

FOREIGN POLICY OF NORTH KOREA AFTER KIM JONG-UN CAME TO POWER

Tagoev Asliddin¹,

¹undergraduate master degree student

Ablai Khan KazUIR and WL, Almaty, Kazakhstan

e-mail: atagoev2@gmail.com

Abstract. In this article the author, relying on a neo-realist approach in international relations theory, explores North Korea's place in the system of political relations of the Asia-Pacific region. The author focuses on the analysis of North Korea's current foreign policy, as well as the international community's position on the issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. It is worth adding that the paper analyzes the influence of the US President Trump administration on Pyongyang's foreign policy moves. Among the main reasons for the change in DPRK foreign policy, the author highlights the sanctions pressure of the great powers on Pyongyang through the UN, Donald Trump's uncompromising position on the issue of North Korea's nuclear disarmament and the fact that, in general, Kim Jong-un has successfully ended the nuclear program, so there is no point in developing it further. The author then makes two assumptions, using a scenario forecasting method, about the further development of the negotiation process between Pyongyang and Washington, which began in 2018. The first prediction, which is based on the ideas of neo-realists Mirsheimer D. and Waltz K., suggests that North Korea will not give up nuclear weapons, as the complete denuclearization of the country threatens to undermine the stability of Kim Jong-un's regime. The second prediction explores the likelihood that Kim Jong-un will give up nuclear weapons and implement economic reforms similar to those in Vietnam in the 1980s to make the DPRK's economy part of the capitalist system.

Keywords: DPRK foreign policy, North Korea's nuclear missile program, denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, neo-realism in international relations, Asia-Pacific region, security dilemma, UN sanctions, DPRK economic performance, Cold War, Chinese diplomacy.

Introduction

With each passing year, the position of Asian states on the international stage is becoming more and more entrenched. As of 2016, three of the world's top 10 financial centers are already located in East and South-East Asia [1]. However, the dynamic development of the states in the region is taking place against the backdrop of the subversive foreign policy activities of the DPRK. The Juche regime, under extreme pressure from the world community, has been able to develop ballistic missiles with nuclear-capable launchers capable of reaching any part of the world in a few minutes. The international community is now watching with interest Kim Jong-un's new policy, whose meetings with the leaders of South Korea and the US have encouraged many to be optimistic and hopeful that the peninsula can be completely denuclearized. The relevance of this paper lies in the fact that due to the constantly changing situation in the region, there is a limited amount of work on the current actions of the DPRK on the international scene.

The purpose of this study is to analyze Pyongyang's current foreign policy vector and to predict what Pyongyang intends to do next on the international stage to denuclearize the peninsula.

In order to achieve this objective, the following tasks were identified:

1. Clarify the reasons behind the North Korean government's development of nuclear weapons;
2. To examine the possible reasons that prompted the DPRK's leadership to engage in dialogue with its "ideological opponents";
3. to assess the perspective of the intended political course of North Korea, which was taken by the party leadership in 2018.

The object of this study is the DPRK in the system of international relations. The subject of the paper is the economic, military and political aspects that characterize Pyongyang's foreign policy course.

Various research methods were used to write this paper. The method of systematic analysis allowed us to approach the subject of work in a comprehensive manner, taking into account various aspects, and to trace interconnections and interdependencies of the phenomena under study. Pyongyang's various foreign policy actions were analyzed using situational analysis. Possible scenarios of future behavior of North Korea on the world stage were compiled using scenario forecasting method.

The place of North Korea in world politics was explored through the lens of the neo-realist approach of international relations.

Foreign policy of North Korea to 2018

In December 2011, North Korea's top leader, Kim Jong-Il, died suddenly, leaving his youngest son Kim Jong-un as heir to the state. The world community, amid media reports that the new North Korean leader had studied in Europe for some time and had proved himself at a Swiss business school to be an open and pleasant young man, was hopeful that the DPRK would wind down its nuclear program [2].

