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Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages

MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign Languages
English Studies

Literature and Civilization

US Attitude towards the North Korean Nuclear Program A Comparative Study of the Obama and Trump Administrations

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Academic Year: 2020-2021

Dedication

This work is dedicated first and for most to the soul my mother, who has been taken from three weeks ago because of the pandemic. Thank you mom for the unconditional love and support you have given to me. I am sorry that you will not be able to see my work, yet you are in every breath I take and every word I write. Rest in peace my dear jewel. I miss you so much and I love you so much. Thanks to my father and my siblings who have also been there for me throughout all ma educational life. This work is also dedicated to my best friends Jiwon, Latifa, Amina and hadjer who have been there for me and without whom I could not finish ma work.

Thank you everyone

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my teacher and supervisor Dr. Salim Kerboua, without whom I would not start nor finish my work. I would like to thank him for growing my interest in the topic from different angles, and his support and help by providing me with very beneficial sources. I am also grateful to the board of examiners, Ms Bougofa Zineb, Ms Cheriet Asma, and Mr Benabderezzak Abdenacer for the evaluation of my work. I would also like to thank all my teachers who enriched me with academic guidance. As I would like to say thank you especially to Mr Khaled Lebiar and Mr Adel Boulegroun who taught me American Literature, British Literature and Literary criticism. Those lectures were the most exciting lectures. As my teachers they taught me more than I can ever describe. Thanks to all of them.

Abstract

The North Korean nuclear issue has been one of the pressing problematic to the American foreign policy. After Korean War and with the help of the Soviet Union the Democratic People's republic of Korea (DPRK) has pursued a nuclear weapons program. Over the course of time Pyongyang advanced with its nuclear capabilities resulting in its first nuclear test in 2006. Ever since that day the DPRK conducted several tests, violating the United Nations resolutions, and posing threats on the United States and its allies. Although the United States tried to engage North Korea and denuclearize it, however all its attempts ended up with failure and Pyongyang continued with its tests. However, the United States witnessed an unprecedented change within the last two administrations. The present research aims at analyzing the policies and strategies of the former president Obama and the current American Trump in approaching the North Korean nuclear program. The present study also aims at highlighting the difference between both strategies, and to what extent each president succeeded in influencing the DPRK. Both presidents seemed to use the same strategies with the isolated state, yet, while diplomacy with the DPRK barely existed in the Obama term, Trump succeeded in bringing Pyongyang to the bargaining table. Based on these results, it is concluded that although Trump did not curb the North Korean nuclear yet he placed the relationship between Washington and Pyongyang in a better place than any of his predecessors.

Key Words: North Korean nuclear program, Weapons of Mass Destruction, denuclearization, nuclear non-proliferation.

ملخص

كانت قضية كوريا الشمالية النووية واحدة من المشاكل الملحة للسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية. بعد الحرب الكورية وبمساعدة الاتحاد السوفيتي ، اتبعت جمهورية كوريا الديمقراطية الشعبية برنامج أسلحة نووية. مع مرور الوقت ، تقدمت بيونغ يانغ بقدراتها النووية مما أدى إلى أول تجربة نووية لها في عام 2006. ومنذ ذلك اليوم أجرت كوريا الديمقراطية عدة تجارب، منتهكة بذلك قرارات الأمم المتحدة، مع تشكيلها تهديدات للولايات المتحدة وحلفائها. على الرغم من أن الولايات المتحدة حاولت إشراك كوريا الشمالية ونزع سلاحها النووي ، إلا أن كل محاولاتها انتهت بالفشل واستمرت بيونغ يانغ في اختباراتهما. لاكن ، شهدت الولايات المتحدة تغييراً غير مسبوق في الإدارتين الماضيتين. يهدف البحث الحالي إلى تحليل سياسات واستراتيجيات الرئيس السابق أوباما والرئيس الأمريكي الحالي ترامب في التعامل مع برنامج كوريا الشمالية النووي. تهدف الدراسة الحالية أيضاً إلى تسليط الضوء على الفرق بين الإستراتيجيتين، وإلى أي مدى نجح كل رئيس في التأثير على جمهورية كوريا الشعبية الديمقراطية. بدأ أن كلا الرئيسين يستخدمان نفس الإستراتيجيات مع الدولة المعزولة ، ومع ذلك ، بينما كانت الدبلوماسية مع كوريا الديمقراطية بالكاد موجودة في عهد أوباما ، نجح ترامب في جلب بيونغ يانغ إلى طاولة المفاوضات. بناءً على هذه النتائج ، تم التوصل إلا أنه على الرغم من أن ترامب لم يحد من أسلحة كوريا الشمالية، إلا أنه وضع العلاقة بين واشنطن و بيونغ يانغ في مكان أفضل من أي من أسلافه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البرنامج كوريا الشمالية النووي ، أسلحة الدمار الشامل ، نزع السلاح النووي ، عدم الانتشار النووي.

List of Acronyms

AFC	America First Committee
SPT	Six-Party Talk
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BDA	Banco Delta Asia
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's republic of Korea
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic missile
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
ROK	Republic of Korea
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

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General Introduction

Research Background and Problem

The North Korean nuclear dilemma is considered one of the most pressing issues in United States foreign policy. Tensions between the two countries trace back to the Korean War (1950-1953). During the early stage of Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States sought dominance over the Korean peninsula. While the Soviet Union supported the South, the United States feared the spread of communism into the rest of Korea; therefore, it pledged full support of the South and engaged its military in the war. The Koreas witnessed a three-year bloody conflict, yet in 1953 Pyongyang and Seoul signed an armistice agreement that separated the Koreas with a demilitarized zone.

Due to its enmity with the United States and the fear of a Western nuclear threat, Pyongyang developed a sense of insecurity and worked to have its own nuclear capabilities through signing a nuclear cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union in 1965. For what was claimed by Pyongyang, its nuclear development was used as a means of deterrence. To prove its peaceful intentions, Pyongyang joined to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1974 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985. Furthermore, to avoid another Korean War, the United States sought a mission of denuclearization with the Democratic and Popular Republic of Korea (DPRK i.e. North Korea). However, disagreements appeared after North Korea rejected some of the IAEA requests. Although, negotiation between the two countries was conducted through the Six-Party Talks, multilateral negotiations that included Japan, China, South Korea, North Korea, Russia, and the United States. Yet, it failed mainly because of Pyongyang's incorporation. Tensions reached its climax when the DPRK succeeded in conducting its first nuclear test in October 2006. Pyongyang's

first test was said to be unsuccessful, but it marked the first step towards a long list of nuclear development.

The United States toughened its policy after the Bush administration and the 9/11 incident. Former President Bush declared North Korea one of the "Axis of evil," as he threatened to meet any DPRK provocations with military engagement. After the DPRK's first nuclear test, the United States relied on more rigid policies covering mostly economic Sanctions and military pressure by the United States and its allies.

Over the course of time, things changed, after the coming of Barack Obama to the oval office in 2009, experts expected a new policy with the DPRK especially with Obama's pivot to the Pacific. Nevertheless, tensions raised between the United States and Pyongyang again, starting from the president's first year. Obama used a "Strategic Patience" policy with Pyongyang, which aimed mainly at bringing Pyongyang into the bargaining table through diplomatic and economic sanctions. However, it was interrupted by the end of Obama's second term with the death of the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung.

Moreover, the United States witnessed an unusual change with Donald Trump's coming, Washington's recent president. Obama's policies were replaced with even tougher with what is called "Maximum Pressure." Although Trump went through a furious phase with Pyongyang through almost two years, yet he succeeded in placing the United States-North Korea relations in a place, it has never been before. Giving the sudden change, Washington witnessed during the last two administrations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The present thesis investigates the following questions:

- How did President Obama and President Trump respectively deal with the North Korean nuclear issue?

The present research also aims at investigating these sub-questions:

- What policies have they undertaken to combat the rising nuclear development of North Korea?
- To what extent did they succeed in curbing Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions?

Research Aims

The United States has experienced an unprecedented change with the DPRK during the Obama and Trump administrations. Therefore the present thesis aims at investigating the difference between the two presidents concerning their adopted strategies and their outcomes. The present study also aims at providing a historical overview of the North Korean nuclear program's development since the Korean War period 1950s. The objective of the thesis is also to examine the last two American presidents' ideological background. Additionally, it analyses how they adopted their strategies to combat the North Korean nuclear threat.

Methodology

Concerning methodology, the thesis relies on different primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used in the research are in the form of presidential statements and other official statements taken from official governmental websites. Additionally, the research also includes several secondary sources in the form of books and articles written by different international relations scholars, students, analysts and scientists. By using this variety of sources, the present research follows a data analysis method. It analyses the president's statements, strategies in comparison to their actual actions. The present research also follows an MLA eight edition style.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the historical framework that contains the main research concepts. The second research is

devoted to an in-depth analysis of the Obama administration's strategies and policies in dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue. And the third chapter analyzes the current Trump administration policies and how it influenced the DPRK until the present day.

The first chapter entitled The United States and North Korea Relations: A Historical Background. This chapter provides a historical overview concerning the roots of United States-North Korean disputes in addition to a brief overview of Obama and Trump's ideological outlook and background.

The second chapter is entitled Addressing North Korea's Nukes under the Obama Administration. It analyses the former president Obama's foreign policy in both presidential terms with Asia-Pacific, particularly North Korea. The chapter also aims at analyzing Obama's approach towards Pyongyang's nuclear development as it highlights to what extent it succeeded in influencing the DPRK.

The third chapter is entitled Chapter three: the United States Foreign Policy with North Korea under the Trump Administration. This chapter aims at analyzing Trump's different foreign policy outlook with Asia-pacific. It also investigates in what way Trump's strategies and policies towards Pyongyang are different from his predecessors. It also analyzes how it changed the relationship between Washington and Pyongyang.

Chapter One

The US-North Korean Relations: A Historical Background

1.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the historical relationship between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the DPRK). It also deals with how President Barack Obama (2009-2016) and President Donald Trump (2016-2020) dealt with the issue. During the two administrations, the United States' foreign policy was distinctively different in terms of theories, perspectives and strategies that influenced presidents' principles and approaches.

When it comes to nuclear matters, the United States makes it clear that its ultimate goal is world peace. In this sense, the United States follows a non-proliferation policy to prevent the spread and the misuse of nuclear weapons and support peaceful cooperation. Therefore, the North Korean nuclear program has been one of the United States' main concerns ever since its beginning.

Experts notice that the foreign policy of President Obama is different from that of President Trump regarding the North Korean nuclear issue. This can be seen in the policies adopted by each president with the DPRK. Still, such discrepancy can be understood only by studying their ideologies and strategies which mainly reflect their decisions.

1.2. US-North Korea Dispute (1950-2005)

Tensions between the United States and North Korea can be traced back to the Korean War (1950-1954.) Tensions reached its climax while the Soviet Union and the United States sought dominance over the whole Korean peninsula.

Supported by China and the Soviet Union, the North Korean communist leader Kim Il Sung decided to reunite Korea under his leadership. In June 1950, Kim

initiated a sudden invasion of the South, and consequently, the Korean War started. Leading an army of 340.000 United States troops with the help of some members of the United Nations came to aid the South. Due to a fear of the spread of communism to the entire world, President Harry Truman and his counsellors followed the policy of containment. The war lasted for three years, culminating when both sides signed an armistice in July 1953. The agreement left the Koreas separated with a fully guarded demilitarized zone running along the 38th parallel (Shim 19).

