

Chapter 4

North Korea

“This is an interactive game. Our relationship [with North Korea] is affected by what we do, which shouldn’t be surprising.”¹

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I performed a quantitative test of my hypotheses on the two North Korean crises, from 1993-1995 and 2002-2003. Both crises exhibited feedback; US actions became amplified through North Korean reactions and US counter-reactions. While in the latter half of the first crisis, a combination of material threats with social benefits led to positive responses on North Korea’s part, both of these relationships were reversed by the second crisis; both material threats and social benefits were rejected by North Korea. In this chapter, I give an overview of the background to these two crises, then chronicle each of these crises in order to explore both the relationships identified by my quantitative analysis and investigate the remainder of my hypotheses.

The US’s changing strategy towards North Korea over three administrations and the start-and-stop development of North Korea’s nuclear program combine to provide significant within-case variation on both my study variable (US strategies) and dependent variables (North Korean nuclear actions). North Korea has probably come the closest in the

¹Gallucci 2004.

post-cold war period to reaching or exceeding the nuclear threshold among the four clandestine nuclear countries (North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya), has the most advanced missile program, and has been both a major focus of US counterproliferation efforts and a main justification for a national missile defense program by every US administration since the end of the Cold War.

Although the North Korean nuclear question is far from resolved, both North Korea's nuclear status and relations with United States have more than once reached a metastable state such that outcomes of two particular periods (12 Mar 1993–13 Jun 1995 and 4 Oct 2002–12 May 2003) are relatively well-defined. The first period begins with North Korea's announcement that it would withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (hereafter NPT), and ends with North Korea's agreement on the supplier of the light-water reactors under the Agreed Framework, while the second period begins with the US accusation of a clandestine highly enriched uranium (HEU) program and ends with North Korea's "nullification" of its only remaining nuclear agreement with South Korea. Additionally, during these periods interaction between North Korea and the US has been at its most frequent and tightly coupled; consequently, I focus my analysis on these two periods, since connections between US strategies and North Korean nuclear actions are most apparent during these crises.

I argue that while evidence can be found for all three types of incentives (military, economic, and social), that military and economic sanctions only worked under very limited conditions (and fail badly under other conditions), while social incentives were useful throughout North Korea's nuclear program. The difference between North Korea's reactions in the first and second crises was a result of primarily two factors: a fundamental change in US–DPRK social relations, and a lack of well-defined 'red lines' or the international consensus needed to make material sanctions effective. Domestic politics seemed to play a limited role, at least during crises. Positive feedback loops, identified as a potentially important factor by my quantitative analysis, did occur in both crises, significantly amplifying the effects of individual actions at the height of crises. Finally, although short-term interactions did drive individual North Korean actions, only potential or actual structural changes in social position caused significant shifts in overall North Korean nuclear status.

In the following sections, I first give a brief historical overview of North Korea's motivations for and technical progress in its nuclear program as background. I then outline a timeline of key nuclear actions taken by the DPRK from the two North Korean nuclear crises and explain how these actions affected North Korea's overall nuclear status. Next, I examine each crisis in detail, breaking down the crises into individual nuclear actions. I chronicle the events leading up to each nuclear action, then analyze how these histories support different hypotheses. In each crisis, I review the administration's policy towards North Korea up until the crisis itself as background and to determine the effects of past administration policy on crisis dynamics.

4.2 The North Korean Nuclear Program, 1950–2003

4.2.1 North Korean Motivations

North Korea's motivations for starting (and continuing) its program could come from a number of different sources. A history of being threatened indirectly with nuclear weapons, its long animosity with a nuclear-armed United States, and the contemporary conventional superiority of the combined South Korean/US forces give it significant military motivations. North Korea may even believe that a nuclear deterrent is an economically optimal choice; the costs of maintaining its "million-man army" may be much higher than maintaining a small domestic nuclear infrastructure capable of producing a few nuclear weapons. Its long and partially self-imposed isolation may have lead the DPRK to seek prestige and social recognition from a nuclear weapons infrastructure. Regardless of its original motivations, the important question is what types of incentives are likely to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear program; however, the wide range of motives that North Korea has to develop such weapons suggests that there may be many different points of leverage that can be used to help convince North Korea to give up its program.

The range of possible motivations and solutions to the North Korean problem suggested by observers is equally broad. (The number of observers is also quite broad; I list a small but representative sample here). Michael Mazaar suggests that North Korea is motivated

by security concerns and legitimacy both at home and abroad; he suggests that military and economic sanctions will likely fail, and that a combination of implied sticks and explicit carrots is needed.² Selig Harrison argues that economic motivations in particular have come to the forefront, and would be the key to successful negotiations.³ Victor Cha argues for containment-plus-engagement, where engagement is highly conditional, in order to build a case for punishment later.⁴ Michael O'Hanlon and Mike Mochizuki advocate a wide-ranging 'grand bargain' with North Korea including all varieties of incentives in exchange for a deal that not only includes nuclear weapons but conventional forces.⁵ A wide range of strategies is consequently advocated by scholars of North Korea.

Few, however, suggest that North Korea cannot be dealt with; studies of North Korea's negotiating style find that while the DPRK often uses brinkmanship and can make outrageous demands, they act rationally and can make deals.⁶ Domestic politics, and therefore responsibility for the nuclear program, in the DPRK is opaque at best. Many observers argue that there are clear splits, however, between military proponents of a nuclear weapons program and members of the foreign ministry who want to use it as a bargaining chip.⁷ An exception to this is a few neoconservatives, who argue that North Korea is monolithic and implacable; for example, Nicholas Eberstadt argues unconditionally for military coercion in the form of regime change.⁸ In Chapter 6, I cover additional, more general examples of this perspective. Both the postulated motivations for and recommended strategies against North Korea's nuclear program cover a wide range, with little consensus.

4.2.2 The Origins of the Program

North Korea is in the rare position of being one of a few states that have been threatened with nuclear weapons (albeit indirectly) during an armed conflict. Korea was partitioned into two states at the end of the Second World War; on 25 June 1950, North Korea crossed

²Mazarr 1995b.

³Harrison 2004.

⁴Cha 2002.

⁵O'Hanlon and Mochizuki 2003.

⁶Snyder 1997, 1998; Manyin *et al.* 1999; Sigal 1998, 2002; Moltz and Quinones 2004.

⁷Quinones 2004; Harrison 2004; Snyder 2004.

⁸Eberstadt 2004.

the 38th parallel, starting the Korean War. General Douglas MacArthur requested nuclear weapons in 1950 to prevent an invasion by China; B-29 bombers were deployed to Guam in 1951 for three months with nuclear weapons. Although Eisenhower has been reported to have employed nuclear weapons in order to bring about an armistice, the authorization of transfer of nuclear weapons to military control in 1953 was not intended as a part of atomic diplomacy, although it may have had that effect.⁹ The Korean War armistice was signed on 27 July 1953 without South Korea's signature. The US deployed nuclear weapons to South Korea starting in early 1958, and had such weapons deployed there until 1991.

North Korea's nuclear program has existed for nearly the entire history of the country. The North Korean Atomic Energy Research Institute was established in December 1952, although basic research and experiments did not begin until the 1960s. The current Yongbyon site where the bulk of North Korea's nuclear infrastructure sits was started in 1962, when the Soviet Union agreed to supply the DPRK with a small (2 MWt) IRT-2000 research reactor.¹⁰ In the 1970s, North Korea separated a small amount of plutonium from the fuel rods of this research reactor.¹¹ North Korea joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1974, and placed this research reactor under safeguards in 1978.¹²

Most of the plutonium-related facilities (pictured on the top and left-hand side of Figure 4.1) were started in the early 1980s and (with the exception of the plutonium reprocessing facility) were completed by the late 1980s. In the late 1970s, North Korea began planning to build a 5 MWe graphite-moderated reactor at Yongbyon, which went critical in the mid-1980s. It is pictured on the left-hand side of Figure 4.1. As noted in Chapter 2, Graphite-moderated natural-uranium reactors are ideal for producing plutonium due to the lower fraction of neutron-emitting plutonium-240 produced; a sufficiently high fraction of plutonium-240 makes the plutonium extracted less usable for weapons design, although the fraction needed is debatable. In the mid- to late-1980s, construction was started on a second (50 MWe) graphite-moderated reactor and a plutonium reprocessing facility at the

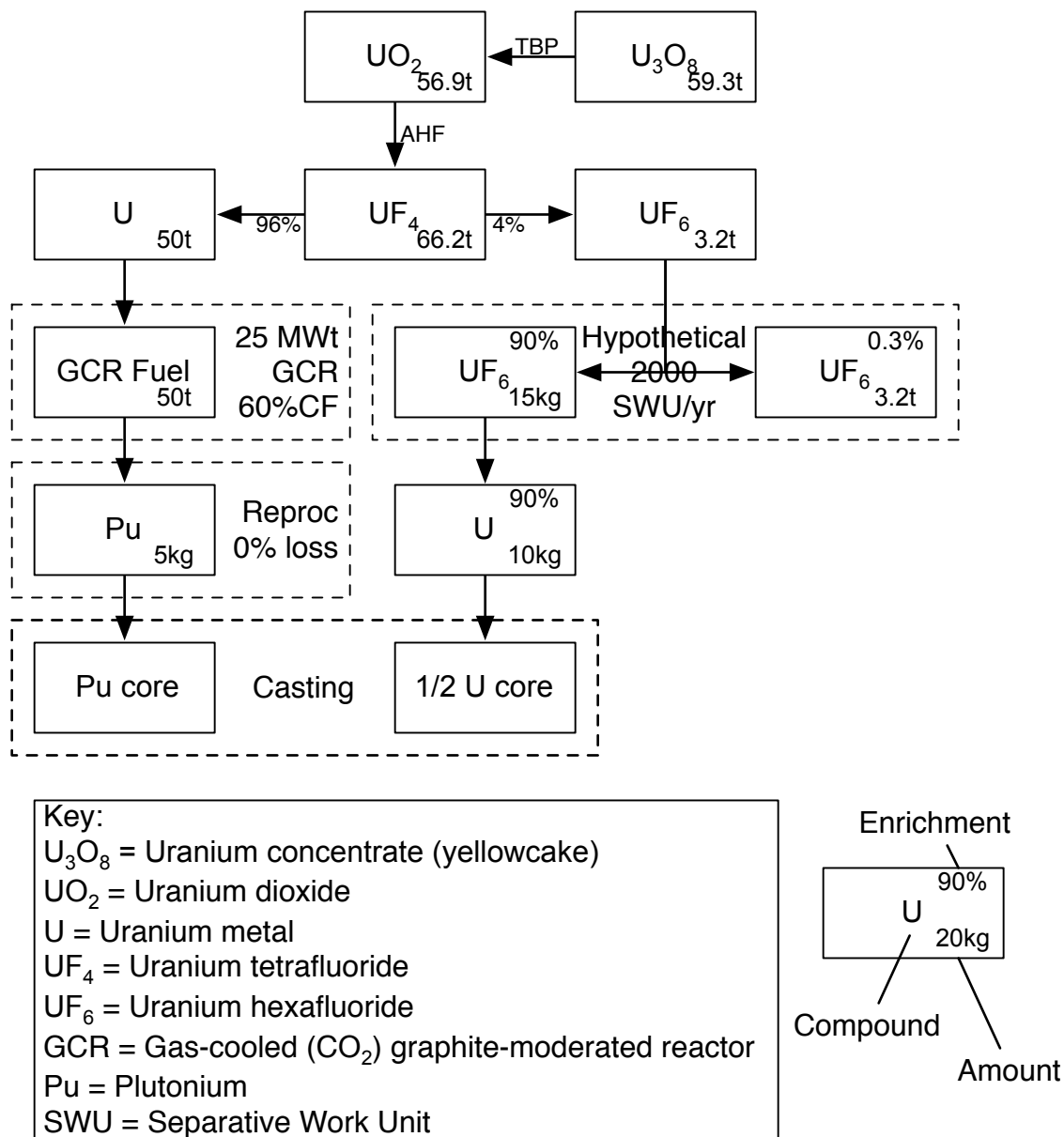
⁹See Dingman 1988 on US nuclear strategy during the Korean War.

¹⁰MWt refers to the raw thermal output of a reactor; MWe refers to the (potential) electricity output. See Chapter 2. Both are measured in megawatts. I refer to these reactors by the most common designations given, occasionally referring to the 5 MWe reactor as the "Yongbyon reactor."

¹¹See *Hibbs 1992b* and Albright and O'Neill 2000 on this separation, which the North Koreans later admitted.

¹²On the North Korean program from 1945–1980, see Mazarr 1995a, 14–34.

Figure 4.1: DPRK materials production flowchart



same site; in 1989, construction on a third (200 MWe) graphite-moderated reactor located in another location (Taechon) also began. Additional facilities are known to exist. A reprocessing facility, also located at Yongbyon, was begun in the late 1980s, and is pictured below the 25 MWt reactor in Figure 4.1; an earlier pilot facility may have also existed. This facility was intended to have two process lines sufficiently large to reprocess spent fuel for all of North Korea's reactors; at the time of the Agreed Framework in October 1994, one of the lines was almost complete. A fuel fabrication laboratory (which converts uranium metal into fuel for the 25 MWt reactor in Figure 4.1) is also located at Yongbyon, and became operational in the mid-1980s. Uranium mining and refinement (to U_3O_8), pictured at the top of Figure 4.1, is reportedly located at Pyongsan.¹³

In December 1985, the Soviet Union agreed to supply four light-water nuclear power reactors if North Korea joined the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). North Korea signed the NPT, but failed to submit a safeguards inspection agreement with the IAEA by the extended deadline of December 1988. In 1989, the DPRK shut down the 5MWe reactor for about 70 days, removing and reprocessing some of the fuel rods and extracting the plutonium. While North Korea claims that it only removed a few damaged fuel rods and reprocessed about 90 g of plutonium, they could have extracted up to several kilograms, depending upon how many fuel rods they removed and the efficiency of the extraction process.¹⁴ In parallel, the DPRK conducted a series of high explosive tests between about 1983 and 1991;¹⁵ further tests were rumored to have occurred between 1991 and 1994.¹⁶

4.2.3 The Post-Cold War Program

North Korean's nuclear actions after 1989 can be classified into three categories: progress in their highly enriched uranium (HEU) program, their plutonium (Pu) program, and general treaty adherence. An overview of the material flows in North Korea's program is

¹³ Albright and O'Neill 2000; Bermudez Jr. 1994, 1999a, b, 2002

¹⁴ On the operating history of the 5MWe reactor and estimates of the plutonium extracted, see Albright and O'Neill 2000.

