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Nervous about a Nuclear Neighbor: Japan's Policy on North Korea

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Nervous About a Nuclear Neighbor: Japan's Policy on North Korea

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Note from the Editors

Analysis in this report is based on events that transpired on or before the 26th of February, 2022.

Japanese, Chinese, and Korean names are written “*Last Name First Name*”, with hyphens separating Korean first names. Superscript citations refer directly to references in the bibliography at the end of the report, where they are listed by section in order of appearance.

Sources referenced multiple times are cited with the same number.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ROK	South Korea also referred to as “Seoul”
DPRK	North Korea also referred to as “Pyongyang”
US	United States of America also referred to as “Washington”
USSR	The Soviet Union
Russia	The Russian Federation also referred to as “Moscow”
Japan	Also referred to as “Tokyo”
PM	Prime Minister
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile
KEDO	Korean Energy Development Organization
MT	Metric Ton
NPT	Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
LWR	Light-Water Reactors
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Missiles
SDF	Self Defense Force
JGSDF	Japan Ground Self Defense Force
LDP(Japan)	Liberal Democratic Party
MOFA	Ministry Of Foreign Affairs
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
GSOMIA	General Security Of Military Information Agreement
WWII	World War II
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
FTA	Free Trade Agreements
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
CJK	China-Japan-Korea
Quad	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
NODONG	Medium-range ballistic missile indigenous to North Korea
NPR	National Public Radio
MD	Missile Defense
GHQ	The Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers

SM-3	Standard Missile-3
KNCA	Korean Central News Agency
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
G7	Group of 7 industrialized nations (US, Japan, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Italy, and West Germany)
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
MND	Ministry of National Defense
NBC	Nuclear, Biological, and Chemicals weapons Program
CW	Chemical Weapons
VX	Nerve Agent
FROG	Free Rocket Over Ground categorized as a short-range missile
MRBM	Medium-Range Ballistic Missile
IRBM	Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile
KM	Kilometer
PAC-3	Patriot-Advanced Capabilities
SBRIS	Space-Based Infrared System
JADGE	Japan's Aerospace Defense Ground Environment
HCM	Hypersonic Cruise Missiles
HGV	Hypersonic Glide Vehicles
HVGP	Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile

Definitions

Translation of Title photo: “Our military’s power has no limits! A self-sufficient [North] Korea.”

Abduction Issue (singular): North Korean agents abducted Japanese citizens from 1977 to 1983.

Diplomatic Bluebook: An annual report on Japan's Foreign Policy and Activities published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Democratic Party (더불어민주당): A political party in South Korea that was established in 2014 with the blending of the Democratic Party and the Preparatory Committee of the New Political Vision Party.

People’s Power Party (국민의힘): A conservative political party in South Korea that was founded in 2020 after the merge of the Liberty Korea Party, the New Conservative Party, and the Onward for Future 4.0.

UN Security Council: One of the six principal bodies of the United Nations and is responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship Cooperation and Mutual Assistance 1961: A treaty signed in 1961 that is the only defense treaty China and North Korea possess.

Article 9: An article in the Japanese constitution that prohibits Japan from utilizing military power, specifically stipulating that Japan can maintain defensive measures but cannot evolve into an offensive military power.

1951 Security Treaty (Agreement): An agreement signed in 1951 which allowed for US military forces to be stationed in Japan.

Deterrence: National military and/or diplomatic security strategy to prevent an attack by threatening severe retaliatory action.

38th Parallel: The line of latitude that marks the border between North and South Korea after the Korean War.

The Quad: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with its members including Japan, US, AUS, India acted as an avenue for addressing a range of other security and economic issues in the Indo-Pacific.

Ballistic missiles: Missiles that are rocket propelled and follow a parabolic trajectory path.

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Executive Summary (Gauri)

North Korean brinkmanship remains a threat to Japanese policymakers and civilians alike, with a record eight ballistic missile launches as of February 26th, 2022.¹ The DPRK possesses the world's fourth largest military, an expanding chemical and biological weapons arsenal, and a renewed commitment to secure the country's status as a powerful nuclear state.² Most concerning for Japan and its allies is North Korea's rapidly evolving nuclear weapons program; American officials estimate that North Korea possesses at least sixty nuclear weapons and the ability to produce enough fission material for an additional twelve weapons per year.³ Since Kim Jong-un came to power in 2011, he has overseen four out of the country's six nuclear tests in a bid to increase negotiating leverage and demand sanction relief and military concessions from Japan, the US, and South Korea, as a precondition for resuming denuclearization talks.⁴ North Korea's recent increase in missile tests is the latest attempt to pressure Washington, Tokyo, and the United Nations Security Council into easing sanctions, most recently enacted by the US on January 5th and 11th.⁴

The Biden Administration's latest sanctions emphasize the international community's ongoing, yet unsuccessful, efforts to denuclearize North Korea. Since the first nuclear crisis of the 1990s, Japan, the US, South Korea and regional allies have attempted different strategies to pursue denuclearization, alternating between policies of engagement and pressure. However, North Korea routinely reneges on both types of agreements, most notably during the Agreed Frameworks in 1994, the Six Party Talks in 2005 and 2007, the Stockholm Agreement in 2014, and the Singapore Summit in 2018.³ Since 2018, bilateral and multilateral progress towards denuclearization has resulted in a political stalemate. In the meantime, North Korea continues to amass fission material, expand its missile and chemical arsenal, and escalate regional tensions via inflammatory rhetoric and missile tests. Throughout 2021, Kim Jong-un has held multiple military parades to unveil new missiles, an apparent show of force against Japan and its allies.⁵ Additionally, in early January 2022, Kim Jong-Un vowed to pursue national defense via nuclear weapons at the Eighth Workers' Party Congress, underscoring the need for Japan and its allies to reform their coordinated North Korea policies.²

North Korea's militarization and pursuit of a nuclear weapons program have proven to be a long-term policy problem for Japan since the 1950s. For one, Japan and North Korea have not

established diplomatic relations since the division of the Korean Peninsula after Japan's defeat in World War II. Second, Japan's defense strategy, including a military, diplomatic, and economic response regarding North Korea has two objectives: achieve denuclearization and compel the DPRK to investigate and return the Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea during the 1970s and 1980s. The "abduction issue" is highly divisive in Japanese domestic politics and its attachment to denuclearization efforts has produced mixed results. Normalization talks during the early 2000s did lead to North Korea admitting to the abductions, but Japan considered these admissions to be inadequate and insincere. Since then, the abduction issue, in conjunction with North Korea's nuclear and missile testing program, has become the primary deterrent to rapprochement between Japan and North Korea.

The inability of Japan and North Korea to engage bilaterally strengthens North Korea's ties to China and Russia, a security risk for the US-aligned Japan. Since 2018, China has conducted its own bilateral summits with North Korea and violated its UN sanction commitments to send aid and continue trade with North Korea. However, North Korea was willing to accept an American agreement at the Singapore Summit in 2018, a potential counterbalance to China's influence.⁶ It is imperative that North Korea see the US and Japan as stronger and more viable allies than Russia, and in particular, China. Unlike Japan and its allies, both China and Russia have openly called for denuclearization while supporting militarization in North Korea. Since the late 1990s, American officials have reported on China's technological contributions to the DPRK's missile program and the willingness of China and Russia to block UN sanctions on North Korea.⁷ If North Korea were to strengthen its alliances with Russia and China, the international order as well as Japan, South Korea, and the US's regional influence would all be at risk.

In the past five years, the North Korean threat has become more critical for Japan amidst frequent nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests, the ineffectiveness of sanctions, stalling of diplomatic talks, and a weakening of regional American deterrence. However, Japanese policy could play a critical role in de-escalating North Korea brinkmanship. Thus, our policy recommendations focus on strengthening Japan's existing security partnerships with the United States, South Korea, vis-à-vis North Korea, through foreign policy, economic policy, and national defense policy recommendations. With China and Russia, our policy recommendations focus on furthering shared objectives while preserving Japan and its allies' regional influence.

Every chapter includes a review of each nation's diplomatic history and existing policy with Japan regarding North Korea as the foundation for policy recommendations provided at the beginning of each chapter. Additionally, the chapters on Japan-US, Japan-DPRK, and Japan-ROK include leadership analyses, which evaluate the North Korea policies of the relatively new administrations in the US and Japan as well as the two presidential candidates from South Korea. Our research demonstrates that a coordinated, multilateral policy approach is the only method to restart the stalled denuclearization efforts with the DPRK. As North Korea faces a contracting economy, natural disasters, and potential food and energy shortages in 2022, it is a prime opportunity for Japan and its allies to reform their coordinated policy approach and begin negotiating a denuclearization policy linked to a gradual normalization of relations with further incentives. The current international climate presents new opportunities for Japan to play a central role in the normalization of diplomatic relations and the denuclearization of North Korea. Policy recommendations are listed as follows:

- **In regards to Japanese relations with the DPRK**, we recommend Japan start by decoupling the abduction issue and the denuclearization of North Korea, as in the 2014 Stockholm Agreement.
- After decoupling, we recommend that Japan pursue the abduction issue multilaterally and as a humanitarian issue for a greater chance at progress.
- To denuclearize North Korea, we recommend that Japan restart previous aid programs, namely food, energy, or medical aid to prevent funds from being diverted to North Korea's nuclear and WMD programs.
- From aid, Japan should aim for normalized economic then diplomatic relations, in order to eventually eliminate the need for the DPRK to use nuclear weapons as deterrence.
- If this is achieved, we recommend that Japan provide technological assistance to North Korea following the framework established by KEDO to denuclearize Nyongbyon and construct proliferation-proof LWRs.
- **In regards to Japanese relations with the ROK**, we recommend that Japan separates historical issues and economic issues so that Japan and South Korea can collaborate in their efforts to denuclearize North Korea.
- In this, it is recommended for Japan to continue exercising caution diplomatically with South Korea due to past fluctuations concerning said historical points of contention.

- We also recommend that Japan should work with the United States to fully include the ROK in their military alliance.
- In regards to the upcoming Korean presidential election, Japan should reach out to the ROK before results are announced and express its intention in mending the relationship.
- If Yoon Seok-yeol is elected, Japan would be able to further Japan-ROK military cooperation.
- If Lee Jae-myung is elected, it would be recommended that Japan pursue cooperation with the ROK on denuclearizing North Korea through economic aid.
- **In regards to Japanese relations with China and Russia**, we recommend that Japan establish common interests with the two countries to prioritize cooperation and ease regional tensions.
- In this, Japan should look long-term to work together with these nations in the form of a Regional Trade Agreement to strengthen trade connections with the DPRK and provide sanction relief.
- We also recommend that Japan seek alternative sources of support such as The Quad if China and Russia do not comply.
- **In regards to Japanese relations with the United States**, we recommend that Japan continue to cooperate with the United States in a military alliance as it is effective to deter North Korean attacks.
- We also recommend that Japan coordinate with the Biden Administration in a “step-by-step” policy to partially relieve sanctions for partial denuclearization.

Chapter 1: Japan and the DPRK

Introduction

Japan must coordinate closely with South Korea, the US, and other regional allies to guide North Korea towards normalization and eventual denuclearization, while separating the abduction issue from policy attempts to negotiate denuclearization. Japan must resume stalled denuclearization talks to counter North Korea's escalating programs of nuclear weapons and other WMDS. Since Kim Jong-un took power in 2011, he has overseen 125 missile tests, far greater than the 15 and 16 missile tests conducted by his grandfather and father, respectively.¹ North Korea's arsenal is also expanding, its military has tested ICBM missiles, thermo-nuclear warheads, and most recently in January 2022, a hypersonic glide vehicle.¹ With Pyongyang and Tokyo less than 700 miles apart, many of these tests encroach into Japanese airspace, threatening citizens and Japanese sovereignty. Additionally, four out of North Korea's six nuclear tests have occurred in the past decade as the threat of nuclear conflict allows North Korea to hold the international community hostage, in exchange for aid or resources.¹ If Japan does not separate the abduction issue and denuclearization, North Korea will continue to use its nuclear weapons and other WMDS for brinkmanship purposes: to threaten military conflict in exchange for aid and resources at Japan's expense.

Since the first nuclear crisis of the 1990s, the dual objective of Japan's North Korea policy has remained unchanged: Japan prioritizes the resolution of North Korean sponsored abductions of Japanese citizens and for North Korea to begin denuclearization.² Japan's policy options to push North Korea towards denuclearization have historically been limited, especially when attached to recommendations which attempt to resolve North Korea's historic abductions of Japanese citizens. To resume stalled denuclearization efforts, Japan must separate the abduction issue and denuclearization into two policy tracks, permitting Japan to use different strategies to achieve both objectives. In the past, North Korea has been more amenable to denuclearization when non-conditional aid is offered first. In light of increased missile testing, Japan should consider a proactive non-conditional aid package in exchange for denuclearization. Japan can de-escalate tensions by providing North Korea with other needed aid and resources, preempting the threats of nuclear war in times of need. Nuclear weapons promise security and

negotiating leverage, and without Japan providing strong incentives, North Korea has little reason to proactively pursue denuclearization.

Section 1: Japan and DPRK Leadership Analysis: Motivations for the Future

Japan

Kishida Administration Goals and Responses

The Kishida Administration has the opportunity to shift their political alliances with many other countries in the context of the DPRK's nuclear threat. The Japanese Prime Minister, Kishida Fumio, took office on October 4th, 2021 and although he is new to the position, he is not new to the global relations sphere. He was appointed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 2012 under the Abe Administration. Kishida has made it clear, even during his time as Minister of Foreign Affairs, that Japan's goal is worldwide nuclear nonproliferation. He stated that the world should work toward three types of reductions: in the number of nuclear weapons, the role they play, and the incentive to possess them.¹ His non-proliferation speech also heavily relied upon the NPT, which seems to be a hopeful outlook on something that has proven unhelpful with the North Korea situation. Further, if North Korea's goal of reunification is realized through the use of their nuclear program, Japan would lose South Korea's valuable allyship, while simultaneously having to face a more powerful North Korea.

One thing that has been a focal issue in the minds of Japanese citizens and the Japanese government is the abduction issue. Kishida claims that this issue is central to his administration and he plans to resolve it during his time in office.² The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) itself focuses on foreign relation issues to gain the support of the public, so it was no surprise that the former Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, based many of his political moves on Japan's issues with the DPRK. The LDP transitioned its focus from the abduction issue to Japan's security threats from North Korea, explaining why Prime Minister Kishida is focusing on the DPRK.³ Kishida Fumio himself identifies as a liberal, but the LDP is still dominantly right-wing, giving Kishida a challenge as to whether he will appease his party, or continue with the liberal messages on which he has governed in the past.⁴

North Korea

Kim Administration Goals and Responses

Kim Jong Un, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Supreme Leader, governs very privately, making it difficult to determine the goals he has for his country, however, his leadership is fully dependent on the DPRK's nuclear program and its nuclear weapon capabilities. While the Kim Regime does not always make its intentions public, through their actions, or lack thereof, an attempt to understand what they are working to achieve can be made. Their nuclear program was initially created as a way to generate energy for the country, but evolved into a producer of missiles and nuclear weapons resulting from their fear of the US and the ROK. Kim believes that these weapons are the strongest thing holding his leadership in place, and he uses them as bargaining tools when negotiating with other countries. It is these negotiations and the continued growth of the program that expose their intentions internationally and domestically as well.

Nuclear-State Status

This brings us to one of North Korea's biggest goals: to be globally recognized as a nuclear state. Thus far, the only internationally recognized countries with nuclear-state status include China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.⁵ Originally, North Korea joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a 'non-nuclear weapon state' but withdrew in 2003 in order to pursue their nuclear weapons capabilities. Although North Korea has many financial struggles, they want global recognition and power, which could be demonstrated if they were to be pronounced a nuclear state. Historically, Kim Jong Un has shown his public support for national events and programs, such as the nuclear program, when those projects are near completion.⁶ He made an appearance for the launching of the second hypersonic missile this January, which demonstrates his investment in that missile and what it may be used for in the future.

Motivations behind the Nuclear Program

Under Kim Jong Un, the DPRK's nuclear program has shifted from simply testing the missiles, to practicing military drills as well, which may suggest a more aggressive offensive strategy in the future. As previously mentioned, it is difficult to discern the exact reasoning behind the decisions of the Kim administration and this goes for the nuclear program as well. North Korea, however, has hinted at an interest in the reunification of the Koreas and continues

to ask for concessions from the US, using their nuclear weapons as a negotiation tactic. This can create the assumption that the Kim regime sees their nuclear program as both a tool of offensive power and defensive strategy.

Section 2: The North Korean Threat: Missiles and Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons

While North Korea's nuclear program is the main concern for nations including Japan, the DPRK possesses a notable arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, including biological and chemical weapons, as well as sophisticated missile delivery systems for its nuclear program. In the past decade, North Korea has conducted an increasing number of missile launches, utilized chemical agents to conduct assassinations, and has escalated the development of its nuclear weapons program. North Korea's WMDs not only enhance attack capabilities, but serve as deterrence against threats from perceived adversaries. In the past five years North Korea has continued to launch an increasing number of missiles towards Japan, and successfully miniaturized nuclear warheads, increasing the impact that the missiles have. Japan and its allies must end the current political stalemate and push for denuclearization, as further advancements in the nuclear program sustain a state whose ultimate goal is to shatter the international order.

Subsection A: Biological and Chemical Weapons

Introduction

North Korean deployment of biological and chemical weapons poses an escalating threat to Japan and its allies, as North Korea develops dual-use and military technology. Though a large portion of North Korea's munition deployment system is outdated, experts estimate that Cold War-era biological and chemical weapons could be more lethal than those of today, increasing the associated risk of armed conflict with the DPRK.⁷ In particular, North Korea continues to advocate for a biological and chemical-free Peninsula, while possessing at least eight industrial facilities and multiple state-run laboratories which investigate the weaponization of biological agents.⁸ North Korea's development of its biological and chemical weapons arsenal complicates Japan's military response options and strengthens North Korea's offensive capabilities in the

event of deploying a nuclear weapon or launching a conventional attack. Accordingly, North Korea is more than a nuclear threat and proper attention should be given to its considerable arsenal of biological and chemical weapons. North Korea's chemical weapons program underpins the country's conventional military capabilities and the nuclear deterrent by increasing the stakes associated with potential military action.