During the Korean War, the United States considered the use of atomic bombs to support the South. In addition to President Eisenhower's threat to use nuclear weapons to end the war if necessary. As a result of this perceived aggression, North Korea developed a sense of insecurity. Later in 1959, a nuclear cooperation agreement was signed by North Korea and the Soviet Union, and in 1965 North Korea began operating a research reactor constructed near the small town in Yongbyon. The Soviet Union gave a small, 2-MW (thermal output), light-water-moderated, research reactor that burned highly enriched uranium. After the DPRK reached two nuclear agreements with the Soviet Union, Yongbyon became a Nuclear Scientific Research Center its construction began in 1961. It produces the mainly fissile material for North Korea's nuclear weapons ("Yongbyon" par 1).

According to Time's magazine Jan.13, 2003 cover story about the North Korean nuclear ambitions, the end of the Korean War left some traces on North Korea. Before the end of the war, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who took office in 1953, put the use of nuclear weapons on the table if needed to end the war. Though the war ended in the same year, the idea that nuclear weapons might be necessary left effects on North Korea. Therefore, the 1965 nuclear cooperation is said to be the essence of the North Korean nuclear program (Waxman par 1-2).

In September 1974 North Korea signed a Safeguard Agreement and joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As an indication for its peaceful nuclear intentions, North Korea also joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1985. Nevertheless, struggles started to appear after North Korea retracted its endorsement of the 1987 safeguard agreement provided by the IAEA because it asked for a precondition. That precondition included a non-threat agreement to North Korea and non-use of nuclear weapons alongside the United States forces inspections in South Korea. Various negotiations took place between the Koreas and the United States. It ended with the withdrawal of the American forces from South Korea and the removal of all tactical nuclear weapons there. In December 1991, the North and the South adopted a declaration of denuclearization. It was a prohibition from any nuclear development or deployment in the Korean Peninsula. The safeguard agreement was signed in 1992, but what seemed to be the end of the nuclear issue was actually not.(Shim 20)

In May 1992 the DPRK delivered its report under the safeguard agreement. When inspections began, the agency's findings did not match the delivered report. The later found that there is existing undeclared plutonium. Therefore in order to confirm the existing analysis, the IAEA requested access to further information and to two sites related to nuclear waste, but North Korea refused. On 1 May, 1993 the IAEA's Board of Governors declared the DPRK as non-compliant with the safeguard agreement. According to the Article XII.C of the IAEA Statute, the DPRK's non-compliance was referred to the United Nations Security Council. As a result, North Korea declared its decision to withdraw from the NPT, yet it suspended the effectuation of its withdrawal in June 1993 ("Fact Sheet on DPRK" par 6).

In December 1993, North Korea agreed on the IAEA special inspection, yet with limited purview(containment, surveillance and maintenance). Soon after the inspection took place, the Director-General of the agency delivered a report to the Security Council considering the limited inspection as a sign of the DPRK's non-peaceful nuclear intentions. In 1994, the IAEA turned the North Korean nuclear program to the United Nations' Security Council. Accordingly in his statement, on 30 May 1994, the council's president called for an immediate consultation between the agency and the DPRK. The situation escalated, and North Korea finally announced its discontinuation with the IAEA. Hence the council started to discuss sanctions against the DPRK, and the U.S. threatened to bomb the North Korean nuclear facilities ("Fact Sheet on DPRK" par 7).

From 15 June to 18 June 1994 U.S. envoy (and former president) Jimmy Carter met President Kim Il Sung in North Korea. The meeting resulted in an agreement which stated that the U.S. would give North Korea a Light-Water reactor to get rid of the constant threat of nuclear crisis. Also, Pyongyang would quit the development of its nuclear program. President Carter's trip gave the DPRK a chance to engage in peaceful compromises with the U.S. After President Kim Il Sung's death negotiations between the United States and North Korea continued and both countries signed the Geneva agreed framework in October 1994. North Korea decided to stop its nuclear, and dismantle its facilities by 2003 after the U.S. provided light-water power reactor power plans before even the first light-water reactor finished, accompanied by 500.000 of heavy oil for heating and electricity production. By 1999 the United States diminished its sanctions against the DPRK's economy (Shim 24).

On the other hand North Korea froze the launch of a missile test. The first summit talk between the Koreas was held for the first time in 2000. In order to create a

friendly atmosphere between both countries a “U.S.-D.P.R.K. Joint Communiqué” was held on October 2000 (par 3).

Yet, after the inauguration of the American President George W. Bush, the US-NK relations started to change. Within the Bush administration, the U.S. changed its policies with DPRK. After the 9/11 incident, the U.S. foreign policies become tougher, and as a result, President Bush declared North Korea alongside Iraq and Iran an "Axis of evil." This pushed North Korea to consider such announcement a threat of war. By 2002, North Korea became one of the seven targeted nuclear states by the U.S. Department of Defense; therefore, it started to reconsider its agreements with the United States. Finally, in May 2002, the United States declared the DPRK a state that promotes terrorism. After that N.K. revealed its secret nuclear operations; in return, the U.S. Security Council announced that it would stop providing the DPRK with oil. The latter expelled all the IAEA inspectors, and urged the agency's board of governors to issue a policy that called for a full cooperation of the DPRK with the agency; however, by January 2003 North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation treaty (NPT) (par 5).

On 28 January 2002, and during his State of the Union Address, President Bush considered North Korea an outlaw state that would be faced with strong defense from the U.S., as he considered military actions with the DPRK. Amidst this unsettled climate, China intervened in the issue, peacefully asking for US-NK talks. As a result, a trilateral meeting took place in Beijing from 23 April to 25. While the U.S. asked for a complete drop out of nuclear operations from the DPRK. Additionally, the U.S. proposed that if N.K. allowed immediate complete nuclear inspections, economic support would be resumed, yet North Korea refused the proposal insisting on the idea

of "security guarantee economic support". Eventually the trilateral talks proved to be fruitless (Goodby par 4).

While the relations between the United States and Pyongyang was unstable , China maintained its effort to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue engaging in multilateral talks: Consequently, the first round of the Six-Party Talk was held in Beijing from August 27-29, 2003, involving South Korea, United States, Japan, Russia, China and North Korea. Later the SPT had a second and a third-round in 2004, but with no concrete results. Tensions increased and meetings between the SPT members were held in 2004 from May to June. While the first phase of the Six-Party talk was held in Beijing from 26 July to 7 August, the second phase was held from 13 September to 19. By the fourth round North Korea decided to give up its nuclear weapons and all its nuclear operations and running programs and return to the NPT and IAEA. Additionally, the U.S. confirmed its unwillingness to attack North Korea and that it had no nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula. The Six-Party Talks members agreed that North Korea has the right to use nuclear energy as long as the purposes are peaceful (Shim 25).

Nevertheless, soon tensions grew after the U.S. Treasury Department announcement of the imposed economic sanctions on Macau's Banco Delta Asia (BDA) for its pretended financial support to the DPRK's banned financial transactions. As a result, about \$25 million of the North Korean funds in the BDA were frozen. The first phase of the fifth round of the Six-Party Talk failed. Due to the opposition of North Korea to the BDA issue, as well as the U.S. refusal to negotiations and talks. The US-NK tensions heightened ever since (Solomon, and King par 4).

1.3. The Development of the North Korean Nuclear Program

The roots of the North Korean Nuclear Program traces back to the 1950s. The DPRK set up the Atomic Energy Research Institute and the Academy of Sciences. Yet, after North Korea signed a cooperative agreement with the Soviet Union, nuclear started to be developed. In 1956, Pyongyang signed the founding charter of the Soviet Union's joint institute for Nuclear Research. After that, North Korea started sending technicians and scientists to the USSR for training. The DPRK and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on the peaceful use of nuclear energy in 1959. The agreement also included permission to the Soviet support to establish a nuclear research complex in a North Pyongan province, Yongbyon (Nünlist 4).

The Soviet Union provided an IRT-2000 nuclear research reactor to the DPRK which helped in the construction of Yongbyon's Nuclear Research Center. Later this small reactor was used by North Korea to produce radioisotopes. At first, the Academy of science had an operational and administrative authority over the research. Yet the DPRK's leader Kim Il Sung gained total control over the nuclear program and its development. North Korean engineers started using indigenous technology to develop the IRT-2000 research reactor by the early 1970s. Therefore, the DPRK began acquiring plutonium reprocessing technology from the Soviet Union. North Korea and the USSR signed a trilateral safeguard agreement with the IAEA. The later was included because it was responsible for supplying the reactor's fuel ("Nuclear" par 7).

By the 1980s, North Korea witnessed a significant period of indigenous expansion. During that period the DPRK established uranium milling facilities, a fuel rod fabrication complex and a 5MW nuclear reactor. And by the mid-1980s, North Korea established a 50MW nuclear reactor in addition to the Light Water Reactor provided by the United States at the beginning of the 1980s (Bermudez 409).

In 1994 the DPRK witnessed a series of crisis with IAEA, which ended with its withdrawal from the NPT. Yet the crisis defused after former president's travel Jimmy Carter to North Korea. The U.S. envoy met the Korean president Kim Il Sung, the meeting concluded with signing the October 1994 agreed framework. The DPRK accepted to freeze its gas-graphite moderator and other related facilities and to remain in the NPT. In 2002 the Bush administration presented a review concerning the North Korean policy. It states that the DPRK should abide by the Agreed Framework principles and accelerate the IAEA inspections. And soon the international community became worried about the illicit Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) program. And the evidence was discovered in summer 2005 that Pakistan transferred HEU technology to North Korea. Later, Dr A. Q. Khan Pakistani nuclear scientists confirmed it. After this, the DPRK started establishing its uranium facilities covertly. Bilateral talks took place in October 2002 between the United States and Pyongyang. As a result, North Korea admitted its program's activities, yet it is considered as its own right of self-defence (Bermudez 410).

Multilateral negotiations started in April 2003 that included china, the United States and North Korea and later Japan, Russia and South Korea. It aimed at putting an end to the North Korean nuclear development. Although the talks had its first round in 2003 and the second and third rounds in 2004, it was burdened by the tensions between the Six-Party Talk members mainly between the United States and North Korea. But it was resumed in 2005. Due to the SPT Pyongyang shut down its 5MW reactor that has been active since 2003. It is enough time that allows the DPRK to produce enough plutonium for between one and three nuclear devices in its spent fuel. The SPT had its fourth round on 19 September 2005 that ended with signing a statement of principles, which was centred mainly on the shutdown of the DPRK's

nuclear program. Later the parties disagreed upon the implementation of the principles and North Korea did not abide with its part of the agreement. Therefore the principles remained stall. Finally, The North Korean nuclear crisis reached its climax in October 2006, when it conducted its **first** test at 10:35 AM. A plutonium-based device less than one kiloton yield. According to the Korean Central News Agency, it was expected to be a four kiloton yield (par 6).

1.4. Barack Obama and American Grand Strategy

In 2008, Barack Obama was inaugurated as the first African American president to the United States. A member of the Democratic Party becoming the 44th president, after he worked as a part-time lawyer, part-time law professor, and part-time state legislator in Illinois. Obama served two terms in 2008 and 2012.