¹⁵ Nuclear Threat Initiative 2005.

¹⁶ Yu 1996.

pictured in Figure 4.1. The DPRK has a complete plutonium cycle, from mining to re-processing; the status of its uranium cycle is unknown. The uranium conversion (from UF_4 to UF_6) and enrichment facilities in Figure 4.1 are hypothetical; the number of centrifuges (and therefore SWU) is based on the 214 tubes intercepted in 2003, which would have provided the vacuum casings for 428 P2 type centrifuges.¹⁷ The UF_6 found in Libya is speculated to be connected to North Korea;¹⁸ if the UF_6 (and not simply the precursor uranium) did come from the DPRK, it would indicate that North Korea does have a UF_4 to UF_6 conversion facility. Such a capability is certainly within the reach of a state that has mastered the other parts of the uranium conversion cycle, although the Libyan UF_6 is probably not directly from North Korea; see Chapter 6

Little is definitively known about North Korea's HEU program; the evidence in Table 4.1 is an estimate of dates based on the available open literature. I include dates on which the HEU program seemed to make particular forms of progress (e.g. initial signing of agreements, small-scale acquisitions, seeking large numbers of parts on the market).

North Korea's highly enriched uranium (HEU) program can be divided into several distinct phases. Most programs pass through at least three distinct phases in terms of what the program needs to acquire in order to move to the next phase. First comes an initial phase in which parts for a few individual centrifuges are acquired; these centrifuges are assembled and tested separately. The second stage involves assembling centrifuges into small (tens to a couple hundred) cascades in a pilot facility, testing connections between machines. Finally, parts for the entire facility are acquired and built.

It appears that cooperation with Pakistan on the HEU program started in the early 1990s. The full story is only beginning to partially emerge, although some dates and details are known. During the 1990s, A.Q. Khan visited North Korea a dozen times or more.¹⁹ When these visits occurred is not documented. Joseph Bermudez reports that cooperation began with Prime Minister Benazir Bhuttos trip to North Korea in December 1993.²⁰ However, an agreement was totally not formalized until later; the Congressional

¹⁷Warrick 2003.

¹⁸Sanger and Broad 2005a; Kessler 2005.

¹⁹Hersh 2003.

²⁰Bermudez Jr. 2002.

Table 4.1: DPRK HEU program timeline

Year	Time	Event
1990s		A.Q. Khan visits DPRK 12+ times
1993	Dec	Bhutto trip to DPRK
1996	Mid	Agreement signed DPRK/Pakistan
1997		Cooperation starts
1998	Jun	Missile transfers DPRK-Pakistan. Nuke transfers?
1999	Early	Frequency converters (two) sought by DPRK
1998-1999		Clinton Administration learns of possible HEU projects
1999-2001		CIA reports DPRK seeks dual-use technologies
2000/2001		CIA reports DPRK begins developing HEU program
2001	Late	CIA reports DPRK seeking centrifuge parts in “large quantities”
2002		DPRK seeks frequency converters from Japan, pure cobalt
		DPRK orders 6000-grade aluminum tubes from German firm
	Mid	Last exchange of equipment (one-way?)
	Mid	CIA reports “clear evidence” of centrifuge facility
	Sep	Export license for 214 6016-T6 tubes rejected
	Oct	DPRK “admits” to HEU program
2003	Apr	214 6016-T6 tubes seized

Research Service (CRS) claims that an agreement was reached between North Korea and Pakistan in the summer of 1996. This date is in accordance with recent testimony of defectors.²¹ Actual cooperation is reported to have started in 1997,²² although direct transfers of parts between Pakistan and North Korea tend to be dated to 1998. Transfer of missile technology from North Korea to Pakistan are known to have taken place in 1998; the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) reports that an ‘Unknown number of Nodong missiles’ and ‘Several shipments of warhead canisters and missile production components’ were sent to Pakistan.²³

The Clinton administration reportedly learned of these transfers in 1998 or 1999, according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS).²⁴ CRS cites as evidence a 1999 DOE report, likely the same one reported on in the Washington Times.²⁵ However, the only actual components that were cited in the Times article were two frequency converters.

²¹ *Agence France Presse* 2004.

²² *Bermudez Jr.* 2002; *Hersh* 2003.

²³ Nuclear Threat Initiative 2005.

²⁴ *Niksich* 2005.

²⁵ *Gertz* 1999.

This would seem to indicate that North Korea at this point was still in the first stage of their HEU program. CIA reports from the first half of 1999 through the first half of 2001 indicate renewed interest in dual-use technologies by North Korea; all reports repeated the same phrase “[North Korea] sought to procure technology worldwide that could have applications in its nuclear program, but we do not know of any procurement directly linked to the nuclear weapons program.”²⁶ The CIA didn’t mention seeking components for uranium enrichment specifically until the latter half of 2001, when it reported that “The North has been seeking centrifuge-related materials in large quantities to support a uranium enrichment program. It also obtained equipment suitable for use in uranium feed and withdrawal systems.”²⁷

However, it is possible that the uranium program began earlier. A special, untitled report by the CIA, released on November 19, 2002, stated “we assess that North Korea embarked on the effort to develop a centrifuge-based uranium enrichment program about two years ago.”²⁸ This makes it difficult to determine whether the program actually started during the Clinton administration. According to Seymour Hersh, a classified report argues that in “2001 North Korean scientists began to enrich uranium in significant quantities.”²⁹ However, this latter piece of evidence is at odds with the remainder of the evidence, and has not been supported by any other open sources. The last well-known transfer between Pakistan and North Korea occurred in July of 2002,³⁰ although additional transfers may have been made. It is also unclear what was on each shipment and in which direction a transfer was taking place; for example, the last shipment was claimed by President Musharraf to have been surface-to-air missiles being transferred to Pakistan.³¹ Musharraf verified in 2005 that A.Q. Khan had passed “probably a dozen” centrifuges to North Korea.³²

Various different components for centrifuges have been sought on the market by North

²⁶Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 1999.

²⁷Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 2001.

²⁸Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 2002b.

²⁹*Hersh* 2003.

³⁰*Sanger* 2002.

³¹*Rohde and Waldman* 2004.

³²*Agence France Presse* 2005.

Korea. Documented components include frequency converters (from Japan, used for timing),³³ pure cobalt (used in bearings),³⁴ and aluminum tubes (from, variously, Russia, China, Japan, Pakistan, and Europe).³⁵ The latter bears special mention. Intelligence on Iraq falsely identified a shipment of 7000-grade aluminum as centrifuge tubes, even though the dimensions and finish of the tubes indicated that they were primarily suited to be used as rocket motors.³⁶

However, the shipment of 214 6000-grade aluminum tubes that were intercepted on April 12, 2003, as a French ship sailed through the Suez Canal on their way to North Korea via China, seem to fit more closely dimensions of known centrifuges;³⁷ in particular, if cut in half, the tubes are well-suited to be used as vacuum housings for the G2/P2 centrifuge design that Pakistan is known to have stolen from Urenco. The G2 is the designation of the original Urenco design for a supercritical centrifuge with two maraging-steel rotors; the P2 is Pakistan's version of the G2. The P1 centrifuge is not based on Urenco's G1 design, but rather on an earlier Urenco design with four aluminum rotors that is twice as tall as the G2, but less efficient due to its lower rotor speed. This finding in 2003 contradicted earlier evidence that Pakistan had only given North Korea an earlier, aluminum-based design.³⁸ Reports indicate that the North Koreans had sought as many as 2000 tubes in 2002. Frequency converters were sought as early as 1999,³⁹ while the dates on which North Korea sought cobalt are unknown. However, the number of frequency converters (two) sought in 1999 would indicate a very small testbed, while the number of tubes actually shipped in 2003 indicate a shift to a pilot facility. The uranium enrichment facility pictured in Figure 4.1 assumes a pilot-sized facility of 400 G2 centrifuges.

Unlike the HEU program, the plutonium program is relatively easy to observe due to satellite monitoring and the presence of IAEA inspectors during portions of the timeline. During the 1993-1995 crisis, North Korea only made two moves with respect to its plutonium program: unloading the fuel rods from the 5 MWe reactor in May-June 1994 and

³³Hibbs 2003b.

³⁴Hibbs 2002a, b, 2003a.

³⁵Squassoni 2004.

³⁶Albright 2003.

³⁷Warrick 2003.

³⁸Hibbs 2003a.

³⁹Gertz 1999.

freezing its program in November 1994. Several additional moves were made in the 2002-2003 crisis, all of them in 2003: testing the power system at its reprocessing plant on January 15, moving the 8000 canned fuel rods out of storage at the end of January, restarting the 5 MWe power plant at the end of February, and starting to reprocess the fuel rods. See Table 4.2 for a complete list of plutonium-related actions.

The latter event is the source of some contention. Intelligence estimates indicate that North Korea started reprocessing in late spring or early summer of 2003. This corroborates the North Korean claim during talks with the United States in late April to be starting reprocessing. While the initial translation (by North Korea into English) of the announcement on the KCNA website declared that they had finished reprocessing—“We are successfully reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods at the final phase”—this was pulled from the website later; another translation given is “We are successfully completing the final phase, to the point of the reprocessing operation, for some 8,000 spent fuel rods.” The former translation is currently posted on the KCNA website.⁴⁰ However, significant levels of Krypton-85 were not detected until July 19—and even then the location and concentrations seemed to indicate a second reprocessing plant, not the Yongbyon facility. This is consistent with an often-speculated second plant (most reprocessing facilities are preceded by smaller pilot plants; no such plant has been declared by North Korea).

However, little hard intelligence indicates that the rods have been reprocessed. This leaves a puzzle: if the North Koreans have not reprocessed the fuel, what did they do with it? The magnesium cladding on the fuel makes the rods dangerous to store without proper precautions; the joint US-North Korean effort in the 1990s to store the rods placed them in containers filled with an inert gas. The visit in early 2004 to Yongbyon by a small US delegation verified that the storage pools were empty.⁴¹ While it is possible to store them elsewhere, this would be hazardous; therefore most estimates assume that reprocessing finished some time in 2003; see Chapter 6 for further analysis of the likelihood of reprocessing and the amount of plutonium extracted.

⁴⁰*Korean Central News Agency 2003.*

⁴¹Hecker 2004a.

Treaty adherence (apart from the HEU/Pu events) is indicated by the level of compliance with treaty obligations, the DPRK's relationship with the IAEA, and statements from North Korea regarding how they view the treaty in question; I also include declarations regarding building or testing nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons state status, as well as other key events, in Table 4.2. For example, North Korea's announcement that they were withdrawing from the NPT on March 12, 1993, their suspension of that withdrawal on June 11, 1993, and their renewed withdrawal announcement on January 10, 2003 are all included, as are six threats to leave the NPT and one threat to withdraw from the IAEA.

Table 4.2: DPRK nuclear/Pu timeline

Dates	Type	Event
03/12/1993	Treaty	DPRK announces withdrawal from NPT
06/11/1993	Treaty	DPRK suspends withdrawal from NPT
09/22/1993	Treaty	DPRK threatens to leave NPT(1)
10/25/1993		IAEA cameras out of film
11/29/1993	Treaty	DPRK threatens to leave NPT(2)
01/31/1994	Treaty	DPRK threatens to leave NPT(3)
03/03/1994	Treaty	IAEA inspectors allowed to reload film
03/21/1994	Treaty	DPRK threatens to leave NPT(4)
05/12/1994	Pu	DPRK begins removing fuel rods
06/02/1994		Unloading of reactor partially destroys past Pu production history
06/05/1994	Treaty	DPRK threatens to leave NPT(5)
06/10/1994		DPRK finishes removing fuel rods
06/13/1994	Treaty	DPRK announces withdrawal from IAEA
06/16/1994	Treaty	DPRK threatens to leave NPT(6)
06/23/1994	Treaty	DPRK announces compliance with NPT
10/21/1994	Treaty	DPRK, USA sign the Agreed Framework
11/01/1994	Pu	DPRK orders cessation of Pu-related nuclear activities
11/23/1994	Treaty	IAEA inspectors verify nuclear freeze
12/31/2002	Treaty	DPRK kicks out inspectors, threatens to withdraw from NPT
01/10/2003	Treaty	DPRK withdraws from NPT
01/15/2003	Pu	Test of power system at reprocessing plant
01/30/2003	Pu	DPRK moves 8000 fuel rods out of storage
02/26/2003	Pu	DPRK resumes operations at 5 MWe plant
04/06/2003	Treaty	DPRK threatens to arm itself with "tremendous military deterrent"
04/24/2003	Pu	DPRK announces reprocessing fuel rods
05/12/2003	Treaty	DPRK 'nullifies' 1992 N-S nuclear pact

These three measures of nuclear status (progress in their HEU program, plutonium program, and treaty status) have moved back and forth across different nuclear thresholds

repeatedly (see Chapter 2). The first move across the threshold between hedging and acquisition occurred on March 12, 1993, when the DPRK announced their withdrawal from the NPT, triggering the first North Korean nuclear crisis. The suspension of this withdrawal on June 11 temporarily moved North Korea over to the other side of the threshold. However, the questions about continuity of safeguards in the ensuing months made North Korea's nuclear status more questionable at the time; in retrospect, it appears that North Korea did not take any additional nuclear steps during this period of time. North Korea stepped back towards the threshold in late May of 1994 when it began unloading the Yongbyon reactor, and formally crossed it in early June when a sufficient portion of the reactor had been unloaded to partially destroy the past operating history, making it difficult to determine how much plutonium had previously been extracted from the reactor (although opinions vary as to the degree of the destruction). Its withdrawal from the IAEA on June 13 added to this step over the threshold. However, on June 23, North Korea not only announced that it would comply with its NPT obligations, but would freeze its entire nuclear program. This was further solidified with the signing of the Agreed Framework and the return of IAEA inspectors.

