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North Korean and US Nuclear Threats: Discerning Signals from Noise 北朝鮮と米国による核の脅し—発信されるシグナルとノイズの区別

Peter Hayes, Roger Cavazos

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The signal to noise ratio on the Korean Peninsula is usually very low with a great deal of noise and only a few signals. Recently, the signals increased in amplitude and frequency, but so too has the noise. Interpreting the signals correctly is even more challenging when the parties are not talking to each other but rather, past each other.

North Korean threat rhetoric is often hard to decipher. For example: "If the US imperialists brandish nuclear weapons, we -- in complete contrast to former times -- will by means of diversified, precision nuclear strike in our own style turn not just Seoul, but even Washington, into a sea of fire."[1]

Thus wrote a North Korean official in the authoritative party newspaper *Rodong Simun* on March 6, 2013. This was the first time the North threatened to use nuclear weapons against cities, emulating the operational practices of the United States, China, and Russia. Perhaps that was the point.

This was followed shortly by a March 7 2013 declaration that North Korean forces could "carry out preemptive nuclear strikes on the strongholds of the aggressors."[2] It was another attempt to assert that the North is a nuclear weapons state on equal footing with the United States, China, and Russia – a status that can only be accorded via the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is therefore unattainable for North Korea.

Run-up to B52 and B2 Deployments

If we read the DPRK decisive system-wide policy pronouncements, and not just those statements that are public but tactical in nature and designed to twang nerves in Washington or Seoul we find a more deliberate positioning of the North Korean nuclear weapons strategy than the casual reader might assume from reading the headlines based on the latest threat statement from Pyongyang, or the latest riposte from Washington.

Until mid-March, DPRK foreign affairs officials asserted that as "an all-powerful treasured sword that defends the country's sovereignty and security," its nuclear weapons were not negotiable. At least, not "as long as the United States' nuclear threats and hostile policy exist."[3] As late as March 16, when this statement was broadcast, the North held open the possibility that it might abandon its nuclear weapons provided US nuclear threats and hostility are removed.

This posture shifted dramatically in the last week of March. On March 25, US B52 bombers flew over South Korea in military exercises that simulated nuclear bombing runs against North Korea.[4] Nuclear-capable B2 stealth bombers followed on March 28[5] and F22 stealth fighters on March 31 that could accompany B2 bombers in a nuclear strike mission on North Korea.[6]

B2s dropping inert munitions

Pentagon press secretary George Little reportedly said on March 19, referring to the participation of B52s in the joint exercises in Korea: ""The B-52 Stratofortress can perform a variety of missions including carrying precision-guided conventional or nuclear ordnance,"[7] These days, Pentagon officials usually refer to "extended deterrence" without referring to "nuclear extended deterrence." This and similar statements were neither routine nor accidental, and this was surely noted by the North Koreans.

There are very deep North Korean memories of airpower killing an estimated twenty percent of the populace and flattening most vertical structures during the Korean War. The nuclear-capable B-52 and F111 flights and the near war during Operation Paul Bunyan in 1976 struck a particularly resonant chord with the North Koreans. What one side intends as deterrence can easily be perceived as a provocation given an unsettled strategic environment. The B52s and B2s could also reduce China's influence to zero or even negative in Pyongyang given its inability to affect the US mobilization of countervailing nuclear threat against the North.

Beijing may also perceive that this unilateral move shows that the United States has given up on China to influence Pyongyang. From the Chinese perspective, sending the bombers embodies the "Pivot" in the worst possible way—especially given the likely association in Chinese minds of the B2 bombers over Korea with the mistaken stealth bombings of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 during the war in Kosovo.

On March 26, the North Korean foreign affairs ministry informed the UN Security Council that the United States was "fostering a vicious cycle of escalating tensions in order to come up with an international justification for provoking a nuclear war against us under the pretext of 'non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.'"