Before they are commanders in chief and heads of the states, presidents are party leaders and politicians who have specific interests. Therefore they act upon their beliefs when it comes to issuing policies whether at the international or domestic level. Being the successor to the former American president George W Bush, Obama was left with two wars alongside huge financial crisis in the market; therefore, he is remembered as the president who gave much importance to the domestic issues. Showing more concerns towards prevailing over the economic disasters that were troubling the country. Yet, this doesn't exclude his remarkable efforts concerning foreign policy (Nünlist 1).

1.5. Obama's Foreign Policy outlook

When it comes to foreign policy, critics attacked Obama for complying with the events rather than following an overall strategy. However, some considered his policy of having strategic principle such as maintaining the U.S. leadership as a global hegemony but with lower cost leaving a greater share to its allies. Moreover, Obama

adopted the language of "Dialogue" with countries such as Cuba and Iran which had been regarded for many years as enemies to the U.S (Nünlist 2).

Unlike Bush's unilateral administration, Obama leaned towards a multilateral American leadership. Addressing the U.N. General Assembly in 2009, Obama urged, "Those who used to chastise America for acting alone in the world cannot now stand by and wait for America to solve the world's problems alone." Obama sought multilateral collaborations to solve international problems like in Libya and Syria (Lyman par 5-6).

Multilateralism in international politics is the process of arranging cooperation between more than three states based on specific principles. These principles are interests that are shared between the states. For instance, to solve a particular issue that threatens these states as equally. Multilateralism has a long history yet it is mainly associated with the era after World War II, during which there was thrive of multilateral engagements led mainly by the United States. It is best embodied in organizations like World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO.) (Penn par 7).

The unilateral intervention in the war of Iraq in 2003, which have been under the "coalition of willing" that included not only the U.S. but also the British and the Polish in addition to other nations. Yet the United States covered most of the costs, and its troops were the ones who faced the risks and got affected the most. As a result, the U.S.' global role has been questioned by many countries. That is why during the Obama administration the United States sought consensus and international coalition to protect its interests, security and military. This reflects Obama's wisdom for seeking international coalition to solve global affairs instead of acting unilaterally. It reflects

his desire to share his decisions with the international community specially his western allies (Lyman par 2).

While some of Obama's critics criticized him of having no strategy others like Ryan Lizza considered Obama's foreign policy as "Leading from behind" strategy. It is a term that was first popularized in Nelson Mandela's 1994 autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom", in which he compared leaders to shepherds that leads its flocks from behind, empowering other actors to be the doers of their own intentions. For instance, the case of Libya can exemplify such a strategy when President Obama sought the support of the Arab League to gain approval from the United Nation and give the green light to military intervention in Libya. According to Lizza Obama scored a success since his predecessor George W Bush couldn't get the United Nation's approval for the war in Iraq, even Bill Clinton couldn't get it for his war in Kosovo (Lizza par2).

Colin Dueck suggests that "that strategy is one of overarching American retrenchment and accommodation internationally, in large part to allow the president to focus on securing liberal policy legacies at home." In the sense that, president Obama hybridized his grand strategy overseas including, engagement, containment, assertion, integration and sometimes even occasional to assure accommodation and retrenchment. Such a mixture of strategies, according to Colin, it stresses the president's "goodwill" abroad. This can be exemplified in his strategic retreat from the Middle East and Afghanistan in addition, to the shift of attention towards Asia. Alongside the engagement in diplomacy which became a major element in Obama's strategy. This strategy gained some remarkable success such as the nuclear strife with Iran alongside the renovation of diplomatic relations with Cuba, establishing new economic ties with Asia and Latin America. (Dueck 2)

Additionally Obama is often described by some as a realist and by others as a liberal realist. To begin with, Realism is a theory that dominated International Relations ever since the end of World War II. Realism also known as Political Realism is a theory that emphasizes the conflictual and competitive side of international relations. The most noticeable names of this theory are Thucydides, Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. According to realists, states are the main performer in the international arena, they are concerned mainly with security and their constant strives and struggle for power. However, realists stress self-interest and power over ethics, norms and ideals. Leading Realist scholars ever since WWII in addition to the already mentioned are Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, Reinhold Neibuhr, Nicholas Spykman, George Kennan, Henry Kissinger, Kenneth Waltz, Robert Gilpin, Stephen Walt, John Mearsheimer, and Robert Art ("Political Realism In International Relations" par 4)

Ever since the beginning of his presidency Obama made many speeches that advocated idealist principles such as engaging in multilateral diplomacy and cooperating with allies. However, from the realist's standpoint, Obama's administration leaned more to realist idealism. According to Jeffery Goldberg who wrote for the Atlantic magazine, Obama attributed his philosophy of international relations to the first President Bush's Realism, particularly his chief national security advisor Brent Scowcroft. Just like them Obama aimed to prioritize the United States' national interest to the forefront. Especially within his first term the president engaged in different wars like in Afghanistan, Libya, In addition to the United States' constant military growth, preserving its place as the most powerful nation in the world. "Starting with the world as it is, in order to make effective changes" was more emphasized by Obama in his Nobel Prize speech in 10 September 2009. During his

speech Obama discussed war and peace and the limits of power, as he acknowledging the necessity of using force when it is needed.(Kim 14)

However, According to Stephen M. Walt, Obama was not a Realist. When we speak about Obama's administration the most remarkable achievement were the Health Care reforms and saving the country from another great depression. Taking into consideration the circumstances that faced him right after his inauguration, in addition to his tolerance with minorities and the legalization of gay marriage. This is no small success in comparison to how things were in 2009, yet these achievements were on the domestic level. His success in foreign policy according to Walt is a "mixed bag." Although he achieved some success, for instance, the relations between the United States and China became more tranquil despite the U.S. "pivot" on Asia. In addition to the nuclear deal with Iran. But he failed in other aspects; according to Walt, a genuine realist would have left Afghanistan by 2009 instead of sending nearly 60.000 troops with no tangible results enabling Taliban of gaining control over most of the territory by 2016. He would have changed the United States "special relationship" with the Middle East to a more normal one. Therefore, Obama did not fully embrace a realist outlook in his foreign policy which resulted in most of his failures (Walt et al par4-6).

It was generally expected that the Obama administration would be different from the Bush administration, leaning more to the liberal direction, in other words, engaging more in diplomatic negotiations. It was also expected that it would take a more flexible way with North Korea. Yet, President Obama followed a hard-line strategy also called "Strategic patience" (Kim 1).

According to Daniel Kim, the concept of Strategic Patience refers to the United States policy toward Pyongyang's nuclear program and ballistic missiles. As a definition to the term it simply means "inaction", it means that negotiations with the

DPRK are cut off until it shows concrete and tangible evidence toward its intention for nuclear disarmament (Kim par 8).

This trend did not show any signs of change during both terms of the president during his term America engaged with Iran concerning its nuclear program in addition to the restoration of diplomatic negotiations with Cuba except for North Korea which remained a sole enemy (Kim 12).

1.6. Trump's Doctrine

After a divisive campaign, on November 8, 2016, the Republican candidate Donald John Trump became the 45th president of the United States. An estate investor and a reality television star that never held a public office entered the white house and the oval office as the new American president.

According to Sherle Schwenninger, a grand strategy is an outline or a road map that carries a vision of the United States' foreign policy goals or objectives and presents the most effective ways to reach these goals. Additionally, grand strategies and foreign policy doctrines are further perspectives and visions to the threats that can threaten a country's national interests. Therefore most of the American presidents' doctrines were interested in a particular crisis, for instance, the Bush doctrine and the 9/11 attack, the Truman Doctrine and his containment policy (Dimitrova 34).

Yet when it comes to Trump, it is a different story. Ever since its start, Trump's administration has been the centre of debates among pundits and critics, inside and outside the United States, in an attempt to decipher Trump's approaches, ideology and intentions. It is almost two years now critics are trying to find his academics and principles that are guiding his policies. But these efforts were incapable of giving a clear definition of what is Trump's catalyst or grand strategy, especially concerning foreign policy. Therefore, Trump's foreign policy has also been interpreted from a

different perspective. While some suggested that he has no ideology, and he is only guided by personal unsystematic desires, others argued and gave different principles and philosophies that characterized the president's strategies and principles of foreign policy (Sestanovich par 6).

1.7. Trump's foreign policy outlook

Ever since its beginning of Trump's campaign there was only one slogan that marked the campaign, which is "We Will Make America Great Again". President Ronald Reagan popularized it in the 1980s. According to James Dinsdale, the 2016 elections were a referendum on globalism versus patriotism. Therefore people were calling for a foreign policy that puts "America First, America Last, and America Always." And consequently, Trump's chances were high, especially when he promised to put an end to the United States interventions in overseas conflicts. Alongside promoting what he called "Fair Trade" in the economy through imposing tariffs on foreign countries (Dinsdale par 3).

On 27 April 2016, the Republican candidate Donald Trump delivered his foreign policy speech. He demarcated his general stand in international relations that would reshape the American responsibility abroad and place "America First" (A. Del Real par 6).

The term "America first" is not new in the American political vocabulary. It is a committee found in 1940 labeled The America First Committee (AFC). It is a nationalist pursuit that opposed the United States involvement in the Second World War. It has also rebuked President Roosevelt for pushing the United States towards war. Seventy years later, President Trump rode back to these nationalist sentiments (Calamur par 4).

At a formal meeting, a White House official and Trump's former communications director Mike Dubke and supported by Richard Haass declared that there is no trump doctrine. On the other hand, Trump's staffer argues that America First is Trump's doctrine. Therefore pundits say that this approach to the foreign policy indicates the tensions in the white house between the "nationalists," and "globalists." Trump's character and ideology are hardly detected due to his controversial ideas and paradoxical attitudes. Yet, the "America First" principle was emphasized in more than one speech. In a well-structured statement published in *The National Interest* review on 27 April 2016, Trump expressed his foreign policy vision clearly. First, he gave what he considered a gloomy depiction of today's international order as a dangerous arena. While the United States' allies are not paying their fair share, the U.S. is paying for the total financial, human and political cost of the security burden. Therefore this allowed the U.S.'s opponents to strengthen their powers. According to Anna Dimitrova, a professor in international affairs, Trumps Hobbesian view of international relations opposes the post World War II internationalist consensus held by mainstream liberals and conservatives. The United States has continuously played a hegemonic role in this consensus. As a result, Trump seeks to replace this role with a new national American foreign policy, that focuses on creating stability in the world instead of the nation-building business (Dimitrova 35.)

Subsequently, although the previous presidents sought to secure the economy and preserve the well-being of the country, Trump's foreign policy differs from the last liberal grand strategies. He embraces a "neo-isolationist" and a "neo-sovereigntist" approach led by his "America First" strategy. His plan also rejects the two pillars of the liberal grand strategy, multilateralism and globalism. Trump also expressed his scepticism towards "international ties up" that brings America down. That is why he

withdrew the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations after he denounced unfair deals like NAFTA that is considered a total disaster to him ("Trump" par 5).