However, upon assuming full power in the spring of 2012, the new leader's first televised address emphasized that North Korea would not abandon its ballistic missiles. At a parade commemorating the birthday of the country's founder, Kim Il-Sung, one such missile was featured. The founder's grandson said at the time that "superiority in military technology is no longer the exclusive monopoly of the imperialists. The new head of the republic accelerated the development of nuclear weapons, which seemed impossible in the shortest possible time and under sanctions, but today the DPRK is a new powerful nuclear power whose missiles can reach the United States.

Why is the DPRK leadership so eager to develop nuclear weapons? In general, the East Asian region is characterized by a system of "balance of power" that is somewhat reminiscent of the "European concert" established following the wars with Napoleon. International relations in the area are determined by the relations between the leading powers of the region. There is a simultaneous intertwining of interests and fierce competition between China, Japan, South

Korea, Russia and the United States. Although the United States is geographically distant, Washington is using its military presence in the Republic of Korea and Japan to dictate its will to the regional players. One of the constants of the region is the permanent presence of low-intensity conflicts, in which all the above-mentioned countries, except the US, are involved in one way or another. There are no collective security systems of states in the region. Moreover, unlike in other parts of the world, integration processes that would make economies so dependent on one another that war would be impossible have not taken place here until recently. The only economic and political platform for the countries of the region is the APEC forum, which is not even a permanent organization, but only a club of interested states. Participation in APEC does not require member economies to delegate some of their sovereignty, or to unconditionally implement decisions taken at APEC meetings. In such international realities, when international institutions are unable to resolve old contradictions in the region, to preserve its independence and autonomy Pyongyang has chosen a strategy of constantly strengthening its army's defensive capabilities. This includes the development of weapons of mass destruction. The country's leaders themselves have always stressed that ballistic missiles can only be used to defend national sovereignty.

The emergence of nuclear weapons in non-nuclear-weapon states was predicted in his writings by the American neo-realist proponent John Mearsheimer [4]. In his view, the proliferation of nuclear weapons has a twofold impact on the world order. Mearsheimer, being an adherent of the "offensive theory" of neo-realism, unlike most scientists, says that nuclear weapons are undeservedly considered to be an absolute evil and a threat to peace. The nuclear warhead, according to the scholar, is an element of stability which, together with bipolarity and military parity between the US and the USSR, brought lasting peace from 1945 to 1991. On the other hand, the emergence of nuclear weapons in a large number of states increases the fragility of peace, especially if the new countries do not agree to accept the principles set out in the 1958 Non-Proliferation Treaty [4].

Within the neo-realist theory of international relations, Kenneth Waltz has a similar interpretation of the impact of nuclear weapons on international security [5]. According to him, the structure of international relations is anarchic, therefore the introduction of the nuclear weapons element in the relations between the states decreases the willingness of the states to fight each other [5].

During the Cold War, the North Korean leadership may not have spent money on developing nuclear weapons, as Moscow was the guarantor of the country's security. However, based on the reasoning of political scientists, we can conclude that the collapse of the bipolar system of international relations, characterized by an increase in military operations of the great powers without UN Security Council sanction against "undesirable regimes" and generally growing anarchy, forced North Korea to begin developing its own nuclear weapons.

Reasons for the DPRK's change in foreign policy

Events in 2018, including Kim Jong-un's peace-loving statements, the performance of a unified sports team of DPRK and ROK athletes at the Pyeongchang Olympics, several meetings between the DPRK leader and South

Korean President Moon Jae-in and the legendary summit with US President Trump, many experts hope that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the stabilization of the region in general will bring hope. What were the main factors that could prompt the leader of one of the most militarized countries to start a dialogue with old enemies?

First of all, we believe the key factor that has prompted the DPRK leadership to soften its foreign policy rhetoric is external pressure. The great powers sought to prevent the emergence of another serious actor in the region. Regular nuclear weapon tests have led to a "security dilemma" in which North Korea's desire to secure itself was perceived as a challenge and threat by other regional players, which in turn compelled them to build up their own armed forces. Under conditions of international anarchy, such a race could continue indefinitely, hurting the budgets of Japan and South Korea, which have been increasing their military budgets in particular. For Washington, however, the DPRK's nuclear missile tests were a blow to the country's image as being unable to contain the threat posed by Pyongyang. Moreover, the nuclear tests, which were widely reported in the American media, worried American citizens, who began to think seriously about a possible nuclear war with the DPRK.

