

# **YOUNG PROFESSIONAL PAPER SERIES**

Volume I • Spring 2014

(Part II: Andrew Kwon)

**Integrating and Retaining World-Class Scholars:  
The Key to Innovation in Korea • Jin Noh**

**On Understanding and Responding to the Hermit Kingdom:  
The Effect of Current U.S. Foreign Policy Formulation Modeling  
and the DPRK • Andrew Kwon**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Young Professionals Paper Series (YPPS) is an initiative launched under the Research Directorate of the Sejong Society of Washington, DC. The YPPS program was designed to generate original policy literature by young professionals and graduate students on issues relating to the Korean peninsula. The program provided participants with the unique opportunity to be mentored by established Korea policy experts throughout the research and writing process, and to ultimately be published in cooperation with the U.S.-Korea Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Sejong Society received an outstanding number of submissions after our initial call for papers, on topics ranging from nuclear security on the Korean peninsula to the effectiveness of humanitarian aid in North Korea. After a successful research exhibition by our two finalists, Jin Noh and Andrew Kwon, in December 2013, the Sejong Society and the U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS are pleased to announce the inaugural publication of the Young Professionals Paper Series.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Andrew Kwon** is a Master of International Security graduate of the University of Sydney Centre for International Security Studies (CISS). He received his Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Politics and International Relations, from the University of New South Wales. In 2013, Andrew was based in Washington D.C., completing a research internship at both the Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI) and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). Deeply interested in the role of the Asia-Pacific on international security, his writing on the subject (single and co-authored) has been published on *The Diplomat*, *The National Interest*, *Foreign Policy* and *CNN*.

# On Understanding and Responding to the Hermit Kingdom: The Effect of Current U.S. Foreign Policy Formulation Modeling and the DPRK

By Andrew Kwon

## Introduction

After the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994, there was a period of uncertainty over the future of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Based on the limited information available, it seemed almost a certainty to Western analysts that the regime was unsustainable—that it had neither the ability nor the resources to survive the country’s hardships at the time. Despite those predictions, it became clear by 1998 that the regime would not topple under Kim Il-Sung’s son and successor, Kim Jong-Il. In the lead-up to 2012, history repeated itself when observers, such as Andrei Lankov,<sup>1</sup> predicted the inevitable collapse of the DPRK regime after the death of Kim Jong-Il and the succession of his son, Kim Jong-Un. Unfortunately, none of these predictions has been realized. This begs the questions as to why predictions about the future of the DPRK regime have consistently been incorrect. If these cases demonstrate anything, it is a clear deficiency in information about the DPRK that would otherwise inform accurate considerations, and that in turn calls into question the quality of current policy mechanisms upon which assumptions are based.

This paper will seek to consider the theoretical foundation of U.S. foreign policy and its weaknesses and to consider how U.S. policy makers have sought to overcome those weaknesses in relation to the DPRK and their effects. It will include a series of conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

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<sup>1</sup> Lankov, Andrei. 2011. “North Korea’s Choice: Collapse or Reform: Why Demise Is the Most Likely Option.” *Foreign Affairs*, December 19, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136966/andrei-lankov/north-koreas-choice-collapse-or-reform>.

## The Theoretical Basis of U.S. Foreign Policy

Foreign policy, as defined by the Oxford dictionary,<sup>2</sup> is “a government’s strategy in dealing with other nations.” This definition is perfect in demonstrating the dichotomy of foreign policy; a simple purpose that masks considerable thought and complex process. The creation of foreign policy, a state’s strategy vis-à-vis another, means confronting a range of both internal and external challenges. The ability to successfully navigate these obstacles, either through negation or mitigation, means the difference between success and failure. As the sole superpower today, the United States arguably faces the most complex internal and external environment in the world. Its economy accounts for more than 20 percent of gross global GDP,<sup>3</sup> and its military is deployed or based in every region of the globe.<sup>4</sup> As such, the challenges to U.S. interests are broad and at times extremely convoluted. With scale and complexity come the risk of being overwhelmed, bringing the need to be ever more methodical and systematic to formulate policy that maximizes gain from effort.