It is difficult to pin down when North Korea next crossed the threshold from hedging to acquisition. Although this chapter does not deal explicitly with the reasons why North Korea began or continued pursuing a highly enriched uranium program, the timing of the various pieces of evidence seems to indicate that regardless of the status of the program during the Clinton years, the program began expanding in 2001. While CIA reports from the late Clinton years seem to indicate a very small-scale program, in November 2002, they concluded that North Korea “embarked on the effort to develop a centrifuge-based uranium enrichment program about two years ago.”⁴² Since DPRK–US relations were at an all-time high in November 2000, it seems more likely that the program started a couple of months later. North Korea then began seeking centrifuge parts in large quantities throughout 2001. In 2002, North Korea sought as many as 2000 aluminum tubes—enough for 4000 G2/P2 centrifuges, or about five weapons per year. However, it is not clear when in 2002 North Korea sought these components, so putting a more precise date than 2002 for the HEU

⁴²Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 2002b

program is not possible. What is not ambiguous, however, is that North Korea did pass the acquisition threshold by kicking out inspectors (December 31, 2002) and withdrawing from the NPT (January 10, 2003). Further escalation, pushing towards nuclear weapons state status, occurred on April 6, 2003, when it stated that it “will have no other option but to beef up the deterrent force for war by mobilizing all the potentials.”⁴³ At the end of the US–DPRK talks in late April, they announced that they already possessed nuclear weapons, and were reprocessing the plutonium in the 8000 fuel rods. Finally, North Korea announced towards the end of the first six-party talks that it planned to formally declare itself a nuclear power and test a nuclear weapon,⁴⁴ leaving it just short of the threshold for nuclear weapons state status (having not yet publicly tested).

4.3 North Korean Actions, US Reactions, 1990–2003

4.3.1 The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis

North Korea’s nuclear program in the early 1990s has been well chronicled elsewhere.⁴⁵ Here I focus on specific actions taken by the relevant parties and North Korea’s reactions to these actions. In this section, I break up the first crisis into five periods, according to variance in North Korea’s nuclear status: 1) The first negotiations with the US in 1990 until early 1993, 2) North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT in March of 1993 until its subsequent rejoining in June; 3) nearly a year of back-and-forth negotiation that failed to produce a solution from June 1993 until the DPRK threatened to leave the NPT in March 1994; 4) the peak of the crisis from late March to June of 1994 until North Korea’s agreement to come into compliance with the NPT; and 5) the subsequent bargaining between June and October of 1994. I end with a discussion of the Agreed Framework. Due to a lack of additional nuclear actions, I truncate my analysis here, although bargaining continued through June of 1995.

A large military benefit (the announcement of the US withdrawal of nuclear weapons

⁴³ *Korean Central News Agency* 2003.

⁴⁴ *Sanger* 2003e.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Mazarr 1995b; Oberdorfer 2001; Sigal 1998; Wit *et al.* 2004.

from South Korea) in 1991 paved the way for the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, a signing of IAEA safeguards, and a reciprocal cancellation of the annual US-South Korean military exercises, Team Spirit. However, subsequent deadlock and a showdown with the IAEA over 'special inspections' resulted in North Korea announcing its withdrawal from the NPT. Temporary potential social benefits (bilateral talks) and weak military benefits (agreement on a principle of not using military force) got North Korea back to the negotiating table after North Korea's initial withdrawal from the NPT in 1993 once the US obtained agreement from the IAEA and South Korea. However, the US was unable to hold together this temporary alignment of interests; high-level talks were suspended as both the IAEA and South Korea made demands that threatened North Korea's social status, causing additional threats to leave the NPT; a US decision to ship Patriot missile batteries to South Korea in early 1994 added a military grievance rather than proving to be a deterrent as intended. However, after once again managing to realign other interested states (Japan, China, Russia, and South Korea) and plying North Korea with a combination of social benefits, potential economic carrots, and credible threats of economic sanctions, the US changed the dynamic of relations with North Korea in June 1994. By demonstrating that it was serious both about taking decisive action and about offering substantial benefits, the US established a pattern that continued throughout the remainder of the crisis: arguments became debates over details of the agreement rather than fundamental issues. The Agreed Framework contained both economic and social benefits; yet the social aspects of the deal (being treated as an equal, maintaining "nuclear state" status, establishing a reciprocal arrangement, obtaining a measure of the US's good will), which altered North Korea's social structural position, proved to be crucially important to North Korean acquiescence.

Overall, support for hypotheses is mixed. I find some support for military incentives (H1a), strong support at the height of the crisis for economic incentives and disincentives (H2a/H2b), and moderate to strong support for social incentives (H3a). I also find evidence against military, economic, and social disincentives (H1b/H2b) before the height of the crisis. Domestic politics (H4a/b) played a minor role at best. Positive feedback (H5) was prominent at the height of the crisis, but not at other times. While strategies that focused on

short-term interaction were employed, the crisis lingered on (H6a); once serious negotiation that had the potential to change structural motivations occurred, the crisis ended (H6b). Finally, interactions with other relevant actors (China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the IAEA) were very important (H7), since the crisis only ended once the US managed to present a credible threat while aligning the interests of these other parties.

Prelude to Withdrawal: 1990–1992

During the first Bush administration, multilateral efforts were made to bring North Korea into compliance with IAEA standards, since it had already acceded to the NPT but had not yet signed a safeguards agreement. The promise of bilateral talks and the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea helped to secure North Korean cooperation, leading to a North-South agreement on denuclearization and a joint nuclear commission. However, problems soon surfaced with the extent of North Korea's declaration and whether joint US-South Korean military exercises were to continue.

At the end of 1989, several nations called on North Korea to sign an IAEA safeguards agreement,⁴⁶ but North Korea insisted on demands such as the establishment of a nuclear-free zone (i.e., removal of US nuclear weapons) on the Korean Peninsula, a cessation of the annual joint US-South Korean Team Spirit exercises (began in 1976), and a no-first-use agreement by the United States. North Korean and US representatives met several times in 1990 to discuss security issues, but failed to come to any agreements.⁴⁷ Normalization talks with Japan also foundered on the issue of IAEA safeguards. The Soviet Union halted exports of nuclear materials and equipment and work on the light-water reactors by 1991 due to North Korea's unwillingness to sign a safeguards agreement.⁴⁸ However, in June of 1991, North Korea announced that they would finalize the text of the safeguards agreement, since the prospect of bilateral talks with the United States had emerged.⁴⁹ The agreement was finalized and initialed in July, but not signed or ratified.

President Bush announced the removal of all US tactical nuclear weapons from South

⁴⁶Gordon 1989.

⁴⁷Spector and Smith 1990, 118-134.

⁴⁸Usui 1991.

⁴⁹*Yonhap News Agency (Seoul) 1991.*

Korea on September 27, 1991.⁵⁰ North Korea agreed to sign the safeguards agreement after all weapons were removed, but began simultaneously covering up its nuclear waste storage facilities.⁵¹ North and South Korea signed a non-aggression pact on December 12 and a “Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”⁵² In January 1992, the United States and South Korea announced cancellation of Team Spirit, and North Korea signed the IAEA safeguards agreement at the end of the month (although it was not ratified until April 1992). The first high-level talks between the United States and North Korea were held on January 21.⁵³

In March, the United States informed North Korea that sanctions would be imposed if they did not allow inspections by a deadline of June.⁵⁴ The same month, North and South Korea agreed to hold joint inspections and held the first meeting of the Joint Nuclear Control Commission (JNCC) set up by the denuclearization agreement.⁵⁵ In May, North Korea submitted a 150-page initial declaration of nuclear facilities and materials to the IAEA; the first inspections occurred at the end of the month. The six IAEA inspections that occurred between the initial declaration and February 1993 raised suspicions over the concealment of nuclear waste at the Yongbyon facility, additional unreported facilities, and the misreporting of the number of times and amount of plutonium that was reprocessed.⁵⁶ Throughout the remainder of 1992, additional meetings of the JNCC failed to produce an agreement on joint inspections, although the United States expressed a willingness to allow inspections of its bases. At the end of 1992, a stalemate existed in which North Korea threatened to halt all inspections if Team Spirit wasn’t canceled, while the United States and South Korea insisted on additional inspections before canceling Team Spirit for the next year.⁵⁷

The prospect of social incentives (bilateral talks) with the United States pushed North Korea towards signing an agreement with the IAEA during the first Bush administration;

⁵⁰*Oberdorfer 1991.*

⁵¹*Bermudez Jr. 1994.*

⁵²*Blustein 1991.*

⁵³*Oberdorfer 2001, 260-267.*

⁵⁴*Daily Telegraph (London) 1992.*

⁵⁵*Japan Economic Newswire 1992.*

⁵⁶*Albright 1994.*

⁵⁷*United Press International 1992.*

the announcement of withdrawal of nuclear weapons (a major military incentive) from the peninsula along with the cancellation of Team Spirit created additional goodwill and led to the resumption of North-South ties and the Denuclearization Agreement. However, the meeting with the United States and the cancellation of Team Spirit were only one-shot affair, and so had no permanent impact on North Korea; without verification, North Korea's suspicions about the continued presence of US nuclear weapons could not be assuaged. The threat of economic sanctions in March 1992 may have helped spur on North Korea's initial declaration.

Early Withdrawal: January–June 1993

North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT on March 12, 1993, had been preceded by months of arguing with the IAEA over inspection of two undeclared but suspected nuclear waste sites, as well as frequent demands by North Korea to suspend the annual Team Spirit joint military exercise between South Korea and the United States. These two issues had been linked by both North and South Korea; North Korea threatened to withdraw from the JNCC and IAEA inspections if Team Spirit was not canceled by December 1992, while South Korea (backed by the United States) demanded that the JNCC conduct inspections before canceling Team Spirit for 1993.⁵⁸ In January, North Korea argued that the IAEA could not inspect the two facilities in question, warning that it might jeopardize its supreme interests, language that reflected the NPT's withdrawal clause.⁵⁹ South Korea formally notified North Korea on January 25 that Team Spirit would continue as previously planned, and North Korea warned that it would have to cut off access by the IAEA to nuclear facilities as a result.⁶⁰

In February, the IAEA's sixth inspection team was denied access to the two suspected sites, and IAEA Director Hans Blix formally asked for a "special inspection," the first in the IAEA's history.⁶¹ After being denied, the IAEA passed a resolution demanding access to the two sites in question by March 25, with a threat to send the matter to the

⁵⁸*United Press International* 1992.

⁵⁹Oberdorfer 2001, 276.

⁶⁰*South Korean News Agency (Seoul)* 1993b; *Japan Economic Newswire* 1993d.

⁶¹*Hibbs* 1993a.

Security Council for sanctions if North Korea did not comply. On March 9, Team Spirit began. These combined pressures left North Korea with no way of backing down without revealing their previous concealment of plutonium; *on March 12, North Korea withdrew from the NPT, moving over the threshold from nuclear hedging to nuclear acquisition.*⁶²

With North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT, what had been a disagreement became a crisis. The IAEA (ineffectively) extended the deadline for compliance to March 31.⁶³ Japan, South Korea, and the United States expressed support for bringing the issue to the Security Council and imposing sanctions, while China opposed any international sanctions on North Korea due to the lack of punitive measures called for by the treaty itself.⁶⁴ North Korea reacted strongly to the idea that sanctions could be imposed. The IAEA voted to send the issue to the Security Council, over Chinese and Libyan objections.⁶⁵ Due to China's veto, the UN Security Council simply expressed concern over the nuclear situation on April 8.⁶⁶

Japan offered bilateral talks, but North Korea refused, insisting upon bilateral talks with the United States.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the IAEA began backing off, acquiescing to more limited inspections of North Korean nuclear facilities. North Korea then agreed on May 1 to allow an inspection team to carry out maintenance work on safeguard equipment on May 10.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, South Korea offered to drop its opposition to US–DPRK talks if China would not veto a (sanctionless) UN Security Council resolution on North Korea.⁶⁹

On May 3, North Korea set out its conditions for rejoining the NPT, including a no-first-use guarantee and verification of the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons by the United States from South Korea.⁷⁰ US and DPRK representatives met in Beijing two days later as a precursor to higher-level bilateral talks which were to start on June 2. The proposed UNSC resolution (without a sanctions clause) finally passed on May 11. The same day, however,

⁶²Oberdorfer 2001, 278-9.

⁶³*Japan Economic Newswire* 1993g.

⁶⁴*Schweid* 1993b.

⁶⁵*Sanger* 1993.

⁶⁶*Japan Economic Newswire* 1993j.

⁶⁷*Japan Economic Newswire* 1993e.

⁶⁸Sigal 1998, 62.

⁶⁹Oberdorfer 2001, 283.

⁷⁰*Japan Economic Newswire* 1993f.

US Deputy Secretary of Defense William Perry announced that the United States would not consider reductions of troops until the DPRK rejoined the NPT.⁷¹ While North Korea voiced its objections to the UNSC resolution, it continued to pursue diplomatic avenues for reconciliation.

