed as North Korea's closest ally, but in reality, relations between Beijing and Pyongyang are often frosty. As already mentioned, China has a history of opposing North Korea's nuclear

---

51 Narang, "Nuclear Strategies of Emerging Nuclear Powers"; John K. Warden, *North Korea's Nuclear Posture: An Evolving Challenge for US Deterrence* (Paris: IFRI, 2017). [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/warden\\_north\\_korea\\_nuclear\\_posture\\_2017.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/warden_north_korea_nuclear_posture_2017.pdf).

52 Fred Halliday, "Third World Socialism: 1989 and After." In *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics*, ed. George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 112–34, 119.

proliferation, even though Chinese attempts to halt the nuclear program have failed.<sup>53</sup> This failed attempt includes Chinese support for the series of UN resolutions sanctioning North Korea, the latest one adopted in December 2017.<sup>54</sup> North Korea has suffered significant economic hardship from these sanctions, but neither China nor Russia aided North Korea with their veto power in the UNSC. North Korea may be compelled to pursue an asymmetric escalation strategy due to its conventional military disadvantage to American and South Korean forces while lacking a reliable security patron.<sup>55</sup> Pyongyang's recent claims regarding the development of tactical nuclear weapons, a notable feature of the asymmetric escalation strategy, are strengthening the argument that North Korea is indeed adopting this nuclear posture. On March 28, 2023, North Korea unveiled pictures of a tactical nuclear warhead named *Hwasan-31*, sharing them with the international community for the first time through images published in the North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun*. This, however, contradicts the official intelligence evaluations by both South Korean and U.S. military authorities, which maintain that North Korea has not yet obtained tactical nuclear capabilities.<sup>56</sup>

According to Narang's theory, Pyongyang's strengthened ties with both Moscow and Beijing could induce the North Korean regime to pursue a catalytic nuclear posture. Developing further nuclear capabilities is an expensive business, and the key obstacle for North Korea to pursue a catalytic nuclear posture has been the absence of a reliable third-party

---

53 Dong Sun Lee, Iordanka Alexandrova, and Yihei Zhao, "The Chinese Failure to Disarm North Korea: Geographical Proximity, U.S. Unipolarity, and Alliance Restraint," *Contemporary Security Policy* 41, no. 4 (2020): 587–609, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1755121>, 588–89.

54 "S/RES/2397 (2017)," *United Nations Security Council*, December 22, 2017, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/463/60/PDF/N1746360.pdf?OpenElement>.

55 Narang, "Nuclear Strategies of Emerging Nuclear Powers."

56 Je-hun Lee, "N. Korea Reveals Tactical Nuclear Warhead for First Time," *Hankyoreh*, March 29, 2023, [https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_northkorea/1085699.html](https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/1085699.html).

patron. As the East region is moving rapidly towards bipolarity, North Korea suddenly has two potential third-party patrons among the regional powers. At this point, it is too early to say whether Moscow and Beijing will be seen as reliable security guarantors for Pyongyang. North Korea has not joined any military alliances, nor does it enjoy any formal security guarantees from Russia or China. However, as North Korea has an opportunity to align itself closer with a powerful coalition, Pyongyang's rationale for attempting an asymmetric escalation posture has at least significantly decreased. As with the divergence of the East Asia region, this is a direct consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

## **V. Conclusion**

This article argues that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the new world order that emerged after the invasion have reduced the likelihood of a military confrontation between North and South Korea. This is primarily because Russian aggression has accelerated the ongoing division of two distinct security blocs in the East Asian region. The split increases regional stability for two main reasons. First, the emergence of two security blocs makes the region bipolar, maintaining a balance of power between adversaries. Second, due to the sudden opportunity to strengthen its relations with Russia and China, North Korea is more likely than it was pre-February 2022 to adopt a catalytic nuclear strategy. This strategy would be less aggressive and require only limited nuclear capabilities.

It could be argued that it is too early to assert the existence of a completely bipolar system in East Asia. Considering the fact that the two groups have not formed formal security alliances and North Korea is not likely to participate in joint military exercises in the near future, this counterargument could be valid. Furthermore, the neorealist argument that bipolarity provides stability was mainly based on an analysis of the Soviet-U.S. rivalry, but the world looks very different today than it did during the Cold War. However, two main points should be emphasized regarding the emergence of bipolarity in East Asia. First, the division of

the region has clearly accelerated since February 2022, and second, to our knowledge, there is no persuasive theoretical or empirical evidence supporting or predicting that this growing regional division will bring instability to the Korean Peninsula.