Biological Weapons-History and Current Capabilities

The clandestine nature of North Korea's biological weapons program results in few verifiable sources. Declassified estimates from the intelligence communities of Japan, the US, and South Korea suggest that North Korea does possess biological weapons capabilities, though the exact extent of the program remains unknown.⁸ Regardless, South Korean defense papers indicate that North Korea established its biological weapons program under Kim Il-Sung.⁷ During the Korean War, North Korea experienced large-scale outbreaks of various diseases, including cholera and smallpox, which it falsely attributed to attacks by the US.⁸ The false claim of American biological weapons attacks provided the justification for developing an indigenous biological weapons program. According to South Korean MND white papers, North Korea has been capable of producing and deploying biological agents since the 1980s.⁸ In contrast to rhetoric regarding the nuclear program, North Korea has gone to great lengths to hide the existence of its biological weapons program, denying Japanese and American claims as well as accusing other nations, namely the US, of using biological weapons against North Korea.⁹ Furthermore, in domestic newspapers, North Korea has rejected accusations of possessing a biological weapons program and claims to be "peacefully upholding" the values of the Biological Weapons Convention, ratified in 1987.¹⁰ With limited accurate information combined with North Korea's reluctance to confirm the existence of biological weapons within the country, Japan and its allies face difficulties in monitoring future developments.

Today, North Korea's offensive biological weapons program is estimated to include agents such as anthrax, cholera, and a variety of neuro-toxins.¹¹ North Korea continues to develop biological weapons despite agreeing to the Biological Weapons Convention in 1987 and the Geneva Protocol in 1988, documents that explicitly prohibit the production or development of biological weapons for military use.⁷ However, due to limitations in bio-technology capabilities and the knowledge that bio-weapons would harm the domestic population, the actual weaponization of biological weapons seems unlikely.¹¹ Policymakers should note that Pyongyang

will continue to develop its pharmaceutical and biotech industries in an effort to increase production of biological warfare agents.¹² Though North Korea's biological weapons program is not at immediate risk for deployment, the DPRK's possession of these weapons remains concerning.

Chemical Weapons History

More concerning than the biological weapons program is North Korea's chemical arsenal, which is expanding and ready for deployment. North Korea's motivations for developing an offensive and defensive chemical weapons program date back to the aftermath of the Korean War, as the country attempted to recuperate wartime losses, deter US and South Korean military threats, and prevent reunification by force.¹³ Significant progress was only made during the first "Seven Year Plan" from 1961-1967, when Kim il-Sung announced the "Declaration for Chemicalization", whose aim was to create a chemical industry capable of supporting the economy and chemical weapons production.¹³ During this period, in accordance with the expansionary Four Military Lines Policy, North Korea created organizational bodies to oversee the research, design, and construction of an "NBC" program for national defense.¹¹ The development of the biological and chemical weapons program also served to increase North Korea's combat capabilities with less expense than missiles or nuclear weapons, a central tenet of the Four Lines Policy.⁸ Since the 1960s, North Korea's chemical weapons program has grown alongside its chemical industry, in an attempt to support conventional defense measures.

The chemical weapons continued to expand through the 1970s, and by the late 1980s, the DPRK was capable of producing and deploying chemical weapons agents. In January 1987, the ROK's Ministry of Defense reported that the DPRK possessed upwards of 250 metric tons of chemical weapons, as of today, that estimate ranges from 2000-5000 metric tons.¹³ Through the 1990s, nuclear weapons took prominence and by 1997, 192 nations signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and agreed to destroy their stockpiles while North Korea refused to become a member-state.¹⁴ North Korea's refusal to destroy its chemical weapons arsenal has facilitated contributions to authoritarian violence in other parts of the world, most notably in Syria, under the Assad regime.⁸ As of today, North Korea's chemical weapons program continues to expand with the intent of weaponization, a persistent threat to Japan, its allies, and the international order.

Current CW Capabilities

Today, the DPRK is known to have one of the largest arsenals of chemical weapons, ranking third after the US and Russia.¹³ North Korea has at least eight known industrial facilities that produce chemical agents, though the production rate and specific munitions are unknown.⁸ Additionally, North Korea has the capabilities to produce a wide variety of agents, including: nerve gas, blood gas, mustard gas, vesicants, choking agents, cyanogen, and nerve agents such as VX and Sarin which comprise the bulk of production.⁷ North Korea is one of the few nations not to have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and has refused to acknowledge its chemical weapons program in accordance with UNSC resolution 1718.¹³ Furthermore, the South Korean MND estimates of North Korea's chemical weapons range from 2,000-5,000 metric tons of agents, in addition to various means of deployment, including field artillery, FROG rockets, Scud and Nodong missiles, warheads and long-range missiles capable of reaching Japan and the US.¹³ North Korea has also allocated considerable portions of defense spending on measures to protect the civilian population and military forces from the effects of chemical weapons.⁸ Civilians and armed forces alike are extensively trained in the use of hazard masks and suits, detectors, and decontamination systems.⁸ These civil defense measures are meant to support North Korea's offensive use of chemical weapons during combat.⁸ In the event of military conflict with Japan and its allies, North Korea could reasonably use chemical agents with minimal harm to the domestic population.

The pursuit of a chemical weapon program serves to enhance North Korea's asymmetric military capabilities, intended to increase the devastation of a North Korean attack.⁸ If an armed conflict were to occur between Japan, its allies, and North Korea, the DPRK would be at a severe disadvantage in traditional combat, as a large portion of its conventional forces are outdated.¹⁴ As such, chemical weapons not only enhance North Korea's asymmetric combat capabilities, but serve as a deterrent to Japan and allies from using chemical weapons against the regime.⁸ North Korea's focus on developing nerve agents also allows for targeted operations, as in the assassination of Kim Jong-Un's half brother Kim Jong-Nam in 2017.¹¹ This particular incident provides clear evidence of both a weaponized chemical weapons program and emphasizes the regime's willingness to utilize it against any perceived threats. As such, Japanese policymakers should consider the chemical weapons program as one with offensive capabilities, which presents a real danger for civilians and military personnel alike.

Conclusion

Since Kim Il-Sung's rule, North Korea's arsenal of WMDs has remained a cornerstone of the country's national security policy and served as negotiating leverage in the international arena. The North Korean regime undertakes significant security measures to conceal information related to its biological and chemical weapons and has purposely obfuscated international attempts at destroying its arsenal. The development of this program aligns with North Korean ambitions to be a powerful military state by reinforcing the nuclear threat. Without a dramatic shift in security policy, it is unlikely that North Korea will independently abandon its WMDs and any attempts at denuclearization must include contingency plans for destroying the DPRK's chemical arsenal, though dismantling the nuclear weapons and missile programs takes immediate precedence.

Subsection B: North Korea's Missile Arsenal

Introduction

North Korea's development of ballistic missiles emerged in the 1960s and has since transformed into a force capable of unnerving both Japan and the United States. Originally, the DPRK developed mere artillery rockets throughout the 1960s, but the program has advanced rapidly and intercontinental ballistic missiles have been a pillar of North Korea's missile program since the 1990s.¹⁵ It is difficult to estimate the exact number of ballistic missiles North Korea has, however; to-date North Korea has experimented with over 100 short and intermediate-range, as well as intercontinental ballistic missiles that can carry nuclear warheads.¹⁶ Now that the DPRK holds missiles of varying ranges, Pyongyang can strike several nations easily; North Korea's ballistic missiles force has Scud class missiles that can reach South Korea and extended range Scud and Nodong MRBM missiles that can reach Japan.¹⁷ Also, the ballistic missile force has tested the Hwasong-12 IRBM, which can reach Guam, and the Hwasong-14 ICBM, which can reach the continental United States.¹⁷ Regardless of range, the DPRK's missile arsenal provokes distress worldwide, as US intelligence determined in 2017 that the DPRK can miniaturize nuclear weapons to fit them on missiles.¹⁶ In light of North Korea's successful development of missiles that can carry nuclear weapons over the past half-century, Pyongyang will be able to strengthen the nuclear program into an exhaustive threat globally.

Advancements in the North Korean Missile Program in the Past Decade

Within the history of North Korea's program for missile development, the most notable advancements materialized in the past decade. Overall, the DPRK has increased ballistic, cruise and space launches in the past ten years.¹⁷ The DPRK has tested road mobile and submarine-launched missiles (SLBM),¹⁷ both of which decrease the detectability of launches. Additionally, the DPRK also possesses space launch vehicles which can be reconfigured to serve as ICBM missiles capable of hitting Japan or the United States.¹⁷ Increasing the range of missiles is North Korea's primary focus, and in 2017 the DPRK sent multiple Hwasong-12 tests over the North of Japan, which flew to a range of 3700 KM, the longest range in direct trajectory missile tests to date.¹⁷ Later, in 2021 North Korea's missile program witnessed more advancements when it tested a supersonic missile with "ready-to-load cartridges of fuel," enabling North Korea to shorten the time needed to load fuel and prevent the risk of pre-emptive strikes against North Korea's missiles.¹⁸ The rapid developments in the construction of more efficient missiles in the past decade establish that North Korea intends to perfect its missile arsenal and additional upgrades should be expected in the future.

Motivation for the North Korean Missile Program

While South Korea and Japan are certainly in range and often the target of North Korea's missile testing, deterring the United States is North Korea's main motivation for developing missiles. By continuing to develop its missile program along with its nuclear program, North Korea intends to dissuade the United States from ultimately ending the Korean War with nuclear warfare.¹⁹ Consequently, the DPRK continues to focus on developing missiles that can reach the US, and, indeed, the DPRK already has ICBMs that can reach Guam and the continental United States.¹⁵ In 2017 the DPRK tested a set of Hwasong-14 and Hwasong-15 ICBMs, the first missiles that could hit North America from North Korea.¹⁷ Ultimately, in fear of a second Korean War, Pyongyang will continue to pursue developing missiles that can reach and deter the United States.

Japan's Concern

The United States is the primary target of Pyongyang's missiles, however; Tokyo is equally concerned about North Korea's rapid advancements in missile technology. As early as 1998 the DPRK launched a missile over Japan that was designed to carry nuclear weapons, demonstrating that North Korea's nuclear program could reach and attack Japan.²⁰ Also, North Korea's arsenal is not limited to reaching the United States, and all of North Korea's short range

ballistic missiles can reach Southern Japan,¹⁵ taking only 10 minutes to strike.²¹ The missile program startled Japan further in 2017 when the DPRK developed the Hwasong-12 missile, confirming that North Korea was capable of carrying nuclear weapons over Japan.¹⁵ As long as North Korea continues to launch missiles that can strike Japan, the United States will not be the only nation that will need stronger deterrence against North Korea in the future.

While the Japanese government relies on missile defense systems to shield Japan from North Korea's ballistic missiles, the current defense system may not be enough to stop North Korea in the future. Missile defense systems are the main interceptor of North Korean missiles, prompting Pyongyang to upgrade its missiles to escape missile defense systems. Specifically, North Korea is attempting to develop solid fuel missiles in order to have missiles that fly low enough to breach the missile defense systems.²² By 2019, North Korea began testing three solid fuel missiles, KN-23 -24 and -25, the first two of which are capable of flying at low altitudes to avoid interception.¹⁸ By 2021, North Korea launched a missile that was larger than the KN-23, allegedly capable of carrying a 2.5 ton warhead, and the Defense Minister of South Korea, Suh Wook, disclosed that the South Korean military missed some of the missile's trajectory because of its ability to maneuver midair.¹⁸ Although mere speculation, North Korea's progress in evading missile defense systems may enable the DPRK to have missiles capable of striking Japan or other nations undetected, ultimately prompting Japan to reconsider the limits of ballistic missile defense systems.

January 2022

Several of North Korea's advancements in missile production over the past decade occurred solely in January 2022, highlighting the possibility that the DPRK missile program will expand notoriously throughout the year. The first test on January 5 was a hypersonic missile test, serving as a precursor to the hypersonic missile test of January 11 that, while achieving a distance of only 1000 Kilometers, used engines for ICBM and IRBM missiles,²³ verifying that the ICBM technology is continuing to advance. Three days later on January 14 North Korea tested two KN-23 ballistic missiles from a railway car, confirming that North Korea is content with rail launches and still intends to establish such a missile launching system across North Korea.²³ The tests on January 17, 25 and 27 were improvements to KN-23, KN-24, and cruise missiles, but the most concerning test took place on January 30, when the DPRK launched the Hwasong-12 ballistic missile, North Korea's test of paramount importance since the test of a

intercontinental ballistic missile in 2017.²⁴ As this was the first test of an IRBM in the past four years, the DPRK is likely to resume the testing of major weapons in the near future.²³ The test of January 30 is the most concerning, however; all tests reflect North Korea's intention to develop a cutting-edge missile program as a complement to the nuclear program.

Conclusion

Overall, North Korea continues to make progress in developing more efficient missiles, provoking trepidation worldwide from Japan to the United States. Since Pyongyang intends to improve several aspects of its missiles, North Korea's ability to deter any perceived enemies, including the United States and Japan, will strengthen. Nevertheless, the missiles are only one aspect to the DPRK's entire weapons of mass destruction program, and nuclear weapons will ultimately determine the missiles' success.

Subsection C: the North Korean Nuclear Program

Introduction

While Japan and its allies have historically envisioned a total denuclearization of North Korea, an examination of the nuclear program's history establishes North Korean motives for possessing nuclear weapons, which limits the possibility of immediate and complete denuclearization. From the 1960s North Korea's nuclear program has rapidly evolved from mere nuclear energy research to producing nuclear weapons that are capable of reaching Japan and the United States. Current estimates from American intelligence officials suggest that the DPRK has a sufficient supply of enriched uranium and extracted plutonium to produce 65 nuclear weapons.²⁵ Since nuclear brinkmanship is the sole negotiating tactic of the DPRK, used in times of crisis to extort aid and resources from Japan, the US, and regional actors, attempts to denuclearize will be limited.

Historical Overview: 1950-1970s

In order to understand why complete denuclearization is nonviable, Japan must consider the historical roots behind North Korea's motivations to pursue a nuclear program. Since the US used nuclear weapons against Japan in 1945 and later threatened to use them to end the Korean War, North Korea has pursued its nuclear weapons program for deterrence.²⁶ Additionally, policymakers must consider that Pyongyang values a nuclear program as a method to compete with US-aligned South Korea.²⁷ Since the nuclear program has served to deter both an

increasingly provocative Southern rival and US hegemony, North Korea is unlikely to earnestly pursue denuclearization.

1980-1990

After acquiring the ability to extract plutonium to develop nuclear weapons in 1987, Pyongyang wavered between nuclear proliferation and denuclearization, demonstrating that its motives for pursuing a nuclear weapons program trumped North Korea's desire to heed international pressure to denuclearize. Originally, following international pressure, North Korea conceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985, promising to abandon the pursuit of nuclear weapons.²⁸ Also, under diplomatic and economic pressure, North Korea signed a comprehensive agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1992, promising to allow independent IAEA agents to inspect their nuclear facilities.²⁹ Nevertheless, the IAEA found several discrepancies during their investigations into North Korea.³⁰ North Korea's vacillation during these and other denuclearization agreements is a hallmark of North Korea's foreign policy negotiations, suggesting that North Korea's motivations impede progress in denuclearization.

1990-2004

Alongside the DPRK's goal of deterring South Korea and the United States, two other aspects regarding the nuclear program demonstrate that attempts to completely denuclearize North Korea will not work. First, by the 1990s, it became increasingly difficult to prevent North Korea from acquiring source materials for nuclear weapons. In the 1990s, a nuclear scientist from Pakistan, A.Q. Khan, provided the DPRK with blueprints for warheads and parts to expand the DPRK's enrichment program.³¹ The DPRK's cryptic circle of material suppliers grew throughout the decade, allowing North Korea to expand its weapons proliferation program. Although it became difficult to monitor the sources of North Korea's nuclear program, the United States made preliminary progress in denuclearization by the mid 1990s, serving as a potential model for current Japanese policy. By the 1990s, the United States, successfully, reached out to the DPRK and both signed the Geneva framework agreement in 1994 that required North Korea to suspend operations at the Nyongbyon nuclear facility.³² In exchange, North Korea would receive two light-water reactors and annual shipments of fuel during their construction, which would be financed through KEDO.³⁰ Although this agreement ended in 2002 when North Korea resumed operation at the Nyongbyon facility, the conditions of the 1994 framework agreement are certainly relevant in the future attempts to denuclearize North Korea.

At the time, the Agreed Frameworks was unsuccessful, due in large part to the series of internal North Korean crises. The death of Kim Il-sung in 1994, fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, subsequent famines and energy shortages left North Korea paralyzed. During this period, the US-aligned South also began to rapidly expand, creating a rebalance of power on the Korean Peninsula. The nuclear program has allowed North Korea to feel similarly powerful alongside an expansion of South Korea's economy and soft power.³³ Additionally, following North Korea's economic disasters, the United States appeared overwhelmingly more powerful, and the nuclear weapons program ultimately guaranteed the survival of the Kim dynasty, complicating policy attempts to achieve denuclearization.³¹

2004-2011

Following North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, the United States and other countries, particularly those in the Six-Party talks, promptly relaunched their attempts to denuclearize the DPRK, demonstrating the success of economic concessions. The Six-Party Talks of August of 2003 were between the US, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and North Korea and were convened to deal with the new nuclear crisis, but no initial breakthroughs were made. Nevertheless, by October 2007, the Six-Party Talks led to a joint statement that asserted that North Korea would shut down its nuclear facilities and provide the details of its nuclear program.²⁸ In return, North Korea would acquire over 900,000 tons of oil and the United States would remove the DPRK from its list of states that sponsor terrorism.²⁸ The agreement was initially successful; in June 2008 North Korea demolished part of the cooling tower of the nuclear reactor at the Nyongbyon nuclear facility.³² Although previous negotiations had limited results, this attempt to denuclearize Pyongyang established that partial denuclearization is possible when tied with economic concessions.

Unfortunately, North Korea did not maintain the agreement for long. A year after the demolition of the cooling tower, Pyongyang conducted a rocket launch in April of 2009, prompting the UN to assert that North Korea was in violation of Resolution 1718.³² In response, the DPRK declared that it would quit the Six-Party Talks and vowed to resume its nuclear program.³² From 2009 onwards, there was a marked deterioration of Japan-North Korea relations, due to the stalling of the Six-Party Talks and North Korea's second nuclear test and tests of ballistic missiles. At this point, Japan responded by extending all existing sanctions and instituting a ban on all exports to North Korea.³⁴ Since North Korea does not respond to

sanctions, policies that pressure North Korea have dissuaded the DPRK from pursuing denuclearization further.