Prior to the beginning of negotiations, officials at the State Department separately commented that it had not ruled out sanctions, and that the United States would be willing to address legitimate security concerns that North Korea had.⁷² After four rounds of talks, on June 11, a joint statement was made by the North Korean and US delegations agreeing to continued dialogue and US security assurances. *In exchange, North Korea suspended its withdrawal from the NPT.* The next day, the US made an additional unilateral statement saying that it would regard additional reprocessing, a break in the continuity of safeguards, or withdrawal from the NPT as inconsistent with US efforts to resolve the nuclear issue.⁷³ These standards later became important “red lines” in US-DPRK relations.

The IAEA (and especially its director Hans Blix), having been embarrassed in Iraq, took a hard line towards North Korea and refused to compromise, threatening to refer the DPRK to the UN Security Council for sanctions. Simultaneously, South Korea’s unwillingness to cancel Team Spirit for a second year in a row without inspection of the same two sites that the IAEA wanted to inspect gave North Korea additional justifications. Both military and social threats preceded North Korea’s decision to step over the line. While the Team Spirit exercises may have seemed relatively routine and innocuous to South Korea and the United States, North Korea took them very seriously, mobilizing its army each time the exercises were carried out. North Korea claimed that the Team Spirit exercises were a prelude to an invasion, while the hard line that the IAEA and South Korea were taking with respect to inspections didn’t leave North Korea any ability to ‘save face’ since it would have been caught lying about its plutonium extraction.⁷⁴ The threat of economic sanctions was an unlikely cause of withdrawal, since with China on the Security Council, the probability of sanctions was low without multilateral support. Yet this does not explain why North Korea

⁷¹South Korean News Agency (Seoul) 1993c.

⁷²Japan Economic Newswire 1993k; Jehl 1993.

⁷³Sigal 1998, 64.

⁷⁴On the importance of “saving face” and this particular decision, see Mazarr 1995b and Oberdorfer 2001.

chose to take this step in 1993 as opposed to any other year; it seems likely that although the military threat contributed, it was the social implications of being caught lying and losing face that made North Korea decide to adopt brinkmanship as an option. Consequently, these events offer evidence against military and social disincentives, and to a lesser extent against economic disincentives.

A combination of several elements enabled the deal with North Korea to return to the NPT. A complex multi-party deal was struck (China agreed not to veto a UNSC resolution on North Korea in exchange for South Korea's acquiescence to the United States conducting bilateral talks with North Korea). This opened up a bargaining space which was then exploited by the United States, which offered social and military benefits (bilateral talks that would treat North Korea as an equal; a willingness to address security concerns), while keeping the threat of disincentives (the possibility for future economic sanctions). Along with the IAEA's retreat on inspections, these tactics managed to get North Korea to suspend its withdrawal from the NPT.

The intrinsic value of the social benefits of simply being able to participate high-level talks with the United States—a consistent theme throughout both crises—became apparent when North Korea rejected bilateral talks with Japan during this part of the crisis and demanded talks with the United States instead. In fact, the only concessions made by the United States in exchange for the suspension were an agreement to high-level talks (a social benefit) and a (non-binding) military agreement to the principle of “assurances against the threat and use of force, including nuclear weapons,”⁷⁵ against North Korea. Economic sanctions were not mentioned in the joint statement. It is unclear how effective (additional) economic sanctions against the DPRK would have been in any case, unless applied multilaterally, since the United States had no less than five different sets of sanctions on North Korea already in place.⁷⁶ Without Chinese support, such threats had no effect other than to incite backlash from the DPRK. These events thus support military and social benefits and a small amount of support for economic disincentives.

⁷⁵DPRK/USA 1993.

⁷⁶Lee 2003.

Waiting for Results: June 1993–March 1994

From June 1993 to March 1994, multi-party interactions continued. The IAEA variously pushed for additional inspections or acquiesced to whatever North Korea was willing to give them; South Korea demanded off and on to have talks with North Korea as a precondition for high-level US-North Korean talks; China continued to refuse to allow any resolution that included sanctions pass the UNSC; Team Spirit was continually up for grabs, being scheduled, postponed, canceled, and rescheduled. North Korea threatened to leave the NPT again whenever South Korean dialogue became an issue, the IAEA rejected a deal bartered by the United States, or Team Spirit seemed ready to go ahead. The deployment of Patriot missiles became a potent issue, first with North Korea becoming incensed over their deployment, then with South Korea demanding their deployment once the United States began considering them more of a liability than an asset.

The June 11 agreement was far from the end of the crisis. North Korea refused to negotiate with the IAEA until after talks with US scheduled for mid-July had ended.⁷⁷ At the conclusion of the talks, a joint statement was released which promised to explore replacement of the proliferation-prone gas-graphite reactors North Korea currently had.⁷⁸ Meanwhile, South Korea continued to threaten North Korea with a possible imposition of sanctions by the United Nations.⁷⁹ IAEA inspectors returned to North Korea on August 3, but again were not allowed to visit the two suspected nuclear waste sites.⁸⁰ South Korea attempted to hold out an olive branch and propose resuming the JNCC talks, which North Korea rejected (unless Team Spirit were to be cancelled).⁸¹ The US, in turn, told North Korea in mid-September that it would not resume high-level bilateral talks until North Korea resumed dialogue with both South Korea and the IAEA (working-level talks had continued in the meantime). *In response, North Korea threatened to withdraw again from the NPT on September 22.*⁸²

At the general meeting of the IAEA on September 27, Blix put North Korea's refusal to

⁷⁷South Korean News Agency (Seoul) 1993a.

⁷⁸DPRK/USA 1993.

⁷⁹Japan Economic Newswire 1993i.

⁸⁰Japan Economic Newswire 1993b.

⁸¹Agence France Presse 1993a.

⁸²Associated Press 1993.

allow inspections at the top of the IAEA's agenda; meanwhile, the commander of U.S. and allied forces in South Korea warned North Korea against developing nuclear weapons.⁸³ In response, North Korea accused the IAEA of not being impartial. The IAEA then passed a resolution calling upon North Korea to cooperate,⁸⁴ which was duly rejected by North Korea, which again emphasized the need for bilateral talks with the United States.⁸⁵ Blix warned that assurance that North Korea was not diverting nuclear materials was diminishing.⁸⁶ However, on October 2, North Korea proposed working-level talks with South Korea. The US held secret talks with North Korea on October 19, offering diplomatic recognition and the suspension of Team Spirit if North Korea accepted IAEA inspections before the end of October.⁸⁷ On October 25, the nuclear monitoring equipment in North Korea ran out of film.

South Korea denied two days later that there were discussions with the United States regarding canceling Team Spirit (they later agreed in a November meeting to postpone the decision);⁸⁸ the IAEA moved back towards its previous hard-line policy on November 2 by refusing to send an inspection team unless North Korea permitted inspections of all sites,⁸⁹ and the next day Secretary of Defense Les Aspin added back two requirements for further talks with North Korea: opening the two suspect sites and opening dialogue with South Korea.⁹⁰ North Korea counter-offered on November 11 with a 'package deal' that excluded South Korean dialogue; South Korea rejected it the next day.⁹¹ However, the United States and South Korea agreed privately on an unspecified 'new approach' towards North Korea on the 23rd.⁹² *North Korea threatened to leave the NPT again on November 29.*⁹³

North Korea's threat on November 29 was followed by releasing a new list of six demands on December 2;⁹⁴ the same day, Blix warned that the IAEA's ability to confirm

⁸³ *Agence France Presse 1993e.*

⁸⁴ *Hibbs 1993c.*

⁸⁵ *Agence France Presse 1993b.*

⁸⁶ *Agence France Presse 1993c.*

⁸⁷ *Japan Economic Newswire 1993c.*

⁸⁸ *Japan Economic Newswire 1993h.*

⁸⁹ *Lewis 1993.*

⁹⁰ *Japan Economic Newswire 1993a.*

⁹¹ *Agence France Presse 1993d.*

⁹² *Burns 1993.*

⁹³ *United Press International 1993b.*

⁹⁴ *United Press International 1993a.*

North Korean compliance continues to degrade. North Korea agreed the next day to allow the IAEA to replace film and batteries in the cameras.⁹⁵ However, this offer was rejected by the United States and the IAEA as inadequate. Meetings continued between US and North Korea in which the United States demanded access for the IAEA at the two suspect facilities, and North Korea insisted upon the United States accepting its previous limited offer. On December 27, the United States escalated by announcing that it would seek international economic sanctions if North Korea continued to refuse access by the IAEA to all of its facilities.⁹⁶ However, talks continued, and an agreement was announced between the DPRK and the United States in early January 1994 on inspections to maintain continuity of safeguards. However, the IAEA rejected one-time inspections as unacceptable, and the United States denied making such a concession without consultation with the IAEA.⁹⁷ Despite several working-level bilateral discussions, no agreement was reached.

Talk of potential economic sanctions continued to circulate without raising the usual amount of North Korean ire. However, the announcement on January 26 that Patriot missiles would be deployed in South Korea escalated the conflict further, which was promptly protested by North Korea, who *threatened again five days later that they might withdraw from the NPT*, warning that it was prepared to renege on all promises if the deployment continued.⁹⁸

The next day, the U.S. Senate called on the Clinton administration to take a more aggressive stance towards North Korea.⁹⁹ The DPRK responded the following day by stating that it would not accept any pressure tactics from Washington,¹⁰⁰ then followed up the next day by officially informing the IAEA that it rejected nuclear safeguards inspections.

The US then appealed to China to put added pressure on North Korea, warning that the other permanent members of the Security Council would press for economic sanctions if North Korea did not cooperate.¹⁰¹ North Korea responded on February 12 by claiming that sanctions would be viewed as a declaration of war (a frequent North Korean theme), but

⁹⁵Hibbs 1993b.

⁹⁶Schweid 1993a.

⁹⁷Greenhouse 1994b.

⁹⁸United Press International 1994a.

⁹⁹Abrams 1994.

¹⁰⁰United Press International 1994b.

¹⁰¹Lewis 1994c.

agreed to allow IAEA inspectors to inspect the seven already-declared nuclear facilities.¹⁰² However, North Korea refused to issue visas to the IAEA inspectors until a third round of high-level talks was scheduled,¹⁰³ then added the demand that the annual Team Spirit exercise must be officially suspended, which then led the United States to break off the talks again on the 24th;¹⁰⁴ yet on the 26th, the United States and North Korea agreed that inspections would begin on the first of March, while the third round of high-level talks would begin on March 21. On March 2, the United States and South Korea announced cancellation of Team Spirit, and *the inspectors arrived on March 3.*¹⁰⁵

However, since South Korea insisted on North-South talks being part of the deal, the high-level talks were postponed;¹⁰⁶ the IAEA inspectors left on the 15th without having been able to inspect all seven sites fully, after which the United States canceled the talks and resumed planning for Team Spirit.¹⁰⁷ On March 19, a North Korean representative remarked in a meeting at the DMZ that Seoul could be turned into a “sea of fire,”¹⁰⁸ which three days later caused the South Korean military to be placed on high alert.¹⁰⁹ *Two days later after the sea of fire remark, North Korea again threatened to pull out of the NPT if the IAEA were to refer the North Korean issue to the Security Council and Team Spirit were to go as planned.*¹¹⁰

Of the four threats to leave the NPT between June 1993 and March 1994, two offer evidence against hypothesis H3b (Social Disincentives), two H1b (Military Disincentives), and one H2b (Economic Disincentives). The first threat came after a refusal by the United States to resume high-level talks; the second after the United States demanded inspections of the two suspect sites and for North Korea to talk to South Korea; the third is after the announced deployment of Patriot missiles; and the fourth is after the United States decided to ask the UN to prepare economic sanctions and the resumption of Team Spirit. The

¹⁰²Central Broadcasting Station (Pyongyang) 1994b.

¹⁰³Japan Economic Newswire 1994b.

¹⁰⁴Japan Economic Newswire 1994f.

¹⁰⁵Gordon 1994b.

¹⁰⁶Japan Economic Newswire 1994e.

¹⁰⁷Burns 1994.

¹⁰⁸McCarthy and Poole 1994.

¹⁰⁹Reid 1994.

¹¹⁰Sanger 1994b.

first two are reactions after social sanctions were threatened (canceling high-level talks; inspections of the sites that would cause North Korea to lose face), the third after a military threat (the Patriots), and the fourth after a combination of an economic sanctions threat and the resumption of Team Spirit. Although the Patriot missile batteries would have decreased North Korea's military ability to threaten South Korea, it is not clear how much of an offensive military threat they would have posed. Again, with China blocking economic sanctions, evidence against H2a (Economic Disincentives) exists, but is not very strong. The one positive nuclear move (allowing IAEA inspectors) came after a promise to suspend Team Spirit and for high-level talks to begin, supporting H3a (Social Incentives) and H1a (Military Incentives).

Deterrence: March–June 1994

During the height of the crisis, North Korea repeatedly threatened to leave the NPT while first warning of, then carrying out, the discharge of fuel rods from their nuclear reactor. However, North Korea never stepped over the 'red lines' that the United States had set nearly a year before: reprocessing, safeguards, and NPT membership. The US successfully managed to put together a consensus on action against the DPRK and followed through on its earlier threats to cancel talks if any of the red lines were violated. This led to North Korean acquiescence once former president Jimmy Carter traveled to North Korea to present a deal to North Korean president Kim Il Sung.