Does this mean that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has made war on the Korean Peninsula impossible? Certainly not; the Korean Peninsula remains one of the most militarized territories in the world, and the interests and goals of Seoul and Pyongyang remain incompatible. North Korea can still pursue an asymmetric escalation strategy despite its improved relations with regional powers. This article simply argues that conflict, or more specifically, a war between the two Koreas, has not become any *more* likely in the post-Ukraine War era. Rather, the opposite is true, as a cornered and desperate North Korea will always be more dangerous than a North Korea belonging to a powerful coalition in a bipolar system. Unlike the conventional argument, the authors claim that there is no reason the international community should feel more worried about an inter-Korean war now than pre-February 2022. This fact remains true even if North Korea further strengthens its relations with Russia and China, and even if North Korea keeps acting aggressively.

One might also posit that the emergence of bipolarity in East Asia could potentially escalate into regional military confrontations. During the Cold War, Asia experienced proxy wars like the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Soviet-Afghan War. Two plausible counterarguments challenge this perspective. Firstly, this article argues that regional bipolarity in East Asia contributes to regional stability. It does not argue that global bipolarity would increase stability on the Korean Peninsula. Secondly, the Korean Peninsula does not constitute a periphery in this regional bipolarity. While Europe was the focal point of the Cold War, East Asia in general and the Korean Peninsula in particular stand as the epicenter of the rivalry between the U.S. and China. As we observed how "cold peace" prevailed in Europe during the Cold War, it is plausible that stability will prevail in East Asia because the region serves as the focal area for the U.S.-China rivalry.

The ironical stability on the Korean Peninsula due to Russian

aggression in Ukraine will, however, be highly influenced by China's position in the future. There are at least two reasons why China could disengage itself from the current security alignment with Russia and North Korea. First of all, Beijing may not be able to achieve its security objectives through closer relations between Moscow and Pyongyang. For China, maintaining the status quo in North Korea is a critical matter for its own security and economic development. Therefore, to prevent any unrest and provocations in North Korea, China is willing to exert strong control over its neighbor. However, if Russia and North Korea's relationship becomes excessively close, the leadership in China may feel anxious that Russia could weaken Chinese control over North Korea. In this context, the close relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang has the potential to once again generate conflictual relations between Moscow and Beijing, significantly weakening the security cooperation among the three.

Secondly, China could potentially distance itself from Russia's war in Ukraine. The lingering war in Ukraine has resulted in a humanitarian crisis with numerous casualties, and international condemnation of Russia is growing with each passing day. Given China's aspirations to become a leading global power, Beijing might find it increasingly challenging to not condemn a prolonged Russian war. This hesitancy was evident during the summit between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin in May 2023. During the press conference after the summit, President Putin stated that "we believe that many of the provisions of the peace plan put forward by China are consonant with Russian approaches and can be taken as the basis for a peaceful settlement when they are ready for that in the West and in Kyiv. However, so far we see no such readiness from their side." Contrary to Putin, President Xi was hesitant to make any bold statements regarding the war in Ukraine, simply saying that China has an "impartial position" in the conflict.<sup>57</sup> A potential Chinese disengagement from the revisionist security bloc would break the balance of power in the region, and this could again increase instability on the Korean Peninsula.

■ Article Received: 11/13 ■ Reviewed: 12/01 ■ Revised: 12/07 ■ Accepted: 12/12

---

57 "Putin, Xi Pledge Friendship but Talks Yield No Ukraine Breakthrough," *Reuters*.

## Bibliography

- Bae, Gawon, and Brad Lendon, "Putin Thanks North Korea for Supporting Ukraine War as Pyongyang Displays Its Nukes in Parade," *CNN*, July 28, 2023. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/28/asia/putin-north-korea-ukraine-parade-intl-hnk/index.html>.
- Bicker, Laura. "US-Japan-S Korea Summit A Coup for Biden but Will Détente Last?" *BBC*, August 19, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-66543514>.
- Byun, Duk-kun. "U.S. calls for UNSC action against N. Korean satellite launch, says China, Russia's opposition is 'troubling'." *Yonhap News Agency*, August 26, 2023. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230826000300325>.
- Ching, Nike. "Russia-North Korea Military Cooperation Concerns US," *Voice of America*, September 13, 2023. <https://www.voanews.com/a/north-korean-leader-vows-unconditional-support-for-all-decisions-by-putin-/7266310.html>.
- Dotto, Carlotta, Brad Lendon, and Jessie Yeung. "North Korea's Record Year of Missile Testing is Putting the World on Edge." *CNN*, December 26, 2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/26/asia/north-korea-missile-testing-year-end-intl-hnk/index.html>.
- "Fact Sheet: North Korea Sanctions." *Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, May 11, 2022. <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-north-korea-sanctions/>.
- "General Assembly Resolution Demands End to Russian Offensive in Ukraine." *UN News, United Nations*, March 2, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113152>.
- Ha, Yong-Chool, and Beom-Shik Shin. "The Impact of the Ukraine War on Russian-North Korean Relations." *Asian Survey* 62, no. 5-6 (2022): 893-919. Accessed April 10, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2022.1800092>.
- Halliday, Fred. "Third World Socialism: 1989 and After." In *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics*, edited by George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox, 112-34. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Kang, Seung-woo. "North Korea Fires Missile toward South Korean Territory." *The Korea Times*, November 2, 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/10/103\\_339068.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/10/103_339068.html).