1.8. Conclusion

North Korea has been a rogue states for over five decades. After the Korean war ended the DPRK developed a nuclear program, in which Pyongyang developed nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Additionally, North Korea has also developed a stressing relationship with the United States during the Korean War being it the soul enemy of South Korea and after the war for developing nuclear program. Pyongyang has always posed a threat on the United States and its allies, resulting in stationing the United States forces in Japan and North Korea. Although the United States sought to improve relations and involve the DPRK into negotiations. But all its attempts ended with failure and tensions between the two countries escalated even more, especially after Pyongyang's first nuclear test in 2006.

Furthermore, although the previous presidents failed to bring the DPRK into the bargaining table, yet Washington witnessed an unusual change within the last two Administrations of Trump and Obama. However, both Administrations persuaded the North Korean nuclear program in a different way.

Chapter Two

Addressing North Korea's Nukes under the Obama Administration

2.1. Introduction

At the beginning of the Obama administration in 2009, experts speculated a different foreign policy with Pyongyang from the Bush Administration. Since the president promised to deviate from the Bush policy as he emphasized strengthening the United States ties with the entire Asia Pacific. It was expected that Obama would engage in a more dovish approach with the DPRK, but following the president's inauguration tensions have been raised with North Korea. That eventually urged President Obama to adopt a harsh tone and policy with Pyongyang, known as "Strategic Patience." Therefore, this chapter will be examining Obama's Strategic patience. It will also analyze the reason behind adopting this policy and its consequences.

2.2. Obama's Pacific "Pivot"

Within the last century, the United States foreign policy witnessed a huge transition that is directed more towards Asia. The 9/11 incident rearranged the United States priorities, which led President Bush to change Washington's strategy of ignorance known as the "Benign Neglect" strategy and include Asia that later became the United States second front against terrorism. Then under the Obama administration, the United States foreign policy focused on the Asia-Pacific region. Hillary Clinton, in the secretary of state hearing, suggests that in the past twenty years, the world went through a rapid change, which highlighted the United States' need to cooperate with other countries to solve global problems and respond to threats. Then she points out at the use of "Smart Power" and foreign policy tools such as diplomacy to strengthen the United States ties with the other countries and preserve its hegemonic

role. The Obama administration pivoted its strategy towards the Pacific and prioritized strengthening ties with the region because it considers Asia-Pacific as a vital and dynamic region, especially with the rising China and its influence on the region. Therefore, as a multilateralist, Obama sought a cooperative strategy that engages the Asia-Pacific and, more precisely, Southeast Asia (Ming-Te, and Tai-Ting Liu 195).

Being the home for most of the American foreign investments, Asia's rising growth is an economical central interest to President Obama. Additionally, maintaining peace around the Asia-Pacific region is vital to the global process, and curbing the North Korean nuclear proliferation is one of the crucial goals (Ayyub et al par 5).

The pivot is also known between experts as "the Rebalance to Asia-Pacific" because, after a review tackled by the Obama administration in 2008, the results showed that the United States' global interest was more directed towards the Middle East and Europe, and neglected the Pacific. This imbalance was regarded as a gap in the United States foreign policy to Obama; therefore, the pivot was described as a rebalancing (Thuy Hang 291).

Some scholars suggest that Obama's rebalance towards the Pacific is significantly realist oriented. Nguyen Thi Thuy Hang suggests realism in the United States pivot lies in its national interest and attempt to prevent any other power from becoming a "regional hegemony" (Thuy Hang 292). Additionally, Stephen M. Walt, in his book "Taming American power," wrote that "there is perfectly a sound realist justification for this strategic shift" (Walt 11-16). Pointing to the development of the Asia-Pacific and rising China and the dynamic economy in Asia. Therefore, the United States needed to engage in the Pacific region and establish a rebalance, especially in China,

as a key area. President Obama announced his main goals in the Asia-Pacific region in his November 17, 2011 speech in the Australian parliament. He emphasized strengthening bilateral security alliance; broadening the United States military base in the area; joining regional multilateral institutions; deepening relationship with the emerging powers, china mainly (Obama par 10).

Hillary Clinton was always present in the region, in her term as a Secretary of States. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter has made Asia one of his priorities. The United States grew its military presence and deepened its alliance, especially across Indo-Asia. Its traditional alliance with South Korea and Japan also intensified with 49.000 American forces in Japan and 28.500 in South Korea. In addition to enhancing its economic and diplomatic ties with ten countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Southeast Asia has been one of the neglected regions by the United States. Yet, during the Obama administration, a change in the attitude occurred when the president hosted all ten heads of state at the third U.S.–ASEAN summit in Sunnylands, California, on February 15, 2016 (SHAMBAUGH). Yet, according to John Ford Obama's strategy and sudden shift in security and defense by putting Asia as the center of focus gave china the attitude of containing Beijing's growing military capabilities and encircling China's effect in the region (Ford par 4).

While on the surface, relationships between the United States and South Korea are strong, in reality, Seoul is leaning more to Beijing. However, combating North Korea's nuclear program is a common problem between the two countries. South Korea and the United States were outraged from china's failure to pressure Pyongyang. Following its fourth test nuclear bomb (allegedly a hydrogen device), and ballistic missile in January and February 2016. While depending on China to deter North Korea's

military ambition, the Obama administration followed a “Strategic Patience” strategy to curb Pyongyang’s nuclear program (Shambaugh par 6).

2.3. Obama and The DPRK’s Nuclear Crisis

Before the 2008 presidential elections, Obama and Hillary Clinton criticized the policies of Bush's administration in dealing with Pyongyang publicly. Senator Clinton in 2006 suggested that the Bush administration created an "open invitation" for the DPRK to produce more plutonium because of the lack of direct talks. As she claimed that the Six-Party Talks proved to be "fruitless" because it wasn't adequately dealing with North Korea. Former President Obama called the SPT an "ad hoc," and instead of the SPT, he supported a “sustained, direct, and aggressive diplomacy.” In a presidential debate in September 2008, Obama maintained that due to the lack of diplomatic engagement with North Korea, Pyongyang succeeded in mounting its nuclear capacity ("The Candidates" par 3).

Before the November election with a month, candidate Obama in a debate with Senator John McCain said that the United States needs to advocate in "tough, direct diplomacy." And that the idea of not talking to the people that the United States is punishing is not working. According to Obama, this technique did not work with Iran, and it is not working with North Korea. Additionally, he stated that isolation increased Pyongyang's efforts to nuclear weapons (Kim 32).

Obama directed his criticism to Bush’s non-engagement policy. However, he supported Bush's second term last re-engagement after DPRK’s first nuclear test in 2006 and a hard stance against permitting verifications of its atomic sites. United States chief negotiator Chris Hill accelerated in a series of nuclear deals with Pyongyang with the full support of George W. Bush and secretary of state Condoleezza Rice. As a result, under the Six-Party Talk framework on February 13 and October 4,

2007, an agreement took place between the United States and North Korea. Pyongyang was to provide clear and correct reports of its nuclear facilities in exchange for 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil (HFO) or the energy equivalent. Additionally, the United States took the DPRK off the terrorist list in an attempt to negotiate to drop the DPRK off trading with the enemy Act, in return to its provisions of verification inspections. Yet Pyongyang refused, as the Obama Administration's preparations to take office started (Snyder, and Won Byun 2).

Therefore, when Obama took office, it was expected that the United States-North Korean relations would move towards a new era and a more liberal policy that includes mostly diplomatic engagements and a dialogue-oriented way. However, the Obama administration adopted a strict policy called "Strategic Patience," and the outcomes of this strategy were debatable. Because while some considered it successful, others argued for it was a complete failure.

2.4. Obama's "Strategic Patience"

Throughout the Obama Administration, the United States foreign policy with North Korea has been termed "Strategic Patience." According to Shao Binhong, Strategic Patience means that diplomatic negotiations between the United States and the DPRK can take place only if Pyongyang presents "the good faith in denuclearization." Obama's policy is based on suspicious presumptions; it is neither active nor passive. The United States believes that Pyongyang will not abandon its nuclear program. Therefore, the United States and its allies need to be ready for consequences and the implications. Binhong thinks that this is the reason behind Obama's Strategic Patience for that the United States is prepared to tackle any possible development of the DPRK's nuclear crisis (Binhong 105).

It was expected from the Obama Administration to carry out a breakthrough policy with the nuclear DPRK since Obama criticized Bush's lack of engagement. Yet, such expectations were hindered by a sudden series of provocations by Pyongyang right at the beginning of the Obama administration against both the United States and South Korea. It started on January 31 when North Korea accused Seoul of aggressive posturing. Therefore, it canceled all its military and political agreements with South Korea, including the armistice agreement that ended the 1953 Korean War, which raised the possibility of armed conflict in the Korean peninsula. Within the same context, President Obama promised to strengthen the United States ties with South Korea and to denuclearize North Korea through the Six-Party Talk. Obama affirmed that denuclearizing Pyongyang could be achieved only through a robust US-South Korea alliance. Tensions raised as the South Korean national intelligence agency discovered Pyongyang was preparing to test-fire its long-range ballistic missile, the Taepodong2. According to the intelligence agency, it can reach as far as Alaska and the West Coast of the United States. Pyongyang's test troubled the United States officials, which urged the United States top commander in South Korea to deliver a speech, calling the DPRK to stop its provocations whatsoever (Kim Hong 23).

After weeks from the South Korean Intelligence agency report, on February 26, 2009, North Korea announced a statement from its national space committee that it is preparing to launch an "experimental communication satellite" from its northeastern coast. However, South Korean and the United States officials believed in the intelligence agency's report that Pyongyang is preparing to test its Taepodong2 ("NORTH" par 6).

The space committee statement came after the first overseas trip of Hillary Clinton as a secretary of state to the Asian region, including South Korea. In which she warned

the DPRK to stop its provocative conduct. Clinton has also said that the missile issue can be addressed only through the multilateral negotiations. Still, the Six-Party Talk was stuck in limbo after the disagreement over verifying Pyongyang's old nuclear activities. During her trip, Clinton has also officially stated that the primary goal of the administration is to "normalize bilateral relations with North Korea and replace the peninsula's long-standing armistice agreement with a permanent peace treaty" (Olsen 54). This indicates the different attitude the Obama administration is taking, that is different from the Bush Administration. Yet this statement didn't have any outcomes as tensions have been raised between the DPRK and the United States hindering any type of negotiations and pushed the Obama Administrations to take a hard-line policy with Pyongyang.

A similar warning was delivered in March by Stephen Bosworth, anew appointed United States envoy to North Korea. Bosworth warned the DPRK from launching a missile or a satellite because it would be a violation of the 2006 United Nations' Security Council 1718 resolution ("NORTH" par 3). It is a resolution issued by the United Nations' Security Council following Pyongyang's first nuclear test in 2006. Sanctions were imposed on the DPRK by the Security Council's members; these sanctions include an embargo on military and technological materials also, to luxury goods, and even financial penalties. North Korea returned to the Six-Party Talk a month after the Security Council held the US-backed sanctions against Pyongyang, including the other members of the SPT (Forum par 6).

Many experts questioned the constant North Korean provocation to the Obama administration. For instance, Hong Nack Kim thinks that the DPRK is preparing to fire a rocket for prestigious aims, and mainly to bolster the power of Kim Jong-Il. Kim suffered a stroke by the mid-August 2008 and disappeared from the political arena for

about three months. According to Hong Nack Kim, giving that Kim was about to start his third term as chairman of National Defense in early April 2009, firing a long rocket successfully would boost his prestige and power as the leader of North Korea(Nack Kim 24). On the other hand, Larry A. Niksch suggests that Pyongyang is looking for a departure from the Bush Administration's policies, and the only way to achieve this is by asserting its developing military powers. And pressure the United States through raising the credibility of its threats to be one of the main issues in the United States' agenda (Niksch 31).