2011-2021

In 2016, five years into Kim Jong-Un's rule, North Korea's nuclear weapons program underwent a dramatic shift, from tests to military training exercises. Two nuclear tests were conducted in January and September 2016, in addition to the launching of 24 missiles.³⁰ In 2017, North Korea continued to expand its nuclear and ballistic missile program and tensions between Kim Jong-un and President Trump increased. In July, North Korea tested the Hwasong missile, capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the United States, the only nation in possession of such a weapon.²⁸ In September, North Korea completed its sixth nuclear test at the site in Punggye-ri and was met with international condemnation. North Korea claimed the test was of a thermonuclear warhead, however, following the successful test of the Hawasong-15 missile in November of 2017, North Korea announced it had successfully completed the state nuclear force.²⁸ In 2018, owing to an easing of diplomatic tensions between North and South Korea, the test site at Punggye-ri would be destroyed later in the year by North Korea following a joint summit with the South and pledge to work towards a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.³⁵ The most significant developments through 2018 were the joint summits between Kim Jong-un and South Korean president Moon Jae-in in April, and between Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump in June, where North Korea once again promised to pursue denuclearization in exchange for economic assistance.

Projections for 2022 and Hereafter

While Pyongyang is ultimately set on ensuring that the Kim regime survives among the powerful adversaries including the United States, South Korea and Japan, a more recent motive to preserve the nuclear program is leveraging nuclear weapons for increased negotiations. Indeed, the DPRK needs the economic concessions that are the feature of the denuclearization agreements of the past; in January 2021 Kim Jong-un, almost a year into the coronavirus pandemic at the time, announced that the five-year economic plan utterly failed.³⁶ Nevertheless, further negotiations with the United States regarding the denuclearization of North Korea are absent, as North Korea is not a priority under the Biden administration.³⁷ Consequently, in January 2022 North Korea, in an attempt to catch the attention of the United States, began launching missiles that can carry small nuclear weapons, placing allies of the United States,

including Japan and South Korea, under threat of nuclear weapons.³⁷ Ultimately, if Pyongyang denuclearized, its ability to garner economic support would be insubstantial. South Korea and Japan face an increased burden of risk given their proximity to Pyongyang, however, a nuclear conflict with North Korea would threaten the United States. In 2021, North Korea was suspected to have resumed nuclear activity, specifically the resumed production of plutonium. North Korea's recent expansion of its nuclear program remains a threat to US-allied South Korea and Japan, as well as the greater region.

Section 3: Japanese Defense Capabilities

Introduction

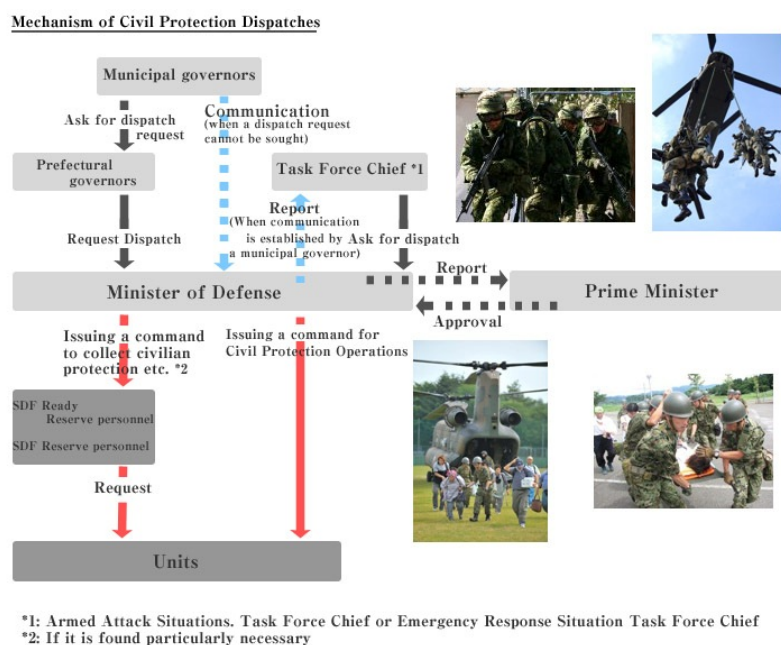
The potential three pillars to counter the increased power of the DPRK are civil defense, ballistic missile defense (BMD), and US nuclear deterrence (See US-Japan Military Alliance Section).³⁸ These are supported by the Self Defense Force (SDF) and the US military bases. The Japanese BMD and civil defense system developed in response to North Korea's military and nuclear threat. This combination of three elements composing Japan's measures toward the DPRK are quite unique compared to the military systems in other countries. Current civil defense in Japan, especially SDF has limitations following basic principles of Article 9 of the constitution.³⁹ However, a major limitation of Japan's national defense measures is the reliance on US support and cooperation in the event of a North Korean attack.

Two Forms of Defense

Given the increase in tension within East Asia, Japan was urged to develop civil defense policies by utilizing the US-Japan alliance and SDF. The US military takes responsibility for protecting Japan from armed attacks by foreign countries based on the Japan-US Security Treaty in 1952.⁴⁰ The SDF, in Japanese “Jieitai”, plays a central role in defending Japan from invasion by foreign nations which was established after WW II ; and is composed of the Air SDF, the Maritime SDF, and the Ground SDF, based on the revised version of the constitution of Japan.⁴¹

Civil Defense Measures

Civil defense measures did not exist until North Korean threats required Japan to re-evaluate the strategic environment.³⁸ Yet, the Civil Protection law, officially called "the Law concerning the Measures for Protection of the People in Armed Attack Situations" was finally enacted in 2004, in order to provide its citizens with a more robust civil defense.⁴² The law asserts various measures to how the local and national governments should manage evacuations, relief support, and armed attack disasters in order to protect civilian's lives, bodies, and property from the harm of an armed attack.⁴² Furthermore, the Basic Guidelines for Protection of the People was introduced in 2005, which led local governments and institutes to develop their own plans of civil protection.³⁸ The first measure the J-Alert system was introduced in 2007 and is a satellite-based system which makes it possible to transmit emergent information including a launch of an anti-ballistic missile, emergency earthquake report, or Tsunami alert.⁴³ Another measure is the SDF's response. As figure 1 below shows, JGSDF for instance, will be dispatched for civil protection based on the Basic Response Plan as well as the basic guidelines for civil protection.⁴⁴ This plan includes measures of how SDF would deal with armed attack, the way of evacuation, relief support, and how responses to armed attack disasters.⁴⁴ Thus, the Civil Protection Measures has developed as one of the fundamental pillars to cope with the increased



threat and protect citizen

S.

Figure 2: Mechanism of Civil Protection Dispatches (Source: <https://www.mod.go.jp/gsdf/english/civil/index.html>)

Section 4: Barrier to Normalized Relations: The Abduction Issue - Previous and Future Policies

Recommendations

Although Japan fears that the abduction issue will be abandoned, Japan can make progress on the abductions if it separates negotiations of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula and the abduction issue. Indeed, Iizuka Koichiro, the Secretary-General of the Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea, stated that it is advisable to pursue the abduction issue separately from North Korea's nuclear program.⁴⁵ It is important to note that the abductions are not entirely a bilateral issue. North Korea abducted victims worldwide, as noted by Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative Head of the delegation of the European Union at the UN, emphasizing that over 500 Koreans are also abductees.⁴⁶ Furthermore, victims include citizens from Thailand, Romania, and the United States, as well.⁴⁶ With global assistance, Japan can discuss the abductions separately from the negotiations of denuclearizing North Korea without fearing the abandonment of the issue, given its unrecognized importance internationally.

Since multilateral talks with North Korea produce limited results, reflecting on the success of previous policies that promoted economic cooperation will also be crucial for relaunching the investigations. Ideally, not only Japan, but other international entities can give economic aid to North Korea in exchange for progress on returning the abductees. 2022 is the ideal time to give economic aid to North Korea; in January 2021, Kim Jong-un confessed that his five-year economic plan failed, as the economy confronts the calamities of economic sanctions, the effects of the COVID pandemic, and natural disasters.⁴⁷ Since North Korea's economic conditions may lead Pyongyang to give concessions for assistance, Tokyo can provide the economic aid that the DPRK desperately needs in exchange for further cooperation on returning the abductees. Ultimately, such policies were fruitful in 2002-2004 and 2014 and provide the justification for pursuing them again.

Previous Japanese Policy on the Abduction Issue: Economic Aid Trumps Sanctions

Abduction Issue

While the matter of Japanese abduction is certainly relevant to today's Japan-DPRK relations, the conflict emerged over four decades ago; specifically from 1977 to 1983.⁴⁸ Kim Jong-Il - who then was the leader of DPRK's intelligence services - launched the plan to abduct the Japanese people in order to expand the DPRK's espionage program, training them to be teachers, spies, and mere identities that DPRK could utilize in fake passports.⁴⁸ The abduction matter has since become a feature that defines Japan-DPRK relations. While the abductions occurred over 40 years ago, the matter would not be a pillar of Japan-DPRK talks until 2002, when DPRK confessed to the abductions.

Kim Jong-il acknowledged the abduction issue at the summit meeting in 2002. Yet he only admitted the DPRK's Special Service Agency's involvement, but not his direct involvement in this matter.⁴⁹ As soon as Pyongyang admitted to abducting Japanese citizens, Tokyo initiated an investigation, although Pyongyang provided conflicting information that hampered the investigation.⁵⁰ When North Korea gave Japan Kaoru Matsuki's remains, for example, the remains belonged to someone else.⁵⁰ The Japanese government officially recognizes the abduction of 17 Japanese citizens by the DPRK, but they only admitted abducting 13.⁵¹ Nonetheless, there are more than 875 missing people who could have been possibly abducted by DPRK.⁵² Of the 17 people that the Japanese government has identified as victims, the DPRK denied the entry of four, claimed eight of them dead, and agreed to allow five that are alive to visit Japan temporarily.⁵⁰ However, after the arrival of the five, the Japanese government made the decision to refuse to return those five to Pyongyang.⁵⁰ With this, negotiations regarding the abduction issue have been suspended and from 2004 to 2007, Japan and DPRK made little progress on the abduction matter.

In 2006 Tokyo demanded the return of the abductees and wanted a new investigation, as well as the people responsible for the abductions to be extradited.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, by 2007 Pyongyang declared that the abduction issue remains resolved and there will be no further progress.⁵⁰ Since Pyongyang considered the matter to be settled, Tokyo was not able to make progress on the abductions for several years.⁵³ However, one of the North Korean agents who was captured from the Korean Air Flight 858 incident confessed that one of the abductees who Pyongyang claimed to be dead was the one who taught her the Japanese language, and also testified that she obtained some information regarding another victim - Yokota Megumi.⁵⁴

According to that information, she was claimed to be still alive in the county, which contradicts the statement by Pyongyang.

Stockholm Agreement

At Japan-DPRK Intergovernmental Consultations that was held in Stockholm in 2014, Pyongyang agreed to the establishment of the Special Investigation Committee to conduct an investigation on abductees once again.⁵⁵ In return, Japan decided to lift part of the autonomous sanctions against the DPRK. However, in January 2016, the DPRK restarted nuclear tests, and in February 2016, a ballistic missile was launched to the Sea of Japan once again.⁵⁶ For that reason, Tokyo announced the new measures to take accordingly which caused the DPRK to disassemble the special investigation committee and cease investigations on the abduction issue. Since then, Pyongyang claims that the abduction issue was completely solved with the return of 5 Japanese victims in 2002.⁵⁶ This reveals that depending on how the Government of Japan negotiates with the DPRK, there still is a possibility of resuming the investigation on the abduction issue. Although it requires the separation of abduction issues and the nuclear power program is necessary for Tokyo as Pyongyang has never shown an earnest attitude towards denuclearization.

Several years passed, as mentioned earlier, with the Stockholm agreement signed between Japan and the DPRK, North Korea reestablished the investigation team on the abduction issue. However, In January 2016 the DPRK conducted a nuclear test, prompting Japan to put economic measures against North Korea in place.⁵⁰ Consequently, North Korea ceased to investigate the abduction issue further.⁵⁰ The Japanese government is currently taking the stance that they will not provide aid to North Korea unless they restart the investigation on the abduction issue.

Decoupling

While Tokyo's current policies vis-à-vis North Korea consist of applying sanctions, the negotiations between Japan and North Korea from 2002-2004 proved that economic stimulus is more effective at inducing Pyongyang to return the Japanese abductees. In 2002, Tokyo agreed to pursue economic cooperation with North Korea,⁵⁷ and Japan's assistance materialized during the negotiations in 2004, when Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro announced that Japan would provide \$10 million USD in pharmaceutical materials and 250,000 tons of food aid for North Korea.⁵⁸ Accordingly, Pyongyang decided to cooperate further on the abduction issue; in May 2004, after five abductees originally returned to Japan in 2002, North Korea permitted the family

members of four of the abductees to return to Japan.⁵⁹ By favoring carrot policies, Tokyo ultimately achieved notable progress in returning the Japanese abductees, serving as a model for future negotiations.

Economic incentives proved effective in 2002-2004, however; North Korea's cooperation was as limited as when the DPRK was under sanctions, questioning the viability of exchanging aid for resolving the abduction issue. After the nuclear test in October 2006 Japanese sanctions on imports of the DPRK led Pyongyang to insist in March 2007 that the abduction issue was resolved, halting the resolution.⁵⁹ However, as early as February 2006, eight months before North Korea's first nuclear test that led to Japanese sanctions, North Korea contended the same argument and did not contribute further to returning the other abductees.⁵⁹ It appears that the sanctions in response to North Korea's nuclear weapons program have little effect on the DPRK's investigations into the whereabouts of the Japanese abductees, and perhaps the carrot policies were in vain.

Although the abduction issue confronted the DPRK's lack of cooperation when Japan alternated between embracing policies of economic aid or sanctions, the Stockholm Agreement in 2014 demonstrated that economic incentives remain effective in persuading the DPRK to investigate the abduction issue. By July 2014 Japan loosened restrictions on money transfers for North Korea and removed the embargo on the DPRK's ships that are in Japanese ports for humanitarian purposes.⁵⁹ In response, by October 2014 Pyongyang informed Tokyo that it was conducting a new investigation in order to track where the abductees previously stayed throughout North Korea and to find new witnesses, ultimately making progress in the abduction issue.⁵⁹ As North Korea was willing to pursue further investigations into the abductions, a matter Pyongyang previously considered resolved, economic concessions certainly proved more useful than countermeasures in resolving the bilateral issue.

Today's Policies: In Need of New Recommendations

Today, North Korea's increasingly frequent nuclear tests discourage Japan from offering carrot policies to North Korea to return the abductees. After Pyongyang terminated the investigations of 2014 following Japanese sanctions in 2016, North Korea now asserts that it will not cooperate further on the abduction issue until Tokyo lifts the sanctions,⁶⁰ which is not in Japan's interests.⁶¹ Economic sanctions discourage proliferation of nuclear weapons, yet they continue to limit future progress with the abductions. As the investigations from 2014 were the

last sign of progress between Tokyo and Pyongyang, Japan may be prompted to consider alternative policies in the future.

One aspect of the abduction issue that leads it to be difficult to resolve today is that the negotiations of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula are tied to progress in the abduction issue. Japan upholds that it will not assist North Korea with economic concessions in return for denuclearization until the abduction issue is resolved.⁶² Tokyo's decision to pursue resolving the abductions and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula simultaneously is rationale; Japan fears that the United States will sacrifice the issue of the Japanese abductees, a matter that is seemingly less relevant outside of Japan, in order to convince North Korea to denuclearize, having received other concessions in return.⁶³ Ultimately, pursuing talks of denuclearization along with the abductions allows Tokyo to try and resolve its bilateral conflict that is not as important internationally as domestically.

Japan currently relies on the US and ROK to resolve the abduction issue. Yokota Takuya, the new representative of the families of the Japanese abductees, stated that Japan will need to work bilaterally with the United States and South Korea to resolve the abduction issue, as the US and the ROK, instead of Japan, are North Korea's priorities.⁴⁵ Consequently, Tokyo must pursue resolving the matter through third parties.⁶⁴ Using third parties has its limitations; leaders from Washington and Seoul, including former President Trump and President Moon Jae-in, have conveyed Tokyo's concerns on the abduction issue to Kim Jong-un, although this cooperation was limited to mere talks with little results.⁶⁵ With little progress from these bilateral talks with Pyongyang, Japan may be inclined to reshape international cooperation in the future.

Section 5: Denuclearizing North Korea through Normalized Relations

Introduction

After separating the abduction issue, Japan will be able to pursue further negotiations of denuclearizing the DPRK. Japan should prioritize lifting sanctions, providing food aid, and exchanging proliferation-proof reactors, such as LWRS, for partial denuclearization of the DPRK's nuclear program. Japan should prioritize non-financial support for the DPRK, as direct

cash transfers can be diverted to fund the WMDs and missile programs. In the past, economic incentives have been more likely to produce progress on denuclearization in comparison to levying sanctions.

Treaty On the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

From the beginning, North Korea reneged on promises of denuclearization. The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was signed in 1968 and joined by five nuclear weapon states and 178 non-nuclear state members in total, with its objective to restrict the usage and development of nuclear technology.⁶⁶ Following the signing of the NPT in 1985, the DPRK was obligated to abandon nuclear weapons and was only allowed to apply nuclear power to energy technology.⁶⁶ However, the DPRK started the construction of a graphite-moderated reactor (Magnox type reactor) with help from the Soviet Union for generating electricity.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the DPRK started extracting plutonium from the nuclear power plant and developing the nuclear program.⁶⁸ The DPRK attempted to secede from the NPT in 1993, after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s inspection team suspected a violation of the NPT: nuclear weapon development at the nuclear power program facility in Nyongbyon.⁶⁷ This incident then led the 1994 Agreed Frameworks to be signed between the US and the DPRK, which allowed North Korea to agree on stopping the development of the nuclear power program and remaining in the NPT.⁶⁶ In return for the deactivation of the nuclear reactor, the US agreed to provide two light-water reactors (LWRs) and fuel oil.⁶⁶ The NPT is the first example of North Korea withdrawing from a nuclear agreement, though future denuclearization attempts would firmly establish this pattern.

Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

A different approach to denuclearize North Korea besides aid is transitioning from graphite reactors to non-proliferation LWRs, as seen in Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). First, the Agreed Framework led KEDO - consisting of South Korea, Japan, and the United States - to be established in 1995.⁶⁷ KEDO - mainly ROK and Japan - provided North Korea with financial support for the construction of two South Korean made LWRs under the terms of Agreed Framework, allowing them to shut down the graphite-moderated reactor.⁶⁹ This makes it harder for them to extract plutonium, eventually

preventing the development of nuclear power. In addition to financial support, the Government of Japan also provided food aid for famine relief.⁷⁰ Additionally, following the Agreed Framework, KEDO also provided five hundred thousand tons of fuel oil to North Korea every year as a substitute for nuclear power.⁶⁹ Tokyo had only frozen its funding once in 1998 due to the launch of the Taepodong-1 missile to the Sea of Japan.⁷⁰ Furthermore, in October 2002, when the US presidential envoy visited North Korea, Pyongyang admitted the violation of the Framed Agreement due to the fact that they were proceeding with the Enriched Uranium program - which was the main resource for developing their nuclear power program.⁷¹ In response to the disclosure of the uranium program, KEDO stopped the fuel oil supply as a sanction.⁷¹ With this, the DPRK reacted by reactivating the nuclear power plant and the nuclear power project in December 2002; and North Korea once again declared to secede from the NPT in January 2003.⁷¹ In November 2003, KEDO suspended the construction of the two light-water reactors following DPRK's withdrawal from NPT.⁷¹ Lastly, in 2006, KEDO was completely dissolved and North Korea now is in debt.⁷¹

Six-Party Talks

Another notable multilateral attempt to denuclearize North Korea, the Six-Party Talks, led to the DPRK originally accepting to dismantle its nuclear program. The first Six-Party Talks was held in August 2003, in response to North Korea's secession from the NPT.⁷² The members of Six-Party Talks - USA, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea - gathered ten times in total within the span of four years between the years 2003 to 2007 in Beijing, China to address the new nuclear crisis.⁷³ From 2003 to 2005, negotiations with North Korea seemed to be working - North Korea agreed to denuclearize, including the promise to abandon all nuclear weapons as well as programs existing, and return to NPT in return for food and energy supplies provided by the members.⁷⁴ However, at the beginning of the Six-Party talks, Kim Jong-il accepted Japan's offer of an economic cooperation package for the compensation of Japan's colonial history. For North Korea, accepting Japan's economic cooperation package was a significant shift in policy. The agreement to an economic cooperation package in 2002 can be seen as a compromise from both sides and one step closer to the normalization of political relations between both countries. However, the launches of several ballistic missiles to the Sea of Japan, forcing through nuclear testing in 2006, and the launch of the Taepodong-2 missile in

2009 induced the restart of sanctions against North Korea.⁷⁰ North Korea consequently seceded from the Six-Party Talks, and ever since 2007, the Six-Party Talks have never been held again.⁷⁴ While North Korea often appears to agree to partial denuclearization, their determination to continue launching more advanced missiles will ultimately hinder multilateral attempts to convince Pyongyang to pursue denuclearization sincerely.

Developments in the Past Two Decades

For the first and last time at least until 2022, in 2002 and 2004, the summit meeting was held in Pyongyang where both of the leaders - Koizumi and Kim Jong-il - agreed to devote their effort to the restoration of diplomatic relations with the proclamation of the Pyongyang Declaration.⁴⁹ Japan officially apologized for the occupation of Korea and was committed to providing and aiding economic assistance.⁷⁰ Currently, as of 2022, with the DPRK's multiple nuclear testings and launching of missiles, the Government of Japan is banning the entry of North Koreans, re-entry of the North Korean authority officials, suspension of Japanese government officials visiting North Korea.⁷⁵ While diplomatic relations between Japan and the DPRK continue to stagnate because of North Korea's pursuit of further denuclearization talks, Japan will be prompted to return to giving aid for partial denuclearization to make progress in the future.

DPRK - Conclusive Recommendations

Japan has not been able to achieve meaningful progress regarding North Korean denuclearization when combined with the "abduction issue." By resolving the abduction issue as a humanitarian issue, Japan can freely grant concessions and sanction relief in exchange for steps towards denuclearization. Furthermore, by pursuing the abduction issue and denuclearization as separate policy objectives, Tokyo has a greater chance of resolving both issues. Additionally, pursuing the abduction issue multilaterally, as opposed to a Japanese condition for denuclearization, has a higher chance of resolution. North Korea has kidnapped foreign nationals of other nations, including South Korea, China, and various European countries, providing a base of countries with which Japan can jointly negotiate for the return of abduction victims. In

contrast to traditional policy which argues for the investigation of the abduction victims in exchange for aid, Japan should increase non-financial aid to North Korea to initiate a diplomatic relationship, then push for resolution of the abduction issue. The success of the 2014 Stockholm Agreement, which separated the abduction issue and denuclearization, suggests that North Korea would be amenable to partial denuclearization if pursued separately from the abduction issue. As the abduction issue plays a central role in Japanese-North Korean relations, we have included an in-depth evaluation of Japan's policy response and current recommendations in the "Abduction Issue" chapter.

Regarding North Korea's nuclear program, Japan should restart food and energy aid programs to promote the normalization of diplomatic relations before negotiating denuclearization or investigation into the abduction issue, and to prevent North Korea from redirecting funds for weapons production. In the past, Japan has resumed aid when North Korea appeared to be progressing on the abduction issue, most notably in 2001, only three years after the Taepodong launch in 1998. Given that North Korea relies on economic assistance, Japan should resume a non-conditional aid program to de-escalate tensions between both nations and to provide a foundation for negotiating steps toward denuclearization. During the 1990s, Japan was North Korea's second largest trading partner and Japan benefited from access to natural resources while North Korea gained access to the global market. A food or energy aid program would provide a cooperative basis to negotiate both denuclearization and the abduction issue, increasing the likelihood of verifiable progress.

Another viable alternative to food or energy aid programs is pharmaceutical or medical aid; North Korea's failing medical infrastructure and military expenses result in less than \$1 per person per year being spent on medical care, and health complications from malnutrition is common among North Korean civilians. In light of COVID-19, it can be assumed that North Korea is reeling from the spread of an infectious disease, loss of its largest trading partner (China), inflation, and an overall failing economy. Regardless of North Korea's denial of COVID cases and rejection of vaccines from China, Japan and the US can offer assistance with general medical infrastructure by providing trained personnel, PPE and medical equipment, as well as assisting in the construction of medical facilities. Resuming aid programs with North Korea accomplishes two objectives: first, to normalize relations between Japan and North Korea and second, to counter China's influence over North Korea, supported by aid offered on a bilateral

basis, rather than through the UN. Beginning a diplomatic relationship with an offer of medical, food, or energy aid would allow Japan to de-escalate regional tensions as well as protect vital security interests.

After establishing a diplomatic relationship with North Korea, Japan should also offer technological assistance for the denuclearization of the atomic power plant at Nyongbyon. Following the framework for economic assistance established by KEDO, Japan and its allies should exchange North Korean graphite reactors to light-water reactors, as a first step in denuclearization and restarting the nuclear energy program. Uranium mining and enrichment abilities have progressed since the 1960s and, without identifying a clear supplier of enriched uranium, it will be difficult to limit the program's development. With plentiful uranium ore deposits and the ability to mine them, North Korea's nuclear program is self-reliant and could one day meet the energy needs of the region, given proliferation-proof reactors. Transitioning North Korea from weapons proliferation back to nuclear energy research would both fulfill North Korea's energy needs and serve as a means for starting economic relations with regional actors.

Chapter 2: Japan, the ROK, and DPRK

Introduction

Japan and South Korea's current relationship is focused on remedying mutual hostilities as opposed to countering the expansion of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles program. Although nearly eighty years have passed since the end of Japan's colonial rule, Japanese-South Korean relations are still precarious due to decades of suspicion and hostility. In recent years, conflict has centered around the ROK's perception of Japanese wrongdoing regarding comfort women and forced laborers of the colonial era. In the past five years, relations have worsened considerably and decreased both nations' effectiveness in negotiating denuclearization. Progress might be made under the new Japanese PM Kishida, who oversaw the adoption of the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement as Chief of the Japanese MOFA.¹ However, Kishida's policy is similar to that of Former Prime Ministers Suga and Abe's: Japanese-South Korean relations should be based on the 1965 Normalization Agreement, a document which does not mention reparations for South Korean individuals who suffered under Japanese colonial rule.² South Korea maintains that diplomatic talks have stalled due to Japan's continued insistence on utilizing the Normalization Agreement as a framework for modern diplomatic relations. A lack of resolution on Japan and South Korea's historical issues contributes to stalling of North Korean denuclearization.

In the context of North Korean nuclearization and increased military activity, Japan and South Korea must strengthen diplomatic ties and establish a relationship which does not rely on the US as a mediator. Japan should establish a new diplomatic framework with the new South Korean president in March and shift the focus to contending with the North Korean nuclear threat. One tactic is to pursue a sequential economic aid policy, which rewards North Korea for verifiable progress towards denuclearization. Conditional aid agreements have led to little progress and fears of abetting the nuclear program have stalled non-conditional policy agreements. Due to COVID-19 energy and food shortages, in addition to new sanctions, Kim Jong-un could be incentivized to create trade or aid related agreements to boost his nation's contracting economy. Japan and South Korea must cooperate bilaterally and within the greater trilateral US-Japan-South Korea relationship to achieve a middle ground between complete economic isolation and complete sanction relief. To be the most effective, both countries should

separate policy related to resolving historical issues from the shared national defense objective of denuclearizing North Korea.

Section 1: Rebuilding Diplomatic Trust with the ROK

For Japan, building trust and creating a communication pipeline with the ROK are key policies that would work to improve past animosity toward each other. Their cooperation is difficult in the presence of DPRK's nuclear threat, but that threat has also created an opening for bilateral talks to occur between both countries alongside the United States.¹ These talks can create a new foundation of trust between Japan and the ROK as the DPRK is a threat they are both experiencing. In addition, conducting a trilateral approach with both the United States and the ROK will hold more traction and leverage when negotiating with the DPRK. Thus far, the different policies followed by the South Korean presidents have been unable to solve or make significant progress in dismantling the DPRK's nuclear program. Further, public opinion polls demonstrate a "drastic drop in mutual national sentiment in the two countries"² stemming from the South Korean Supreme Court ruling and Japan's export controls. However, Japan should consider the upcoming South Korean presidential election as the elected candidate can drastically change the relationship between both countries.

In the section on South Korea, the Japanese MOFA first mentioned that the "ROK is [an] important neighboring country."³ They have marked that the Japan-ROK relationship should be based on the 1965 Normalization Agreement, but improving their relationship will still take a significant amount of time. In relation to that agreement, Japan's situation dramatically shifted after the ROK had a short period of democracy following Rhee's retirement due to the April 19th Revolution and May 16th military coup in 1960 orchestrated by Park Chung-hee. The Japan-ROK relationship during his regime was stronger than that of Rhee's presidency. Park was aiming for rapid economic growth of South Korea, and Japan was willing to have a military partnership to regionally balance the security threats posed by the Communist Bloc. Therefore, both agreed to normalize relations with each other in 1965. Based on the Japan-ROK Normalization Agreement, South Korea received \$800 million as compensation for colonization.⁴ This was positive for their relationship and demonstrates how collaborations

between the two countries are a future possibility. There are specific points found in the continued use of the Normalization Agreement in the perspective of South Korea.

Similarly, Japan and South Korea tried to work together through the Six-Party Talks which resulted in contentions of their attempted cooperation.⁵ The resurfacing of the abduction issue during the September 2005 Six-Party Talks created difficulties for Japan and the ROK to continue collaborations. Despite this, countries involved in the Six-Party Talks considered conditional economic compensation to the DPRK if they were to give up their nuclear ambition, with the cooperation of mainly the ROK government. Unfortunately, Pyongyang walked out of negotiations with the 2nd nuclear test in May 2009. This revealed the failure of multilateral talks due to profound mutual distrust in the DPRK.⁶ Since the Six-Party Talks stalled, Japan lost momentum in taking an active role on the Korean Peninsula. Both this and the previous instance of normalization demonstrate how quickly fluctuations between Japan and the ROK can occur. They are both sensitive to small details which should be considered as Japan continues its cautious approach toward a stronger diplomatic alliance with South Korea.

Despite these uneasy situations in the past, President Moon Jae-In is strongly committed to non-proliferation and his anti-nuclear weapons stance. He has approached the North Korean threat differently than previous administrations, which can result in benefits for Japan as they align in national interest. In addition, the Moon administration delivered an incredibly successful and comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased trust in Moon among South Korean citizens and led to Moon being the most popular South Korean president in democratic history.⁷ This suggests the possibility of South Korean leadership becoming more adaptable to Japanese interest, and how they approach a range of issues, rather than sticking to one policy or belief as seen previously. Regardless, North Korea has remained more or less unresponsive in terms of actually considering the Moon administration's proposals which suggests that South Korea should focus its diplomatic efforts on Japan.

Moon proposed a peace declaration to replace the hostile relationship the Koreas currently have. However, Japan cannot rely on the peace proposal. It was believed to "pave the way for irreversible progress in denuclearization and usher in an era of complete peace."⁸ A peace agreement would have built confidence and trust between the North and South, and in the long-term dismantle the DPRK's nuclear program. This was the idea but was unable to gain significant traction as the DPRK rejected the proposal. Even so, Kim Yo-jong, Kim Jong-un's

sister, stated the peace declaration could be adopted if preconditions were met.⁹ Regardless of this, the DPRK has not attempted to dismantle its nuclear program or have an open dialogue with the ROK to implement an agreement. As previously stated, this situation predicts the opportunity for South Korea to shift their efforts to diplomacy with Japan. Japan should focus their efforts on what time Kishida has left in office while simultaneously preparing for the upcoming ROK presidential elections.

The Japan-ROK relationship still has a chance to be repaired through the upcoming ROK presidential elections in March 2022. Since both Japan and the US are waiting for the results of the election, Japan must wait so that they can initiate collaborative diplomatic solutions with South Korea and the US on the North Korean nuclear crisis. The US is currently more focused on strengthening their relationship with Japan, though, by having the first meeting between US President Biden and the Japanese Prime Minister Kishida on two-plus-two discussions.¹⁰ Following this, Japan should attempt to involve the new South Korean president in these discussions as well. The growing positivity of young generations of both Japan and South Korea can also positively impact their relationship. Young generations of both countries share the sentiment of improving the Japan-ROK relationship, due to their future-oriented generational similarities.^{11, 12} This indicates that younger generations will be able to bridge the gap between the sentiments of the older generations, similarly to the elections, improving the Japan-ROK relationship.

Section 2: 2022 Presidential Candidates in the ROK

As previously mentioned, the South Korean presidential elections will influence Japan's relationship with the ROK and its policies regarding the DPRK's nuclear program. The two dominant candidates are Lee Jae-myung from the Democratic Party (더불어민주당) and Yoon Seok-yeol from the People's Power Party (국민의힘).

If Lee is elected, Japan should resume an economic relationship with the ROK, as a means of improving current relations. Additionally, Japan could proactively begin the process of separating historical issues and denuclearization by utilizing the two-track policy in an effort to pursue North Korean denuclearization. Lee Jae-myung intends to "carry on and develop further

the Kim Dae-jung administration's Sunshine Policy, the Roh Moo-hyun administration's peace and prosperity policy, and Moon Jae-in administration's Korean Peninsula peace process.¹³ Lee differs as he argues there needs to be a practical change in inter-Korean policies to develop a meaningful relationship between both countries. Lee argues “snapback sanctions” are needed to negotiate with the DPRK as a “big deal” would be unlikely to succeed.⁸ In regards to Japan, Lee stated he plans to “adopt a ‘two-track’ strategy of responding firmly on matters related to history... while actively pursuing exchange and cooperation in economic, social, and diplomatic terms.”¹³ Therefore, Japan and the ROK would be able to work together on the nuclear threat alongside historical disputes without both intermixing and influencing their DPRK policies.

If Yoon is elected, Japan should respond to his defense policy by increasing cooperative military measures with South Korea. Yoon Seok-yeol's comments have revealed his intention of pursuing a “fire and fury” approach towards the DPRK.¹⁴ Unlike Lee Jae-myung, Yoon has strong reservations for Moon's inter-Korean policies and instead wants to focus on building up the ROK's hypersonic missiles as a preemptive strike strategy, titled the “Kill Chain” defense system.²⁴ In addition to the preemptive strategy, Yoon intends to promote the construction of a nuclear power plant that was suspended under the Moon administration.¹⁶ Yoon's aggressive policies are also met with cooperative economic plans that rely on the DPRK denuclearizing and the importance of improving ties with Japan.¹⁷ Yoon's campaign has received criticism as it heightens the risk of war and may provoke the DPRK further but is also met with praise as Yoon plans to cooperate with Japan and the United States further. This is significant to Japan as Yoon would be more willing to cooperate and revive diplomatic talks but his confrontational policies may isolate and anger the DPRK.

Section 3: Japan's Economic and Military Cooperation with the ROK

Introduction

The ROK and Japan have a mutual goal: denuclearizing North Korea to create stability, something that can be met by encouraging economic collaboration between Japan, the ROK and the DPRK. Rather than relying on unconditional financial aid or harsh conditional terms to meet this goal, Japan and the ROK can instead coordinate an economic plan to reward the DPRK

sequentially. Heavy sanctions have shown little progress, as demonstrated through Lee Myung-bak's presidency, so Japan should continue encouraging these economic connections and attempt to expand their own. The ROK and Japan are encouraged to pursue sanctions alongside incentives, a strategy that gives the DPRK the necessary foreign direct investment to build up infrastructure, benefitting the livelihood of its citizens and the country as a whole. Since the North Korean nuclear issue is the focus for the Japanese military and foreign affairs officials, it is necessary for Japan to solidify its relationship with South Korea in order to strengthen military support. One way to stabilize the relationship is to separate historical and political issues. In addition, the Japan-ROK-US trilateral military alliance is one of the most important military endeavors for Japan in terms of dealing with the DPRK nuclear issue. Japan should seek a way to work with this Japan-ROK-US trilateral alliance to normalize the diplomatic channels between Japan and the DPRK and further discussions on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Economic Cooperation with the ROK

Japan should focus on a version of economic collaboration with South Korea that is decoupled from the historical tensions that have previously prevented cooperation.⁷ The economic relationship between the ROK and Japan was thriving regardless of the historical issues that existed between both countries. Not only did Japan and South Korea have extremely fruitful economic relations from the 1960s to the mid-1990s,⁴ but the South Korean economy was actually highly dependent on Japan.¹⁸ This changed in 2018 when comfort women, a historical issue from colonial-era rule, was put into question again by the Moon Administration² heightening the negative perception between both countries and harming both economies. The matter of comfort women was first “settled under the 1966 state-to-state treaty aimed to normalize bilateral relations”⁹ and even further solidified under the 2015 agreement that “confirmed the issue of comfort women was resolved finally and irreversibly.”²⁰ Under the 2015 agreement, Abe offered his “most sincere apologies and remorse to all former comfort women, and Tokyo provided 1 billion yen (\$8.7 million) to a fund to help victims.”⁴ In spite of this, President Moon created a task force to review the agreement on the comfort women issue in 2017 and publicly argued the agreement was purely “political” and excluded the actual comfort women.⁴ In later years, the South Korean Supreme Court ordered Japanese firms to compensate victims of forced labor during Japan's 1910 to 1945 colonial rule. The Japanese government

responded by imposing tougher restrictions on exports to South Korea²¹ and eventually removed the ROK from its list of favored trading partners.¹⁸ The ROK retaliated with a boycott on popular Japanese products and tourism that resulted in an economic disaster and further weakened trade relations between both countries.²²

It is still believed that the ROK would be open to resuming Japan-ROK economic cooperation detached from shared historical issues, having attempted to do so previously with political issues in regards to the DPRK. Starting in the late 1990s, President Kim Dae-jung adopted a policy towards North Korea called the "Sunshine Policy," which had in it a separation of economics and political issues, such as North Korean human rights violations.²³ While this may have succeeded in terms of providing humanitarian aid to North Korea,²³ the Kim administration's policies were "regarded as too soft on the North,"²⁴ failed to hinder the DPRK's nuclear build-up, and did not improve ROK-DPRK relations.²³ In the early 2010s, ROK-DPRK relations witnessed a gradual increase in tensions and eventually the ROK cutting economic ties with the DPRK.²⁴ Even following this, the Lee administration of South Korea kept separate economic issues from political issues, except did in fact begin to hold denuclearization of the DPRK as prerequisite for economic aid.²³ This separation of economics and political issues yet linking of economics and denuclearization has remained in inter-Korean relations to this day.²³ If the ROK is open to decoupling economical issues from political ones with the nuclear threat that is the DPRK, it can be assumed that the ROK would be willing to decouple economic issues from historical ones for Japan, formerly one of its most important economic partners.