"The United States," it said, "is now fully mobilizing its "three nuclear strike means" in the preparations for a nuclear war of northward aggression"—referring to US bombers, land-based missiles, and submarine-based missiles.[8] Historically, North Korea signals it is paying attention when key U.S. capabilities move.[9]

On March 2, North Korea's supreme commander Kim Jong Un ordered North Korean forces, including artillery, rockets, and missiles, to "enter No 1 combat ready posture." He told his subordinates that the DPRK would "answer the US imperialists' nuclear blackmail with a merciless nuclear attack."[10]

It is unclear what "No 1 combat ready posture" consists of because that was the first time North Korea has announced that level of preparation. Again, North Korea likely felt threatened by unprecedented U.S. actions and responded in an unprecedented manner. If a nuclear armed state had gone onto highest alert during the Cold War, it would likely be read as a "super ready status" on Herman Kahn's classic nuclear Escalation Ladder.[11] U.S., Russian and Chinese security advisors and policymakers are at least familiar with the signaling, but North Korea's understanding of nuclear strategy is unclear although it insisted many times that it was ready to retaliate against an attack with nuclear weapons. However, it is important to note that North Korea did not actually move its *conventional* military forces in any observable ways at this time, according to US officials.[12]

Three days later, on March 31, Kim presided over a pre-announced Korean Worker's Party Central Committee Plenum that "set forth a new strategic line on carrying out economic construction and building nuclear armed forces simultaneously"[13] (see Attachment 1). To this end, the Party directed that the Korean Peoples' Army should make nuclear forces "pivotal" in all aspects of military strategy and deterrence.

For the senior-most leadership of the entire country to announce where and when they would assemble for the Central Committee plenum, including Kim Jong Un, indicates there were at least some in positions of power who did not believe a decapitation strike or pre-emptive attack was imminent. Moreover, a key indicator of U.S. intention to conduct a pre-emptive attack on North Korea based on prior experience—in particular, the August 1976 crisis—is the concurrent presence of US nuclear strike bombers appearing in Korean airspace and US aircraft carrier battle groups offshore. In the present standoff, there are no US aircraft carriers near Korea. To be sure, one is just beginning a transit back to its homeport on the U.S. Pacific Coast, but it is far enough away to be a non-factor. These facts are well known to North Korean intelligence. [14] Nonetheless, the threats continue to come from Pyongyang.

What to make of this nuclear invective and force posturing?

First, the US decision to reassure South Korea (and itself apparently) that it might consider a nuclear strike on North Korea if the North attacked the South by sending nuclear-capable aircraft and submarines to exercise in and around Korea was tailor-made to prompt Northern leaders to escalate. It provided a perfect, undeniable rationale for conservatives in Pyongyang opposed to dialogue with the United States to shoot down any residual notions that the North might enter into a dialogue about the future of its nuclear weapons.

Thus, the DPRK's atomic energy department announced[15] on April 2 that it would "readjust" and "restart" its uranium enrichment plant and plutonium-producing 5MW reactor at Nyongbyon (hereafter Yongbyon), the latter having been disabled in October 2007 as part of denuclearization talks—a slap in the face of not only the United States, but also China. Second, North Korea does not have the resources to sustain a very large military *and* a dynamic economy. Its economy is broken. It is sustained only by food and oil provided by China, and the manual labor of its civilian work force digging out minerals or preparing raw materials for export, mostly to China, and its long-suffering agriculture. The only way that Kim Jong Un can square this circle is to reduce the size of the conventional military and push demobilized soldiers into the civilian economy. North Korea lacks the huge surplus labor dedicated to agriculture that China possessed when it began its privatization reforms in the 1970s. To the extent that nuclear weapons allow Kim to substitute nuclear for conventional forces, the former may enable him to pursue military and economic goals simultaneously—at least in theory. It would also require creation of true market institutions—a policy shift that the North Korean state has always blocked. Indeed, every time North Korea increases military tensions on the Peninsula or responds to external security threats, the conversation shifts away from even discussing, let alone trying to implement, anything resembling market reform.

Third, the Party ended its March 31 directive by noting: "As a responsible nuclear weapons state, the DPRK will make positive efforts to prevent the nuclear proliferation, ensure peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world and realize the denuclearization of the world."

On April 1, the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly promulgated a law to consolidate the North's status as a "nuclear weapons state" that enshrined the Party's directive into domestic law, and laid down important fundamentals for future nuclear weapons doctrine[16] (Attachment 2). Many states have written policy into domestic law as a way of ensuring programmatic (budgeting) priority and establishing a bureaucracy to establish inertia and prevent change – this is a classic signal of political will to stick to a decision. It also has the effect of raising the cost to change.