On April 5, 2009, North Korea launched what is said to be a long-range ballistic missile. Still, the DPRK argued that it was the satellite Kwangmyongsong-2, which was intended to be put into orbit through a space launch vehicle Unha-2. North Korea officials stated that the satellite was successfully set in the orbit, as they said that the satellite transmitted revolutionary song while it circled Earth. The United States and South Korea stated that the satellite failed its way to the orbit, as its payload dropped into the sea. North Korea ignored the previous warnings and violated the United Nations Security Council's 1718 resolution that forbids the DPRK from engaging in any ballistic missile program. Instantly, President Obama condemned North Korea's action, as he warned Pyongyang that this action would be subject to international sanctions (Kim 24).

According to the office of the South Korean president, Lee Myung-bak, the multi-stage rocket has been launched at 11.30 am (2.30 am GMT) from the Musudan-ri site in northeastern North Korea. Additionally, the Japanese prime minister's office stated that the three-stage rocket appeared to be successfully launched, as they said that the first stage fell into the sea of Japan and the second one in the Pacific. On the one hand, Choe Sang-Hun and David E. Sanger suggest that North Korea aimed to demonstrate

that the DPRK is capable of launching a multi-stage rocket that could surpass thousands of miles. As they think that the launch was behind political as well as technological motivations since the DPRK was able to gain fuel from the United States during the Bush Administration enough for six or more nuclear weapons. On the Other hand, Difilippo says that Pyongyang did not see any difference from the previous administration; therefore, it sought an "action for action." Yet it saw the United States' primary goal was disarming Pyongyang without any considerations or in-between solutions. After an in-depth analysis of the launch, South Korea argues that the launch's technology is the same used for a missile. Therefore, Pyongyang's launch appears to be an attempt to bid attention from the Obama administration ("Rocket" par 5).

On April 5, 2009, Obama was scheduled to present a speech in Prague to lay out his strategy to counter nuclear proliferation bluster. And as a reaction to Pyongyang's launch, Obama said North Korea demonstrates “the need for action, not just this afternoon at the U.N. Security Council, but in our determination to prevent the spread of these weapons.” Yet, there were no tangible actions after it. However, Japan's response was strong. It diffused ships all over the Sea of Japan and stated that it would shoot any launching "debris," which already threatened to hit the country (Sang-Hun, and E. Sanger par 4).

Quickly North Korea reacted, which was considered a hostile reaction. The DPRK declared that it is willing to reactivate its nuclear facilities in Yongbyon, as it expelled all inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Additionally, it declared its unwillingness to get back to the Six-Party Talk and demanded an apology from the Security Council for what Pyongyang considers unjust. North Korea has also announced to reprocess the spent nuclear fuel to produce weapons-grade platinum, and

carry both nuclear and missile tests. The United States took the DPRK's threats as a provocative mean to get attention; therefore, Secretary of State Clinton said that the United States would have "to be strong, patient and consistent and not to give in to ... the unpredictable behavior of the North Korean regime" (Kim 25)

And as a result of North Korea's constant provocations right from the beginning of the Obama administration, President Obama becomes convinced that there will be no negotiations with the DPRK unless it shows a change in its behavior and shows commitment toward denuclearization. According to Pyon, there is no surprise when the Obama administration chose to pull out Bush's engagement policy and replace it with a stricter policy. That secretary of State Clinton called a "Strategic Patience" policy (Pyon 75).

Nevertheless, the "Strategic patience" policy has been debated between pundits. Experts argued concerning the real causes and aim behind Obama's strategy against North Korea that dominated his terms. Dongsoo Kim, for instance, examined Strategic Patience's causes through two international political theories Realism and Liberalism. According to Kim from a realist standpoint, unlike its behavior, the United States should have reacted in a proactive way to the North Korean nuclear program and the DPRK provocations. However, he explained that the United States does not consider Pyongyang an earnest threat to its national security. And although North Korea is by de facto a nuclear power considering its nuclear technology and missiles, yet Dongsoo Kim suggests that the United States perceive the DPRK as a rational actor. Therefore, mutual deterrence will work successfully (Kim 35-36).

However, Obama is described more as being liberal; Dongsoo Kim thinks that this is the best way to study the reason behind Obama's Strategic Patience. Liberalism emphasizes the importance of negotiations and international cooperation in solving

global problems. During his presidential campaign president, Obama expressed his ideas, which were generally perceived as congruent with the liberalism. To cope with silent issues that phase the United States and global community such as terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), Obama supported the significance of international cooperation and multilateralism. However, when it comes to the North Korea nuclear program, Obama favored "Strategic Patience" rather than Liberal instruments such as engagement, multilateralism, or negotiation. Dongsoo says that the only possible answer is that the Obama administration emphasizes another element of liberalism that is refutation. Therefore, the United States intends to increase refutation internationally that Pyongyang is not a reliable partner for negotiations and multilateral talks. Additionally, the United States does not trust the DPRK with WMD because it has deceived the United States during the past decades. Thus, the Obama administration was being cautious when it advocated Strategic Patience as a foreign policy with the DPRK (Kim 38).

2.5. North Korea's Second Nuclear Test

After Pyongyang's withdrawal from the Six-Party Talk and outraged by the Security Council's presidential statement, the DPRK shocked the world with its official second nuclear test. On May 25, 2009, Pyongyang conducted a large-scale underground nuclear test. Unlike Pyongyang's first nuclear test in 2006, which was considered as a failure, its second test was comparable to the atomic bombs that America dropped on Japan in August 1945. President Obama called in a statement. "North Korea is directly and recklessly challenging the international community," considering the test as a grave threat to not only America but also to the other countries (McCurry, and Branigan par 5).

As a result of the United Nations' Security Council with China's help unanimously passed the 1874 resolution and strongly further sanctioned the DPRK. The United States has condemned any future nuclear test conducted by the DPRK is considered as a violation of the 1695 resolution passed after North Korea's first ballistic missile testing in 2006. Forcefully the North Korea Foreign Ministry reacted to the Security Council's condemnation. Pyongyang announced that it would begin its uranium enrichment, and weaponize its new plutonium stockpile. The DPRK has also threatened to consider any action that hinders its activities as "an act of war." That emphasizes a "Songun" solution, which means "military first," that indicates North Korea's ideology that prioritizes the military as a solution to any problem. Three months later, the DPRK declared that its experimentation with uranium enrichment had been completed, and it was working on the final phase (Difilippo 66).

To calm the stress of Seoul and Tokyo caused by the DPRK, Obama affirmed the United States' responsibility and commitment to defend Japan and South Korea from the North Korea danger. Additionally, Obama declared that Pyongyang's actions are endangering the people of North-east Asia. Also, President Obama reaffirmed his multilateral stand to work with allies to deal with Pyongyang, as he confirmed that the United States would further sanctions on the DPRK through the United Nations Security Council. Addressing the DPRK, secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the United States would continue pressuring North Korea. The United States has also pushed the United Nations to chastise Pyongyang, as it provided the international community the power to block the cargos of North Korea financially. Furthermore, Hillary Clinton has asked Pyongyang to release the two American journalists captured by North Korea (Kim 26). The two journalists were two women arrested in North

Korea after they have been accused of entering Pyongyang without authorization; therefore, the DPRK sentenced them to 12 years of hard labor (McCurry par 5).

However, in August 2009, former President Clinton traveled to the DPRK, in which he had what is said to be a humanitarian meeting to discuss the issue of the captured journalists with the North Korean president Kim Jong Il. Eventually, Clinton managed to free the journalists. Although Clinton's meeting with Kim was considered to be a political push, yet the Obama administration detached itself from the former president's trip. Emphasizing that Clinton's trip to the DPRK was a private meeting with a purely humanitarian goal ("Briefing" par 9).

In August 2009, North Korea took an initiative step by inviting the United States Special Representative for North Korea Policy Steven Bosworth to visit Pyongyang. The State Department response agreed to have bilateral talks with North Korea, yet within the context of the Six-Party talk and mainly to get the DPRK back to the multilateral negotiations. That was contradicting with what president Obama said in his last visit to Seoul in November 2009. In which he confirmed his adherence to the Six-Party Talks. However, President Obama announced that Bosworth would visit Pyongyang to engage in bilateral talks, which aims mainly at bringing the DPRK back to the Six-Part Talk ("White House" par 4).

However, in 2010 two incidents occurred in Northeast Asia, which increased tensions and blocked the return of the Six-Party Talk. The South Korea warship "the Cheonan" sank in the yellow sea in late March 2010 that lead to the death of over forty South Korean sailors. The Cheonan fell near the Northern Limit Line (NLL), a nautical area that has been disputed for decades, located between South and North Korea. Later, it was estimated by some South Korean officials that a torpedo launched from Pyongyang sank the Cheonan. After a thorough investigation conducted by the

United States and South Korea, it was officially confirmed that it was a torpedo (Howe and Kondocho 243). The second incident is by the late November 2009, after North Korea said that the South fired artillery that landed near its territorial waters. Pyongyang bombed South Korea's Yeongpyeong Island, killing four people. While Beijing recommended the restart of the SPT to solve the crisis, yet Japan, the United States, and South Korea ignored China's recommendation and threatened Pyongyang with war (Diffilipo 69).

In an attempt to bring back the DPRK to the Six-Party Talks, the United States made only a few security talks and bilateral engagements with North Korea besides Ambassador Bosworth's trip to Pyongyang in December 2009. Then in July 2009, during the discussions between the nuclear officials of South and North Korea in the ASEAN that took place in Indonesia and Bali, the Obama Administration invited the DPRK's vice foreign minister Kim Kye-Gwan to the United States. The meeting took place in New York for two days. Later, in October 2011, Bosworth and Glyn Davies, U.S. ambassador to the IAEA and the Obama administration's new Special Representative for North Korean policy, met with Kim Kye-Gwan in Geneva. Bosworth said that the meeting was positive in general. Also, President Kim Jong Il remarked that it was progress for the United States and Pyongyang. Furthermore, In mid-December 2011, American and North Korean officials met in Beijing to discuss the possibility of the United States resuming food aid to the DPRK. However, the security talks could not continue due to the death of President Kim Jong IL two days after the meeting on December 17, 2011(Kurata 33).

In January 2012, Kim Jong Il's youngest son Kim Jong Un began his rule as the new leader of North Korea. This transition of power was considered as a positive start for many countries, especially the United States. Therefore the Obama Administration

seized the Opportunity and held the first talk with the new administration the American and North Korean officials met within Beijing. The meeting resulted in an agreement known as the Leap Day Agreement (Blackstone 19).