Military Relationship with the ROK

It is recommended that Japan work within the Japan-ROK-US trilateral alliance to revive their military relationship with the ROK, especially in the face of the growing threat of North Korean aggression. Despite past and present tensions in their relations, in 2016 Japan was able to work with South Korea in a trilateral framework with the US to establish GSOMIA, a military agreement to share information related to the DPRK's provocative military actions.²⁵ However, as a result of intensified Japan-ROK trade disputes, the ROK government notified Japan that they would terminate GSOMIA by August 2019.²⁵ Any more conflict between Japan and the ROK could disturb the defensive military alliance of Japan-US-ROK in a similar manner.

Currently, politicians of Japan and South Korea feel it is risky to cooperate militarily due to these fluctuations and lack of mutual trusteeship, so Japan must utilize its alliance with the US as a tool to create safe conditions for military collaboration between Seoul and Tokyo. An example of the US being a mediator in their trilateral alliance is the series of councils between diplomatic officials from Japan, the ROK, and the US regarding the DPRK and the North Korean nuclear issue. The most recent council in October 2021 came to a consensus on sharing opinions and information about the North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile, complete denuclearization of DPRK, and supporting Japan to solve the abduction issue.²⁶ The US Department of State also highlighted the importance of the Japan-South Korea-US trilateral military cooperation in October 2021.²⁷ Most recently, Ministers and Secretary of Defense from Japan, ROK, and the US had a conference call on February 10th, 2022 to discuss the series of North Korean missile tests in January.²⁸ Following that the Secretary of State of the US and the Foreign Ministers of Japan and ROK met in February to establish a joint statement condemning the North Korean ballistic missile launches and denoting their series of launches as unlawful activities.²⁹ These instances allow Japan to trust the US in allowing them to build their military relations with the ROK and show how this can be a successful strategy.

ROK- Conclusive Recommendations

Policy Recommendations for Japan and South Korea must be sequential, beginning with a separation of historical and current geopolitical/economic issues. After establishing economic trust, Japan and South Korea can utilize their alliances with the US to strengthen the trilateral alliance, which could increase engagement with North Korea, which values Japan and South Korea for their connection to the United States. However, this trilateral relationship can only be successful if Japan and South Korea find common ground regarding the North Korean threat, which in the future, will allow Japan-US-ROK to negotiate North Korean denuclearization.

Before both nations can collaborate and implement a coordinated North Korea policy, the historical issue of "comfort women" and forced laborers must be discussed first. The lack of resolution regarding Japan's war-time treatment of vulnerable South Koreans has led to a deterioration of the countries' economic relationship. A first step at resolving the economic

issues between Japan and South Korea is for Japan to reinstate South Korea as a preferred trading partner on its whitelist. As the Japanese export controls targeted the South Korean's valuable semiconductor industry, reinstating them could be a sign of goodwill and indicate a desire to resume a diplomatic relationship.

Additionally, improving Japan-ROK relations could contribute to an improvement in Japan-DPRK relations. While North Korea wants to negotiate predominantly with the US, Japan and South Korea should be included in negotiations, as they share the geographic threat of proximity to North Korea. Improving Japan-ROK relations is necessary to define their shared strategic interests, even while cooperating bilaterally with the US. In the long-term, after improving bilateral economic relations, both Japan and South Korea should lobby to lift sanctions which prevent North Korea from improving infrastructure, i.e. sanctions which limit the shipments of raw materials. Non-conditional food aid can be offered to support infrastructure development projects in North Korea and to prevent funds from being diverted to North Korea's military and nuclear weapons program. Continuing aid programs to boost North Korea's economy can be negotiated in exchange for denuclearization progress. In the future, infrastructure programs, potentially coordinated with Russia, would help North Korea open its economy and begin the process of normalization, a key objective for the Kim Regime (see Russia section).

This is not to mention the upcoming presidential election in March, which will create an opening for bilateral talks between Japan and the ROK, as both presidential candidates are willing to cooperate with Japan, though they prioritize Japan differently. Yoon Seok-yeol from the People's Power Party (국민의힘) would be the most optimal candidate for Japan-ROK relations and would further Japan-ROK military cooperation. Lee Jae-myung from the Democratic Party (더불어민주당) seems to only prioritize South Korea's relationship with the DPRK, and therefore would be a candidate with which it would be best to pursue cooperation on denuclearizing North Korea through economic aid. Regardless, Japan should express its intention towards mending the relationship and initiate a conversation with the ROK before candidates are selected.

Chapter 3: Japan, China, Russia, and the DPRK

Introduction

In any Japanese policy towards North Korea, economic and political cooperation with China is crucial due the fact that China has historically been the primary economic engine of the DPRK. For various economic, political, and ideological reasons since the dawn of the 21st century, China has become an integral part of the world order and their economic and political influence cannot be understated. Despite complicated political conflicts and economic competition between Tokyo and Beijing, forging economic cooperation in the form of regional trade agreements between the two in regards to providing non-financial aid is possible, given the similar interests in a more stable, less erratically aggressive Korean peninsula. This regional economic cooperation would create a key bargaining tool in negotiating Japan's relationship with North Korea, solving the abduction issue, and making progress towards North Korean denuclearization.

Although the invasion of Ukraine has led to a short-term cooling of Russo-Japanese relations, Russia will still be a key ally long-term in securing Chinese economic cooperation and has had a renewed diplomatic influence on North Korea that would greatly benefit a regional trade agreement. Though the Russian Federation's influence on North Korea is not what it was in the Soviet era, in the last decade Moscow has had a renewed interest in being a mediator in the region. Although maintaining relations with the ROK, Russia has most notably worked with China diplomatically on multiple occasions to successfully block further UN sanctions against the DPRK. This has been a factor in increased North Korean favorability towards Russia and North Korean support of Russian foreign policy. Due to these diplomatic ties between Russia, China, and North Korea, considerations about Russian interests and scope of influence are another worthy avenue of securing Chinese cooperation in Japan's DPRK policy in the long-term.

Finally, amid the plethora of evidence that backs up a deep commitment from China and Russia to creating a more stable DPRK, it is worthy to consider alternatives if their cooperation cannot be secured fully. Japan and China's historically rocky relationship is marred by the legacy of World War II and other current day territorial disputes and rising nationalism from both ends. Japan and Russia's relationship as well will be cooled for the next few years due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent sanctions imposed by Japan. Therefore, a proposed solution

lies in calling upon the “Quad,” or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which consists of Japan, the US, Australia and India, in order to take advantage of regional trade agreements to offer economic support in turn, ultimately, for opening up diplomacy and normalizing relations with North Korea. However, calling upon the Quad could complicate any present and future cooperative strategies regarding North Korea that are still increasingly reliant on China.

Section 1: China: North Korea's Economic Support

Introduction

Japan should take into account the North Korean-Chinese economic partnership in regards to its overall policy towards the DPRK — especially in beginning to actively negotiate with China to establish regional economic cooperation, which can ultimately and optimistically lead to long-term normalization of a diplomatic and economic relationship between Pyongyang and Tokyo. This is in part due to how historically, China’s economic partnership has played and continues to play a disproportionate role in supporting the DPRK’s emaciated economy and politically pressuring Pyongyang with either economic carrots and sticks. To adequately consider the limitations and bargaining points in potential joint diplomacy efforts between China, Japan, and North Korea, understanding China and Japan’s economic relationship is paramount.

China-Japan Economic Relationship

Though there are economic regions that have become areas of contention between China and Japan, engaging in cooperation on an economic front through free trade agreements (FTAs) and/or economic partnership agreements (EPAs) wouldn’t be out of the realm of possibility given historic and present conditions specific to North Korean aggression and nuclear development.¹ Even before the liberalization of China’s economy in 1978, Japanese companies have explored economic opportunities within China. Whether it be taking advantage of cheap labor and Chinese policies that were increasingly aimed at rapid development of an outward-looking economy, China and Japan’s economic relationship is, “characterized by shrinking gaps in economic sizes and by decreasing asymmetries in the bilateral foreign trade pattern.”² As Chinese companies have become competitive internationally, increased competition and interdependence through

transnational corporations have economically linked the two countries in a manner that has been nearly independent of political strife that has caused rifts between them. Although the countries are economically dependent in many ways, it is also “predicted that strong competition and rivalry in all markets is most likely to happen in the domestic markets in both countries.”²

Moreover, in 2010, China officially overtook Japan in nominal GDP (\$1.286 trillion versus \$1.335 trillion in April-to-June quarter in 2010) as the world's second largest economy and has only continued to witness meteoric exponential growth since then.³ In tandem, China has assumed a larger role within the Pan-Asian and Pacific Islands/Oceania economy — areas where Japan also maintains vital economic interests and allies.¹ Despite the pre-existing economic and political rivalry, the momentum of economic integration between the two economies “seems hardly unstoppable” with the increasing flow of Japanese FDI in China and being one of China’s largest trading partners.¹ Since the early 2000s, China has negotiated on a potential China-Japan-Korea (CJK) Free Trade Agreement which was operationalized on May, 17, 2014.¹ This signifies important economic interdependence taking place on both sides, although given China’s superpower status, it is difficult to say if any country doesn’t view China as of strategic economic importance and partnership.

Japan-China economic relations have since been complicated with other political disputes involving other outside powers, there are political decisions from both sides that reflect a willingness from China to collaborate with Japan in both their bilateral and external economic relationships. For example, within the South China Sea, geopolitical and foreign relations struggles present grave concerns for both countries. However, during the China-US trade war, trade disputes and economic relations between the two saw an improvement, with Prime Minister Abe Shinzo even personally advising Xi Jinping on trade negotiations with the US as the US continued to economically pressure the two countries. Xi eventually remarked that, “The China-Japan relationship has moved onto the normal track with the joint effort of both sides and is facing important opportunities for reform and development.”⁴

Clearly, during the China-US trade war, a unique opportunity for reform and development of further economic agreements have arisen. Given China and Japan’s storied relationship in the economic sphere and closer ties that have been nurtured within the last 5 years despite various political issues bubbling up, it is a worthy consideration for both sides to come to an economic agreement involving Japan based on the joint prioritization of de-escalation of DPRK aggression

(and eventual denuclearization) and both parties' economic interdependence with each other. The door to joint cooperation can be opened through regional economic political agreements between the two and can come to include those previously present at the six-party talks.

China-DPRK Economic Relationship

China and North Korea's economic relationship accelerated after Soviet aid was cut off after the fall of the USSR in 1991. Although China failed to completely take the place of the Soviet Union for the DPRK, China's economic activity with North Korea has made Beijing the DPRK's most important trading partner and economic patron.⁵ Trade between the two countries accounts for 1/3 of the North Korea's entire trade internationally even though, on the contrary, it barely accounts for China's total trade volume. From 1996 to 1998, China has also provided unconditional food aid to North Korea during a period of severe food shortages. Additionally, before the Agreed Framework of 1994 was established and sanctions from the US were imposed, China was estimated to provide 3/4ths of North Korea's oil and food imports — creating a large trade deficit that may even be larger than records show due to large amounts of smuggling and unofficial trade across the border.⁵ In summary, China had quickly become the economic backbone of the DPRK following the fall of the USSR.

However, after Pyongyang's test of a nuclear device in October 2006, China has shifted its political policy and tone towards the DPRK even though it still maintains the strongest economic relationship out of any of North Korea's working economic relationships.⁶ Despite this change in China's attitude, growth in China-DPRK economic ties didn't appear to be heavily affected despite new political developments and instead, grew substantially.⁷ In fact, several actions Beijing has pursued seem to clue in to the idea that China is attempting to build a more formal economic relationship with the Pyongyang rather than one with special subsidies and considerations.⁶ The benefit for the two countries economic relationship is two fold: the DPRK "is currently deepening economic cooperation with China to overcome international sanctions and achieve the goal of building a strong, prosperous and great country" with China viewing North Korea as integral to developing Northeast China as a 'Fourth Economic Engine.'⁸ This cooperation has manifested itself in bilateral economic projects in the Tumen River and Yalu River regions between the two in order to continue a "strategic partnership on the basis of close connections through cross-border infrastructure."⁸ In addition to providing direct key economic

support, China has subsequently worked with Russia to push the UN Security Council to ease sanctions on North Korea in 2019 and more recently in 2021 and 2022 as well.^{9, 10} This push to relieve sanction pressure from the UN may indicate not only political and economic affiliation, but also mirrors China's long-term economic plans to ultimately nurture and develop the DPRK's economy.

Although in 2014, Pyongyang seemed to make infrastructural moves to decrease dependence on China and start an overall strategy that started to decrease that dependence, the ravishing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have drawn North Korea closer to China.^{11, 12} Today, trade between countries has fallen to an all-time low due in part to the pandemic, which caused border closures and international sanctions. The full extent of the damage was made clear as the number of North Koreans who are food insecure has increased and total decline in the ability to import food, "could result in a crisis of a different nature in the months ahead."¹³ While the resumption of trade and transport between the two was announced in January of 2022, the damage and economic insecurity of the DPRK caused by the pandemic is sure to factor into the DPRK furthering its economic dependence on China rather than withdrawing deeper into economic isolation — supporting a potential positive outcome when it comes to economic cooperation in the region.¹²

Conclusion

This is a pivotal time for both China and North Korea, which can be taken advantage of in Japan's policy towards the DPRK in an effort to promote normalization of economic relations. Due to the past and current failures of North Korea's economy, it is suggested by Chinese analysts that Pyongyang may have to eventually take on large-scale economic reforms that China did in the liberalization of its economy.^{2, 6} China, even outside of security concerns over the DPRK's nuclear arsenal, has a multitude of personal economic reasons to establish and ally with other key surrounding countries in helping North Korea remedy and build its economy. These issues that are heavily considered by Beijing can be a key bargaining stepstone for Japan in proposing opening and increasing economic activity in terms of trade and food aid in a regional trade agreement between Japan, China, US, Russia, ROK and the DPRK in return for normalization of diplomatic relationship with North Korea and eventual denuclearization.

Between the major players involved in diplomacy with the DPRK, Japan must establish and push for cooperation towards opening up an economic relationship with one another through the route of getting China on board. China is perhaps the most integral of these partners that would be involved in a regional trade agreement due to the deep political and economic ties the Pyongyang and Beijing have maintained. More importantly, these economic relationships should stay away from giving direct financial aid and resume economic relationships through either trade or food aid. Although China and other countries have provided both aid types in the past, food aid and trade limits the possibility for the DPRK to use money awarded from foreign direct investment into further developing its nuclear program. However, as always, there are a variety of different interwoven relationships and histories — which remain dependent on foreign relations as well — that can be utilized in order to give these countries more incentive to follow through on economic cooperation concerning Pyongyang. In total, China's support in the economic realm is so critical that, without China's political *and* economic support, potential Japanese-North Korea economic ties will be threatened. This cooperation between China and Japan will require additional efforts through foreign diplomacy to work in tandem to better ties with China — even if to unite against the common threat that is Pyongyang's nuclearization and concurrently erratic behavior.

Section 2: Japan, China, and DPRK Relations

Introduction

As North Korea's patron and only major ally, and the largest economic partner of both North Korea and Japan, China must be considered in the formulation of any North Korea policy. China's relationship to North Korea is complex and understanding it is crucial for policymakers to understand what actions China would be willing to take vis-à-vis North Korea. The two are linked by treaties and history but the relationship is often tense, and China would welcome a change in North Korean behavior. Japan-China relations have also been mixed, with major historical issues and outstanding territorial disputes contrasting with strong economic ties. Nationalist impulses combined with anxieties about the possibility of a broader clash between the US and China have contributed to worsening ties despite efforts by leadership in both

countries to ease tensions. Nonetheless, given China's importance to North Korea and to Northeast Asia more broadly, efforts at finding common ground should be prioritized in order to gain Chinese cooperation with initiatives to promote economic development in the DPRK in return for a moderation of hostile behavior and progress towards denuclearization.

China-North Korea Relations

The roots of China's relationship with North Korea begin with the DPRK's foundation. China intervened militarily to support North Korea in the Korean War and has been one of its primary economic and political patrons since, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While China has proven a consistent defender of North Korea, the relationship between the two remains difficult. North Korea has often taken actions that concern China, going ahead with nuclear and missile tests despite Chinese opposition. The DPRK has also repeatedly conducted internal purges that raise Chinese fears of instability within the regime.¹⁴ The recent spate of missile tests in January 2022 has further added to the resulting tensions by causing chaos and instability near China as it seeks to awe the world with its hosting of the 2022 Winter Olympics has deepened Beijing's irritation with its neighbor.¹⁵ As a result, China has sometimes been less than fully committed to the DPRK. China has no interest in North Korea having a nuclear capability, as such it has sometimes backed UN sanctions, though usually only after they've been weakened. This presents an opportunity for Japan to find common ground with Beijing on a policy of reducing sanctions and increasing economic assistance for the DPRK, with the shared goal of denuclearization and a moderation of North Korea's aggressive behavior. China has also implied that should North Korea be responsible for starting a conflict, China won't intervene to defend it despite existing obligations under the 1961 Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.¹⁴ Some analyses published in *Foreign Affairs* even propose that should North Korea collapse, from either war or internal factors, Chinese forces would intervene against North Korea in order to secure nuclear facilities and classified archives, and gain a say in the shape of the Korean Peninsula in the aftermath.¹⁶ This extreme state of affairs clearly demonstrates China's desire for a less erratic neighbor, a desire which provides common ground for cooperation between China and Japan.