Here, Kim signaled that the door is not yet closed totally on negotiations over his nuclear weapons program. By demonstrating his ability to challenge the United States with the most virulent possible threats, he has positioned himself to be North Korea's Richard Nixon to engage the United States as Nixon moved to engage China.

As a down payment on that option, he also indicated, albeit ambiguously, that the North does not intend to cross the United States by exporting nuclear weapons or materials.

The DPRK's nuclear strategy is not about deterrence or reassurance. It has plenty of conventional forces for deterrence or self-reassurance, even if they are relatively inferior and more so with every day that passes. Indeed, although it can still throw a sledgehammer at northern Seoul and inflict enormous damage on the ROK, a North Korean attack on the South would lead to the rapid demise of the Kim regime.[17]

Rather, these statements are opportunistic, and express its authentic strategy, which is extortionate, since North Korea presently has so few sources of legitimate rent seeking opportunities. The North's nuclear forces are intended to compel its adversaries to change their policies towards the DPRK, not to deter unprovoked external attack.

Also, charismatic leadership in a "partisan state" based on an ideology born in guerilla strategy requires an endless reaffirmation in the form of battles against external forces.[18] Although Kim Jong Un appears to be secure in his rule, at least on the surface, he needs to establish his own credentials separate from the revolutionary legacy of his grandfather and the military-first politics of his father. Confrontation with the United States and virulent nuclear threat is tailor-made for this renewal of charismatic leadership.

In the latest ambiguous posturing and messaging, the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC), which served as an oasis of exchange that continued even during previous fatal incidents, has been affected directly, at least in the short run. There is precedent for closing KIC, but it is rarely exercised. North Korea said that it allowed activities in Kaesong to continue in order to benefit the South Korean companies who were operating shops there. However, it argued that if South Korea continued to insult North Korea then North Korea would close the zone. North Korea's sudden interest in the fate of South Korean entrepreneurs indicates a willingness to consider alternative ways of earning foreign exchange—not all of which would be welcome to the international community.

Kaesong is an important symbol of what little Korean unity exists. It is also an important demilitarized area that presents an invasion corridor or "dagger aimed at the heart" of Pyongyang that traverses the DMZ. Threatening to shut down KIC casts a shadow of war over the entire ROK economy. When a rumor circulated for only a few hours that North Korea would close the zone, South Korea's stock market lost almost over a percentage and a half.[19] For all these reasons, threatening to shut down KIC is a perfect wedge to push Seoul to pressure Washington to capitulate to North Korean demands and indeed, on April 3, the DPRK blocked trucks from entering the KIC.[20]

We do not believe that North Korea intends to attack South Korea, pre-emptively or otherwise, in the current cycle of threat projection. However, miscalculation, accidents, or "wild cards" can all activate an unstoppable chain of events that lead

South Korean trucks blocked from entering Kaesong

to uncontrollable escalation. Who would have guessed, for example, that a former North Korean defector would steal a fishing vessel from the island of Yeonpyeong, and return to the North across the Northern Limit Line at this of all possible times?[21] If he had been discovered and shot at by either side while in transit in a "radar blind spot", then a firefight could well have ensued and started a kinetic escalatory spiral.

Talk is cheap, valuable, and entails no concessions. They do not entail up-front capital investments. Relative to war or even the costs of maintaining the current level of mutual threat, talking is efficient. In the current charged environment, the only way to obtain badly needed information about North Korean intentions and therefore, the real level of threat, is to talk to them.

In this regard, it is easy to find the bad news and reasons to have a continuing standoff and fight. It's harder to find the tiny signals that all is not lost. The latter are what matters. We believe we have discerned some of these signals and that these deserve to be the subject of discussions between North Korea and the United States as a matter of urgency.

Comprehensive Security Strategy: Avoiding the Reefs

The fact is that U.S. vital interests in the region mostly don't revolve around the DPRK. Therefore, the US should establish a framework that addresses primarily the nuclear insecurities of the five parties, not the DPRK, as the first priority.

The main game is to reduce the risk of Taiwan Strait-induced US or PRC nuclear first-use, and to moderate Sino-Japanese conflict and the potential for Japanese and ROK nuclear weapons. Only a nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ) can manage the cross-cutting nuclear insecurities of states in this region. A Northeast Asian NWFZ (NEA-NWFZ) requires:

- Termination of the state of war;
- Creation of a permanent council on security to monitor the agreement
- Mutual declaration of no hostile intent;
- Provisions of assistance for nuclear and other energy;
- Termination of sanctions on North Korea.[22]

However, as an ancillary benefit, a NWFZ does offer a way to defuse the current crisis and to bring North Korea back out of the cold while denuclearizing its military forces. How might it work?

A nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ) is a treaty, affirmed in the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, whereby states freely negotiate regional prohibitions on nuclear weapons.[23] Its main purposes are to strengthen peace and security, reinforce the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and contribute to nuclear disarmament.

A NEA-NWFZ would provide a stabilizing framework in which to manage and reduce the threat of nuclear war, eliminate nuclear threats to NNWSs in compliance with their NPT-IAEA obligations, and facilitate abolition of nuclear weapons. (It would apply to nuclear weapons only, not to other "WMD.")

It would also restrain and reverse the DPRK's nuclear-armament; build confidence that nuclear weapons will not be used either for political coercion or to fight wars; and reassure non-nuclear weapons states that they are secure, thereby deepening commitment to non-nuclear weapons-status. In a NEA-NWFZ, US Forces Korea and a reconstituted UN Command might become a pivotal[24] rather than a partisan deterrent, thereby creating an enduring geostrategic buffer between the two Koreas, and between China and Japan.[25]

Would the North Koreans find valuable a multilateral, legally binding guarantee that they won't be attacked with nuclear weapons? We don't know. They have consistently said it's one of their most important issues and as we have seen North Korea is keenly aware of movements in all parts of the strategic triad. Their perceptions may have shifted now that they have declared themselves "forever nuclear-armed", but their coverage of the subject remains detailed. Talking to them is the only way to find out.

If they say "no", then the United States should ignore them and proceed, because a regional NWFZ is in its interests anyway. The United States should not give veto power to the DPRK. This was most clearly demonstrated in a Global Arms Trade Treaty when North Korea, Syria and Iran objected to, but could not stop passage in the UN General Assembly.[26] Eventually, the DPRK will collapse into such a construct, or follow the ROK and others into it. Nuclear weapons cannot create an enduring, stable North Korea given the parlous state of its economy. The United States for its part should focus on shaping the regional environment, not bad behavior by itself or others.

If they say "yes", then the United States should make room in the NWFZ for them to enter, either at the outset, or over time. It is perfectly feasible for the United States to make a guarantee to NPT-Non-Nuclear Weapons States [NNWSs] in the region in a NWFZ, including the DPRK should it disarm and comply with its NPT-IAEA obligations, that it won't use nuclear weapons against the DPRK. The other Nuclear Weapons States [NWS] have the power to provide the same guarantees.

In this scheme, residual US nuclear extended deterrence will still exist for the ROK and Japan, only rhetoric and legal form will realign (at last) with the restructured US nuclear forces that no longer include any form of forward-deployed theater or tactical nuclear weapons. Until the NWFZ is fully in force, nuclear deterrence will continue to flow "around" the NWFZ between the NWSs, and between them and the DPRK while it is nuclear-armed.

Should a NWS or nuclear-armed state (DPRK) use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a NNWS, then it would face residual nuclear extended deterrence; and render moot NWS' guarantees to not use nuclear weapons in or against the Zone parties.

This approach is tough on the North Koreans, unlike the current US policy of strategic drift, which is soft on the North Koreans; and leaves the region including two U.S. treaty allies, and a major "non-NATO ally" (Taiwan), and the three largest economies in the world, crashing onto reefs rather than standing offshore, safe in deep water with plenty of room to maneuver.

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ATTACHMENT 1:

Report on Plenary Meeting of WPK Central Committee

Pyongyang, March 31 (KCNA) -- The historic March, 2013 plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) took place at the building of the WPK Central Committee, supreme staff of the Korean revolution, on Sunday.

First Secretary of the WPK Kim Jong Un guided the meeting.

Present at the meeting were members and alternate members of the WPK Central Committee and members of the Central Auditing Commission of the WPK.

Present there as observers were senior officials of ministries, national institutions, provincial, city and county committees of the WPK, complexes, major munitions factories and enterprises.

The participants paid silent tribute to President Kim Il Sung and leader Kim Jong Il.