It is therefore only logical that the leading powers, whose national interests were primarily affected by the DPRK's nuclear tests, united at the UN. Thus, in 2017, the Security Council adopted five resolutions on the issue of Korean nuclear weapons, which significantly undermined Pyongyang's economic ability to pursue its chosen militaristic course [7]. Resolution S/RES/2371 (2017), adopted unanimously by all UN Security Council members, almost completely cut the DPRK off from the global economic system. For some, it was surprising that sanctions against the DPRK were supported by Beijing, Pyongyang's closest ally. The Chinese diplomatic "maneuver" suggests that despite close relations with a country, a state is always driven by selfish motives. By voting for sanctions against Pyongyang, China wanted, on the one hand, to warn the DPRK that its militarization had reached a dangerous level for Beijing. On the other hand, China demonstrated to new US President Trump the Chinese willingness to make concessions on issues related to the DPRK's nuclear program, while expecting Trump's aggressive rhetoric regarding US-China trade relations to soften. The PRC's diplomatic gesture, we believe, was meant to halt the US intention to impose economic restrictions on the Chinese economy.

The UN sanctions have not gone unnoticed by the North Korean economy. As seen in Korea Bank data, the DPRK's unprecedented GDP growth of 4% in 2016 was replaced by a drop of 4% in 2017 following the implementation of the UN restrictive measures [8]. The hardest hit was the mining industry, which lost 9 percentage points in 2017 [8]. The DPRK's foreign trade has also been severely affected.

Table 1 - Foreign trade of DPRK

The year	Trade balance
2015	- 603.9 million €
2016	- 786.0 million €

2017	1,841.2 million €
Source: (North Korea Trade balance. URL: https://countryeconomy.com/trade/balance/north-korea)	

Washington's rhetoric towards North Korea has been toughened in a serious way since Donald Trump came to power in the US. On 19 September 2017, President Trump, commenting on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, said in particular: "The US has a lot of patience, the US is strong, but if we are forced to defend ourselves or defend our allies, we will have no choice but to completely destroy North Korea" [9]. For the first time in a public speech, the US President said not about the destruction of the North Korean regime or military installations, but about a possible attack on the state as a whole. Somewhat later on November 30, the US official representative to the UN Security Council warned the DPRK leadership in a similarly bellicose manner, "if war breaks out, there is no doubt that the North Korean regime will be completely destroyed."

The new US presidential administration has not confined itself to belligerent rhetoric against Pyongyang. During his first official visit to Japan, Trump promised to sell the Japanese side F-35 fighter-bombers, SM-3 Block 2A interceptor missiles as well as ships to be equipped with the Aegis system [9]. In addition, American PAC-3 anti-missile systems have been deployed in the prefectures of Shimane and Hiroshima on the main Japanese island of Honshu and in the prefectures of Ehime and Kochi on the southwestern island of Shikoku.

Another factor that, in our opinion, has contributed to Pyongyang's adjustment of its foreign policy is the successful establishment of a nuclear shield over North Korea. The strategic objective was, according to Kim Jong-un himself, successfully achieved by 20 April 2018. On that day, Kim Il Sung's grandson made a speech at the 3rd Plenum of the 7th CC of the TPK, where it was announced that the strategic course of parallel economic construction and building of nuclear armed forces had been successfully implemented [10].

The above reasons for Pyongyang's revised foreign policy rhetoric in 2018 are in line with D. Mearsheimer's postulates. In particular, where he says that the primary goal of foreign policy activity is survival, which consists of two main components: the preservation of territorial integrity and the autonomy of the political regime. According to the author, by successfully testing a long-range ballistic missile, North Korea has achieved the primary goal at this stage in history: it has survived in the midst of hostile states [10].

Forecast. Based on the above, two possible scenarios for Pyongyang's foreign policy may be considered.