2.6. The Leap Day Deal

Analysts had no clear idea about the new transition of power in North Korea's power after the death of Kim Jong Il. Therefore the Obama Administration was waiting to see how Kim Jong Un's power will unfold in North Korea. The possibility of resuming the Six-Party Talk becomes promising. Consequently several security meetings took place in Beijing between the United States and the North Korean new officials. And as a result, these meetings dubbed “the Leap Day Agreement.” The agreement was signed in February, 29, 2012, it is considered as an exchange of what both countries needed. North Korea would immediately stop all its nuclear and missile tests, and end all the nuclear activities in Yongbyon’s facility, in exchange for a food aid from the United States. The agreement was a start for a new chapter between the two countries. However, shortly Pyongyang declared in mid-March that it is willing to launch a Kwangmyŏngsŏng-3-1, what it called an “earth observation satellite.” Pyongyang’s launch destroyed any chance for the agreement to succeed; therefore, it was considered as a failure (Difilippo 70).

According to Atsuhito Isozaki, being not a natural heir to his father succession and unknown in the political arena, Kim Jong Un had to prove his power among his community with launching a satellite. And to prove that ones again North Korea is not willing to submit to the United States easily. After Pyongyang’s breach of the Leap Day agreement the United States condemned the DPRK’s launch and raised economic sanctions on Pyongyang. Additionally, the Obama administration carried out with its strategic patience and avoided any direct negotiations with North Korea. Whereas,

North Korea persisted with the development of its nuclear program, as it become more isolated economically and politically. After a stressed first few years with North Korea, the Obama administration alleviated its involvement with the DPRK between 2012 and 2016, as North Korea continued with its nuclear tests. Additionally, Pyongyang claims have developed a hydrogen, or thermonuclear, bomb (Isozaki 45).

2.7. The Consequences of Strategic Patience

The Obama administration's policy was criticized by several experts. While some considered the policy a success, others considered it as a complete failure. According to Chris McGreal, the policy of Strategic Patience was ultimately a failure in retrospect; nevertheless, it was beneficial at that time. President Obama moved the responsibility to international institutions. And made the North Korean nuclear program a global threat, instead of countering Kim Jong Un's provocations and endanger the United States' national security. This strategy was built on the assumption that Kim Jong Un would tone down his provocations. However North Korea conducted its first nuclear test under Kim Jong Un in February, 12, 2013. Additionally, Pyongyang fired hundreds of artillery shells into South Korean waters in March 2014. Both actions were condemned by the United Nations by harsh sanctions (McGreal par 8). Benjamin D Blackstone thinks that the absence of serious response by the Obama administration indicates the cautious nature of his policy. Still North Korea continued with its provocations praising its nuclear weapons publically in 2015, and its ability to strike the United States by miniaturizing its nuclear weapons (D. Blackstone 20-21).

When the North Korean provocations reached the limits the Obama Administration unfolded a set of harsh sanctions on the DPRK under the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act. This act gives the right to the president to

sanction any country that is involved in the North Korean nuclear program, or any country that trades metals and minerals with Pyongyang. Curbing metal trade with North Korea put China under pressure especially that it is considered as a fledgling to Pyongyang's economy (Zengerle par 3).

2.8. Conclusion

With the coming of president Obama to the oval office, it was generally expected that the United States will take a new path in its foreign policy with North Korea. The president announced his Asia Pacific pivot even during the presidential campaign. Obama highlighted the negligence of the previous administration to the rising Pacific. Therefore he promised to strengthen economical and political ties with Asia especially with the new rising powers such as Japan and China. Therefore it was generally expected that the same change will occur in terms of dealing with the North Korean nuclear program. However, tensions raised right from the first year of Obama's presidency, in which Pyongyang conducted series of constant provocations, significantly its second nuclear test in May 25, 2009. After a several bilateral talks, North Korea continued with its nuclear tests, and consequently the Obama Administration advocated a "Strategic Patience policy", a policy that avoids any talks with Pyongyang until it shows a serious commitment to negotiations. In 2012 before Kim Jong Il death tensions decreased between the two countries, and the DPRK was ready to come back to the Six Party Talk. However, Kim Jong Il's death in December 2011 paused these negotiations. It was until 2012 when his youngest successor came to office that the United States and Pyongyang resumed negotiations. As a result the Leap Day agreement was signed, yet shortly after that Pyongyang broke the agreement by launching what is said to be a satellite. Eventually the Obama Administration

condemned North Korea and avoided any bilateral engagements with the country.
Furthermore it increased its sanctions, and continued with its Strategic Patience.

Chapter Three

The United States Foreign Policy in North Korea under the Trump Administration

3.1. Introduction

Ever since the inauguration of President Donald Trump, the United States entered a new style of foreign policy. Unlike his predecessors, Trump has no specific ideology that identifies his decisions and principles. Therefore pundits criticized him, while some defined his doctrine as "Trumpism," others argued that he is a populist and nationalist. Nevertheless, when it comes to Asia, the previous administration's pivot on Asia Pacific was replaced by a new focus towards the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, Trump has pressed a particular focus on the North Korean nuclear dilemma, shifting from the old "Strategic Patience" policy to "Maximum pressure" policy. This chapter investigates Trump's foreign policy with Asia, focusing mainly on the North Korean nuclear issue. It will also analyze to what extent Trump succeeded in curbing Pyongyang's nuclear and how Trump's strategies are different from Obama's Strategic Patience.

3.2. Trump's no Ideology Foreign Policy.

Before Trump's entrance to the oval office, the United States witnessed different presidents with various grand strategies. Each president dealt with the national and global issues following his principles and beliefs, which is mainly an illustration of their ideological belonging. For instance, the Bush administration had different policies from the Obama one, in terms of strategies and ideological affiliation. However, when it comes to President Donald Trump and unlike his predecessors, critics faced obstacles and controversies trying to analyze Trump's grand strategy and principles. Some observers consider Trump, a populist who speaks on behalf of

marginalized citizens. This support was pivotal in Trump's program ever since the beginning of his campaign (Pollack par 5)

While specialists are trying to understand Trump's basis and principles, they often refer to Trump's pattern of thinking as "Trumpism." Trumpism has no specific definition; however, it indicates mainly uncertainty and ambiguity. Additionally, unlike his predecessors, Trump has no prior political or military experience. His past experiences are mostly in the world of money and media; thus, the president's world view is mainly and transactional business-oriented (Daghrir2).

Trump's administration officials often say that Trump has no core ideology in foreign policy. Therefore he can be an internationalist on one issue, a nationalist on the next, and a realist on another issue without belonging to a specific ideology. Thus, he is criticized mainly for his no ideology foreign policy. However, although Trump's ideological affiliation has no clear picture, he has some principles, which he emphasized ever since his campaign. Trump prioritizes America, and according to him, the United States is taken advantage of on trade. Therefore, he emphasized the "America First" principle (Rogin par 5). "America First" is a slogan that has emerged during Trump's campaign, yet this phrase is undoubtedly reflected in American Foreign Policy. It means that the United States prioritizes its interests and concerns over any other region or allies' interests (Sánchez 39). Thence, it is difficult to predict Trump's future decisions based on his past actions. Subsequently, according to Josh Rogin, the current United States' foreign policy is characterized by unpredictability and controversies. Because whatever Trump says or does on a given day, it changes the next day (Rogin par 7).

Furthermore, when it comes to foreign policy priorities, Trump's term differed significantly from the Obama rule. For instance, while the former president focused on

“the rebalance to Asia” that aims at strengthening economic and political ties with the region. Trump shifted the pivot to the “Indo-Pacific region.” Despite the drastic changes, Trump's administration made concerning different aspects of the United States foreign policy. The most noticeable element is Trump’s shift from Obama’s pivot (Ford 1).

3.3. Asia Policy Under President Donald Trump

With the Administration transition to President Trump and the exit of Barack Obama, there were some changing aspects within the American Foreign Policy, especially with the Asia-Pacific region. Donald Trump had made some provocative statements during his campaign concerning the relationship between the United States and China and, in a broader sense, the Asian-pacific region. After accusing China of currency manipulation, President Trump promised to impose tariffs on Chinese goods. And he swore to withdraw the United States from Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (Poornima and Joshy 239).

Pundits criticized president Trump later for being a bilateral exclusivist, unlike Obama, who was a multilateralist. When Trump took office, things changed, starting from the United States' withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, one of the significant multilateral agreements. It represents 13,4% of the world's economy without the United States. The TPP is considered a "Pathway Initiative" by the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), composed of twelve Asian economic powers. According to Trump, the agreement is a "horrible deal" that affects American jobs overseas by allowing other countries to manipulate and take advantage of the United States. After the United States' withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, President Trump fulfilled one of his campaign's promises (Sánchez 41).

The United States' interest later shifted starting from the Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's speech in October 2017, when he outlined the new approach of the Administration towards India using the term "Indo-Pacific" repeatedly. However, his address didn't indicate the United States' total departure from the Asian-Pacific region (Fly 4). According to Sánchez Valentina Taborda, Trump's foreign policy with Asia-Pacific emphasizes two key features: reinforcement of economic alliances and military power reinforcement. He adds that President Trump abandoned the "Asia Pivot" strategy. Still, he did not relinquish the United States' strategic interests in the region or its commitment towards the area (Sánchez 42).

Additionally, Liu Qing underlined three key features that characterize Trump's strategy towards the region. First "America First" principle, Trump has been careful concerning the United States budget directed towards the American allies' security in the region. Secondly, maintaining the American search for peace through power. To retain its hegemonic dominance, the United States increased its economic and military power and presence in the Asia-Pacific region. The American influence in the region resides in the American naval and military basis. In 2017, the United States increased its military arsenal in Asia-Pacific. Later in 2017, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, declared that the United States would implement a stability initiative in the region. Its main goal is to set 60% of the American military in the Asia-Pacific region. Finally, the essential feature is Washington's "issue-oriented" approach. The United States' interest in resolving global problems is one of Trump's priorities. The common problem in the region is Pyongyang's increasing nuclear development. Trump shows a significant interest in curbing North Korea's nuclear growth and denuclearizing it (Qing par 6).

Since the Korean War, American presidents have persuaded the same basic policy toward the Korean peninsula nuclear problem. The United States' priority was avoiding another Korean war; however, over the past three decades, the United States' main goal is to curb North Korea's nuclear ambition and development. The possession of nuclear weapons by the DPRK is an unacceptable situation internationally, as it comprises risks to the United States' vital interests. This generally includes undermining the global nonproliferation regime, which is considered one of the United States' core principles ever since the Truman administration. With North Korea's possession of weapons of mass destruction, officials remain concerned and anxious from another Korean war or the threat of attacking the United States at any time. Therefore tensions exist between the two countries, and the United States' top priorities are to protect South Korea, preventing the possibility of any future war on the Korean peninsula and ending the DPRK's nuclear activities and development (Straub 2-3).

As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump declared his desire to meet with the DPRK's leader Kim Jong Un without preconditions or any concessions and have a hamburger with him. However, he reiterated from his promise after his first year as a president. Ever since Trump took office tensions raised between the United States and North Korea. The United Nations resolutions forbid Pyongyang from conducting any nuclear tests. Nevertheless, the isolated country broke the resolutions by performing several tests in 2017. Consequently, President Trump later promised to show the DPRK "fire and fury!" if it continues with its provocative threats and nuclear tests (Windrem et al par 6).