The same day that North Korea made its threat to pull out of the NPT, Clinton announced that the Patriot missiles would arrive in South Korea in about 30 days, and the United States presented a draft resolution to the Security Council calling for North Korea to accept additional inspections (but without including sanctions).¹¹¹ On March 29, China objected to the part of the resolution suggesting that the Security Council would take further action if the inspections did not occur; a version without this clause was issued as a UNSC presidential statement on the 31st.¹¹² Two days later, Secretary of Defense William Perry stated that North Korea was lying about its nuclear program, and mentioned that direct

¹¹¹*Gordon 1994e, d.*

¹¹²*Lewis 1994a.*

military action was still an option with dealing with North Korea.¹¹³ The next day, North Korea condemned the UN resolution.¹¹⁴ These negative reactions were then balanced by positive steps. On April 15, South Korea withdrew its demand for an exchange of special envoys as a precondition for high-level US-North Korean talks;¹¹⁵ on April 20, Perry announced that Team Spirit would be postponed until at least November.¹¹⁶ However, these concessions were too late and had no apparent effect; North Korea announced on April 19 that it would be shortly be refueling its reactor, while refusing to let the IAEA sample the removed rods.¹¹⁷

On May 2, the United States announced that they would abort all talks if North Korea removed the fuel rods without IAEA inspectors;¹¹⁸ the IAEA followed the next day, saying that it would be compelled to take the issue to the Security Council.¹¹⁹ On May 3rd, North Korea rejected the IAEA's demand.¹²⁰ Working talks continued with the United States nonetheless, although the United States threatened again to break off all talks.¹²¹ *North Korea announced on May 12 that they would begin discharging the reactor immediately, and began removing the rods on the 14th.*¹²²

The next day, the Clinton administration threatened to seek sanctions if North Korea removed the fuel from the rods in accordance with the "red lines" set almost a year before; Perry declared the situation to be a crisis two days later.¹²³ IAEA inspectors were allowed to complete inspections of the plutonium reprocessing plant and replace film and batteries on monitoring equipment, then reported that fuel was being removed from the reactor, but was not being diverted.¹²⁴ Since North Korea wasn't diverting the fuel, the United States decided to resume high-level talks on the 20th,¹²⁵ while the IAEA sent a second team to

¹¹³ Cornwell 1994.

¹¹⁴ Smillie 1994.

¹¹⁵ Xinhua News Agency 1994b.

¹¹⁶ Sanger 1994a.

¹¹⁷ Sanger 1994c.

¹¹⁸ South Korean News Agency (Seoul) 1994c.

¹¹⁹ KBS Radio (Seoul) 1994.

¹²⁰ Central Broadcasting Station (Pyongyang) 1994a.

¹²¹ South Korean News Agency (Seoul) 1994b.

¹²² Sanger 1994d.

¹²³ Diamond 1994.

¹²⁴ Gordon 1994c.

¹²⁵ Gordon 1994a.

discuss implementation of safeguards on the 24th; however, North Korea rejected IAEA and US demands to set aside 300 rods for sampling later.¹²⁶ By the 27th, North Korea had removed almost half of the fuel in the reactor core without tracking the location of the rods, partially destroying the past history of burnup in the reactor core. The UNSC passed a resolution on the 30th also urging that rods be set aside.¹²⁷ The next day, Blix announced that North Korea was no longer officially in compliance with safeguards due to the removal of too many fuel rods without sampling. On June 2nd, IAEA inspectors stated that they could no longer verify that North Korea had not diverted plutonium.¹²⁸

The same day, Russia warned North Korea that it could not expect protection from sanctions or war.¹²⁹ The next day, North Korea reiterated that it would view economic sanctions as a declaration of war.¹³⁰ On the 4th, The US, Japan, and South Korea called on the Council to urgently consider economic sanctions,¹³¹ while *North Korea threatened again on the 5th to leave the NPT*.¹³²

North Korea then backed down, claiming that the rods could still be measured, and offered to guarantee IAEA inspections in exchange for a third round of bilateral talks. However, the United States replied on the 8th that North Korea had passed the “point of no return” due to North Korea’s destruction of the evidence necessary to determine whether spent fuel had been diverted;¹³³ the same day, South Korea came out in favor of economic sanctions, despite the potential ramifications of such a move.¹³⁴ Two days later, North Korea announced they had finished discharging the fuel rods, Russia agreed to cooperate on a resolution calling for economic sanctions, and the IAEA suspended technical aid to North Korea; China also warned North Korea that they might not be able to veto a sanctions resolution in the Security Council.¹³⁵ Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gallucci threatened

¹²⁶*Korean Central News Agency 1994b.*

¹²⁷*Schmitt 1994.*

¹²⁸*Hunt 1994.*

¹²⁹*Trickey 1994.*

¹³⁰*Korean Central News Agency 1994d.*

¹³¹*United Press International 1994c.*

¹³²*Japan Economic Newswire 1994c.*

¹³³*Toronto Star 1994.*

¹³⁴*Radin 1994.*

¹³⁵*Hibbs 1994e, Kendall 1994, Shin 1994; Oberdorfer 2001, 320-1*

on the 12th to implement escalating sanctions.¹³⁶ *On the 13th, North Korea withdrew from the IAEA*, and reiterated that sanctions would be viewed as a declaration of war.¹³⁷

Two days later, the United States presented the four other permanent members of the Security Council with a resolution calling for sanctions on North Korea.¹³⁸ However, Russia reversed its position the next day on sanctions since the United States had failed to consult with Russia sufficiently before presenting the resolution.¹³⁹ *On the 16th, North Korea again threatened to leave the NPT.*¹⁴⁰

During the same period of time, a second diplomatic track opened. On June 9th, former President Jimmy Carter announced the next day that he would travel to North Korea. He arrived on June 15th; the next day, he met with President Kim Il Sung, who agreed to allow IAEA inspectors to remain at the reactor and to allow upkeep of monitoring equipment;¹⁴¹ However, North Korea had already been backing down; Carter's trip simply just sealed the deal after Kim elected to have the more prestigious Carter visit instead of the two US Senators that the Clinton administration was prepared to send.¹⁴² US safeguards experts also proposed alternative techniques to measure the plutonium in the 8000 fuel rods that had been withdrawn from the Yongbyon reactor, and Clinton announced the United States' willingness to reopen high-level talks if the nuclear weapons program was frozen.¹⁴³ *On the 23rd, North Korea not only announced that it would comply with its NPT obligations, but would freeze its entire nuclear program.*¹⁴⁴

Once North Korea realized that it would not get support from at least one of its patrons (Russia) in early June, it started backing down, but did not go sufficiently far to placate the United States. Once it became clear that South Korea was willing to suffer the consequences of sanctions and that North Korea would not receive any support from China, either, North Korea began looking for a way out. The US carried through effectively with

¹³⁶*Reuters News 1994b.*

¹³⁷*Japan Economic Newswire 1994a.*

¹³⁸*Lewis 1994b.*

¹³⁹*Stanley 1994.*

¹⁴⁰*Agence France Presse 1994.*

¹⁴¹Oberdorfer 2001, 326-332.

¹⁴²Perry 2004.

¹⁴³*Hibbs 1994b; United Press International 1994e.*

¹⁴⁴*Yonhap News Agency (Seoul) 1994.*

its threats: once North Korea refused to set aside a sufficient number of rods, they aborted the talks. However, the success of this deterrent depended upon successful US diplomacy with the other involved parties; by getting China, Russia and South Korea on board, the deterrent threat became credible to implement, since North Korea could no longer expect to escape the sanctions through threatening South Korea or circumventing the sanctions through Chinese and Russian support. North Korea escalated by threatening to leave the NPT every time that sanctions were threatened; however, once it became clear that sanctions would actually be implemented, they backed down. By having a way to save face through former President Jimmy Carter's visit to North Korea, North Korea was able to take advantage of the offered social benefits instead of having to suffer the highly probable economic sanction, supporting hypothesis H2b (Economic Disincentives); additionally, the positive response of North Korea to Jimmy Carter's visit and the North Koreans' willingness to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for the United States suspending its sanctions drive and high-level talks lends additional support to H3a (Social Incentives). Finally, hypothesis H5 (Positive Feedback) is supported by the reciprocation of threats and accusations between North Korea and the United States in the month before Carter's visit. Neither military hypothesis (H1a/b) is strongly supported; military threats (such as Perry's comments) did not seem to provoke a particular reaction from North Korea, although they could have contributed to North Korea's decision, lending some support to H1b (Military Disincentives).

Bargaining: June–October 1994

In the bargaining that followed the June climax to the crisis, the United States continued to successfully keep third parties (principally the IAEA and South Korea) in line with promises to respect their interests while negotiating with North Korea. It is unclear whether the military threat posed by the US carrier battle group that was moved during this phase actually improved the US bargaining position, but it did not have the negative effect that such moves had had in the past. Otherwise, reciprocal positive social and material moves continued between North Korea and the United States, concluding with the signing of the Agreed Framework and the verification of the freeze of North Korea's nuclear program.

The day after North Korea announced that it would freeze its nuclear program, a low-level working group met and settled on an agenda and a date (July 8) for further talks.¹⁴⁵ South Korea announced three days later that a presidential summit would occur between the two Koreas on the 25th of July.¹⁴⁶ The opening day of talks with the United States, Kim Il Sung died; negotiations were postponed until the 5th of August, and the presidential summit with South Korea was indefinitely postponed.¹⁴⁷ On July 11, North Korea announced that IAEA inspectors would remain, the fuel rods would not be reprocessed, and the reactor would not be refueled, in accordance with the United States' three red lines.¹⁴⁸ The US Senate passed an amendment four days later to prohibit aid to North Korea unless the president certified that North Korea was not seeking nuclear weapons, a move that later became an impediment to implementation of the Agreed Framework.¹⁴⁹ The third round of high-level talks finally occurred from August 5-12; by the end of the meeting, the basic outline of the Agreed Framework was in place and was codified as an Agreed Statement, as was an agreement to meet again on September 23.¹⁵⁰ However, disputes still remained over the timing of the inspection of the two suspect nuclear waste sites. On August 18, the White House announced that inspections would be required before light water reactor parts would be supplied; this demand was rejected two days later by North Korea.¹⁵¹

South Korea insisted on playing a larger role in the crisis on September 6, and was assured by the United States that the resumption of substantive dialogue with North Korea would be a requirement of any deal.¹⁵² Working-level talks with the United States on the 10th were followed by North Korea expressing a willingness to work with the IAEA, whose personnel had recently been permitted to inspect two additional facilities.¹⁵³ The IAEA then reported that inspections in March and May 1994 had indicated that no reprocessing had taken place recently in those facilities.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁵ *Fournier 1994.*

¹⁴⁶ *Goodspeed 1994.*

¹⁴⁷ *Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1994d.*

¹⁴⁸ *Japan Economic Newswire 1994d.*

¹⁴⁹ *Associated Press 1994.*

¹⁵⁰ *Korean Central News Agency 1994a.*

¹⁵¹ *Greenhouse 1994a; Korean Central News Agency 1994c.*

¹⁵² *Gedda 1994.*

¹⁵³ *Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1994e.*

¹⁵⁴ *Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1994a.*

The locus of the disputes then shifted to who would supply the reactors to North Korea; while North Korea insisted upon being able to choose a supplier, the countries paying for the reactor insisted upon choosing the supplier.¹⁵⁵ A US carrier battle group was deployed to the Sea of Japan on September 22, a day before the second session of the third round of talks began in Geneva, in order to bolster the United States' bargaining position.¹⁵⁶ After a brief suspension at the end of the month, talks resumed on October 5. North Korea warned South Korea and the IAEA not to add additional requirements to the talks; two days later, South Korea's president criticized the US approach to negotiations.¹⁵⁷ The US sent a draft compromise five days later that did not contain South Korea's demand for special inspections of the two sites before nuclear technology would be supplied; however, the United States privately assured South Korea that their position would be defended in any eventual agreement.¹⁵⁸

The Agreed Framework was signed on October 21. Its key provisions included an international consortium that would replace North Korea's graphite reactors with light water models, provision of 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil annually until the reactors came online, efforts to normalize economic and political relations, canning of the 8000 fuel rods withdrawn from the reactor (with North Korea to remaining in possession), IAEA monitoring of the freeze, and North Korea's continued membership of the NPT.¹⁵⁹ In parallel, the United States and South Korea announced suspension of Team Spirit.¹⁶⁰ *On November 1, North Korea ordered the cessation of construction of their 50 MWe and 200 MWe reactors, operations at the 5 MWe reactor, and operations at other nuclear facilities; IAEA inspectors verified these actions on November 23.*¹⁶¹

At first glance, the Agreed Framework would seem to be primarily about exchanges of economic goods: two light water reactors and monthly supplies of fuel oil in exchange for a nuclear weapons program. Yet each of the elements of the Agreed Framework vindicates the perspective that social benefits were just as, if not more important than, the economic

¹⁵⁵United Press International 1994d.

¹⁵⁶Reuters News 1994a.

¹⁵⁷Mannion 1994; Sterngold 1994.

¹⁵⁸South Korean News Agency (Seoul) 1994a.

¹⁵⁹Albright and O'Neill 1994.

¹⁶⁰Xinhua News Agency 1994a.

¹⁶¹Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1994c; Deutsche Presse-Agentur 1994b

benefits.¹⁶² During the negotiations, the Clinton administration repeatedly offered fossil-fuel based energy plants of equivalent or greater power that could be built more quickly and would be more compatible with North Korea's shaky electric grid, yet North Korea insisted upon nuclear technology, since they wanted to be seen as a modern nuclear state. The fuel oil was more symbolic than anything else; it provided about 2.5% of North Korea's total energy consumption.¹⁶³ Instead, North Korea used the frequency of deliveries of fuel oil as a symbolic measurement of the US commitment to the Agreed Framework. Frequent complaints about the lateness of deliveries were due to this symbolic nature; since North Korea buffered the supply of fuel oil, late deliveries did not actually affect power generation, but rather just relations between the United States and the DPRK (North Korea has storage approximately equal to the amount shipped every year; at the end of 2001, this reserve was nearly full).¹⁶⁴ The prospective lifting of economic sanctions would have been worth little, at least initially; the sanctions had existed for so long that North Korea had structurally adapted to these sanctions. Moreover, North Korea had little to offer the United States in terms of trade. The normalization of political relations had been important to North Korea throughout the crisis, and in fact constituted North Korea's major short-term demand; North Korea attached intrinsic value to being treated as an equal by the United States, and formalizing such social relations had become a major goal. Finally, the Agreed Framework held that the United States would provide "formal assurances to the DPRK against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the United States."¹⁶⁵ While this is a stronger statement than the nuclear guarantee given the year before, it still falls short of a formalized treaty; furthermore, without any kind of confidence-building measures that increase transparency, it fails to make military conquest any more difficult.