Scenario One. On the basis of Waltz and Mearsheimer's concepts it becomes clear that the complete renunciation of nuclear weapons, which the international community awaits, may be the end of the Juche regime as it functions today. First, North Korea's national sovereignty and independence would be threatened. North Korea would be forced to conduct its foreign policy while accommodating the interests of neighboring countries. Secondly, Kim Jong-un's possible abandonment of nuclear weapons would likely meet with opposition within North Korea itself in the form of the military. It is worth recalling that Pyongyang's military spending in

2017 amounted to 20% of GDP. On top of that, there were 1,106,000 military personnel in the country of some 24 million people in 2011, not counting reservists, of whom there are some 8 million in the DPRK [10]. Given the number of military personnel and the enormous power of the army top brass in the DPRK, a possible reduction in military spending due to the warming of relations between the DPRK and the US and the ROK may lead to increased dissatisfaction among the top army officials, which ultimately poses a direct threat to the Kim dynasty dictatorship.

For these reasons, North Korea will delay signing a comprehensive document with clear commitments to destroy the country's nuclear capabilities for as long as possible, limiting itself to ostentatious acts, such as the dismantlement of the Phunggyeri nuclear test site. In the author's view, North Korea will continue to insist on the full lifting of UN restrictive measures against the Juche regime, promising that if these demands are met, the DPRK will be ready to curtail its nuclear missile program. For its part, the current Trump administration in the US will demand that Pyongyang first destroy its nuclear missiles before the global community will allow sanctions to be lifted. The prolonged negotiations will continue until the end of Donald Trump's presidential term, with the hope that a more cautious politician will come to power in the US, with whom the terms of lifting sanctions on the Juche regime can be renegotiated. In the meantime, North Korea will continue to periodically remind us that Pyongyang possesses serious weapons. As the author might suggest, the demonstrative statements about the alleged "winding down" of the peace process and the resumption of nuclear warhead development will be made in order for US citizens, frightened by the resumption of Korean nuclear testing, to influence their government so that the Trump administration will speed up the process of negotiations with the DPRK.

One of Kenneth Waltz's theses also speaks in favors of this scenario: a country that has been able to build up its nuclear capabilities to the necessary level to ensure a reliable protection of state sovereignty will begin to develop other kinds of weapons [5]. It was just in November that North Korea tested "cutting-edge" weapons. Official North Korean media do not specify the weapons in question, but the test was attended by the country's leader, Kim Jong-un, which indicates the importance of the successful development of the tested weapons to the country's leadership [11].

North Korea's neighbors have little faith in disarmament. Japan, for example, has planned a record military budget for 2019. Tokyo has allocated ¥5.3 trillion (\$47 billion) for the defense sector, an increase of 2.1% over the previous annual military budget [11]. Japan plans to spend a portion of the military budget on acquiring two Aegis ground-based missile defense systems. In addition, Tokyo intends to buy the SM-3 Block IIA sea-based missile defense systems, which the Japanese military is developing together with its American partners.

South Korea's military, despite a series of meetings between Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un, has also requested a record budget for 2019. The government has agreed to allocate 46 trillion 700 billion won (more than 41 billion dollars) for the country's defense. Compared to the 2018 defense budget, South Korean

parliamentarians approved a budget that is as much as 8.2 per cent higher than last year's.

Second scenario. Under the second scenario, North Korea would indeed give up nuclear weapons in exchange for a complete lifting of sanctions by the international community. Indirect evidence of the likelihood of this scenario materializing is Kim Jong-un's statement disseminated by the media, allegedly made during the April 27, 2018 summit of the two Koreas, where the North Korean leader said the country was interested in carrying out reforms similar to the economic reforms in Vietnam in 1986 [12]. However, according to the author, such a scenario will only be possible if the talks on the country's denuclearization return in the Six-Party format (Russia, China, the US, Japan, the two Koreas). The Kim representative would require written promises from the US not to interfere in the internal affairs of the DPRK, to remove US bases from South Korea, and to stop regular joint military exercises between Seoul and Washington, which have always drawn the ire of North Korea. China could act as guarantor of the agreement, possibly Russia, if Moscow is willing to pay more attention to the problem than it does today [13].

This scenario seems, on the one hand, to be most beneficial for the great powers because, first, the club of "old" nuclear powers would prove its ability to contain nuclear proliferation and, second, the "security dilemma" we spoke of earlier would be resolved. On the other hand, if the threat of nuclear war disappears, then US allies may raise the question of the irrelevance of US forces on Japanese and South Korean territory. Furthermore, the DPRK's new position would make the country heavily dependent on the guarantors of the agreement, i.e. China and possibly Russia.