Taken up for discussion at the meeting were the following agenda items "1. On tasks of our Party on bringing about a decisive turn in accomplishing revolutionary cause of Juche as required by the present situation and the developing revolution", "2. On personnel affairs issue to be submitted to the 7th Session of the 12th Supreme People's Assembly" and "3. On organizational matter".

Kim Jong Un made a report and concluding speech on the first agenda item.

The plenary meeting set forth a new strategic line on carrying out economic construction and building nuclear armed forces simultaneously under the prevailing situation and to meet the legitimate requirement of the developing revolution.

This line is a brilliant succession and development onto a new higher stage of the original line of simultaneously developing economy and national defence that was set forth and had been fully embodied by the great Generalissimos.

It was stressed at the meeting that the party's new line is not a temporary countermeasure for coping with the rapidly changing situation but a strategic line to be always held fast to, in the supreme interests of the Korean revolution.

The nuclear weapons of Songun (NOTE: this means "military first policy") Korea are not goods for getting U.S. dollars and they are neither a political bargaining chip nor a thing for economic dealings to be presented to the place of dialogue or be put on the table of negotiations aimed at forcing the DPRK to disarm itself.

The DPRK's nuclear armed forces represent the nation's life which can never be abandoned as long as the imperialists and nuclear threats exist on earth. They are a treasure of a reunified country which can never be traded with billions of dollars.

Only when the nuclear shield for self-defence is held fast, will it be possible to shatter the U.S. imperialists' ambition for annexing the Korean Peninsula by force and making the Korean people modern slaves, firmly defend our ideology, social system and all other socialist treasures won at the cost of blood and safeguard the nation's right to existence and its time-honored history and brilliant culture.

When the party's new line is thoroughly carried out, the DPRK will emerge as a great political, military and socialist economic power and a highly-civilized country which steers the era of independence.

The meeting set forth tasks for carrying out the new line and ways for doing so.

All the officials, party members and other people should wage bold offensive and all-people decisive battle with faith in sure victory and strong determination and thus make the flame of miracle and innovation sweep all fields of national economy.

The pilot fields of the national economy, the basic industrial fields should be drastically developed and production be increased to the maximum. Forces should be directed to agriculture and light industry, key fields in building an economic power to improve and put on a stable

basis the people's living standard at the earliest possible date. The self-reliant nuclear power industry should be developed and the work for developing light water reactor be dynamically promoted to actively contribute to easing the strain on the electricity problem of the country.

Spurs should be given to the development of space science and technology and more advanced satellites including communications satellites be developed and launched.

The country's economy should be shifted into knowledge-based economy and the foreign trade be made multilateral and diversified and investment be widely introduced.

The economic guidance shall be fundamentally improved as required by the new situation and Korean-style advantageous economic management methods be completed by embodying the Juche idea.

The DPRK's possession of nukes should be fixed by law and the nuclear armed forces should be expanded and beefed up qualitatively and quantitatively until the denuclearization of the world is realized.

The People's Army should perfect the war method and operation in the direction of raising the pivotal role of the nuclear armed forces in all aspects concerning the war deterrence and the war strategy, and the nuclear armed forces should always round off the combat posture.

As a responsible nuclear weapons state, the DPRK will make positive efforts to prevent the nuclear proliferation, ensure peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world and realize the denuclearization of the world.

Institutions in charge of security and safeguard, judicial and prosecution and people's security and the Korean People's Internal Security Forces should resolutely foil the vicious moves of the imperialist reactionaries and class enemies, devotedly defend the party, social system and people and surely guarantee the new line of the party with arms and by law.

The party and working people's organizations and power bodies should increase their militant function and role in every way in the struggle for implementing the party's line.

The meeting entrusted the Presidium of the SPA and the Cabinet with the matters of taking legal, administrative and technical measures for implementing the tasks.

At the meeting a decision on the first agenda item "On carrying out economic construction and building nuclear armed forces simultaneously and thus bringing earlier the final victory in the cause of building a thriving socialist nation" was adopted with unanimous approval.

The second agenda item, personal affairs issue to be submitted to the 7th Session of the 12th SPA, was discussed and decided at the meeting.

The meeting also dealt with an organizational matter, its third agenda item.

Members of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the WPK Central Committee, members and alternate members of the Political Bureau were recalled and new ones were elected to fill vacancies.

Pak Pong Ju was elected to fill a vacancy of a member of the Political Bureau of the WPK Central Committee.