Since its emergence in the mid-20th century,<sup>5</sup> the Rational Actor Model (RAM), the political science progeny of Rational Choice Theory, has emerged as the dominant theoretical model of foreign policy formulation.<sup>6</sup> At the core of the model is the assumption that the state is motivated by utility maximization and goal fulfillment, a sentiment that speaks volumes to the U.S. situation. Put more simply, the “magic bullet” appeal of a theoretical groundwork helps to logically determine and rank preferences based on the calculation of maximum value from effort. As Richard J. Norton noted about the U.S. government, “... many of the formal decision-making mechanisms in the federal government [were] designed to facilitate and support ... cost-benefits driven decision making.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Oxford University. 2013. *Oxford Dictionary: U.S. Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> IMF. 2013. “World Economic Outlook Database.” In *IMF World Economic and Financial Surveys*, October. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2013/02/pdf/text.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. 2012. *Base Structure Report: Fiscal Year 2012 Baseline*. <http://www.acq.osd.mil/ie/download/bsr/BSR2012Baseline.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Petracca, M. P. 1991. “The Rational Choice Approach to Politics: A Challenge to Democratic Theory,” *Review of Politics* 53 (2): 289.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Norton, R. L. 2010. “Understanding the Policy-Making Process: A Guide to Case Analysis.” In *Case Studies in Policy Making*, 12th ed., edited by H. Alvi and N. K. Gvosdev. Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College.

Simplified RAM Decision-making Process	
1	Identify an issue
2	Consider multiple strategies that will deal with the issue
3	Calculate cost-benefit ratios of each strategy
4	Rank the issue among others based on the cost-benefit ratio of a chosen strategy
5	Undertake strategy for issue based on allocated rank

Unsurprisingly, the dominance of the theory has not gone unquestioned. As a framework, RAM inherits several interdependent weaknesses from Rational Choice Theory. First among the weaknesses of RAM is “perfect information.” “Perfect information” assumes that when the state acts on an issue, it does so with full knowledge of the issue and implications of the act itself<sup>8</sup>—in effect, omniscience. A second major weakness is that a state is in possession of infinite cognitive capacity and has time to weigh all potential acts equally.<sup>9</sup> This leads to the third weakness, in which a state is unaffected by the bias and emotion in dictating preferences for actions, particularly in the face of limited capacity and time.<sup>10</sup> As a product of this system, U.S.-DPRK policy deals with the same weaknesses, and, as will be shown, is heavily affected as a result.

### U.S.-DPRK Policy: A Culmination of Structural Deficiencies

Since Barack Obama took the oath of office in 2009, U.S.-DPRK Policy has taken an unusual turn. After the collapse of the 2012 so-called Leap Day agreement, the administration embarked on “strategic patience,” a decision to do effectively nothing. When considered in the context of the ever-changing landscape of modern diplomacy, a moment—let alone an entire policy choice—based on ceding momentum is risky and ill-advised. What, then, makes the U.S. administration believe this approach is in the national interest? The answer lies in RAM and its aforementioned weaknesses.

#### *“Perfect information” and the DPRK*

When faced with the reality of constructing policy using insufficient information with a model that demands omniscience, the DPRK can seem to be the perfect antithesis to U.S. efforts. Intelligence on the DPRK is notoriously elusive. As was seen recently in the 2013 U.S. Intelligence Black Budget

<sup>8</sup> Mirman, L. J. 2008. “Perfect Information.” In *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, 2nd ed., edited by S. N. Durlauf and L. E. Blume. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>9</sup> Simon, H. A. 1957. *Models of Man: Social and Rational-Mathematical Essays on Rational Human Behavior in a Social Setting*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>10</sup> Calvert, R. L. 1985. “The Value of Biased Information: A Rational Choice Model of Political Advice,” *The Review of Politics* 47 (2): 530–55.



leaked by former contractor Edward Snowden,<sup>11</sup> intelligence gathering on the DPRK remains one of the most difficult exercises for the U.S. intelligence community. The chronic shortage of information that could be used to create effective policy has led to the practice of utilizing the expertise of former policy makers and Korea specialists to augment the limited information and help inform decision making.

Korea experts such as Victor Cha and Scott Snyder are at the forefront of U.S. analysis of the DPRK. Based on years of observations, interactions, and study, each U.S. expert undertakes considerable analysis to create “reasoned estimations” that serve to inform decision making in the absence of greater available information. Based on works produced by these experts (such as Snyder’s *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior*), it is clear that there is a preference for “trait-based approaches,” comparing past and present structures as well as behavioral patterns in an effort to find consistency.<sup>12</sup> Given the aforementioned circumstances, the dependence on subject matter experts, in the absence of more definitive information, is understandable. However, there are risks associated with this route.