Conclusion

Taking into account both the domestic and international circumstances, it can be assumed that the current degree of the negotiation process will not lead to complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula any time soon. The author is inclined to believe that Pyongyang will indeed stop its nuclear tests, but will not give up its nuclear weapons. North Korea will continue to put its national interests above the interests of the world community in order to protect its sovereignty. Nuclear weapons are the only trump card that Pyongyang uses in its negotiations with South Korea, Japan and the US. Abandoning the nuclear umbrella will make it very difficult for Kim Jong-un to retain power. The Juche regime, which has become isolated from the international community because of its domestic and foreign policies, should, in the author's view, reduce its military activity to a minimum so that Pyongyang's neighbors have objective evidence that the DPRK is really ready to normalize relations with its neighbors. We have observed that the Trump administration is not ready to change its demands even if North Korea threatens to derail the negotiation process, so, as the author suggests, Pyongyang needs to change its tactics in the international arena.

REFERENCES

- [1] Top 20 global financial centres. Access mode: URL: <https://finance.rambler.ru/economics/33814939-top-20-mirovyhfinansovyh-tsentrov>. Accessed 26.01.2021.
- [2] Kim Jong-un studied in Switzerland longer than previously thought. Access mode: URL: <https://www.kp.ru/online/news/1136413/>. Accessed 22.02.2021
- [3] Kim Jong-un addressed the parade and showed off a new missile. Access mode: URL: <https://inosmi.ru/fareast/20120415/190561195.html> Accessed 28.01.2021.
- [4] Why we'll soon be pining for the Cold War. Access mode: URL: https://globalaffairs.ru/number/n_12061 Accessed 14.01.2021.
- [5] Waltz K.N. The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better. - London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981. – P.32.
- [6] Japanese Government Approves Record Defence Spending. Access mode: URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/5a3c91059a79471e1a13bb85>. Accessed 03.02.2021.
- [7] Official Web Site of the United Nations. Access mode: Accessed 26.01.2021.
URL: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ru/content/resolutions-adopted-security-council>
2017
- [8] Official website of the Bank of Korea. Economic Statistics System. Access mode: URL: http://ecos.bok.or.kr/flex/EasySearch_e.jsp. Accessed 18.01.2021.
- [9] Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" the DPRK if the US is threatened. Access mode: URL: <https://ria.ru/world/20170919/1505091865.html>. Accessed 22.01.2021.
- [10] Mearsheimer J.J. The tragedy of great power politics. - New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2001. - 592 p.
- [11] DPRK renounced nuclear tests. Access mode: URL: <https://ria.ru/20180421/1519121072.html>. Accessed 21.01.2021.
- [12] Галиев А.А., Сакенова А.М. Южная Корея: опыт социально-политической модернизации. (South Korea: the experience of socio-political modernization). // Известия КазУМОиМЯ им. Абылай хана. Серия «Международные Отношения и Регионоведение». – 2018. – №1 (19).
- [13] North Korea tested "cutting-edge weapons". Access mode: URL: <https://www.ridus.ru/news/287497>. Accessed 01.03.2021.

ВНЕШНЯЯ ПОЛИТИКА КНДР ПОСЛЕ ПРИХОДА К ВЛАСТИ КИМ ЧЕН ЫНА

Тагоев Аслиддин¹,

¹магистрант 2 курса специальности «Международные отношения»,
КазУМОиМЯ им. Абылай хана, Алматы, Казахстан
e-mail: atagoev2@gmail.com

Аннотация. В данной статье автор, опираясь на неореалистический подход в теории международных отношений, исследует место Северной Кореи в системе политических отношений Азиатско-Тихоокеанского региона. Автор делает акцент на анализе современной внешней политики Северной Кореи, а также позиции международного сообщества по вопросу денуклеаризации Корейского полуострова. Стоит добавить, что в статье анализируется влияние администрации президента США Трампа на внешнеполитические шаги Пхеньяна. Среди основных причин изменения внешней политики КНДР автор выделяет санкционное давление великих держав на Пхеньян через ООН, бескомпромиссную позицию Дональда Трампа по вопросу ядерного разоружения Северной Кореи, а также тот факт, что в целом Ким Чен Ын успешно завершил ядерную программу, поэтому нет смысла развивать ее дальше. Затем автор, используя метод