The events surrounding bargaining during this period (and the Agreed Framework itself) supported several hypotheses. The reciprocal positive actions taken by both sides led to the freezing of North Korea's plutonium program, and support hypothesis H5 (Positive

¹⁶²Interviews with Bill Perry and John Lewis confirmed the symbolic nature of many of the provisions of the Agreed Framework. Lewis 2004; Perry 2004.

¹⁶³Manyin and Jun 2003.

¹⁶⁴Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization 2001.

¹⁶⁵Albright and O'Neill 1994.

Feedback). The offer of economic and social goods that constituted the Agreed Framework supports both hypotheses H2a (Economic Incentives) and H3a (Social Incentives), and more weakly H1a (Military Incentives).

Summary

Of all the hypotheses, H3a (Social Incentives) has the most support during the first crisis. The initial decision to leave the NPT in order to save face and the decision to suspend withdrawal once high-level talks were offered were both related to social actions. Half of North Korea's threats to leave the NPT followed negative social actions (offering evidence against H3b, Social Disincentives), while positive moves (such as letting in IAEA inspectors) followed positive social moves. The combination of a visit by a prestigious actor (Carter), plus a return to high-level talks were related to the initial freeze of North Korea's nuclear program. Finally, the terms of the Agreed Framework itself were heavily laden with social benefits regarding international status and direct relations with the United States.

Hypothesis H2b (Economic Disincentives) was supported primarily by the events during the height of the crisis, when for the first time economic sanctions became a real possibility, although previously in the crisis there was significant evidence against it. Hypothesis H2a (Economic Incentives) was also supported by the Agreed Framework terms. Hypothesis H1a (Military Incentives) seemed primarily relevant in terms of Team Spirit; whenever it was cancelled, the North Koreans responded well; whenever it was rescheduled, they protested loudly. Additionally, the Patriot missiles turned out to provoke a negative reaction instead of being a deterrent as intended, providing further evidence against H1b (Military Disincentives). Assurances that the United States would not use nuclear weapons were also valued, although the actual military value of such assurances is doubtful.

Domestic politics (H4a/b) seemed to play a minor role, although due to a lack of North Korean openness, it is difficult to tell whether actions were influenced by changing balances of power between different groups within North Korea. Up until the Agreed Framework, the Clinton administration was relatively free to pursue its goals; however, shortly after the Framework was signed, control of both the House and the Senate passed into opposition hands, placing severe constraints on the administration (however, this falls outside the time

periods covered in this study.)

There is also the question as to whether interaction (H6a) or structure (H6b) played a greater role. Although interactions throughout the crisis were linked with nuclear moves by North Korea, the crisis did not reach a stable state until the United States offered significant benefits that, given time, would alter North Korea's social position in the international system through obtaining US diplomatic recognition, thereby not being treated as a marginalized state any longer. So while interaction was important in terms of short-term nuclear actions, a longer-term freeze required significant alteration to North Korea's social position. The economic benefits, by contrast, were unlikely to be significant enough to alter North Korea's overall economic position.

Finally, there was significant support for hypothesis H7 (Multiparty Interaction). Without Chinese, Russian, and South Korean support, the threat of sanctions would not have been nearly as effective. Additionally, demands by South Korea or the IAEA on North Korea frequently exacerbated the crisis.

4.3.2 The Second North Korean Nuclear Crisis

I discuss the second nuclear crisis in a slightly different manner from the first, in part because a definitive account of this crisis has yet to be published. Although the actual crisis did not begin until October of 2002, I argue that the actions of the Bush administration prior to that date were crucial to establishing the patterns that played out in the crisis. I divide my analysis into three parts: The first twelve months, during which the Bush administration first conducted a comprehensive review of North Korean policy, then attempted to widen the scope of talks with North Korea to include other issues; the period from the inclusion of North Korea in the "axis of evil" until the proper beginning of the crisis in October 2002; and the crisis itself, until it reached an equilibrium in May of 2003. For each of the first two parts, nuclear moves with clear dates are relatively rare, although the evidence that does exist in public accounts does indicate that the North Koreans accelerated their HEU program during this time. Consequently, instead of tracking nuclear actions, I track changes in North Korean discourse as a function of US policies in order to trace how North

Korean responses to US statements and actions during this period.

The deterioration of the US–DPRK relationship began in early 2001, when the social benefits (in particular, high-level talks) that had been granted the North Korean government by the Clinton administration through the Agreed Framework were severely decreased. Upon entering into office, the administration cut off these high-level ties until they formulated a comprehensive plan for dealing with the DPRK, increasing North Korean suspicions as to US intentions. Later demands for a widened agenda to include conventional weapons and humanitarian issues led North Korea to reject further talks. The inclusion of North Korea in the “Axis of Evil,” the Nuclear Posture Review, and the National Security Strategy in 2002 then led North Korea to invert its responses from reciprocation of actions (positive or negative) to continual rejection. Subsequent overtures by the Bush administration to talk and attempts to deter North Korean action were consequently met with continued rejection and further acceleration of North Korea’s nuclear program. Attempted military deterrence in the form of sending bombers to Guam and repositioning US forces failed to alter North Korea’s trajectory; attempted economic sanctions without aligning other parties to the conflict also failed, leading to a nuclear stalemate, with North Korea remaining just at the nuclear weapons state threshold, having declared its possession of nuclear weapons but not having tested.

Like the first crisis, support for hypotheses is again mixed. I find some mostly evidence against hypotheses formerly supported; in particular, military, and economic disincentives (H1b/H2b) were both ineffective during the period (October 2002–May 2003) in which the Bush administration attempted to employ these strategies. Domestic politics (H4a/b) again played a minor role at best. Positive feedback (H5) was prominent throughout, although with different effects during different parts of the crisis; insults were repeatedly traded before the onset of the actual crisis, while during the actual crisis it primarily took the form of escalating military and economic moves: while the United States made threats of economic sanctions and implied military moves, North Korea ramped up its production of fissile materials and made vague threats of retaliation. The shift in the US–North Korean social relationship appeared to motivate the North Korean shift in strategies, implying that structural motivations (H6b) were at work. Finally, interactions with other relevant actors

(H7) played little role due to the determination of both the United States and North Korea not to negotiate.

The Calm before the Storm: January 2001–January 2002

The new administration expressed doubt very quickly both about the Agreed Framework and North Korea itself, freezing ties with North Korea while they completed a policy review. At the same time, multinational efforts were also in disarray, although these problems were inherited from the Clinton administration. Although no military or economic threats were made by the Bush administration during the first twelve months, several social snubs were made with respect to both North and South Korea, which led to corresponding complaints by North Korea, collateral damage with respect to North-South relations, and increased suspicion among the North Koreans as to the intentions of the Bush administration. In particular, personal statements made about Kim Jong Il led to increased North Korean suspicions. Since relations were at a positive peak with North Korea at the end of the Clinton administration, it is possible that the development of the HEU program cited by the CIA was more closely connected with the early statements of the Bush administration regarding North Korea. Although these events cannot be directly connected to US policy, the timing is suggestive.

Once the policy review was completed, the United States sought to resume talks with North Korea with an expanded agenda to include troop deployments. At the same time, North Korea began demanding compensation for lost electricity due to the delayed completion of the nuclear power plants under the Agreed Framework. While the two sides were at loggerheads, North Korea's HEU program continued to develop.

The Agreed Framework was already in trouble when the Bush administration entered office; several potential appointees for the Bush administration were known to be "highly critical of the 1994 deal."¹⁶⁶ In particular, both Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice were in favor of a transition to

¹⁶⁶*Hibbs 2000b.*

thermal energy sources rather than nuclear power plants, despite the previously voiced opposition in March and June 2000 to thermal plants by the South Koreans,¹⁶⁷ the North Korean determination to be seen as a nuclear-capable state, and the opposition of the director-general of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).¹⁶⁸ Still, the United States continued to suggest thermal plants as a substitute for nuclear technology until late June 2001. Even Secretary of State Colin Powell suggested that the administration might seek to modify the accord,¹⁶⁹ although on other occasions Powell, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, and State Department spokesman Richard Boucher all said that they expected to fully implement the Agreed Framework. The North Koreans objected to what they saw as a hard-line approach from the very beginning, singling out the “foreign and national security policy team” as the source of this approach; they also objected to the US commitment to a national missile defense “to cope with the ‘missile threat’ from the DPRK, calling it a ‘rogue state.’”¹⁷⁰

The Bush administration started a complete policy review on North Korea in January 2001, although various details of the policy leaked out during the process very early on.¹⁷¹ The central tenet of the new deal that the Bush administration was to offer North Korea was to further expand negotiations to include conventional forces and humanitarian issues as well as missiles and nuclear weapons. Two weeks before the review was finished, another important detail was leaked: the United States would seek to accelerate safeguards inspections.¹⁷²

With the new administration in office, the oppositional stance that Congress had taken against deals with North Korea intensified; in early March, both Democrat and Republican lawmakers delivered letters to the Bush administration asking for a reconsideration of its existing commitment to the Agreed Framework. This mistrust was shared by Bush himself; at a press conference with South Korean president Kim Dae Jung on March 7, Bush said, “I do have some skepticism about the leader of North Korea. We’re not certain as to whether

¹⁶⁷ *Choson Ilbo* 2000.

¹⁶⁸ *Shin* 2001.

¹⁶⁹ *Barber* 2001.

¹⁷⁰ *Korean Central News Agency* 2001b.

¹⁷¹ *Japan Economic Newswire* 2001b.

¹⁷² *Hwang* 2001.

or not they're keeping all terms of all agreements.”¹⁷³ Shortly after this comment, the fifth in a series of inter-ministerial talks between North and South Korea were postponed on March 13; this postponement was suspected at the time to have been caused by Bush's remark.¹⁷⁴

By the time that President Bush announced the conclusion of his policy review, most of the relevant details had already been leaked. For several months after the review, administration officials declared that they were ready for talks “without preconditions,” but insisted upon a broadening of the agenda to include conventional arms talks and unspecified “humanitarian issues,” and pushed for early implementation of the IAEA safeguards. In the first official US–DPRK meeting since the Bush administration entered office, Special Envoy Jack Pritchard outlined this new policy and requested a meeting with the North Korean Vice Foreign Minister.¹⁷⁵

The North Korean response on June 18 was to continue to insist that the main issue to be discussed between the two sides was compensation for the lack of electricity due to the delay and reactors. North Korea continued throughout the summer to argue that determining the agenda of the talks before meeting was equivalent to putting preconditions on talks, and contrary to equal treatment: “It is the universally recognized elementary requirement that dialogue between sovereign states should be conducted on a fair and equal footing.”¹⁷⁶

Additionally, Bush's criticism of Kim Jong Il continued even after the policy review, calling him “untrustworthy” because “he makes his own people go hungry,”¹⁷⁷ which prompted further criticism from North Korea reiterating the theme of equality: “The DPRK holds its dignity and sovereignty dearest, and never allows any infringement upon them. It will surely make the U.S. pay for such impudent behavior intended to infringe upon its dignity and sovereignty. If the U.S. wants dialogue with the DPRK, it should approach the dialogue on a fair and equal basis and make a political decision to renounce its hostile

¹⁷³*Federal News Service 2001; Sanger 2001.*

¹⁷⁴*Torchia 2001.*

¹⁷⁵*Wagner 2001.*

¹⁷⁶*Korean Central News Agency 2001d.*

¹⁷⁷*Japan Economic Newswire 2001a.*

policy toward the DPRK.”¹⁷⁸ Redeployments of aircraft from the USS Kitty Hawk to South Korean air bases¹⁷⁹ prior to deploying the carrier to the Indian Ocean in support of operations in Afghanistan were also met with criticism. This was followed by a vague threat when Bush warned North Korea “not to think that because we happen to be engaged in Afghanistan we will not be prepared and ready to fulfill our end of our agreement with the South Korean government.” He also stated that “I’ve been disappointed in Kim Jong Il not rising to the occasion, being so suspicious, so secretive.”¹⁸⁰ North Korea duly returned the criticism:

“He went the length of speaking ill of its supreme leadership, saying it is too doubtful and shrouded in secrecy and it refuses to keep the promise and he is a person quite not understandable. Putting aside the political motive of his utterance, Bush’s remark cannot but be interpreted as an imprudent statement unbecoming for the president of a “superpower.” It is a senseless attitude away from even elementary diplomatic etiquette for the head of state of the U.S. to speak ill of the leader of other country, who is stranger to him, for no reason. It is universally known that it was none other than Bush who began casting a string of doubts, saying he feels skeptical about the North Korean leader as soon as he assumed the presidential office and it was again his administration which put the DPRK-U.S. dialogue which was under way to a stalemate.”¹⁸¹

The escalation of rhetoric on both sides deteriorated relations rapidly. The new administration’s return to the “rogue state” rhetoric of contrasted sharply with the Clinton administration’s rhetoric regarding “states of concern” that had just been introduced the previous June.¹⁸² While the review was under way, official contacts were broken off, which was also seen as suspicious by the North Koreans.¹⁸³ The North Koreans saw the “phased access” and “conditional and strict reciprocity”¹⁸⁴ advocated by some members of the Bush