Using cognitive models based on structural and behavioral consistency in the absence of baseline data is extremely risky. For one, cognitive models depend heavily on the assumption that there is structural consistency; in other words, that tests are being carried out on the same person in order to discern change.<sup>13</sup> While a realist can argue that this is applicable given that a state does not change in purely objective terms, there is insufficient data to prove this one way or another. In essence, we see the development of a troubling negative feedback loop; in the absence of qualitative and quantitative data, estimations take the fore. However, estimations draw their plausibility from a modicum of qualitative and quantitative data that have been established to be absent. This problem is made worse when considering works such as *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. Authors Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro show that not only has RAM been largely ineffective, but that even the most complete data modeling used to substitute for “perfect information” has traditionally been weak and that conclusions resulting from RAM are vulnerable to revision when data modeling is strengthened.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Inside the 2013 U.S. Intelligence Black Budget.” 2013. *Washington Post*, August 29, <http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/national/inside-the-2013-us-intelligence-black-budget/420/>.

<sup>12</sup> Cottam, M. L., B. Dietz-Uhler, E. Mastors, and T. Preston. 2010. *Introduction to Political Psychology*, 2nd ed. New York: Psychology Press.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Given the various weaknesses, key ethical questions arise for both the purveyors of opinion and its consumers. If the DPRK issue were to be treated as an unknown illness and experts were treated in the same vein as medical practitioners, are they adhering to a standard that allows them to provide not only the best possible opinion, but also the most responsible? In the American College of Physicians' *Ethics Manual* section on "Informed Decision Making and Consent": "Physicians cannot properly diagnose and treat conditions without full information about the patient's personal and family medical history, habits, ongoing treatments (medical and otherwise), and symptoms."<sup>15</sup> Given the veritable lack of a "patient's history" on the DPRK, the answer to the question has to be that experts are not adhering to a standard that leads to the best possible and most responsible opinions. The consumers of the process are no less safe from the ethical conundrum arising from compensating for a lack of "perfect information." Continued consumption of advice despite the flaws and lack of any structural change to rectify failings and weaknesses raises serious questions as to whether the issues are being treated seriously. In saying this, it could simply be that given the realities of U.S. foreign interests (as mentioned earlier), limited capacity and time may make it too difficult to do things differently. This leads to the other weaknesses related to RAM in relation to the DPRK.

*The compound effect of limited capacity and time as well as bias*

The weakness of "perfect information" in RAM policy formulation for the DPRK and the resulting substitute of expert dependence are plagued by key theoretical and ethical flaws. Unfortunately, these flaws are exacerbated by the other weaknesses inherent in the RAM model. RAM assumes that as a prerequisite, decision making occurs within a space where capacity and time are unlimited and where all decisions can be weighed equally.<sup>16</sup> However, the environment in which national security and foreign policy is formulated is exactly the opposite: it is beset by both stretched capacity and time. Again, as Richard J. Norton noted, "There is a widespread tendency to believe that [national security and foreign policy] decisions ... are derived from a coolly analytical process. ... But scholars who have studied national security [and foreign policy] decision making have learned that such calculated decisions are more the ideal than reality. ..."<sup>17</sup> Given the reality where the United States as the primary consumer of DPRK-related information is unable to weigh all decisions equally in the interest of time and capacity, it depends heavily on the recommendations of its expert pool. This leads to the effects of bias, another inherent weakness in RAM.

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<sup>15</sup> Snyder, L. 2012. "Informed Decision Making and Consent." In *Ethics Manual*, 6th ed., edited by L. Snyder. Philadelphia: American College of Physicians.

<sup>16</sup> Simon, *Models of Man*.

<sup>17</sup> Norton, "Understanding the Policy-Making Process."