сценарного прогнозирования, делает два предположения о дальнейшем развитии переговорного процесса между Пхеньяном и Вашингтоном, начавшегося в 2018 году. Первый прогноз, основанный на идеях неореалистов Мирхеймера Д. и Вальса К., предполагает, что Северная Корея не откажется от ядерного оружия, так как полная денуклеаризация страны угрожает подорвать стабильность режима Ким Чен Ына. Второй прогноз исследует вероятность того, что Ким Чен Ын откажется от ядерного оружия и проведет экономические реформы, аналогичные тем, которые проводились во Вьетнаме в 1980-х годах, чтобы сделать экономику КНДР частью капиталистической системы.

Ключевые слова: Внешняя политика КНДР, ядерная ракетная программа КНДР, денуклеаризация Корейского полуострова, неореализм в международных отношениях, Азиатско-Тихоокеанский регион, дилемма безопасности, санкции ООН, экономические показатели КНДР, холодная война, китайская дипломатия.

КИМ ЧЕН ЫН БИЛІККЕ КЕЛГЕННЕН КЕЙІНГІ КХДР СЫРТҚЫ САЯСАТЫ

Тагоев Аслиддин¹,

¹Магистрант 2 курс мамандығы ӘБ,

ҚазХҚЖӘТУ Абылай хан, Алматы, Қазақстан

e-mail: atagoev2@gmail.com

Аннотация. Бұл мақалада автор халықаралық қатынастар теориясындағы неореалистік көзқарасқа сүйене отырып, Солтүстік Кореяның Азия-Тынық мұхиты аймағының саяси қатынастар жүйесіндегі орнын зерттейді. Автор Солтүстік Кореяның қазіргі сыртқы саясатын, сондай-ақ Корея түбегін ядролық қарусыздандыру мәселесі бойынша халықаралық қоғамдастықтың ұстанымын талдауға баса назар аударады. Айта кету керек, мақалада АҚШ президенті Трамп әкімшілігінің Пхеньянның сыртқы саяси қадамдарына әсері талданады. КХДР сыртқы саясатының өзгеруінің негізгі себептерінің бірі ретінде автор ұлы державалардың БҰҰ арқылы Пхеньянға санкциялық қысымын, Дональд Трамптың Солтүстік Кореяның ядролық қарусыздануы туралы ымырасыз ұстанымын, сондай-ақ тұтастай алғанда Ким Чен Ын ядролық бағдарламаны сәтті аяқтағанын атап көрсетеді, сондықтан оны одан әрі дамытудың қажеті жоқ. Содан кейін автор сценарийді болжау әдісін қолдана отырып, 2018 жылы басталған Пхеньян мен Вашингтон арасындағы келіссөздер процесінің одан әрі дамуы туралы екі болжам жасайды. Бірінші болжам Нео-реалистік идеяларға негізделген Мирхеймер Д. және Вальса К., Солтүстік Корея ядролық қарудан бас тартпайды деп болжайды, өйткені елдің толық ядролық қарусыздануы Ким Чен Ын режимінің тұрақтылығына нұқсан келтіреді. Екінші болжам Ким Чен Ынның ядролық қарудан бас тарту ықтималдығын зерттейді және 1980 жылдары Вьетнамда жүргізілген экономикалық реформаларды КХДР экономикасын капиталистік жүйенің бір бөлігіне айналдыру үшін жүргізеді.

Тірек сөздер: КХДР сыртқы саясаты, КХДР ядролық зымыран бағдарламасы, Корея түбегінің ядролық қарусыздануы, халықаралық қатынастардағы неореализм, Азия-Тынық мұхиты аймағы, қауіпсіздік дилеммасы, БҰҰ санкциялары, КХДР экономикалық көрсеткіштері, қырғи қабақ соғыс, Қытай дипломатиясы.

Статья поступила 18.03.2021