¹⁷⁸ *Korean Central News Agency 2001h.*

¹⁷⁹ *Korean Central News Agency 2001f.*

¹⁸⁰ *Allen 2001.*

¹⁸¹ *Korean Central News Agency 2001c.*

¹⁸² *Albright 2000.*

¹⁸³ *Korean Central News Agency 2001e.*

¹⁸⁴ *Korean Central News Agency 2001b.*

administration as requiring North Korea to act before offering any benefits, as opposed to the simultaneity prescribed by the Agreed Framework. Since the North Koreans saw the ambiguity of the situation created by the postponement of safeguards inspections as an important bargaining chip, and regarded the protocol defining when such inspections could be done as sacrosanct, the new demand to move IAEA inspections forward only increased North Korean suspicions. Ambiguity surrounding the number of fuel rods that had been reprocessed previously was probably their most valuable remaining bargaining chip. Through Bush's personal criticism of Kim Jong Il, the conflict became personalized and deepened mistrust. Even Bush apparently later admitted that this remark had been a diplomatic misstep; Senator Joseph Biden said in an interview that "Bush 'was clearly aware' that his March comments about Kim were 'a blunder' and that the president never intended to disrupt relations."¹⁸⁵

The end of the policy review and its subsequent announcement further chilled relations with North Korea. The main result of announcing the end of the review was a change in administration attitude, since the North Koreans had already mostly adjusted their expectations to the outcome of the policy review. While North Korea stuck to its original claim that the only widening of talks should be to include compensation for lack of energy, the Bush administration attempted to widen the agenda for talks to include conventional forces, which given previous negative statements by the Bush administration regarding North Korea was interpreted as an attempt to disarm North Korea. Between the diplomatic isolation ("It is noteworthy that the new U.S. administration proposed to resume DPRK-U.S. dialogue which it unilaterally had put under suspension for four months, but we cannot but remain vigilant against its real intention.") and the renewal of the "rogue state" rhetoric, the North Koreans perceived this as a break with the Clinton administration's policy of gradual enlargement of the number of issues on which discussions could be made. Instead, they saw the Bush administration's new policy as a major change, "an attempt of the U.S. to disarm the DPRK through negotiations."¹⁸⁶ The North Koreans also became more sensitive to other events; for example, the July 14 missile interceptor test by the United States

¹⁸⁵*Arms Control Today* 2001.

¹⁸⁶*Korean Central News Agency* 2001d.

was roundly criticized,¹⁸⁷ as was the fourteenth sub-critical nuclear test carried out by the United States at the Nevada test site,¹⁸⁸ whereas previous tests had received little response.

Military deterrent threats began to appear, although indirect (a missile interceptor test) or vague (threats not to take advantage of the situation in Afghanistan post-9/11). Additional negative social actions by the IAEA to censure North Korea further increased acrimony. The June meeting of the IAEA board of governors opened with IAEA director Mohamed El Baradei calling on North Korea to comply with its request for safeguards inspections. The IAEA then issued a statement that North Korea was still in noncompliance. A repeat performance occurred in mid-September at the 45th IAEA General Conference. Each time, North Korea accused the United States and the IAEA of working together to shift the blame for a lack of progress.

During this period, evidence on the progress HEU program is very vague, and cannot be directly connected to individual actions by the United States. However, the result of the general US policy during this period was to deny the North Koreans the social benefits of high-level talks and to increase North Korean suspicions regarding US intentions significantly, leading to increasingly hostile relations. No overt nuclear moves occurred during this time, although evidence indicates that during the first year of the Bush administration, North Korea accelerated their uranium enrichment program. The CIA reported in its July-December 2001 report on the progress of various proliferators that “The North has been seeking centrifuge-related materials in large quantities to support a uranium enrichment program. It also obtained equipment suitable for use in uranium feed and withdrawal systems.”¹⁸⁹ Previous to this report, the CIA had never mentioned any actions related to uranium enrichment technologies; later (November 19, 2002), the CIA reported that “North Korea embarked on the effort to develop a centrifuge-based uranium enrichment program about two years ago,”¹⁹⁰ placing the start of the DPRK HEU effort at the end of the Clinton administration or possibly the beginning of the Bush administration.

¹⁸⁷*Korean Central News Agency 2001g.*

¹⁸⁸*Korean Central News Agency 2001a.*

¹⁸⁹Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 2001.

¹⁹⁰Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 2002b.

Although direct, overtly discernable nuclear actions were not taken, the general patterns of interaction during this period do demonstrate indirect evidence for and against some hypotheses. The tit-for-tat North Korea replies to negative comments are evidence against hypothesis H3b (Social Disincentives), while the back-and-forth nature of these interchanges supports hypothesis H5 (Positive Feedback). The effects of the vague military threats cannot be determined, however.

The “Axis of Evil” January 2002–October 2002

Relations continued to worsen through October 2002, as North Korea was identified as a potential target in the Nuclear Posture Review, part of an ‘axis of evil’ in Bush’s state of the union address, and as a ‘rogue state’ in the National Security Strategy. In June, the Bush administration finally attempted to schedule a high-level meeting with North Korea. However, a naval dispute in late June scuttled any chance of talks until October, which were preceded by administration officials briefing allies on evidence that North Korea had been pursuing an HEU program.

An implied nuclear threat was made in the Nuclear Posture Review, leaked on January 8, 2002 to the press; among other “immediate contingencies” it considered was a “North Korean attack on South Korea.” It also noted that “North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya are among the countries that could be involved in immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies. All have longstanding hostility toward the United States and its security partners; North Korea and Iraq in particular have been chronic military concerns. All sponsor or harbor terrorists, and all have active WMD and missile programs.”¹⁹¹ This was followed on January 29 by the State of the Union speech, in which President Bush grouped together Iran, Iraq, and North Korea: “North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens.... States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.”¹⁹² Some administration officials attempted to temper this statement, saying that the United States was ready

¹⁹¹Department of Defense 2001.

¹⁹²Bush 2002.

to talk with North Korea. In an uncharacteristically quick response, North Korea issued a statement in response: “There has been no precedent in the modern history of DPRK-US relations that in his policy speech the US President made undisguised threatening remarks on aggression and threat against the DPRK, an independent and sovereign state. This is, in fact, little short of declaring war against the DPRK.”¹⁹³

Other members of the administration, including Rice¹⁹⁴ and Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton,¹⁹⁵ also criticized North Korea around the same time for conducting covert programs for weapons of mass destruction and missile proliferation. Powell, when testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that Bush’s reference to Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an “axis of evil” was “not a rhetorical flourish—he meant it,” although Powell also stated that the US was not going to invade and was willing to engage in dialogue. Members of the House wrote to President Bush soon afterwards,¹⁹⁶ calling upon him to reconsider implementing the Agreed Framework and later praising him for including North Korea as part of an “axis of evil.”¹⁹⁷ They also introduced legislation to deny funding for KEDO.

North Korea responded through its UN ambassador, repeating the charge that this was equivalent to a declaration of war, but still added that North Korea would still respond in reciprocal ways to both positive and negative signs: “Nice words will be answered by nice words.”¹⁹⁸ This policy of reciprocation was carried out the next day as North Korea accused the United States of being the “empire of devil.”¹⁹⁹ This trading of verbal rebukes tapered off towards the end of February, and real attempts were still made on both sides to resume dialogue. The United States pursued negotiations through China,²⁰⁰ and North Korean and US representatives met twice in March. In April, North Korea resumed negotiations with KEDO. In mid-June, special envoy Jack Pritchard met with North Korea’s UN ambassador

¹⁹³ *Korean Central News Agency 2002b.*

¹⁹⁴ Rice 2002.

¹⁹⁵ *Olson 2002.*

¹⁹⁶ *Agence France Presse 2002c.*

¹⁹⁷ *Deutsche Presse-Agentur 2002a.*

¹⁹⁸ *Lederer 2002*; this echoes the “nice words for nice words” in the North Korea’s original reply (*Korean Central News Agency 2002b*)

¹⁹⁹ *Korean Central News Agency 2002a.*

²⁰⁰ *Agence France Presse 2002a.*

to seek dates for a high-level US meeting.

On June 29, North and South Korean naval forces exchanged gunfire in disputed waters west of the Korean peninsula, resulting in four deaths and sunk ship on the South Korean side and about 30 deaths on the North Korean side. This brought to a halt diplomatic efforts to arrange a meeting between the United States and North Korea. Efforts to resume dialogue resumed at the end of the month; Colin Powell met unofficially for 15 minutes at the ASEAN Regional Forum with North Korea's foreign minister.²⁰¹ Several statements by North Korea and the United States in August mirrored each other, indicating a temporary thaw and a willingness to abide by the Agreed Framework. However, this was balanced out at the end of August by critiques of North Korea by Bolton during his visits to Tokyo and Seoul that reinvoked the "axis of evil" trope: "President Bush's use of the term 'Axis of evil' to describe Iran, Iraq, and North Korea was more than a rhetorical flourish—it was factually correct."²⁰² These statements were duly rejected as "sheer lies" by North Korea soon afterwards.²⁰³ The National Security Strategy, released in September 2002, devoted an entire section to "rogue states," mentioning explicitly Iraq and North Korea (but Iran only as a victim of aggression from Iraq), and enshrined the doctrine of preventive (called "preemptive") action.²⁰⁴

Mounting evidence of North Korean attempts to acquire capabilities for creating highly enriched uranium led members of the Bush Administration to brief Japan and South Korea on the program. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi subsequently paid a short visit on September 17 to North Korea, but only discussed abductions of Japanese citizens and missile testing; Kim Jong Il promised to maintain its moratorium on testing. At the end of the month, North Korea proposed a "technical consultation" with the IAEA to resolve suspicions.²⁰⁵

The severe social sanction represented by the inclusion of North Korea into the "axis of evil" had multiple effects on North Korean behavior. This term became a persistent issue in a way that the older rhetoric of "rogue states" never did; the use of the term "rogue state"

²⁰¹ *Purdum and Kirk 2002.*

²⁰² Bolton 2002b.

²⁰³ *Korean Central News Agency 2002a.*

²⁰⁴ National Security Council 2002a.

²⁰⁵ *Yonhap News Agency 2002.*

was mentioned relatively infrequently in the KCNA in the past compared to “axis of evil.” Also notable is the reinvigoration of the term after the October 2002 meeting in which the North Koreans were accused of having a highly enriched uranium program. The phrase had several effects on the North Koreans: first, it linked them together with the Iraqis and the Iranians, thus making US policy towards these other countries even more salient than it would have been; second, the phrase itself suggests the necessity of regime change; while a “rogue” or an “outlaw” might be brought back into the international community, an “evil” regime requires removal; third, it could and probably was used by hard-line elements in North Korea as a reason to reject diplomatic solutions.²⁰⁶

Again, evidence regarding the progress of the HEU program during this period cannot be connected directly to US actions. North Korea sought frequency converters, pure Cobalt, and approximately 2000 6000-grade aluminum tubes. CIA reports for January-July 2002 indicate that “[The United States] did not obtain clear evidence indicating that North Korea had begun constructing a centrifuge facility until recently.... North Korea’s goal appears to be a plant that could produce enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year when fully operational.”²⁰⁷ In general, however, North Korea continued a policy of responding reciprocally to social sanctions, condemning both the “axis of evil” speech and other such comments made by administration officials, but also echoing periodic positive moves by the United States. The tit-for-tat North Korea replies to negative comments are evidence against hypothesis H3b (Social Disincentives), while the back-and-forth nature of these interchanges supports hypothesis H5 (Positive Feedback). However, this reciprocity was about to change.

The Downward Spiral: October 2002–June 2003

After the October 2002 meeting (in which the United States accused North Korea of having a highly enriched uranium program), dynamics between the United States and North Korea changed substantially. Instead of continuing to reciprocate both positive and negative social actions, North Korea continually rejected almost all diplomatic overtures and

²⁰⁶Off-the-record discussions have confirmed this.

²⁰⁷Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center 2002a.

quickly reactivated its nuclear program. In a few short months, the DPRK kicked out inspectors, withdrew from the NPT, restarted its 5MWe reactor, and claimed to have started reprocessing the 8000 spent fuel rods that had previously been canned. During this period, the United States attempted several diplomatic overtures and various implicit and explicit threats of economic sanctions and potential military action, but no actions resulted in any change in DPRK policy; a single, three-way meeting occurred between China, the United States, and North Korea in April, which ended early and unsuccessfully. Finally, North Korea nullified the 1992 North-South nuclear pact in June 2003.

Having briefed key allies on the uranium program, the United States sent US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs James Kelly to Pyongyang in October 2002 to confront the North Koreans, stating that the United States had evidence that they were seeking equipment for a uranium enrichment facility.²⁰⁸ While Kelly maintains that the North Koreans admitted to the program one day after the accusations were made, the North Koreans insist that they only said that they had the right to pursue nuclear programs, without specifically referring to a uranium enrichment program, and accused Kelly of taking a “high-handed and arrogant attitude.” The North Koreans have released their transcript of the episode in question, which supports their argument.²⁰⁹

After the announcement on October 16 by State Department spokesman Richard Boucher that the North Koreans had admitted to a program,²¹⁰ North Korea was also criticized by the IAEA.²¹¹ This was the end of potential reciprocation between North Korea and United States. Although South Korea, Japan, and China urged the United States to continue negotiations and saw the admission as an offer to put up the program for negotiation (South Korea simultaneously criticized North Korea), such negotiations never began.²¹² The eighth set of inter-ministerial talks between South and North Korea continued as scheduled October 19-22, although separate talks between North Korea and Japan ended in dispute at the end of the month.

²⁰⁸Pinkston 2002.