Two major factors make bias, an inherently anti-rational factor, manifesting itself in relation to the DPRK. First, the very troubling and sometimes unstable nature of the DPRK regime dissuades divergent thinking and recommendation. While it has proven to create consensus in the expert community, it has also become a source for collective bias, or “groupthink.”<sup>18</sup> Second, the veritably small size of the Korea expert community magnifies similar views, which reinforces groupthink.<sup>19</sup> These circumstances pose several important issues in light of the weaknesses of “perfect information” and limited capacity and time. For one, the weakness of expert substitution to compensate for a lack of “perfect information” is compounded by the addition of bias. It skews the rational nature of the model and adds further questions to the veracity of any resulting conclusion. In regard to limited capacity and time, given the outlined dependence on experts, the small size of the community, coupled by groupthink, means there is an added risk of disregarding alternative options.

*Case study: “Strategic patience” and the DPRK under Kim Jong-Un*

If any recent situation exemplifies the weaknesses of RAM in relation to the DPRK, it is the current state of “strategic patience.” The Obama administration’s DPRK policy of “strategic patience” is born from a perception that the DPRK has not fundamentally changed, despite the recent leadership transition. Unsurprisingly, key events that led to this point can be traced back to RAM. First, the absence of “perfect information” and dependence on an incomplete substitute led to a failure to reach truly rational choice and contributed to the collapse of engagement. Second, the lack of capacity to acquire new information and time sensitivity reinforced the aforementioned dependence on information substitution to provide a justification for engagement. Third, following the failure of engagement, reversed consensus in the expert community based on a single failure to engage provided sufficient proof of continuity in the DPRK and warranted a “business as usual” approach.<sup>20</sup>

In late 2011, the Obama administration engaged diplomatically with the DPRK, resulting in the Leap Day agreement. Despite initial (but cautious) optimism, the agreement quickly fell apart due to a factor that had not been completely accounted for, Kim Jong-Un. Though one can only speculate as to what calculus drove Kim Jong-Un to abandon the agreement, the event nevertheless reconfirmed something about the U.S. side: the inability to make rational decisions on the DPRK based on using an

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<sup>18</sup> Kang, D. C. 2010. “‘China Rising’ and Its Implications for North Korea’s China Policy.” In *New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy*, edited by K. A. Park. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>19</sup> Hart, P. 1994. *Groupthink in Government: A Study of Small Groups and Policy Failure*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Cha, V. 2012. “Kim Jong Un Is No Reformer.” *Foreign Policy*, August 21, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/21/kim\\_jong\\_un\\_is\\_no\\_reformer](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/21/kim_jong_un_is_no_reformer).

incomplete substitute for “perfect information” in an equally unrealistic policy model. If there is any indication to the truth of this statement, it was perhaps the speed at which the agreement collapsed. This hints at how unprepared the U.S. side was to the possibility of Kim Jong-Un’s decision to scuttle the agreement and therefore, the incomplete nature of the recommendations at the time. This brings us to the lack of capacity on the U.S. side.

When one considers the surprise of many in the administration at the DPRK’s satellite launch in April 2012,<sup>21</sup> the lack of information also highlights how a lack of capacity and time sensitivity stress the coherence of RAM as well. Though it is unclear as to how much an impact expert speculation on Kim Jong-Un’s reformists credentials<sup>22</sup> had on engagement efforts and hopes, the aforementioned surprise and disappointment at least lends credence to the absence of more credible internally circulated information to the contrary. In turn, the need to act quickly on the issue also would have meant a reduced time frame to vet the Kim Jong-Un element more thoroughly, providing additional vulnerability to the agreement’s collapse.

The collapse of the agreement, a single event, demonstrated groupthink among the Korea policy community. Much like how initial cautious optimism based on very little information mobilized engagement beforehand, a single failure was sufficient in shunting any alternative line of thinking and was indicative of continuity under Kim Jong-Un.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, a single event does not constitute a trend but is nevertheless important in proving the influence of groupthink on the issue.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

As it stands, U.S.-DPRK policy formulation requires a theoretical and operational overhaul. Without both, it will be extremely difficult to devise a coherent and comprehensive strategic approach. Creating policy based on RAM, a flawed theoretical system, means that the underlying basis of policy is tenuous. Though an effort has been made to compensate for weaknesses like a lack of “perfect information,” the weaknesses of the substitutes compound other highlighted issues, such as lack of capacity and time as well as bias, that undermine the credibility of the RAM system.

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<sup>21</sup> Quinn, A. 2012. “Insight: Obama’s North Korean leap of faith falls short.” *Reuters*, March 30, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/30/us-korea-north-usa-leap-idUSBRE82T06T20120330>.