Hyon Yong Chol, Kim Kyok Sik and Choe Pu Il were elected to fill vacancies of alternate members of the Political Bureau of the WPK Central Committee.

Members and alternate members of the WPK Central Committee were recalled and new ones were elected to fill vacancies.

Upon authorization of Kim Jong Un, Paek Kye Ryong was appointed as director of the Light Industrial Department of the WPK Central Committee and Yun U Chol as editor-in-chief of Rodong Sinmun, organ of the WPK Central Committee.

Members of the Central Auditing Commission of the WPK were also recalled and new ones were elected to fill vacancies.

ATTACHMENT 2:

Law on Consolidating Position of Nuclear Weapons State Adopted

Source

Pyongyang, April 1 (KCNA) -- A law on consolidating the position of nuclear weapons state for self-defence was adopted in the DPRK.

An ordinance of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK in this regard was promulgated on Monday.

The ordinance said as follows:

The DPRK is a full-fledged nuclear weapons state capable of beating back any aggressor troops at one strike, firmly defending the socialist system and providing a sure guarantee for the happy life of the people.

Having an independent and just nuclear force, the DPRK put an end to the distress-torn history in which it was subject to outside forces' aggression and interference and could emerge a socialist power of Juche which no one dares provoke.

The Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK decides to consolidate the position of the nuclear weapons state as follows:

1. The nuclear weapons of the DPRK are just means for defence as it was compelled to have access to them to cope with the ever-escalating hostile policy of the U.S. and nuclear threat.

2. They serve the purpose of deterring and repelling the aggression and attack of the enemy against the DPRK and dealing deadly retaliatory blows at the strongholds of aggression until the world is denuclearized.

3. The DPRK shall take practical steps to bolster up the nuclear deterrence and nuclear retaliatory strike power both in quality and quantity to cope with the gravity of the escalating danger of the hostile forces' aggression and attack.

4. The nuclear weapons of the DPRK can be used only by a final order of the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army to repel invasion or attack from a hostile nuclear weapons state and make retaliatory strikes.

Notes

[1] Anon, "The US and South Korean Warmongers Should Prepare for Ultimate Destruction, "Rodong Sinmun, March 6, 2013; truncated to KCNA, "KCNA Commentary Warns U.S., S. Korean Warmongers Not to Wage War Drills Targeting DPRK's Headquarters and Social

5. The DPRK shall neither use nukes against the non-nuclear states nor threaten them with those weapons unless they join a hostile nuclear weapons state in its invasion and attack on the DPRK.

6. The DPRK shall strictly observe the rules on safekeeping and management of nukes and ensuring the stability of nuclear tests.

7. The DPRK shall establish a mechanism and order for their safekeeping and management so that nukes and their technology, weapon-grade nuclear substance may not leak out illegally. 8. The DPRK shall cooperate in the international efforts for nuclear non-proliferation and safe management of nuclear substance on the principle of mutual respect and equality, depending on the improvement of relations with hostile nuclear weapons states.

9. The DPRK shall strive hard to defuse the danger of a nuclear war and finally build a world without nukes and fully support the international efforts for nuclear disarmament against nuclear arms race.

10. The related institutions shall take thorough practical steps for implementing this ordinance.

System," March 7, 2013.

[2] Statement by a Spokesperson for the DPRK Foreign Ministry" Pyongyang Unattributed Korean Central Broadcasting Station, March 7, 2013; another text states that "The right to make a preemptive nuclear attack is no monopoly of the U.S. imperialists." In KCNA, "U.S. Threat and Blackmail Can Never Work on DPRK: Rodong Sinmun," March 7, 2013.

[3] KCNA, "DPRK Has No Idea of Negotiating with U.S. Unless It Rolls back Its Hostile Policy towards It," March 16, 2013.

[4] T. Shanker, S.H. Choe, "U.S. Runs Practice Sortie In South Korea," New York Times, March 29, 2013, p. 4.

[5] W. Strobel , "U.S. B-2 Bombers Sent To Korea On Rare Mission: Diplomacy Not Destruction," Reuters, March 29, 2013.

[6] Reuters, "U.S. F-22 stealth jets join South Korea drills amid saber-rattling," March 31, 2013.

[7] Bill Gertz, 'U.S. B-52 bombers simulated raids over North Korea during military exercises,' Washington Times, March 19, 2013.