- Kim, Cynthia, and Hyonhee Shin. "South Korea urges Russia to halt military cooperation with North Korea." *Reuters*, September 19, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/south-korea-urges-russia-halt-military-cooperation-with-north-korea-2023-09-19/>.
- Kim, Hyung-jin. "South Korea, US and Japan condemn North Korea's alleged supply of munitions to Russia." *AP News*, October 26, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/korea-us-japan-russia-munitions-ukraine-9e3b0195330581779ae69cd47da1d818>.
- "Kim Promises Putin North Korea's Full Support for Russia's 'Sacred Fight,'" *AP*, September 13, 2023. <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230913-putin-welcomes-north-korea-s-kim-with-a-tour-of-russian-space-centre>.
- Kim, Soo-yeon, "N. Korea Vows Strong Ties with Russia on Leaders' Summit Anniversary." *Yonhap News Agency*, April 25, 2023. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230425007600325>.
- Kroeker, Joshua R. "Rising Ethnic Tensions Won't Tear Russia Apart." *The Moscow Times*, September 29, 2023. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/09/29/rising-ethnic-tensions-wont-tear-russia-apart-a82609>.
- "(Lead) Japanese PM Arrives in S. Korea for Summit with Yoon." *Yonhap News Agency*, May 7, 2023. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230506002451315>.
- Lederer, Edith M. "US Says China and Russia Blocking UN Action on North Korea." *AP News*, March 20, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/north-korea-missiles-us-china-6ce477f7e6267aba412cd4020f0bd263>.
- Lee, Je-hun, "N. Korea Reveals Tactical Nuclear Warhead for First Time," *Hankyoreh*, March 29, 2023. [https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_northkorea/1085699.html](https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/1085699.html).
- Lee, Dong Sun, Iordanka Alexandrova, and Yihei Zhao. "The Chinese Failure to Disarm North Korea: Geographical Proximity, U.S. Unipolarity, and Alliance Restraint." *Contemporary Security Policy* 41, no. 4 (2020): 587–609. Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1755121>.
- Lim, Kyunghan, and Jaeho Kim. "Impacts of Russia-Ukraine War on East Asian Regional Order." *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 31, no. 2 (2022): 31–59. Accessed April 10, 2023. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33728/ijkus.2022.31.2.002>.

- Madhani, Aamer. "At Camp David, Biden Aims to Nudge Japan and South Korea toward Greater Unity in Complicated Pacific." *AP News*, October 11, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/biden-japan-south-korea-camp-david-summit-2421359ebcd5973b6252fa284cfb25ff>.
- Martina, Michael. "China Says It Respects Ukraine's Sovereignty and Russia's Security Concerns," *Reuters*, February 26, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/china-says-it-respects-ukraines-sovereignty-russias-security-concerns-2022-02-25/>.
- Mearsheimer, John J. "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War." *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 5–56. Accessed April 10, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, "Answer of Spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK," *Korean Central News Agency*, February 22, 2022. Accessed October 17, 2023. <https://kcnawatch.xyz/newstream/1646055083-689030505/answer-of-spok-espersion-for-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-dprk/>.
- Motyl, Alexander J. "It's High Time to Prepare for Russia's Collapse." *Foreign Policy*, January 7, 2023. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/07/russia-ukraine-putin-collapse-disintegration-civil-war-empire/>.
- Narang, Vipin. "Nuclear Strategies of Emerging Nuclear Powers: North Korea and Iran." *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2015): 73–91. Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660x.2015.1038175>.
- "N. Korea supports Russia's proclaimed annexation of Ukrainian territory." *Yonhap News Agency*, October 4, 2022. <https://m-en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20221004002600325>.
- Palikot, Aleksander. "Oscars and Opposition: For Many in Ukraine, Award for Navalny Documentary Is Part of the Russia Problem." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, March 18, 2023. <https://www.rferl.org/a/oscar-outrage-ukraine-navalny-documentary/32324139.html>.
- "Putin, Xi Pledge Friendship but Talks Yield No Ukraine Breakthrough," *Reuters*, March 25, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-meets-dear-friend-xi-kremlin-ukraine-war-grinds-2023-03-20/>.
- Robinson, James. "Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping Praise 'no Limits Friendship' during Chinese President's Trip to Russia." *Sky News*, March 21, 2023.