<sup>22</sup> Rozman, G. 2011. “Kim Jong-Un, Reformer? The Promise and Peril of North Korea’s Succession Crisis.” *New Republic*, December 20, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/world/98714/north-korea-kim-jong-il-succession>.

<sup>23</sup> Cha, “Kim Jong Un Is No Reformer.”

*Toward a new theoretical approach*

RAM is a fundamentally flawed framework upon which to formulate policy. There are too many unrealistic assumptions within its structure that call into question the credibility of resulting conclusions. As shown by the points made in this article, it is clear that policy formulation on the DPRK alone perhaps highlights that an attempt to conform the issue to the framework fundamentally undermines its logical call and in fact introduces elements that exacerbate the structure's weaknesses. Rather than bend the issue to the formula, it is thus recommended that a different mindset be adopted in order to pave the way for new strategies. An example to consider is a shift away from RAM to a Bounded Rationality Model.

An alternative theory to Rational Choice Theory proposed by Herbert A. Simon,<sup>24</sup> Bounded Rationality can help to address the DPRK issue by removing the unrealistic demands of omniscience, unlimited capacity, and infinite time. A major detriment of the RAM model, particularly in the DPRK case, is the considerable amount of time spent on devising workarounds to the rules of the model that stress its coherence and undermine its logical core. Bounded Rationalism does not preclude the capacity to make rational policy decisions, but rather emphasizes the attainment of grounded rational choices by acknowledging the existence of limits that impede ideal decisions. This model can prove helpful to the DPRK issue in two separate ways. First, by removing excess demands, it will help reorient thinking toward policy that is achievable. Second, by providing a clear understanding of limits, it can prove helpful in stimulating policy innovation. By coming to terms with how limited possible choices are based on limited tools, U.S. policy makers can utilize the model as a means to identify investment opportunities that overcome those limits and bring them closer to attaining the ideal.

Other theoretical concepts to consider that can help focus strategic thinking on the DPRK could be of consideration in the vein of Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin's "decision-making approach"<sup>25</sup> and "context effect"<sup>26</sup> from cognitive psychology. The purpose of considering both concepts lies in addressing the lack of understanding on the human element of policy decisions. If future strategy seeks to be effective, experts should look to understand the DPRK today based on how the individual, as an agent

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<sup>24</sup> Simon, *Models of Man*.

<sup>25</sup> Snyder, R. C., H. W. Bruck, and B. Sapin. 2002. *Foreign Policy Decision Making (Revisited)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>26</sup> Rohrbaugh, C. C., and J. Shanteau. 1999. "Context, Process and Experience: Research on Applied Judgment and Decision Making." In *Handbook of Applied Cognition*, edited by F. Durso, R. S. Nickerson, and M. T. H. Chi. New York: Wiley.

of the state and its interests, will respond to stimuli. This leads to the importance of “context effect,” where environmental factors determine how as individuals we react to issues differently. This is particularly important given it will help to determine, for example, if Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un react to issues in a similar way and whether the current approach requires a shift in the event they do not.

#### *A new operational baseline for U.S.-DPRK Policy*

Restarting a cultural shift is only part of the process. There is a fundamental need to ensure that the quality of the operational baseline is improved so that when a new strategic approach to the DPRK is formed, a strong basis is ready to be built on it. In light of the clear weakness posed by reduced information and a small expert pool to the sustainability of U.S.-DPRK policy making, the major operational recommendations of this paper is a two-pronged approach of investing in enhanced, full-spectrum intelligence and information gathering, as well as personnel capacity building both within and outside of the U.S. government, to build a cadre of capable DPRK policy constructors and implementers.

#### *Investing in new intelligence acquisition arrangements*

Creating an enhanced intelligence network projected toward the DPRK that can produce more and remain credible is a potentially tough and costly endeavor. However, in order to engage the DPRK issue effectively, it is a necessity. Despite possessing some of the world’s most respected and powerful intelligence agencies, the DPRK has been described as an “intelligence black hole.”<sup>27</sup> A potential way in which the United States can address its intelligence deficit is to undertake a unilateral effort to invest in more assets and equipment to bolster full-spectrum intelligence capabilities (e.g., human, signals, and geospatial). However, this option poses the considerable downside of requiring no small amount of time and resources.