In sum, China-North Korea relations are difficult, but China retains a significant interest in the survival of the regime, both as a buffer state and to avoid the chaos and ideological threats

that its collapse could bring. This makes a coercive strategy towards North Korea less likely to gain Chinese cooperation, even as their opposition to North Korean nuclear development and create a common goal of moderating North Korean behavior and attempting to bring about denuclearization. Despite China's hesitation to fully embrace a coercive strategy, its common interest in a less erratic North Korea will make cooperation with other powers on a conciliatory approach more feasible.

China-Japan Relations

Japan-China relations are defined by strong economic cooperation since the establishment of official ties in 1972, but remain colored by the legacy of World War Two. China's program of "patriotic education" emphasizes the suffering resulting from the war, and the ultimate Chinese victory constitutes an important part of modern China's founding myth, fostering continued resentment towards Japan despite repeated apologies.¹⁷ As for outstanding issues in the present, the most notable is the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. This led to violent anti-Japanese protests in China in 2012, and the dispute has heated up again recently with the passage of a law in China allowing the Chinese coast guard to use weapons. Japan has in response reaffirmed its absolute willingness to defend the Senkakus against Chinese encroachment.¹⁸ Overall, Japanese public opinion towards China has reached a dramatic low, with 86% of respondents to a recent Pew Research poll having a negative view of China.¹⁹

The deepening of the US-Japan alliance, as well as Japan's support for other regional arrangements perceived as anti-Chinese, including the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), have also contributed to worsening relations. As the US-China rivalry heats up, Japan has been a clear ally of the US, expanding its military capabilities and offering rhetorical support. Japan has been purchasing advanced weaponry including F35 fighters, as well as converting ships into aircraft carriers for the first time since World War Two.²⁰ It has also increased its participation in naval drills with the US and other states, and installed anti-air and anti-ship missile systems on Ishigaki Island near Taiwan. These moves have been accompanied by sharp increases to Japan's defense budget.²¹ Japanese rhetoric has also drawn closer to the US, with joint statements explicitly targeting Chinese behavior in the South China Sea, near Taiwan, and with respect to its human rights record being issued.²²

Meanwhile, Chinese activity has pushed Japan to further support the US. Japanese officials see Taiwan and the South China Sea as crucial regions given their reliance on commercial and energy shipments passing through their waters, so destabilizing Chinese behavior in these areas provokes Japanese opposition. Defense Minister Kishi Nobuo noted in September 2021 that 90% of Japan's energy supplies pass near Taiwan, making crises in the area of vital importance to the country,²⁰ while statements by former Prime Minister Abe the following December declared that a Taiwanese emergency would be a Japanese emergency as well, directly linking Japanese and Taiwanese affairs.²³ Additionally, there has been a recent emphasis in Japanese security policy on the risk of a US-China conflict that could draw them in, this possibility being prioritized in Japan's 2021 defense white paper.²⁴ Thus far, Prime Minister Kishida has shown a mixed approach, appointing a foreign minister who previously headed a committee focused on improving ties with Beijing, Hayashi Yoshimasa, but also increasing defense spending and appointing a China critic, Nakatani Gen, as his human rights czar.²³ The paradigm of conflict indicated by the actions above makes cooperation with China on North Korean issues far more difficult than it has been in the past. Concerns about a Chinese security threat have grown dramatically, and while opportunities to reduce tensions through cooperation may be attractive it will be difficult to halt and work around the trend of security competition to resolve other regional issues. That said, Japan's best options for addressing North Korean issues include finding common ground with China, and as such every effort should be made to pursue opportunities to cooperate. Despite these disagreements, officials on both sides have made efforts recently to ease tensions, including committing to the establishment of a defense hotline by the end of 2022.²⁰ In a potential opportunity for cooperation on North Korea, Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2020 expressed interest in the abduction issue, a matter of great domestic importance in Japan.⁵² This has yet to result in progress but may offer an area where Japan and China can find common ground at a time of otherwise strained relations. At present, Japan continues to emphasize dialogue over conflict, even as it strengthens both its ties with allies and its military capabilities.¹⁸ This remains the best option for Japan, as gaining Chinese cooperation on North Korea will require both sides to remain committed to peaceful and at least cordial relations.

In light of recent efforts to calm tensions, Japan should seek to cooperate with China on its North Korea policy. As the second and third largest economies in the world respectively, China and Japan are uniquely poised to provide trade and investment incentives that could

alleviate North Korea's economic woes and support Kim Jong-un's stated priority of development. The creation of a Regional Trade Agreement including Japan and China, and, if their cooperation can be secured, South Korea and Russia, could be used as an incentive for North Korea to reduce its aggressive behavior, cooperate with Japan in resolving once and for all the abduction issue, and potentially push for denuclearization. Such an agreement would emphasize trade, investment and food aid over financial aid, in order to promote development and keep North Korea accountable by not simply giving it funds that can't be tracked. Should North Korea cooperate in the framework of such an agreement, the prospect of the other parties lobbying for sanctions relief within the UN could be raised as an incentive for further progress. The receipt of aid and membership in the agreement could be made contingent on North Korean progress on denuclearization in accordance with IAEA guidelines on the subject, verified by international inspections, or in return for progress on normalizing relations with their neighbors. This cooperative angle should be the primary focus of Japanese efforts, but given the significant and overwhelming tensions coloring Japan-China relations, Japan should be prepared to execute a policy without Chinese cooperation. In this case, Japan should take advantage of North Korean resentment of their reliance on China to offer itself as an alternative source of investment and development support, in return for cooperation on resolving the abduction issue and reduced or halted development and testing of nuclear weapons and missiles. Japan won't be able to make up for all of the aid China provides, but as the third largest economy in the world it still represents an attractive option that would give North Korea an alternative to full reliance on China while incentivizing friendlier behavior towards its neighbors.

Section 3: Russia: The Mediator on the Korean Peninsula (Treat)

Introduction

While coordinating economic policy towards North Korea, Japan should work jointly with the Russian Federation, a country with historic ties to the founding of the DPRK²⁵ and a renewed diplomatic role on the Korean Peninsula.²⁶ Following the Second World War, Russia's predecessor, the Soviet Union, went from being the interim occupier of the Northern Korean Peninsula¹ to its primary diplomatic backer and economic partner, comprising 50-60% of all of

North Korean trade by the 1980s.²⁷ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia pursued a radically different diplomatic approach to the Korean Peninsula, normalizing relations with the ROK and dropping its decades-long commitment to defend and aid the DPRK, with catastrophic consequences for the dictatorship.^{27, 28, 29} Since then, under the Medvedev and Putin administrations, Russia has reconnected economically and diplomatically with North Korea while still maintaining relations with the South.²⁸ Doing so, Russia looks to benefit economically from both Koreas while reestablishing its role as a formidable power and even a mediator in the region.^{26, 28} In the last five months, Russia has worked with China twice to counter economic sanctions on North Korea at the United Nations.^{10, 30} These recent actions are part of a continued Russian openness to stabilizing the DPRK economically,²⁶ close diplomatic cooperation between Russia and China,²⁶ and are a large factor in North Korea having a favorable attitude towards Russian foreign policy.³¹ Working with Russia on economic agreements vis-à-vis North Korea will help Japan secure Chinese support and a North Korea more open to negotiation.

Even amidst ongoing territorial disputes³² and fresh sanctions following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine,³³ the commonalities in Japan and Russia's policies towards North Korea offer room for working together economically to normalize relations with the nation.³² Russia's ongoing occupation of the Northern Islands claimed by Japan is an underlying issue in Russo-Japanese relations,³⁴ but has largely been decoupled from economic relations.³⁵ Japanese sanctions imposed after the developing military operation in Ukraine will deter Russia from cooperating short-term,^{36, 37} especially given the heightened severity compared to the Annexation of Crimea in 2014.³³ Japan's sanctions following the 2014 annexation seemed at the time to send Russo-Japanese relations "back to the Cold War,"³² yet both nations resumed joint talks less than three years after Japan's 2014 sanctions on Russia.³⁸ Therefore, pending the invasion does not escalate into a larger conflict, it is believed relations will normalize once again a few years after the conflict finishes due to Japan and Russia's shared views on the DPRK. Russia favors a denuclearized DPRK²⁶ and President Vladimir Putin expressed his intention to cooperate with Japan's Prime Minister Kishida Fumio on the ongoing issue of abductees to the DPRK.³⁹ Russia and Japan have successfully cooperated with other nations on policy towards North Korea previously^{26, 34} and will do so again as it is in the best interest of both nations.

Underlying Russia's current role on the Korean Peninsula is the legacy of the Soviet Union and how it shaped the nation of North Korea. At the end of WWII, the Soviet Union occupied the northern half of the Korean Peninsula and chose then-Red Army Officer Kim Il-Sung as the central political figure of its occupied territory.²⁵ After the occupation spheres of the peninsula were solidified into two separate countries, the USSR became the primary ally and backer of the newly-formed Democratic People's Republic of Korea.²⁵ Prior to giving Kim Il-Sung the go-ahead to instigate the Korean War, Joseph Stalin, then-leader of the Soviet Union, personally persuaded Chairman Mao Zedong to commit to backing the North Korean Army if needed, which came to fruition.²⁵ Following Stalin's death and the resolution of the Korean War, the Soviet Union remained committed to defending the DPRK at all cost if invaded,²⁹ in addition to becoming its primary trading partner and economic support system.²⁷ By the 1980s, the Soviet Union made up over half of the DPRK's total trade, helping further by subsidizing prices of key resources, saving the DPRK \$400 million dollars in oil and coal alone over the course of the decade.²⁷ Having become "dangerously reliant," the DPRK was brought "to its knees" at the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, unable to purchase imports at market prices.²⁷ The food shortages in the DPRK that had begun in the late 1980s worsened into the lethal Great Famine that spanned the 1990s, the drop in energy supplies from the former Communist bloc triggered the mid-1990s DPRK economic collapse, and a general lack of an export sector contributed to a complete splintering of the North Korean economy.²⁷ The Soviet Union's collapse, combined with the Russian Federation's inability to succeed it in supporting the DPRK economically,²⁷ would also create the conditions for the Chinese patronship of North Korea that continues to this day.⁴⁰

The Russian Federation and the DPRK

Following a near-abandonment of the DPRK, the Russian Federation has since sought to return to being a diplomatic power in the region and economic partner of both Koreas, demonstrating openness to cooperating economically to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula. In 1992, Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin apologized to South Korea for the Soviet Union's role in the Korean War and committed to ending Russian military aid to the DPRK.²⁹ Although Yeltsin did state that "the development of Russian-South Korean relations must not be to the detriment of North Korea,"⁴¹ the first foreign minister of the new Russian Federation, Andrei

Kozyrev, was quoted accusing the DPRK of human rights violations and stating that a change in government was needed²⁸ The Russian Federation's new stance on North Korea set a radically different tone, weakening its influence on the DPRK and in turn the significance of the country on the Korean Peninsula.^{26,28} The Putin and Medvedev Administrations took steps to reverse this image on the peninsula by turning to a policy dubbed "the Road to Seoul leads through Pyongyang," reflecting the view that economic relations with South Korea would be most effective if Russia were once again in a position of influence with the DPRK.²⁸ Parallel to economic ventures such as increased cross-border rail connections,⁴² ferry services,⁴³ and a 2012 agreement to write off 90% of Soviet-era debt between Russia and the DPRK,²⁶ Russo-North Korean diplomatic activity has increased as well. Following the withdrawal of the DPRK from the Six-Party talks with the ROK, Russia, China, Japan and the USA, Russian diplomats worked with Chinese diplomats and succeeded in convincing the DPRK to declare its willingness to rejoin the talks on multiple occasions in 2011 and 2012.⁴¹ The Russian Ambassador to the DPRK met with a DPRK minister of foreign affairs to discuss cooperation between the two countries in 2017 and President Putin extended an offer to South Korea to mediate talks on the peninsula later that year.⁴⁰ With this renewed diplomatic presence, Russia looks increasingly likely to engage in talks with Japan regarding the DPRK, especially since Russia would benefit most from an economically stable and denuclearized DPRK.²⁶

Incidentally, Japan cooperating with Russia on a mutual aid agreement would increase the likelihood of not just China joining, but also North Korea's willingness to take steps towards denuclearization and solving the abduction issue. The close diplomatic cooperation between China and Russia to convince North Korea to rejoin the Six-Party Talks in 2011 and 2012 was no outlier.⁴⁴ In October 2021, Russia and China jointly submitted a draft proposal to the UN Security Council to ease sanctions against the DPRK,⁴⁵ something they had considered submitting together two years earlier but had not due to disapproval from the United States.⁴⁶ In January 2022, Russia and China blocked a bid by the United States to impose further sanctions on the DPRK.^{10,30} Both of these joint actions, while consistent with the Putin administration's stances against sanctions and for North Korean economic stability, have increased North Korea's support for Russia and Russian actions.³¹ Along with Russia's opposition to economic sanctions, Russia has allowed North Korean workers in Russia to stay in the country, in defiance of UN sanctions prohibiting it.³¹ Motivated by this leeway, North Korea, although not directly mentioning the

2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, supported Russia's reasoning for amassing troops on Ukraine's border prior to the invasion and blamed the United States for Russia's security concerns after the invasion began.⁴⁷ With Russia's tight-knit cooperation with China, the main ally of the DPRK,⁴⁰ and broadband support from the DPRK itself,³¹ it would be extremely beneficial for Japan to work with Russia on an agreement towards North Korea to encourage Chinese negotiation and increase North Korea's willingness to cooperate.

The Russian Federation and Japan

The Russian Federation and Japan, despite the disputed Northern Territories, are said to have "similar or even at times identical" positions on global affairs issues, something that leaves both nations able to cooperate on almost all areas of mutual interest.³⁴ Although being internationally recognized as Japanese territories since 1855,³⁴ Shikotan, Habomai, Etorofu, and Kunashiri had over 6,000 of their Japanese residents removed³⁵ and the islands were fully incorporated as territory of the Soviet Union.³⁴ The two countries had been on the brink of settling the issue with the 1956 Joint Declaration until the United States threatened to fully annex Okinawa if the peace treaty were to proceed as written, dissatisfied with Japan only being returned two of the islands.^{32,34} After the failure of the 1956 Joint Declaration, Japan and the Soviet Union's economic relations, although minimal in comparison to their respective relations with bigger trading partners,¹⁸ have developed slowly but surely in a complementary manner.³⁴ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Japanese government started to decouple the resolution of the territorial dispute and economic development, leading to record growth between the two countries from the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s.³⁵ Currently, the economic relationship between Japan and Russia is said to be in an "extremely favorable environment," with specific emphasis on energy resources such as crude oil and natural gas that Russia looks to sell and "Japan urgently needs."³⁴ In addition, their foreign policies have promising overlap on North Korea, with both Japan and Russia in favor of the denuclearization of the DPRK^{26,34} and President Putin himself committing to working with Prime Minister Kishida and Japan to solve the abduction issue.³⁹

Even though Japan has imposed sanctions on Russia due to their ongoing invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine, Russo-Japanese relations have proven to recover from the cooling of relations following sanctions previously and will recover again.³⁸ On February 12, 2022, Japan

committed to working with the United States and South Korea to deter Russian action in Ukraine.⁴⁹ Staying true to this commitment, Prime Minister Kishida Fumio announced new sanctions against Russia immediately following the Russian military entering into Ukraine from Russia proper, Belarus, and the Russian-administered Crimean Peninsula on February 24.^{33,50} The Russian ambassador in Tokyo, Mikhail Yurievich Galuzin, warned that sanctions announced by Prime Minister Kishida “will harm” the relations of the two nations, are “counterproductive” to dialogue, and spoke of a “serious” response by Russia.⁵¹ However, this does not spell the end of Russo-Japanese relations or an indefinite freeze on collaboration between the two nations on mutually shared issues. Following Russia's previous violation of Ukrainian sovereignty in 2014, Japan, under Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, joined fellow G7 nations in imposing sanctions on Russia.³² Although these sanctions on Russia were the weakest among those imposed by G7 members, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov declared in September 2015, “[Russia] will not negotiate with Japan” and Russo-Japanese relations reportedly cooled to a level not seen since the Cold War.³² Within two years, however, Japan and Russia resumed ministerial security talks, represented by none other than Lavrov and then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Kishida.³⁸ Admittedly, the Kishida government enacted initial sanctions much quicker than the Abe government and appears much more open to further sanctions as the 2022 invasion proceeds.³³ In addition, That being said, taking into account the previous rupture of Russo-Japanese relations,³² Russia’s hardline position of non-negotiation in 2015,³³ and the surprisingly quick resumption of high-level talks in 2017,³⁸ it can be predicted that Russo-Japanese talks will resume by the latter half of the decade if not earlier. Amid the invasion of Ukraine,⁵⁰ sanctions, and forthcoming cooling of Russo-Japanese relations,³⁶ Japan will still be able to collaborate with Russia in the future on denuclearizing North Korea and resolving the abduction issue.

Section 4: The Quad: An Alternative to China and Russia

If negotiations with China and Russia were to fail, one possible alternative source of support for Japan in dealing with the challenge posed by North Korea is the Quad. The Quad’s members represent a formidable collection of economic and military capabilities that are flexible

enough to take on a wide range of issues. Their economic capabilities make them potentially useful for a conciliatory approach to North Korea that focuses on trade, investment, and building regional ties, but their increasingly militarized nature and their focus on confronting China could complicate efforts that may rely on Chinese cooperation.