3.4. Trump's foreign policy towards the DPRK

According to foreign policy experts, the North Korean nuclear program is among the fundamental and complex issues that face the Trump administration. During his campaign, President Trump's view concerning Pyongyang was inconsistent. However, later Trump stated during his campaign that he was open to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un without any previous concessions. President-elect Trump expressed his willingness to sit down with Kim over a hamburger. In 2016 a states-run new out in North Korea praised candidate Trump after he said that he is unwilling to engage in any possible war in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Additionally, some North Korean scholars praised Trump for being open and having "deep insight's especially after he threatened to remove the American troops from South Korea and Japan if they didn't pay more ("Donald" par 2).

However, soon the president-elect's views changed, three weeks Before Trump's entrance to the oval office, after Kim Jong Un's new year's address in 2017. Offering no specific time frame, Kim Jong Un declared in televised New Year's day speech that Pyongyang's military reached the final stages of launching an Intercontinental Ballistic missile (ICBM). That can reach any part of the United States. President-elect Donald J. Trump wrote on twitter the day after, where he often posts his first thoughts saying, "It won't happen!." Additionally, Trump has also blamed China for taking too much money from the United States, yet refrains from getting involved in the North Korean issue. According to Maggie Haberman and David E. Sanger, with Trump taking office in less than three weeks, Kim's declaration, which demonstrates that the ICBM is capable of reaching the United States shores, presents a security test Trump's Administration. Mister Kim has also said unless the United States relinquishes its

“hostile” policy toward the country, North Korea is willing to carry on with building its nuclear-strike capability (Haberman and Sanger par 7).

Following Trump’s success in the presidential election, Obama briefed him concerning the North Korean nuclear issue for being the most pressing security problematic, and the potential crisis he will need to be addressing as a president. Although Pyongyang could not strike the United States, it was rapidly building its capabilities to reach that goal. Nevertheless, three weeks after Trump took office, Pyongyang launched a ballistic missile known as the Musudan towards the sea off its eastern coast. The Musudan is a mobile intermediate missile developed by North Korea, also known as hwasong-10 and BM-25 (Blackwill 23).

South Korea considered the launch as North Korea's first attempt to test Trump's policy towards the isolated country. Later the United Strategic command issued a statement identifying the missile as a medium or intermediate-range system that did not pose any threat to North America. The missile launch happened to be at the same time when President Trump was hosting Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Some foreign policy scholars and South Korean officials were skeptical over whether the launch is an intended political message or not. Especially that the test came less than two days after President Trump said that defending nuclear and missile threat from North Korea is very important. Trump said that in a news conference in a joint statement with mister Abe. In response to Pyongyang’s Musudan test, president Trump and mister Abe arranged a joint appearance in which Abe said that “North Korea’s most recent missile launch is absolutely intolerable.” Yet, Mister Trump did not say anything about the launch; however, he presented a full pledge to Japan, saying that the United States stands behind Japan (Sang-Hun par 5).

South Korean officials believe that Pyongyang is developing its intercontinental ballistic missile technologies, by testing an intermediate-range missile. North Korea is often known by testing short midrange missiles, which can reach most of South Korea and Japan. Yet, its attempts to test the Musudan are spotty. A long rocket capable of reaching the American military base in the Pacific, including the once in Guam, is considered a provocation and threat to the United States (Sang-Hun par 6-8).

According to some international relations experts, after Trump entered the oval office, the United States and North Korea entered a brinkmanship stage. Benjamin D. Blackstone suggests that both leaders used an inflammatory language, using risk strategy to extract foreign policy concessions from each other. The relationship between the two countries has witnessed optimistic periods, potential compromises and even extended periods of increasing hostility which the Trump Administration is experiencing. Therefore some scholars characterized the current relationship between the two countries as brinkmanship. Noble Laureate Thomas Schelling defines the term brinkmanship, as two or more states manipulating the shared risk of war. In the sense that actors create risks intentionally so that the actor's opponent surrender and satisfy the actor's goals. Therefore, from a North Korean standpoint, war with the United States and its allies would mean the end of Pyongyang's regime. And a war for the United States would mean the death of thousands of American people and South Korean civilians, in addition to the constant nuclear threat from Pyongyang. Although the war would be in favor of Washington, yet having to deal with the ramifications would be massive. Thence both nations are aware of this brinkmanship's subversive consequences (Blackstone 25).

Moreover, brinkmanship is also a way to make nuclear threats plausible. It becomes hard to believe that a country would bring itself into a nuclear war with

another country and take its threats seriously, due to the reprisal's high costs. Therefore Blackstone thinks that engaging in Brinkmanship strategies is less risky than diplomacy through trust-building measures. Deterrence and compellence had already failed with the previous Administrations. On the one hand, The United States failed to curb North Korean nuclear development using economic sanctions. And on the other hand, North Korea has also failed to bring the United States into the bargaining table through provocations. Furthermore, this can be applied to the relationship between the two countries, under Trump and Kim Jong Un. Throughout 2017, both Trump and Kim Jong Un repeated that they do not mind using military force if tensions escalate (Blackstone 26-27).

Nevertheless, Tensions heated up between the two countries on May 29, 2017, when North Korea launched a ballistic missile into Japanese waters, 250 Km west the Japanese coastline. In the middle of international hustle, Pyongyang's leader Kim Jong Un stated clearly his determination to complete the nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), that is capable of reaching major United States cities. The constant tests Pyongyang was conducting lead to a furious reaction from President Trump. On July 1 2017, president Trump declared that "The era of strategic patience with the North Korean regime has failed. Frankly, that patience is over. The nuclear and ballistic missile programs of that regime require a determined response" (qtd.in Tharoor par 7)

After Trump's declaring the end of Obama's "Strategic patience," the United States has to pursue a new policy with Pyongyang. Therefore the Trump Administration adopted a new policy known as "Maximum Pressure and Engagement." The new policy attempts to coerce and high pressure the DPRK economically and military to give up its nuclear development and constant ICBM tests (Easley 8).

3.5. From Strategic Patience to Maximum Pressure and Engagement

Weeks after Trump's victory, foreign policy experts tried to analyze the president's foreign policy with the DPRK, yet it was mostly defined as "uncertain." During the first months of the Trump Administration, the US-North Korea relationship was at a brink phase. In which tensions were raised between Kim and Trump. Neither Trump nor his officials highlighted any specific policy to combat the growing North Korean nuclear development.

However, North Korean nuclear threats become one of the pressing issues as soon as Trump's administration started. Therefore the new president decided to confront North Korea with a more proactive, consequential and decisive strategy. Trump adopted a policy known as "Maximum Pressure." Markus B. Liegl defines Trump's maximum pressure as a strategy that aims at coercing Pyongyang into abandoning its nuclear through comprehensively increasing economic, military and diplomatic pressure on the DPRK's regime. According to Liegl, this approach consists of three main elements. First, it aims at encouraging Beijing to go tougher on Pyongyang, being it a very important ally to the DPRK, second tightening economic and financial sanctions. Additionally, it aims at raising military threats, including the articulation of explicit threats (Liegl 4).

However, although Trump's administration declared the end of the previous Obama strategy as over, some scholars think that Trump's policy does not differ much from Obama's. Similarly, the elements that Trump is following were also part of Obama's strategic patience. The previous administration has also tried to make China more involved in the DPRK's nuclear issue. And it also used economic and financial pressure to bring Pyongyang into the bargaining table. To some commentaries, Washington's current policy sounds very much like the old one; even some experts

called it "Strategic patience plus." When the "plus" refers to Trump's new bellicose touch in the White House (Klimas par 5).

Nevertheless, throughout 2017 president Trump and Kim had massive rhetorical conflicts and provocations. After testing ICBM to coincide with the anniversary of the ceasefire of the Korean War. On July 28, 2017, North Korea launched another ballistic missile that it is said it would have been able to reach the United States if it was placed on a flatter trajectory. As a response to Pyongyang's launch, on August 1, 2017, Trump urged the United Nations Security Council to tighten its sanctions against the DPRK. As a result, the UN Security Council held an anonymous United States sponsored resolutions against the isolated country. In addition, On August 8, 2017, President Trump said that "North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire, and fury like the world has never seen." President Trump's statement was widely criticized for whether it was an appropriate reaction or not. Robert D. Blackwill suggests that. Over the past twenty-five years, presidents tried economic sanctions and diplomatic negotiations to slow Pyongyang's nuclear development. Yet, it did not lead to anything except a more dangerous North Korea. However, Trump shook up everyone's expectations and raised threats to use military interventions if needed (Blackwill 23).

North Korea continued conducting its tests, including two flight tests that sent missiles over Japan. Shortly before its sixth nuclear test, On September 3, 2017, North Korea released a photograph of what appeared to be a miniaturized nuclear weapon. On September 19, 2017, Trump stated in a speech in the United Nations Assembly that the United States "have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea," if the United States and its allies were attacked. He also addressed Kim Jong Un as a "Rocket man," saying, "Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his

regime.” In September 2017, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear weapons test, its most powerful test to date and other tests. In response to the increasing missile tests, Washington diffused an anti-missile system in South Korea. The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system is located in the Seongju region of South Korea, one hundred and fifty-five miles from the northern border. Although Trump’s “Maximum Pressure” was mostly considered no different from Obama’s strategy, yet it succeeded in influencing the United Nations Security Council and Pyongyang’s main allies Russia and China. In which the UNSC passed four new sanctions resolutions that have expanded the requirements for UN member states to stop any diplomatic, economic or military interaction with the DPRK. In addition to the US-South Korea military exercises which Pyongyang considered as provocations and proof to the United States hostile policy toward the DPRK. On December 22, with China's voting in favor, the United Nations Security Council passed tougher sanctions on DPRK. The UN sanctions which heavily restricted fuel imports and required countries that employed North Korean workers to send them back (Gladstone, and Sanger par 9).

By January 1, 2018, Kim Jong Un declared that his nuclear is "capable of thwarting and countering any nuclear threats from the United States.” However, Kim surprised the world in March 2018 by offering to meet president Trump to discuss nuclear issues. On March 8 2018, Trump confirmed his willingness to meet with Kim. Consequently, on June 12, 2018, Donald Trump becomes the first United States president who st foot on North Korea (Davenport par 3).

3.6. US-NK Relations Shift to Diplomacy

On June 12, 2018, and after an almost year and a half of hostile rhetoric, the United States president Trump and Pyongyang’s leader Kim Jong Un met under a

summit framework set in Singapore's Sentosa island. According to Lars Kalbreier, the biggest credit goes for Trump, who succeeded in convincing Beijing, Pyongyang's largest trading partner, to toughen its economic sanctions towards the DPRK. Kalbreier thinks that China's unprecedented sanctions crippled Kim's economy, which explains Kim's sudden desire to have an open dialogue with South Korea and the United States after long rhetoric hostility with both countries (Kalbreier par 5). President Trump and Chairman Kim signed a joint statement as they conducted a comprehensive, in-depth exchange of opinions about the establishment of new U.S.-DPRK relations, and working towards a lasting solid peace regime on the Korean peninsula. Additionally, while Trump committed to provide a security guarantee to the DPRK, Kim assured his unwavering commitment to work towards denuclearizing the Korean peninsula ("Joint" par 1).

Soon after, the summit critics raised a number of questions. Some described it as an eye-catching, yet vague commitment for the DPRK's complete denuclearization and change of regime. Others pointed out the lack of organized steps, timelines and verification mechanisms to denuclearize Pyongyang. However, Trump responded by saying that he developed a "special bond" with Kim, a bond of trust he described it. He also added that the process towards denuclearization has just started and that the practical part will be agreed upon in the coming negotiations between United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his North Korean counterparts (Cumings par 5).