An alternative strategy is using existing U.S. alliances, particularly with the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan, to form a unified intelligence-sharing and cooperation network based partly on the UKUSA Agreement. No doubt, this option is controversial, but given that the United States must operate in a resource-constrained environment, it is a viable option for two reasons. First, the United States already maintains extensive intelligence-sharing agreements with both partners

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<sup>27</sup> Chinoy, M. 2013. “Why North Korean intelligence is so hard to read.” *CNN*, April 12, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/12/world/asia/north-korea-nuclear-capabilities/>.

bilaterally,<sup>28</sup> so the structures and experience for interoperability and cooperation already exists. Second, all three states have a common interest in confronting the DPRK as it poses a mutual threat. Nevertheless, there are considerable obstacles. For one, ROK-Japan relations are at their lowest point in decades. In fact, problems in the relationship have proven great enough, at least for the ROK, to derail a major intelligence-sharing agreement in 2012, a General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).<sup>29</sup> However, given the constraints to resources, as well as the clear advantage of coordinating the efforts of three vested states versus the unilateral efforts of one, it would be wise for U.S. policy makers to push the ROK and Japan toward concluding GSOMIA and to begin consultations for a trilateral intelligence agreement aimed at plugging the information shortfall on the DPRK.

### *Creating a sustainable expert pool*

A disadvantage the United States faces vis-à-vis the DPRK is its retention of upper-level officials with experience related to the DPRK and Korea. Unlike the United States, the DPRK has maintained the same upper-level officials involved in U.S. relations for the better part of 20 to 30 years. Retention issues pose a series of unique problems to the U.S. side. The departure of an upper-level official and expert on the DPRK often leaves an administration without a devoted specialist because a lack of qualified and dedicated personnel leads to dangerously long vacancy periods. Though it is uncertain as to how many Korea specialists work in the U.S. public service at any one time, it will likely be only a handful. This creates a clear disconnect between capacity and lift when a crisis erupts or when an effort of dialogue is undertaken, which in turn leads to risk in quality that could cause a failure to respond effectively.

Due to fundamental differences in the U.S. public service culture, such as the impacts of the political cycle as well as a matter of practice, it is impossible to keep the same people in the same position for as long as 20 to 30 years. However, given the link between the gap at both the upper and lower echelon of government in relation to dedicated DPRK/Korea specialists, consideration should be made into investing strategies that can cultivate personnel capacity both inside and outside of the U.S. government. In addition to the clear benefits of encouraging personnel growth within government

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. 2013. *Joint Communique: The 45th ROK-U.S. Security Consultative Meeting*, October 2, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/Joint%20Communique.%2045th%20ROK-U.S.%20Security%20Consultative%20Meeting.pdf>. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation*, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/guideline2.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Yonhap. 2012. "S. Korea postpones signing controversial military pact with Japan." *Yonhap*, June 29, <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/06/29/57/0301000000AEN20120629008900315F.html>.

to create a more balanced distribution of Korea specialists, investment in personnel growth outside the U.S. government could prevent clustering on DPRK policy thinking and could dilute the impact of groupthink. Potential strategies to consider include “mini-Federally Funded Research and Development Centers” models within existing policy institutes or even greater project funding opportunities aimed at realizing a vibrant and innovative policy environment to tackle the issue.

The creation of a larger and sustainable DPRK/Korea expert cadre is part of the answer to creating and shaping more effective DPRK policy. Though having more facts is definitely important, having an environment that is conducive to drawing in the best and brightest that can effectively utilize those facts, both on tactical and strategic levels within the U.S. policy community, is just as important.

Ultimately, decisions must be made in the near future concerning the DPRK. Current assumptions that have underpinned U.S. policy are not only flawed given their being based on so few facts, but also increasingly flawed given the theoretical weaknesses. Understandably, some of the proposed options will be difficult to consider given the circumstances and the potential costs alone. However, because there is much greater risk and cost from not responding, the aforementioned recommendations should be considered seriously. In conclusion, though the cost of taking an action poses severe challenges and seems counterintuitive in the short term (due to the lack of immediate gains versus the considerable expenditure of political capital), a lack of action is in fact more costly due to the loss of an oft-overlooked, nonrenewable resource: time.





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