The Quad is a loose grouping of Japan, the US, Australia, and India, first formed in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 to better coordinate relief efforts.⁵² The Quad quickly became defunct in its initial form, before being revived in 2017 due to its members' shared concerns about Chinese behavior.⁵³ In its current form, the Quad facilitates cooperation on a wide range of matters including security, economics, and health, with working groups being formed to address areas including supply line resilience and the development and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines.⁵² It is usually seen by analysts as a nascent alliance meant to contain a rising China, but its broader focus and loose structure make it more flexible than this view implies. Some members, such as Japan, emphasize shared democratic values while others such as India prefer to focus on practical cooperation in addressing regional issues. There is also the potential to use the Quad as a framework for bringing in additional partners, seen by efforts to involve France in recent exercises.⁵³ For Japan's part, they have been a major supporter of the Quad, emphasizing the shared democratic values and commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific displayed by its members. In the face of American reticence during the Trump Administration, Prime Minister Abe was noted for championing the value of the Quad in addressing Pacific issues.⁵² Driven by Chinese behavior, including increasingly aggressive claims to the Senkaku islands in the East China Sea as well as similar actions in the South China Sea, Japan has deepened its ties with all members of the Quad. As part of this, it has sought to increase its economic role by using the Quad as a framework to provide an alternative source of investment and aid to that offered by China for states in the regions, potentially providing a model for engaging with North Korea.⁵² As part of its commitments to the Quad, Japan has taken part in India's Malabar naval exercises, which also include the US and Australia, and has planned additional exercises with both Quad members and other states such as France and the UK.⁵³

Thus far the activity of the Quad has been focused on security and economic competition with China, rather than engaging with North Korean issues. Drawing the cooperation of its members will likely be difficult given the overwhelming preoccupation with China, the peripheral nature of North Korea to members such as India, and the preexisting strategies held by

members such as the US towards North Korea, but the Quad has proven willing to take on a broad range of challenges. For the time being Japan should focus on more immediate regional efforts to engage with North Korea economically, but if China proves uncooperative the Quad could be a useful alternative. Japan's use of the Quad as a framework for competing with Chinese investment and aid could be turned to support efforts at delivering similar investment and aid to North Korea. If this aid is framed as giving North Korea an alternative to Chinese economic support and thus potentially tempting North Korea away from China in any regional confrontation, it could even gain the consideration of other members of the Quad. Their economic and diplomatic support for Japanese efforts would provide additional incentives for the DPRK to cooperate in resolving outstanding issues with Japan, improving the likelihood of success in the absence of Chinese cooperation. Should the mood of policymakers in Quad countries shift from confrontation with China to accommodation, Japan could pitch a conciliatory North Korea policy as an area of possible cooperation with China, helping to reduce tensions between it and Quad members while supporting Japan's focus on resolving its North Korea issues. Overall, Japan's focus should remain on more immediate regional partners, including South Korea and China, but the Quad could prove useful if these primary efforts fail.

China & Russia- Conclusive Recommendations

Given the importance of China as the DPRK's primary economic and political backer, Japan should seek to enlist Beijing's support in their strategy of economic engagement towards North Korea. Japan should cooperate with China and other regional actors including Russia and South Korea to offer economic incentives to the DPRK in return for concessions including reducing aggressive behavior, progress on the abduction issue, and progress on denuclearization. These economic incentives include the creation of a regional trade agreement focusing on trade, investment, and food aid over financial aid, in order to promote development and reduce the likelihood of aid being redirected into Pyongyang's nuclear program. If North Korea cooperates, lobbying for sanctions relief can be offered as a further incentive, contingent on independently verifiable progress towards denuclearization. This approach of economic engagement will appeal to North Korea's desire for economic relief to promote its development, as well as to its desire to

find other sources of economic support to reduce its reliance on China. The success of this approach will be contingent on Japan's ability to reduce tensions with China. Outstanding territorial disputes and conflicting nationalist issues rooted in historical conflicts and the paradigm of China's rise and competition with the US will complicate efforts to cooperate on North Korea, but both Japan and China have already made efforts to reduce tensions and both maintain common interests in a less erratic, denuclearized Korean Peninsula, and so cooperation should remain the focus.

If possible, the participation of the Russian Federation in these measures should also be sought. Like Japan and China, Russia has an interest in a more stable, denuclearized Korean Peninsula, and also has a record of opposition to coercive measures against the DPRK, including sanctions. This support will have to be sought further in the future, as the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Japanese sanctions have for the moment taken cooperation off the table. When relations warm, cooperation on North Korea will have to be separated from the outstanding Kuril island territorial dispute. Given Russia's common interests with Japan on the Korean Peninsula, and expressions of support from Russian leadership for Japanese interests including the abduction issue, cooperation should be possible once relations normalize.

In light of the significant difficulties in Japanese relations with both China and Russia, Japan should be prepared to act without their cooperation. This remains secondary to a cooperative approach, but must be considered. As the third largest economy in the world, Japan can still offer significant economic incentives to North Korea even without the cooperation of China or Russia. An alternative option to support the Japanese approach is to seek the backing of the Quad, framing the mitigation of aggressive North Korean behavior through economic engagement as supporting the larger confrontation with China on which the Quad is focused. This would take advantage of the vast economic and organizational capabilities of the Quad states, which have been proven in the use of the Quad as an avenue for distributing aid and economic support across the Indo-Pacific.

Chapter 4: Japan and the United States

Introduction

Amid North Korea's swift acceleration of its nuclear program, Japan is determined to expand its self-defense capabilities in order to deter Pyongyang. Recently, former Prime Minister Abe's reinterpretation of Article 9 expanded Tokyo's self-defense to discourage the DPRK from further aggression. Nevertheless, North Korea continues to further upgrade its missile strike capabilities and often launches them over Japanese territory. Accordingly, Tokyo has been prompted to also reconsider the US-Japan Security Treaty, in which it remains uncertain if the US can use Japanese military bases during an upsurge in hostilities on the Korean Peninsula.

While Japan is intent on taking further initiative to independently pursue Japanese security vis-à-vis the DPRK, Tokyo can anticipate further cooperation with the United States, following the US-Japan Security Treaty of 1951. The long-standing diplomatic and military partnership enables both to cooperate in Asian security and has been valuable for Japan to realize its national security. The security alliance proved especially effective during North Korea's rise during the Cold War, when the DPRK's nuclear program emerged.

Following the end of the Cold War, tensions fell on the international stage, but there was a new threat on the rise. As North Korea's nuclear capabilities began to improve, tensions between Tokyo and Pyongyang worsened. This further made it apparent that Japan would need to continue their reliance on the United States as this would be to the benefit of both nations while tackling North Korea's nuclear program. This could be seen through the joint effort between Japan and the US to improve Japan's BMD systems, the pillar of US-Japanese military cooperation to deter North Korea.

Over the last few decades, past US presidential administrations have attempted to lessen the threat North Korea poses to the US, Japan, and their allies, with the ultimate goal being denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula. However, their attempts have been unsuccessful thus far. Although the Biden administration has maintained certain aspects of the past administrations' policies toward the DPRK's nuclear program, President Biden is also attempting to form a more effective policy that will lead the DPRK closer to denuclearization. A notable feature of President Biden's approach toward the DPRK is his desire to consult and closely collaborate with the US's allies in the region. This is beneficial for Japan, since Japan may be

presented with the opportunity to give input to the US that helps Japan advance its own objectives with North Korea and increase the safety of Japan and its citizens. As the Biden administration continues to shape its policy on North Korea and increases communications with Japan on the matter, both the US and Japan can take advantage of North Korea's current economic state, due to COVID-19, to make diplomatic progress and work toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Section 1: Limitations of Japanese National Defense (Joshua)

Subsection A: Article 9

Overview of Article 9

The advancements of the North Korean nuclear program has prompted Japan to reconsider the limits of Article 9, as the Japanese constitution restricts Tokyo's ability to deter Pyongyang. While Article 9 permits Japan to maintain self-defense forces,¹ these have not discouraged North Korea from threatening Japan; in 1998, the DPRK launched a missile designed to carry nuclear weapons over Japan, demonstrating that the nuclear program could easily strike Japanese territory.² Furthermore, while the United States' contributions to Japan's defense previously deterred North Korea, security experts suggest that, as North Korea possesses missiles that can now carry nuclear weapons to the United States, the US's ability to protect Japan from further aggression is limited.³ If the US ultimately fails to protect Japan from the DPRK in the event of escalations on the Korean Peninsula, Japan will have to rely on its own national defense, prompting a reconsideration of Article 9.

Prime Minister Abe's Reinterpretation of Article 9 and Implications for the DPRK

Aware that North Korea's nuclear advancements are outpacing Japan's self-defense capabilities, former Prime Minister Abe was ultimately able to bypass the Japanese constitution and reformed Article 9 in 2015, implementing collective self-defense. PM Abe established an advisory panel to address the legality of reinterpreting Article 9 as an alternative to amending the constitution.¹ In 2014, the panel concluded that one could reinterpret Article 9 as including collective self-defense.¹ While the bills to implement Abe's reinterpretation of Article 9 passed both the lower and upper houses in 2015, future administrations may reverse this reinterpretation

if they disagree with it, ultimately making its status ambiguous.¹ Nevertheless, as the bill is recognized today, Tokyo will be able to retaliate with the minimum amount of force required against an attack not only on Japan itself, but also on foreign countries, such as the United States, that have close partnerships with Japan.¹ Since the United States is no longer out of reach for North Korean missiles, PM Abe's reinterpretation permits Japan to take a stand against North Korea by practicing collective self-defense outside of Japanese borders. This, perhaps, will discourage further aggression from the DPRK.

PM Abe's reinterpretation of Article 9 will further prepare Japan to deter North Korea; however, the reinterpretation may provoke Pyongyang further and complicate talks to denuclearize the DPRK in the future. North Korea perceives Abe's reinterpretation of Article 9 as aggression against the DPRK; one media outlet in the DPRK, the Korean Central News Agency, states that collective self-defense will enable Japan to "opt for aggression and war with the U.S."⁴ Specifically, KCNA argues that Abe's revision to the constitution will lead Japan to take part in a second Korean war started by the US.⁴ Indeed, the reinterpretation of Article 9 provokes North Korea, as the country fears that the reform will lead to US and Japanese aggression on the Korean Peninsula. Although these sources contain mere claims, it is crucial to consider them in order to fully understand that reinterpreting Article 9 will provoke Pyongyang further, and perhaps discourage the DPRK from denuclearizing in the future.

Conclusion

Amidst the rapid accelerations in North Korea's nuclear program, reconsidering the limits of Article 9 will be crucial for Tokyo to deter North Korea. Abe's reinterpretation of Article 9, although it can potentially be annulled, is recognized today and will improve Japan's defense capabilities in the near future. Nevertheless, North Korea's reactions to the reinterpretation highlight Article 9's implications for future Japan-DPRK relations, and denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula.

Subsection B: The Lack of a Consensus in the US-Japan Security Treaty of 1960

Overview of the Security Treaty's Ambiguity

While the revised US-Japan Security Treaty of 1960 is generally explicit, the additional agreement that the US might be able to use Japanese bases without consulting Japan beforehand remains ambiguous. Unlike the rest of the treaty, the additional agreement was drafted in private

between Japanese and US officials, and it suggests that the United States can introduce vessels with nuclear weapons into Japanese ports without consulting the Japanese government beforehand.⁵ Tokyo claims that the US must consult with Japan before using the bases, while Washington contends that obtaining Japan's permission is not required in all circumstances.⁶ Attempts to address the lack of transparency are limited; in 2009 the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that Japan and the United States continue to disagree if US ships with nuclear weapons need consultation to enter Japanese bases, and the agreement remains ambiguous.⁷ The lack of a consensus has yet to cause problems for Japan; however, further advancements in North Korea's nuclear program may prompt Tokyo to once again address the vagueness in the Security Treaty.

The addendum to the Security Treaty has become increasingly relevant for Japanese politicians as the DPRK continues to develop its nuclear program. January 2022 highlighted the possibility that the US would be inclined to bring ships with nuclear weapons into Japanese waters; in January alone the DPRK launched seven missiles, almost the same number of missiles that the DPRK launched for the entire year of 2021.⁸ Furthermore, entrapment is one of Japan's fears, and it dreads the possibility that the US would pursue its own military plans and Japan would be forced to take part in it.⁹ If the United States decides to use Japanese bases without permission in the future in response to further advancements in North Korea's nuclear program, Japan could be led to participate in a war it does not support.

North Korea's Reaction to the Security Treaty

Although the agreement does not specifically refer to North Korea, the DPRK perceives the pact as a threat, complicating the possibility of denuclearization. KCNA is aware that the agreement permits US military ships with nuclear weapons to enter Japanese waters if escalations were to arise in the Koreas, leading the KCNA to suggest that the secret agreement is a "criminal nuclear war document" that will threaten the Korean Peninsula, since the agreement makes Japan serve as "a sortie base for attack on the DPRK."¹⁰ KCNA blames the United States for the current nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula and asks for an annulment to the secret agreement in the Security Treaty posthaste.¹⁰ The ambiguous addendum will continue to dissuade North Korea from pursuing denuclearization in the future, as it believes the agreement permits Washington to instigate nuclear warfare on the Korean Peninsula.

Conclusion

Considering that both Japan and the DPRK are concerned about the lack of transparency in the secret agreement, it would be in Japan's best interest to begin talks with the United States to remove the vagueness in the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty. It is crucial that the United States be required to consult Tokyo before using Japanese bases in order to protect Japanese citizens from being involved in future wars led by the US. Ultimately, this one bilateral step between Japan and the United States will alleviate North Korea's fears that the U.S. is using Japan to one day attack the Korean Peninsula, and Japan and the United States can continue cooperating on the denuclearization of the DPRK.

Section 2: US-Japan Military History: A Multi-Faceted Alliance

Introduction

After the end of WWII, the cooperative relationship between the US and Japan has been an important cornerstone of both Japan's defense system and the maintenance of security interests in the Indo-Pacific region. With Japan's constitutional restrictions on military offensive-oriented policies, Tokyo has found the US-Japan alliance to be beneficial, especially in the height of the Cold War when mass conflict seemed imminent. As the threat of the Cold War lessened, the threat presented by North Korea's nuclear program only continued to grow, further solidifying the need for a joint relationship between Japan and the US. Due to the military restrictions placed on Japan, improving Japan's BMD systems have been prioritized by both nations as a response to North Korea's nuclear threats. North Korea's rapid advancements in its nuclear program are mounting concerns for Japanese national security issues. While Japan primarily relies on its Missile Defense (MD) system,¹¹ it also utilizes the US-Japan alliance, which plays an important role both in strengthening national security of Japan and maintaining stability, peace, and prosperity of Indo-Pacific region.¹²

US-Japan Military Relations after WWII

Following the devastation of WWII, Japan sought increased cooperation with the United States in Asian security and established the foundation for the current US-Japan security partnership. At the end of WWII, the United States resorted to using weapons of mass

destruction on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹³ This level of destruction changed the course of Japanese history and serves as a lasting reminder of the fatal power of nuclear weapons. To ensure that this would never again occur on Japanese soil,¹⁴ the Government of Japan adopted a new constitution that included Article 9, which prohibits the maintaining of sea, land, and air forces.¹⁵ However, this demilitarization became inadequate upon the escalation of the Cold War at the end of the 1940s and the commencement of the Korean War in 1950.¹ Japan's close proximity to the growing threat of communism in the form of the Soviet Union and North Korea¹⁶ prompted closer cooperation between the two nations.¹⁷ Consequently, the US and Japan signed the 1951 US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, which allowed for US military forces to be stationed in Japan, establishing a military alliance between both nations.¹⁸ In 1960, they revised some of the disagreements they had with the previous version of the treaty, emphasizing the US's duty toward Japan to take action to cope with mutual danger, and that Japan will provide the US access to military bases and related institutions in return.¹⁹ Amid unprecedented security threats, the revised version of the Security Treaty has continued as a base of the US-Japan security relationship today.²⁰

US-Japan Security Partnership in Respect to North Korea

Following the rapid acceleration of the North Korean nuclear program throughout the second half of the 20th century, the DPRK became an even more serious threat to the US and Japan, especially after the 1990s. In 1993, Japan was among the first countries to begin consulting with the US to implement BMD systems, after North Korea's test flight of a Nodong missile that same year.²¹ The discovery of North Korea's nuclear weapons program was quickly followed by the test of North Korea's Nodong missile that passed over Japan in 1994,¹⁷ proving that the DPRK was now capable of hitting Tokyo. Accordingly, President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto declared the "reaffirmation" of the US-Japan alliance in 1996 and announced the expanded defense cooperation, whose central element was joint work on missile defense in response to the new threat posed by North Korea.¹⁷ In 1998, Japan and the US began working together more intensely on missile defense after North Korea fired another missile over Japan.²² Collaborating on missile defense has ever since been a pillar of the US-Japan partnership amid Pyongyang's advancements in missile launches toward Japan.

Japan's development of BMD systems accelerated throughout the early 2000s, preparing Japan to intercept future missiles from the DPRK. While Japan's decision to proceed with the BMD project was also influenced by the later Taepodong launch of 1998, the Nodong missile has remained the most prominent threat to Japan, as it can cover the majority of Japanese territory and is potentially capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.^{21,23,24} Japan's defensive measures against North Korean and other nations' missile threats are limited by nuclear nonproliferation and collective self-defense agreements. However, these BMD systems allow Japan to protect its citizens from missile threats while alleviating other nations' concerns about Japan's remilitarization. By 2003, Japan decided to introduce the first BMD system in response to more North Korean Nodong tests and deployed the dual sea and land-based defense system in 2007.²⁵ Since the first deployment in 2007, the Japanese BMD system has comprised of a dual sea and land-based defense, beginning with the sea-based Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) Block IA missile defense system which is installed on eight Aegis destroyer ships, with advanced kinetic vehicle, or "hit-to-kill" technology, equipped to shoot down short-range, medium-range, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles while in the mid-course or terminal stage.²⁶ The second system is the PAC-3 (Patriot-Advanced Capabilities-3) system, capable of neutralizing cruise, aircraft, and ballistic missiles including chemical warheads within short and medium ranges.^{21,26} Operated by SDF forces, these two systems provide the two-point defense. While the SM-3 system is more important for Japan's front-line defense the PAC-3 system is capable of neutralizing more missiles, but with a limited engagement radius of 12 miles, it is considered the final line of defense of the BMD system.^{21,26} By the end of the mid 2000s, Japan appeared to be capable of successfully intercepting North Korea missiles and diminishing the threat from Pyongyang.

Contemporary Developments in BMD Systems

Japan consistently upgrades its BMD systems to keep pace with advancements in missile technology, especially as North Korea's missile program has continued to develop since the end of the 2010s (see section: The North Korean Threat). In 2017, the Japanese government intended to procure two Aegis Ashore systems, specifically in response to North Korea's forty missile launches and three nuclear tests during the past year (2016-2017).²⁷ However, by 2020, citing budget constraints, errors in construction, and concerns of protecting civilian safety, the Japanese

government rescinded the deployment in 2020 and opted to build two "Aegis system equipped" ships instead, which will be deployed after 2024.²⁷ Most recently, in response to North Korean claims of testing a HGV, Japan unveiled its new defense plans in 2020. HGVs can travel at speeds of Mach 5 and unlike missiles that follow a typical parabolic trajectory, HGVs can avoid radar detection by rapidly changing their flight path (Congressional Primer).²⁸ To combat this new threat, the Japanese government unveiled plans to implement two new defense systems: the scramjet engine powered Hypersonic Cruise Missile (HCM) and the "solid-fuel rocket engine" Hyper Velocity Gliding Projectile (HVGP).²⁹ Japan's notable progress in deterring North Korea with missile defense systems demonstrates that the US-Japan military alliance is valuable in expanding Japanese self-defense.