<https://news.sky.com/story/vladimir-putin-and-xi-jinping-praise-no-limits-friendship-during-chinese-presidents-trip-to-russia-12839120>.

“S/RES/2397 (2017).” *United Nations Security Council*, December 22, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2023.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/463/60/PDF/N1746360.pdf?OpenElement>.

“Security Council Fails to Adopt Resolution Tightening Sanctions Regime in Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as Two Members Wield Veto.” *United Nations*, May 26, 2022. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14911.doc.htm>.

Shin, Mitch. “South Korea’s Yoon Suk-yeol Finally Meets Japan’s Prime Minister,” *The Diplomat*, September 22, 2022.

<https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/south-koreas-yoon-suk-yeol-finally-meets-japans-prime-minister/>.

Snyder, Scott A. “Yoon Is Revitalizing a Seventy-Year-Old Alliance by Taking Political Chances,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 24, 2023.

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/yoons-revitalizing-seventy-year-old-alliance-taking-political-chances>.

The Government of the Republic of Korea, “Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region.”, December 2022. Accessed March 20, 2023.

<https://www.mofa.go.kr/viewer/skin/doc.html?fn=20230106093833927.pdf&rs=/viewer/result/202301>.

The White House. “Leaders’ Joint Statement in Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Alliance between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea,” April 26, 2023. Accessed October 17, 2023.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/leaders-joint-statement-in-commemoration-of-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-alliance-between-the-united-states-of-america-and-the-republic-of-korea/>.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Washington Declaration.” April 26, 2023. Accessed October 17, 2023.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/washington-declaration-2/>.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Spirit of Camp David: Joint Statement of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States,” August 18, 2023. Accessed October 17, 2023.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/the-spirit-of-camp-david-joint-statement-of-japan-the-republic-of-korea-and-the-united-states/>.

- \_\_\_\_\_. “Camp David Principles,” August 18, 2023. Accessed October 17, 2023.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/camp-david-principles/#:~:text=We%20are%20unflinching%20in%20our,undermines%20respect%20for%20them%20everywhere.>
- “Transcript: Vladimir Putin’s Televised Address on Ukraine,” *Bloomberg*, February 24, 2022.  
[https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/full-transcript-vladimir-putin-s-televised-address-to-russia-on-ukraine-feb-24#xj4y7vzkg.](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-24/full-transcript-vladimir-putin-s-televised-address-to-russia-on-ukraine-feb-24#xj4y7vzkg)
- Trevelyan, Mark, and Andrew Osborn. “Russia’s Oscar-Winning Opposition Is Mired in Conflict.” *Reuters*, March 15, 2023.  
[https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-oscar-winning-opposition-mired-conflict-2023-03-15/.](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-oscar-winning-opposition-mired-conflict-2023-03-15/)
- Waltz, Kenneth N. “The Stability of a Bipolar World.” *Daedalus* 93, no. 3 Vol. 93, No. 3 (1964): 881–909. Accessed March 20, 2023.  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/20026863.](https://www.jstor.org/stable/20026863)
- Weitz, Richard. “How the Ukraine War Transforms the Northeast Asian Security Agenda.” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 31, no. 1 (2022): 189–224. Accessed April 10, 2023.  
[https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33728/ijkus.2022.31.1.007.](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33728/ijkus.2022.31.1.007)
- Warden, John K. *North Korea’s Nuclear Posture: An Evolving Challenge for US Deterrence*. Paris, France: IFRI, 2017. Accessed October 17, 2023.  
[https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/warden\\_north\\_korea\\_nuclear\\_posture\\_2017.pdf.](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/warden_north_korea_nuclear_posture_2017.pdf)
- Westad, Odd A. *The Global Cold War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Wong, Tessa. “Vladimir Putin Says Military Cooperation with Kim Jong Un a Possibility,” *BBC*, September 14, 2023.  
[https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-66783384.](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-66783384)
- Woo, Ryan. “Putin visits ‘dear friend’ Xi in show of no-limits partnership.” *Reuters*, October 18, 2023.  
[https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-visits-dear-friend-xi-show-no-limits-partnership-2023-10-17/.](https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-visits-dear-friend-xi-show-no-limits-partnership-2023-10-17/)