Park Hahnkyu suggests that Trump prioritized working towards a new cooperative approach with Kim. Unlike his predecessors who counted on the all or nothing approach, Trump is taking a step by step approach based on the trust he established with Kim in the summit. He adds that the summit is a positive sign that complete denuclearization can be achieved in a nonviolent way (Park par 2).

3.7. Post-Singapore Summit

Following the summit, Trump announced in a press conference that the United States would suspend US-South Korea annual military exercises, which Trump called "war games." After a week from the Singapore summit, the United States defense department announced that the annual U.S.-South Korea "Ulchi Freedom Guardian" exercises scheduled for August would be cancelled. Pyongyang also repatriated the remains of fifty-five American soldiers as it began to dismantle a missile launch site. While Trump stressed that a final verification for denuclearization is necessary for sanctions to be lifted, Pyongyang demanded prior security guarantees before giving up on any of its nuclear weapons. US-NK negotiations were widely criticized for lacking reciprocal actions of the United States. However, the DPRK offered to dismantle its Yongbyon nuclear complex in exchange for corresponding measures (Chanlett-Avery 5).

In October 2018, secretary of state Mike Pompeo held a meeting with Kim to set the ground for another Trump-Kim meeting. Later during his States of the Union address, Trump announced a second summit would be held with Kim in February 2019 in Vietnam. Another summit occurred on February 27, 28, 2019, in Hanoi, Vietnam. Reportedly, the summit ended, yet without any agreement. February 28 2018, the White House declared that there was no agreement reached. Later Trump clarified that the United States walked away from the negotiations because North Korea asked for total sanctions lifting. Yet, Ri Yong-ho, the North Korean Foreign Minister, asserted that Pyongyang asked for a partial lifting of the five United Nations sanctions on North Korea, which took place between 2016 and 2017 (Rucker et al par 6).

Pundits and media reported the Hanoi summit as humiliation and “Collapse” to the United States negotiations. However, Susan Rice, Obama's former national security advisor, said that "For the United States to have agreed to lift all sanctions in the absence of real and complete denuclearization would have been a tremendous mistake." Robert D. Blackwill also disagrees in the sense that although Trump tried to sway Kim through placing too much confidence on his abilities, yet Trump rightly refused Pyongyang's offer to lift all sanctions. Blackwill adds that it is not clear where negotiations will resume after the summit's failure. Furthermore, North Korea is highly unlikely to give up its nuclear; therefore, Trump should understand that and should not make any unilateral concessions such as canceling the United States-South Korea military exercises. Although Trump's attempts did not have any concrete results, it calmed the tensions between Washington and Pyongyang and placed the negotiations in a better place than it ever been (Blackwill 26-27).

After the Hanoi summit, no negotiations took place between the United States. However, in November 2019, after meeting Russian officials in Moscow, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui informed reporters that it is impossible for North Korea to resume talks with the United States until Washington gives up on its hostile policies completely with the DPRK. Yet when Choe was asked about what kind of hostile policies she meant, she answered, "the Americans know very well" (Shin). During Trump's visit to South Korea, Trump tweeted an invitation to Kim to shake hands at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Later, on June 30 2019, the United States President Trump and the North Korean Chairman Kim Jong Un, in addition to South Korean President Moon, met in a historical one day summit over the borders at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The DMZ is a military border barrier, which divides the Korean Peninsula. Trump becomes the first American president who set foot on

the North Korean soil and the second time for a North Korean to enter a South Korean territory since the Korean War 1953. What was intended to be a pleasantries meeting turned into 50 minutes one. The meeting marked a positive signal of a face to face encounter between the leaders after it broke down in the Hanoi summit. After the meeting, Trump announced that Washington and Pyongyang agreed to resume talks within the coming weeks ("Trump" par 3).

3.8. The Current US-DPRK Relationship

The Trump-Kim DMZ meeting in 2019, did not state any specific agreement except a promise from both leaders for better negotiations. However, North Korea continued testing long-range missiles even after the meeting. Experts were skeptical over the DMZ meeting deeming it nothing less than media propaganda. Some foreign policy analysts also predicted scenarios and wondered whether negotiations would resume with the coming year. However, in 2020 the United States is witnessing new presidential elections in addition to a Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic outbreak. According to Frank Aum, although the pandemic has put many the United States Foreign Policy priorities on the "back burner," including the North Korean issue, Pyongyang's longstanding problems continue to deepen. In March 2020, the DPRK conducted five short-range ballistic missile and rocket launches. Additionally, North Korea is expanding existing rocket launch facilities and building new ones. Also, the unexplained disappearance of the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is leading to more speculations about the future of the DPRK's regime (Aum par 3-2-7).

3.9. Conclusion

After the coming of Donald Trump into office in 2017, the United States witnessed a new type of administration. Unlike the previous American presidents, Trump did not have any political experience except his business-oriented outlook. Therefore experts

attributed the term “Trumpism” to him, which refers to Trump's unexpected and unprecedented decisions and actions. Unlike Obama, Trump's administration was hostile to Asia-Pacific and especially China. However, the North Korean nuclear issue remained a pressing threat to the United States. With the new North Korean leader, tensions between the DPRK and the United States raised even before Trump took office. Through the first year and a half, the two countries had long rhetoric hostility. As a result of the North Korean constant provocations and tests, Trump promised to meet the DPRK with "fire and fury" as the world has never seen. Tensions reached its climax, and many foreign policy experts expected a war; however, the Trump administration chose to walk away from the Obama "Strategic Patience," declaring it as a failure. "Strategic Patience" was later replaced by a new policy called "Maximum pressure." The new policy mostly attempted to tighten economic sanctions, especially by the United States and its allies; China being it Pyongyang's most important partner, Russia and the United Nations security council. Additionally, the new policy attempted to influence China and involve it more in the North Korean issue, as it focused on military and diplomatic pressure. Some critics considered maximum pressure contained the same principles as strategic patience, yet Trump's belligerence was the new touch in the White House. Consequently, this led to an offer proposed by Kim to Trump, aiming at a new United States-DPRK, and Trump accepted on the Spot. Later, negotiations took place between the two countries under the framework of two main summits. Yet, talks broke down in the Hanoi summit after Trump's refusal to Kim's demands concerning the total removal of sanctions. North Korea continued testing short-range missiles, yet hostility between the two countries calmed. According to some specialists, although Trump did not succeed in making tangible results, yet he took the credit for placing the two countries' relations in a better way than it ever been

before. By the end of 2019, in July, another face to face Trump-Kim meeting occurred in the Korean Peninsula's Demilitarized Zone, making Trump the first American president who set foot on North Korea's soil. Although after the meeting, Trump announced that the two countries are willing to resume talks, yet relations were paused by the United States 2020 presidential elections and a pandemic outbreak.

General Conclusion

The relationship between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States have been hostile ever since the Korean War. However, it took another path after North Korea developed a nuclear program in 1956 through signing nuclear cooperation with the Soviet Union. Yet the world was skeptical towards North Korea owning nuclear weapons of mass distraction. However, North Korea tried to respond to the wide criticism over its nuclear development through joining into International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Yet these attempts were not enough due to disagreements the DPRK conducted. Over time North Korea continued with its nuclear development, and in 2006 Pyongyang shocked the world and conducted its first nuclear test.

In violations of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, the DPRK continued overt nuclear enrichment and long-range missile development effort. With the growing North Korean nuclear capabilities, the relationship between Washington and Pyongyang remained hostile to the extent that former President Bush referred to North Korea as "Axis of evil" alongside Iran and Iraq. Nevertheless, the Obama administration experts predicted a change in the United States foreign policy with North Korea. Obama's shift towards Asia-Pacific and his willingness to engage with North Korea, unlike the previous Bush Administration, draw a new era to the United States-DPRK relations.

However, such expectations broke in Obama's first year in office, in which Pyongyang's conducted series of provocative tests. Consequently, Obama ended up adopting a strict policy known as "Strategic Patience." This policy avoided any negotiations with the DPRK unless it shows full commitment in denuclearization. As North Korea continued with its tests, Washington tightened its pressure on

Pyongyang, and as a result, the DPRK withdrew from the Six-Party Talk. On May 25, 2009, Pyongyang conducted its second nuclear. Although the United Nations Security Council condemned the DPRK's violation, Pyongyang announced that any further threats would be an act of war. After the United States' constant attempt to bring the DPRK into office, former leader Kim Il Sung died in 2012, leaving his young youngest son Kim Jon Un the new Pyongyang's Chairman. Yet, after the new leader took office, Washington seized the opportunity and made a new agreement known as the Leap Day Deal agreement, in which the United States provided food aid to the DPRK in exchange. Yet soon, Pyongyang breached the deal by launching a satellite.

Nevertheless, Pyongyang continued with its nuclear tests. It claims it has developed a thermonuclear or hydrogen bomb, which was regarded as advancement in its nuclear development and a further threat to develop higher weapons. The consequences of "Strategic Patience" were criticized differently by pundits. Some criticized Obama's policy for being a complete failure, in the sense that Obama did not consider any severe reaction towards the DPRK except for waiting. Others supported Obama's decision being it the right policy at that time. However, either way, the DPRK continued with its tests and extended more hostility with the United States.

Moreover, with Trump being the new American president, tensions escalated. In 2017 the DPRK announced that it reached the final stage of launching an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capable of reaching any part of the United States. At the beginning of his term, Trump did not show any particular interest in the North Korean issue. But, this changed after the constant provocative tests Pyongyang conducted. Therefore, Trump replaced Obama's "Strategic Patience" with "Maximum Pressure." However, critics debated Trump's policy label, especially that it shared the same principles of the former administration's policy. Trump's policy aimed mainly at

coercing the DPRK through economic, diplomatic and military pressure. Throughout 2017 the United States-DPRK relations went through rhetoric hostility. Both Kim and Trump were furious while Kim threatened to strike Washington, Trump promised to hit Pyongyang with fire and fury.

After almost one year and a half of maximum sanctions, Kim shocked the world by inviting Trump into meeting in 2018. Eventually, the leaders met through two historical summits, the Singapore summit on June 12, 2018, and the two days Hanoi summit in on February 27, 28, 2019. Although media called the Hanoi summit a collapse, yet both leaders confirmed that negotiations between them are progressing. Later, on June 30, 2019, Trump and Kim had another meeting in the Korean Peninsula's Demilitarized Zone. The meeting was marked as the first time an American President set foot on the North Korean soil. Although the two countries held several meetings, yet there were no concrete results. Therefore, People were skeptical about Trump's policy for being a failure. Yet some consider it as progress because of the relationship between the two countries because, unlike his predecessors, Trump placed the United States-DPRK relations in an unprecedented way. And unlike the Obama administration, Trump's policy influenced Pyongyang to some extent. After the DMZ meeting, there were no other overt negotiations, but the countries' relationship remained calm with no progress.

Although the current relationship between the United States and North Korea is at ease, yet this does not deny that Pyongyang is a nuclear power. Additionally, its constant provocations and nuclear tests North Korea still poses a significant risk to the world and the United States. Especially that Pyongyang now can launch intercontinental ballistic missiles that can reach the United States. Therefore the North Korean nuclear issue will remain a crucial security threat to Washington.

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