Limitations: The Logistics of Relying on the United States

The Japan-US security alliance is critical for any security and diplomacy measure in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in the case of North Korea.³⁰ Nevertheless, the joint BMD program leads Japan to be disproportionately reliant on US information and BMD technology, limiting independent mobilization of Japan's missile defense systems. For one, Japan receives information about potential launches through the US' Early Warning Satellites equipped with the Space-Based Infrared System (SBRIS) as Japan's ground-based radars, Aegis Destroyers Radar, and Airborne Early Warning can only detect and track a missile after its launch.³¹ Some North Korean missiles can reach Japan in 10 minutes and the inability to mobilize without US information limits SDF response time before a potential strike, endangering Japanese citizens.³¹ Additionally, the two BMD systems are coordinated through Japan's Aerospace Defense Ground Environment (JADGE), which is also dependent on US satellites for immediate missile information.³² With the incomplete logistics of communication between Japan and the United States regarding incoming missiles, the Japan-US military alliance can be further refined in the future.

Reaffirming the Value of the Japan-US Military Partnership

Although the Japan-US security alliance has limitations, the United States' military capabilities, including its nuclear arsenal, remain crucial in deterring North Korean aggression toward Japan. North Korea specifically targets American military bases stationed in Japan as a

show of force against both governments,³³ and previously threatened that US bases in Guam and Japan are “within the striking range of the DPRK’s precision strike means.”³⁴ Since Japan has established the Three Non-Nuclear Principles– no possession, production, or introduction of nuclear weapons– Japan relies on the US’s nuclear umbrella to deter potential aggressors.²² The United States’ and Japan’s efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula include regular joint military exercises in Japan, as well as diplomatic attempts to get North Korea to rejoin the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions as well as the IAEA safeguards.³⁵ While the DPRK may view these measures as Japan aligning with the US, Japan has few other options and relies heavily on the United States’ nuclear umbrella for protection and is responsible in upholding the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

Conclusion

Even though the US-Japan military partnership emerged over 70 years ago, it certainly remains important in maintaining security in the Asia-Pacific region today. The United States continues to cooperate with Japan in expanding Japanese ballistic missile defense systems, allowing Tokyo to successfully block future North Korean aggression. Besides BMD systems, the positive aspects of the US-Japan alliance are especially exemplified by the nuclear deterrence and the strike capabilities provided by the US, important elements for supplementing Japan's defense capabilities.³⁶ Even with a few limitations, US-Japan cooperation remains practical and advantageous for Tokyo when confronting the DPRK. As discussed in the following section, considering the different US presidential administrations’ policies, and diplomatic relations with North Korea, can influence the US-Japanese collaborative approach toward the DPRK in the future.

Section 3: Japan-US Diplomatic Relations: Shifts from Engagement to Pressure (Dominique, Chloe, Grace)

Introduction

Understanding the diplomatic history between the United States and Japan and their shared strategy when it comes to the DPRK, as well as the United States' policy on North Korea, are crucial elements for ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula and guaranteeing the safety of Japan and its citizens. As North Korea's nuclear weapons program continues to evolve, the risk for both Japan and the US has increased. Diplomacy –using both policies of pressure and engagement– has played a major role in both the United States' and Japan's efforts to keep North Korea at bay. The ultimate goal of the previous US administrations' policies has been denuclearization, but, for the most part, these approaches have not been successful. However, they can serve as lessons for Japan in future negotiations with North Korea. Biden's new approach to the DPRK, although restrained by North Korea's recent military tests in January 2022, will build off of the failures of previous administrations and seek progress in denuclearizing North Korea. Japan has the perfect opportunity to influence, consult and work with the US in order to ensure the safety of its people and work toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Lessons in Former US Presidential Administrations' Policies vis-à-vis North Korea

After the election of former US President George W. Bush in 2001, US policy vis-à-vis North Korea became inflexible and dissuaded North Korea from denuclearization. In the beginning stages of his presidency, George W. Bush entertained the idea of diplomacy, which could be seen through his efforts to create dialogue with China and North Korea and other prominent nations regarding the DPRK's nuclear program.³⁷ The Six-Party Talks in 2003 is a clear example of his efforts. However, he moved away from normalization efforts made by the Clinton administration and switched to a hard-line approach.³⁸ The Bush administration was not as willing to resolve problems with traditional diplomacy, and instead chose to deal with the North Korean nuclear threat in a harsh manner with little to no room for negotiating.³⁸ North Korea responded to this new policy by pulling away from negotiations with the US and also derailed ongoing reconciliation efforts with South Korea.³⁸ The diplomatic relations between the US and DPRK under the Bush administration serve as an example that North Korea does not respond well to what it perceives as “hostile” moves. If Japan desires to negotiate with North Korea, diplomacy, rather than presenting rigid demands, might prove to be a more effective method.

Although US policy regarding the DPRK changed following the election of Barack Obama in 2009, the Obama Administration's independent approach also yielded limited success. The Obama administration's approach was labeled "strategic patience" in which the US withheld serious diplomatic engagement with the DPRK until it changed its aggressive behavior and ceased its nuclear provocations.³⁹ The administration also placed too much emphasis on sanctions that did little to accomplish their objective.⁴⁰ However, the Obama administration, unlike the Bush administration, was able to see eye to eye with both Japan and South Korea regarding North Korea.³⁸ Ultimately though, the diplomatic relations with North Korea were plagued by hostile actions from the DPRK and sanctions from the US with an outspoken desire for the DPRK to return to the Six-Party Talks, all of which were unsuccessful in furthering the process of denuclearization.⁴⁰ Obama's efforts to improve diplomatic relations with North Korea and take steps toward denuclearization were not fruitful but do serve as an example that sanctions are not an effective way to get North Korea to negotiate.

Following the 2016 election of former US President Donald Trump, the United States again shifted policy on North Korea, but to no avail. In light of the ineffectiveness of strategic patience under the Obama administration, the Trump administration's "grand bargain" approach aimed for the US to hold out for a "go big or go home" agreement.³⁹ Under this framework, the US would remove all sanctions in exchange for the full dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.³⁹ Nevertheless, Trump's goal to end US sanctions on the DPRK and achieve the denuclearization of the DPRK ultimately failed, since this did not provide enough benefits for the DPRK to consider it as an option.⁴¹ Without a policy that was flexible for partial denuclearization, US policy during the Trump administration was ineffective in moving the DPRK closer to denuclearization.

Besides inflexibility, the Trump administration's policy also failed due to Trump's unpredictable shifts in policy. In 2017, at the beginning of Trump's term, the relationship between the two leaders was filled with insults and rising tensions. Talks of war began circulating as both sides made verbal and physical threats.⁴² The tension and seemingly unavoidable war that would ensue even led China and Russia to back new sanctions on Pyongyang.⁴² However, in 2018 Kim Jong-un shifted his attention to diplomacy by sending his sister, Kim Yo-jong, to the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in South Korea and inviting Donald Trump to meet him. Kim Jong-un became the first North Korean leader to meet a sitting US

president in the 2018 summit in Singapore.⁴² This summit also led to the creation of the Singapore Agreement, a vague agreement in which the US committed to providing security guarantees to the DPRK and Kim Jong-un reaffirmed his “firm and unwavering commitment” to denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula.⁴³ Trump's actions after the Singapore Summit demonstrated to his allies and to North Korea that any agreements made could be quickly overturned without warning. After the Singapore Summit, Trump canceled the US-ROK military exercises without consulting his generals or Seoul, calling these exercises “very provocative.”⁴⁴ Trump's undermining of his own officials by canceling military exercises and compromising the security of important allies impeded denuclearization and decreased the safety of the DPRK's neighbors.

Another aspect of Trump's policies on the DPRK that was unsuccessful was the lack of a specific plan on how North Korea would accomplish denuclearization. Overall, the Singapore Summit benefited the DPRK because the lack of pressure on Kim Jong-un allowed the DPRK to avoid denuclearization and amending its numerous human rights violations.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, diplomatic momentum ceased after the 2019 Hanoi summit was considered a failure when it abruptly ended with Trump walking out and no joint deal was signed.⁴⁵ This ultimately stalled the diplomatic progress toward denuclearization and practically ended proactive negotiations between the DPRK and the Trump administration.⁴⁵ The DPRK-US diplomatic relations under Trump can serve as an example for Japan that concrete steps must be outlined in order to make sure that North Korea follows through with its “unwavering commitment” to denuclearize.

US Policy on the DPRK under President Biden

The past administrations' approaches with North Korea demonstrate to Japan that pursuing a completely inflexible “hard-line” policy or a passive “strategic patience” policy will not prove to be successful. Instead, Biden's efforts will take pieces from multiple administrations' approaches in hopes of a peaceful outcome between the US and North Korea.³⁹ Given Biden's time served as Vice President and as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he is well-equipped to understand the issues with North Korea's nuclear program.⁴⁶ With the goal of denuclearization in mind, Biden plans to take a “phased approach that exchanges partial sanction relief for partial denuclearization until the program is fully dismantled.”⁴¹ There are no expectations that the DPRK will denuclearize all at once nor will the

DPRK be cut off from communications, but there will be a give and take between the two countries to be agreed upon as the situation unfolds and changes.⁴¹ Although the previous three administrations failed to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, Biden's pursuit of a multifaceted approach may yield success in the future.

While Biden's policies on North Korea may be successful, there are certain concerns with the current policy on the DPRK. The step-by-step approach has received criticisms based on the fact that North Korea could simply refuse to take further steps toward denuclearization once it has reaped the benefits from agreeing to the initial steps.⁴⁷ However, due to the most recent North Korean missile tests in January, there is a lot of pressure for Biden to produce measurable results, as previous administrations did not succeed at denuclearizing the DPRK.⁴¹ Despite the concern, the step-by-step approach could prove to be successful since attempting to convince the DPRK to completely abandon its nuclear weapons program in the near future would be futile and a change in policy is needed.

Unlike the former administration—which appeared to be on different pages with its allies, South Korea and Japan, when it came to dealing with North Korea—the Biden administration is making it a priority to increase collaboration with Japan and South Korea.³⁹ His policies aim to show a sort of 'stern deterrence' in which the US plans to strengthen its alliance with Japan and South Korea while expanding on past deterrence policies.⁴⁸ The Kishida and Moon administrations present healthy diplomatic relations with the United States, which can be strategically strengthened through their cooperation on the issue of the DPRK's nuclear program and open communication with the United States. Kim Jong-un's January missile tests prompted talks between Biden and Kishida on the issue, as well as on China's movements in the South China Sea, and discussions on the possibility of increased economic cooperation between Japan and the US.⁴⁹ In May of 2021, President Moon visited the White House to speak with President Biden about a variety of issues that affect both countries, including North Korea's nuclear program and the threat it poses.⁵⁰ They also celebrated 139 years of diplomatic relations, which demonstrated their commitment to open dialogue and joint-security interests on denuclearization.⁵⁰ These examples of consistent communication further illustrate the two nations commitment to allyship and the possibility of forming stronger connections between the ROK and Japan with the help of the US.

Challenges to Denuclearization under Biden

With the COVID-19 pandemic and escalating tensions with both China and now Russia, the Biden administration has not been able to make North Korea a diplomatic priority, prompting North Korea to launch more missiles. Although the Biden administration maintains that it has “no hostile intent” toward North Korea, the DPRK distrusts the US after the failed Hanoi Summit and the United States’ “hostile policy,” which refers to the joint US-ROK military drills and the presence of US troops on South Korean soil.⁵¹ Due to the Biden administration's supposed lack of interest in North Korea in 2021, North Korea has resorted to its preferred method of recapturing the United States’ attention: weapons. North Korea launched numerous ballistic and cruise missiles in the first month of 2022.⁸ Kim Jong-un has also threatened to lift the moratorium on long-range missile and nuclear tests since he no longer feels obliged to follow through with the commitment he made during Trump’s presidency.⁸ The DPRK’s missile launches affirm that Kim Jong-un wants the Biden administration to re-engage and restart diplomatic talks with North Korea.⁸

Although the United States remains committed to pursuing diplomacy with the DPRK, North Korea’s most recent aggressive actions, such as the launches of numerous missiles in January 2022, has led the administration to change its approach toward North Korea. After the missile launches in early 2022, the Biden administration imposed new sanctions over North Korea’s weapons program.⁵² The sanctions exposed several DPRK, Russian, and Chinese actors that helped fund the current nuclear program,⁵³ demonstrating that the Biden administration is consistently uncovering intelligence related to the nuclear program that will help to implement a phased approach. However, UN experts have made it clear that the DPRK is able to evade sanctions and import refined petroleum illicitly, as well as access international banking channels and carry out “malicious cyber activities.”⁵⁴ The DPRK also receives help from other nations making it even harder for the sanctions to be effective. This was apparent when sanctions were placed on China by the US during the Trump administration in an attempt to undermine North Korea’s economy through their largest trading partner.⁵⁵ However, sanctions such as these have been less effective than desired as North Korea remains economically isolated from the rest of the world. Therefore, it is unlikely these new sanctions will hinder North Korea’s continued efforts to advance its nuclear weapons program.

Conclusion

North Korea's nuclear program has led the US to come up with various policy and diplomatic attempts to minimize the threat the DPRK's nuclear weapons pose to both the US and its allies, such as Japan. Although these policies were not effective in the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, they serve as an example to Japan when it comes to future policy and diplomatic attempts. The previous policies, such as the Obama administration's strategic patience approach and Trump's go big or go home approach, have also influenced the Biden administration's policy toward the DPRK, by taking the strong aspects and disregarding the ineffective points of the previous policies. As the Biden administration's policy on North Korea continues to evolve, Japan can take part in the step-by-step approach, collaborate with the US and other important actors, participate in negotiations and play a role in implementing and enforcing the steps North Korea should take to denuclearize. As North Korea's economy was deeply damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems an appropriate time to extend the opportunity to provide aid in exchange for denuclearization to some extent. Aid will lead North Korea to be more dependent on nations other than China and allow them to be less economically isolated, ultimately making sanctions more effective in the future. Joint economic enterprises, developing peaceful nuclear energy capabilities and how to finance these efforts would also be beneficial for all nations involved. Although the ultimate goal is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, making North Korea less of a threat to the US, Japan and their other allies, and hopefully reaching a point where tensions reduce to the point where further economic and social interactions with North Korea can be discussed is a strong starting point to reach that goal.

Japan- Conclusive Recommendations

Policy recommendations for Japan should be based on the assumption that they will continue to rely on the United States militarily, except through Article 9 being Japan's opportunity to take a stand on its own. Yet, Japan must consider that they are unlikely to succeed in denuclearizing North Korea without the help of the US. However, their relationship needs to continue to be based in mutual trust, without destabilizing through the United States becoming overbearing. An example of this mutual respect could be shown if Japan asks and the US agrees

to consult Japan before sending ships with nuclear weapons into their waters. Taking this step would also allow for the DPRK to no longer have the same level of fear about US preparations to attack them, further demonstrating Japan's ability to normalize relations with the DPRK. Prime Minister Kishida needs to be on the same page as the Biden Administration since Japan is not seen as a big threat to North Korea, and the United States is North Korea's priority. It is important to note that efforts to clarify their status on the Security Treaty have been made in the past, but ensuring that this issue is resolved will be an important first step for Japan in continuing their alliance with the US.

Japan should support the US's budding step-by-step approach in order to build quantitative success toward denuclearization of the DPRK as both patient and more assertive strategies have been taken, but yielded limited successes. After strengthening mutual trust with the United States, Japan should attempt to influence the Biden administration's own planned approach to the DPRK. Given that the Biden administration is still in the midst of forming their own policy toward North Korea, this is the perfect time to help the US structure it for increased Japanese benefits. Japan should present their national interests as aligned to the Biden administration in order to demonstrate possible mutual benefits for both countries.

One specific way the structure of the Biden administration's policy approach can be successful to Japan is through partial sanctions relief and infrastructural/food aid for the DPRK in return for partial denuclearization. This piece of the US's step-by-step approach can help Japan normalize relations with the DPRK. It will also make the DPRK less reliant on China both economically and in terms of international relations. Coaxing North Korea out of their tight relationship with China will also allow future US and Japanese sanctions on the DPRK to be more effective, should they be necessary. Collaboration between Japan and the United States on this part of their DPRK strategy will further strengthen the ties between Tokyo and Washington.

It would make sense for Japan to somewhat abandon the idea of fully denuclearizing North Korea due to past history, instead of focusing on diplomacy. As previously mentioned, strengthening relations with the US and normalizing relations with the DPRK will allow Japan to feel more secure in their position as neighbors with North Korea, while simultaneously giving them more future options to deal with the DPRK. North Korea is also more likely to be open to normalizing relations with Japan given the state of their economy, allowing for more experimental Japanese policies. Those include diplomatic strategies, sanctions relief, and various

aid with the DPRK. Overall, Japan has opportunities in many different sectors, with the US as its ally, that will allow it to create new strategies in their nuclear situation with North Korea.

Executive Conclusion (Gauri, Grace, Treat, Joshua)

Since 1984, Japan has contended with North Korea's provocative missile launches and nuclear tests. Japan's major assets in comparison to North Korea are its strategic partnerships and diplomatic relationships, which, through coordinated economic policy, foreign relations policy, and national defense strategies, can coordinate to achieve, at least, partial North Korean denuclearization. First, Japan must implement a two-track policy model to prevent steps toward denuclearization of the DPRK from plateauing. Japan has opportunities to build on shared objectives with their allies while pursuing North Korean denuclearization, countering China and Russia's increasing powers, and strengthening its alliances with the US and the ROK. By coordinating a multilateral, multi-sphere policy approach, Japan can lead its allies to begin denuclearizing the Peninsula. North Korea is likely to face severe shortages of food, fuel, and necessary medical supplies as sanctions compound and prevent access to necessary materials, creating openings for Japan to implement its new strategic policies with allies and other regional actors.

The analysis in each chapter of this report and subsequent policy recommendations provide the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a general two-track framework of separating historical issues from the policy objective of denuclearization with all allies, but particularly South Korea, which will allow Japan to utilize economic policy, foreign policy, and national defense strategy to achieve partial denuclearization of the DPRK and eventually, on a separate track, the resolution of historical issues. Before Japan can negotiate denuclearization, Japan should implement a sequential policy model focused on improving relations to de-escalate tensions and negotiate denuclearization with North Korea as allies, as opposed to Japan demanding denuclearization. This two-track framework which separates historical issues and the objective of denuclearization provided the foundations for our recommendations and for improving relations between Japan and the DPRK, Japan and the ROK, as well as strengthening the trilateral alliance between Japan, the ROK, and the US. Ultimately, Japan must take action to lead the multi-sphere attempts to bring about partial North Korean denuclearization.

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