[8] KCNA, "DPRK Will Show Its Will for Counteraction with Military Action: KPA Supreme Command," March 26, 2013.

[9] For an account of the August 1976 crisis in which such forces were mobilized in a near-war, see P. Hayes, "Tactically Smart, Strategically Stupid: Simulated B52 Nuclear Bombings in Korea," *NAPSNet Policy Forum*, March 20, 2013.

[10] KCNA, "Kim Jong Un Convenes Operation Meeting, Finally Examines and Ratifies Plan for Firepower Strike," March 29, 2013.

[11] H. Kahn, *On Escalation*, *Metaphors and Scenarios,* Praeger, 1965, p. 39.

[12] Sangwon Yoon, "U.S. Sees No N. Korea Military Movement as Kim Names Premier," Bloomberg News, April 2, 2013 and Associated Press, "North Korea moves missile with 'considerable range' to east coast," April 4, 2013.

[13] KCNA, "Report on Plenary Meeting of WPK Central Committee," March 31, 2013.

[14] Until recently, the US Navy routinely announced the location of US aircraft battle groups. These days, it's still easy to find them, for example, on the weekly Stratfor update.

[15] KCNA, "DPRK to Adjust Uses of Existing Nuclear Facilities," April 2, 2013.

[16] KCNA, "Law on Consolidating Position of Nuclear Weapons State Adopted," April 1, 2013.

[17] Roger Cavazos , "Mind the Gap Between Rhetoric and Reality," NAPSNet Policy Forum, June 26, 2012.

[18] See Heonik Kwon and Byung-Ho Chung, *North Korea: Beyond Charismatic Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2012

[19] Kim Seyoon, Saeroni Shin, "Kospi drops most in 5 months, won falls on North Korea threats," Bloomberg, 4 April 2013.

[20] Associated Press, "North Korea blocks South's access to Kaesong factory park, Workers not being allowed to cross border into shared industrial complex that was enemies' only remaining bilateral initiative," *The Guardian,* April 3, 2013.

[21] Kim Eun-jung, "N. Korean defector in South crosses western sea border," Yonhap, April 4, 2013.

[22] See M. Halperin, "Promoting Security in Northeast Asia: A New Approach," NASPNet Policy Forum, October 30, 2012.

[23] United Nations, "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned," Annex 1, Report of the Disarmament Commission, General Assembly, 54th session, Supplement No. 42 (A/54/42), United Nations, New York, 1999, p. 7.

[24] Possibly involving states already allied with UNC under a new UNSC mandate. The 16 UNC member countries are Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, South Africa (rejoined in 2010), Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. "The UNC continues to maintain a rear headquarters in Japan. Unique to that presence is a status of forces agreement that allows the UNC Commander to use seven UNC-flagged bases in Japan for the transit of UNC aircraft, vessels, equipment, and forces upon notification to the government of Japan. During 2010, four naval vessels and four aircraft called on ports in Japan under the auspices of the UNC. Almost 1,000 military personnel participated in these visits. The multi-national nature of the UNC rear headquarters is reflected in its leadership. Last year for the first time, a senior officer from Australia assumed command of the headquarters, while the deputy is an officer from Turkey." In "Statement Of General Walter L. Sharp, Commander, United Nations Command; Commander, United States-Republic Of Korea Combined Forces Command; And Commander, United States Forces Korea Before The Senate Armed Services Committee," April 12, 2011.

[25] "Pivotal deterrence: This concept captures the possibility for nuclear weapons states to arbitrate between two adversarial states, and to deter them from attacking each other. This pivotal role does not imply impartiality, but it further complicates an already complex strategic situation and may supplant or be superimposed on old forms of strategic deterrence. Relevant contexts for the USA may be the Korean Peninsula, China–Japan relations, and Taiwan-China relations." P. Hayes, R. Tanter, "Beyond the Nuclear Umbrella: Re-thinking the Theory and Practice of Nuclear Extended Deterrence in East Asia and the Pacific," Pacific Focus, 26:1, April 2011, pp. 8-9. The concept was first explicated fully in Timothy W. Crawford, Pivotal Deterrence, New York: Cornell

University Press, 2003.

[26]United Nations, "Overwhelming majority of states in general assembly say "yes" to arms trade treaty," United Nations, New York, 2 April 2013.