²⁰⁹Lewis 2004.

²¹⁰Warrick 2002.

²¹¹*Joongang Ilbo* 2002.

²¹²*Goodman and Pomfret* 2002.

Encouraged by its generally improving relations with its neighbors, North Korea's response to the October 16 announcement was to announce that it required three conditions to resolve the current impasse with the United States: recognition of sovereignty, not hindering economic development, and assurance of non-aggression, the latter of which became the primary demand of North Korea. Simultaneously, North Korea complained of US intransigence over the reactor, and revealed what was part of a confidential minute that only obligated North Korea to allow inspections after turbines and generators were installed: "Under article 4 of the framework and paragraph g of its confidential minute the DPRK is to allow nuclear inspections only after the 'delivery of essential non-nuclear components for the first LWR unit, including turbines and generators' is completed."²¹³). This was later verified by Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci.²¹⁴

North Korea's new demands reflected three concerns: being named in the Nuclear Posture Review in January, being placed in the "axis of evil," and fearing the then-newly released National Security Strategy of the United States,²¹⁵ which enshrined the doctrine of preemptive action: "However, the Bush administration listed the DPRK as part of the 'axis of evil' and a target of the U.S. preemptive nuclear strikes. This was a clear declaration of a war against the DPRK as it totally nullified the DPRK-U.S. joint statement and agreed framework. In the long run, the Bush administration has adopted it as its policy to make a preemptive nuclear strike at the DPRK."²¹⁶ With these new demands, North Korean reciprocation of any positive social approaches by the United States ended. Informal guarantees were no longer possible; a formal non-aggression pact was required. The phrase "non-aggression" appeared 283 times in the Korean Central News Agency between 1997 and 2003; 255 of these are after October 16th, 2002. The North Koreans had been convinced by US rhetoric (for there was little new material action up to this point against North Korea) that only binding guarantees were possible, and so spurned all positive social approaches after this point, reciprocating only material gestures (which were mainly negative in any case).

²¹³ *Korean Central News Agency 2002b.*

²¹⁴ Wit *et al.* 2004.

²¹⁵ National Security Council 2002a.

²¹⁶ KCNA2002Treaty

On November 13, the US National Security Council decided to end heavy fuel oil shipments to North Korea. The next day the executive board of KEDO suspended shipments.²¹⁷ This economic sanction lead to further criticism from North Korea and additional declarations that the Agreed Framework was dead.²¹⁸ At the end of November, the IAEA called on North Korea to cooperate with them to settle its safeguards commitments and clarify reports of the uranium enrichment program, to which the North Korean Foreign Minister replied that due to threats from the United States, it could not, and accused the IAEA of being a pawn of the United States.²¹⁹

On December 12, the Foreign Ministry announced that North Korea would “immediately resume the operation and construction of its nuclear facilities to generate electricity,” and the head of the Atomic Energy Department asked the IAEA to remove seals and monitoring cameras.²²⁰ On December 21, North Korea began removing seals and disabling cameras at the 5 MWe reactor site; followed by the storage facility for the 8000 spent fuel rods the next day, and the Radiochemical Laboratory the day after that.²²¹ North Korea requested the removal of IAEA inspectors on December 27.²²²

On New Year’s Eve, 2002, the North Korean Foreign Ministry accused the United States of “ditching” the 1994 agreed framework; North Korea’s ambassador to Russia claimed that “North Korea is not currently able to meet its commitments under the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons,” implicitly threatening to leave the NPT. Simultaneously, the inspectors from the IAEA who were monitoring activity at the Yongbyon nuclear site were kicked out.²²³

President Bush stated that he was certain that North Korea could be stopped “peacefully, through diplomacy.”²²⁴ Bush denied two days later that the United States had major differences with Asian nations over how to handle the dispute, although he also described Kim

²¹⁷Kirk 2002.

²¹⁸Korean Central News Agency 2002a.

²¹⁹New York Times 2002.

²²⁰Korean Central News Agency 2002c.

²²¹Stevenson 2002.

²²²Korean Central News Agency 2002b.

²²³Brooke 2003c.

²²⁴Sanger 2003g.

Jong Il as “somebody who starves his people.”²²⁵ The next day, North Korea’s ambassador to China said that “The U.S. should respect the international community and respond to dialogue without any preconditions;”²²⁶ in response, the Bush administration reemphasized its precondition: that North Korea stop its programs to build nuclear bombs. On January 6, the IAEA passed a resolution unanimously deploring the expulsion of inspectors, dismantling of cameras, and removal of seals, and gave the North Korean government one more chance to be readmitted before referring the issue to the UN Security Council.²²⁷ That afternoon, Bush repeated three times that the United States has no intention of invading North Korea.²²⁸

On January 9, North Korea agreed to hold cabinet-level talks with South Korea from January 21–24, while two North Korean diplomats met with the Governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson, for informal talks regarding the nuclear crisis. The Bush administration, after two days of meetings with South Korea and Japan, expressed its willingness to informally talk to the North Korean government.²²⁹ *The next day, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.* North Korea emphasized at the time that they had no intention of producing nuclear weapons.²³⁰ This statement is important with respect not to formal treaty obligations (although it allowed them to postpone the annulment of the North-South denuclearization treaty), but rather with respect to their informal international status. Just as India and Pakistan have been said to have made not one but two decisions when they tested their weapons—to test, and to declare themselves officially nuclear powers—North Korea consequently delayed this step until later. Still, North Korea’s withdrawal was condemned by many countries, including Japan, Russia, France, and South Korea. Republican Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl (R-AZ) said they would introduce legislation seeking penalties against North Korea.²³¹ However, On the 11th, North Korea’s ambassador to China warned that it might resume long-range ballistic missile tests; a mass rally was held in North Korea that was unusual for being held outside

²²⁵Sanger 2003b.

²²⁶Brooke and Rosenthal 2003.

²²⁷Landler 2003.

²²⁸Sanger 2003d.

²²⁹Weisman 2003.

²³⁰Mydans 2003.

²³¹Sanger and Preston 2003.

of traditional calendar events.²³²

On January 13, James A. Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said during a visit to South Korea, that the United States was willing to talk, and mentioned potential economic assistance to North Korea after its nuclear program is dismantled.²³³ The next day, China offered to arrange a meeting between the United States and North Korea in Beijing, and President Bush said he would consider offering a “bold initiative,” and suggested that security guarantees and diplomatic recognition could also follow dismantlement of North Korea’s nuclear program.²³⁴ *Satellite photos that day indicate that the power system at the “radiochemical laboratory” was being tested. The tests continued for two weeks.* The “radiochemical laboratory” is better known as the North Korean reprocessing plant. Evidence for a test of the power system came when steam was seen billowing from the pipes connecting the power facility connected to the plant.²³⁵

Meanwhile, relations between North and South Korea continued to be stable; on the 15th, they agreed to resume high-level talks; the next day, the President-elect of South Korea argued for a conciliatory approach and all but ruled out the use of force, stating that “North Korea wants to escape from its status as a rogue state.”²³⁶ During the high-level talks that began on the 21st, North Korea also reassured South Korea that it had no intention of producing nuclear weapons - at that stage.²³⁷ Outgoing South Korean President Kim Dae Jung encouraged the United States to have patience and respect when dealing with the North on the 24th.

On the 18th, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov arrived in North Korea in an attempt to negotiate a solution. Upon his return, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov called for direct dialogue between the United States and the DPRK. However, North Korea criticized outside efforts to help resolve the impasse on the 25th.²³⁸

More moderate parts of the Bush administration continued to express a desire to negotiate; Richard Armitage was quoted on the 19th as stating “We are not going to invade North

²³²Eckholm 2003.

²³³French 2003a.

²³⁴Sanger 2003c.

²³⁵Sanger 2003i.

²³⁶French 2003f.

²³⁷French 2003b.

²³⁸Brooke 2003b.

Korea. If we respect their sovereignty, and their economic activity, then there is a basis to move forward.”²³⁹ The aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk was reported to have left its home port for the Sea of Japan on the 24th to “monitor the Korean Peninsula,” which was met with condemnation by North Korea²⁴⁰ (it was later revealed that the Kitty Hawk was being redeployed to Iraq; instead, the carrier Carl Vinson replaced Kitty Hawk) *On January 30, photos showed the fuel rods at the Yongbyon plant being loaded into trucks.*²⁴¹ The destination of the trucks was and still is unknown; however, they are generally assumed to have been reprocessed.

The next day, the Pentagon announced that the commander of American forces in the Pacific, Adm. Thomas B. Fargo, had requested additional air and naval forces the previous week. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld placed 24 long-range bombers on alert for possible employment on February 3, and labeled North Korea a “terrorist regime,”²⁴² both of which North Korea dutifully condemned. *On February 5, North Korea announced that it had resumed normal operations at the Yongbyon reactor.*²⁴³ The Bush administration then warned North Korea against trying to take advantage of the situation in Iraq.

On the 7th, President Bush sought China’s support for resolving the crisis with North Korea; However, Chinese officials replied on the 11th that they had been working hard to help mediate, but that the two sides would need to find a solution themselves.²⁴⁴ South Korean President-elect Roh Moo Hyun dispatched a team to Washington to discuss foreign policy, but it was clear that the new South Korean administration would not fall in line easily; a senior South Korean said that the new government “would prefer that North Korea had nuclear weapons to seeing it collapse.”²⁴⁵ The Bush administration then asked the IAEA on the 12th to find North Korea in violation of its NPT responsibilities, and announced that it was developing plans for sanctions against North Korea on the 17th. ²⁴⁶ North Korea responded the next day by threatening to abandon its commitment to the 1953

²³⁹ French 2003d.

²⁴⁰ Agence France Presse 2003c.

²⁴¹ Sanger and Schmitt 2003.

²⁴² Shanker and Sanger 2003b.

²⁴³ French 2003c.

²⁴⁴ Rosenthal 2003.

²⁴⁵ French 2003e.

²⁴⁶ Dao 2003.

Korean War armistice.

Colin Powell visited South Korea, Japan, and China from the 21st through the 25th in an attempt to gain their support for additional measures against North Korea. However, officials in China, Australia, and South Korea instead urged the United States to talk directly to the North Koreans.²⁴⁷ At the end of the trip, the State Department announced that it was cutting food donations to North Korea for this year; the same day, North Korea tested a ballistic missile, its first test in three years. *The next day, North Korea reactivated the Yongbyon reactor.*²⁴⁸ The 5 MWe reactor at Yongbyon was reactivated at the end of February; photos indicate a plume of steam coming from the reactor (in a separate part of the Yongbyon complex from the reprocessing plant). There are reports that this reactor was shut down on September 11, but was then reactivated on October 2. Some photos seem to indicate another shutdown in early June,²⁴⁹ but there are no other reports discussing a shutdown at this point. Whether shutdowns after February were policy moves on North Korea's part or are simply due to technical difficulties is debated. *Two days later, the reprocessing plant was also restarted, a month after the original tests of its power system.*

On March 3rd, North Korean fighter jets attempted to intercept a reconnaissance plane on a surveillance mission over the Sea of Japan.²⁵⁰ The next day, senior Pentagon officials announced that two dozen long-range bombers would be deployed to Guam (although the order had been signed before the previous incident). White House officials described it as "insurance against North Korean 'opportunism' if military action begins in Iraq," while Bush remarked that if administration efforts "don't work diplomatically, they'll have to work militarily."²⁵¹ It was followed by remarks two days later by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who mentioned that the Defense Department was looking at ways of reducing the vulnerability of the 37,000 troops in South Korea.²⁵² On March 9, North Korea test-fired a surface-to-ship missile.²⁵³

This exchange was interrupted by the US invasion of Iraq, during which Kim Jong

²⁴⁷*New York Times* 2003a.

²⁴⁸*Sanger* 2003h.

²⁴⁹Hinderstein 2003.

²⁵⁰*Schmitt* 2003.

²⁵¹*Sanger and Shanker* 2003.

²⁵²*New York Times* 2003b.

²⁵³*New York Times* 2003b.

Il disappeared completely (in fact, his last noted public appearance had been in mid-February), and North Korea postponed talks with South Korea on March 22. The reason for Kim Jong Il's disappearance was elaborated by the KCNA's reaction to the decapitation strikes on Saddam Hussein: "The arrogant and outrageous behavior of the U.S. that adopted it as its national policy to kill the state leader of another country is typical state terrorism that can never be tolerated."²⁵⁴

Japan launched two spy satellites at the end of the month in response to North Korea's missile launches. In early April, North Korea moved even closer to nuclear acquisition by arguing that only a "tremendous military deterrent" would be needed.

"Even the signing of a non-aggression treaty with the U.S. would not help avert a war. Only the physical deterrent force, tremendous military deterrent force powerful enough to decisively beat back an attack supported by any ultra-modern weapons, can avert a war and protect the security of the country and the nation. This is a lesson drawn from the Iraqi war. The U.S is seriously mistaken if it thinks that the DPRK will accept the demand for disarming while watching one of the three countries the U.S. listed as part of an "axis of evil" already subject to the barbarous military attack."²⁵⁵

After this rejection of disarmament, the United States moved back from its position on passing a UNSC resolution condemning North Korea, while China indicated that it would be willing to assist with dialogue between the United States and the DPRK,²⁵⁶ and Russia warned that it would not welcome North Korean nuclear weapons.²⁵⁷ In response to Chinese pressure, North Korea agreed not to insist upon solely bilateral talks with the United States,²⁵⁸ and the United States agreed to talks without prior conditions with North Korea (with China moderating) a few days later.²⁵⁹ *Just previous to the talks, North Korea announced that they were ready to reprocess the fuel rods, but then also proposed high-level*

²⁵⁴ *Korean Central News Agency 2003.*

²⁵⁵ *Korean Central News Agency 2003.*

²⁵⁶ *Barringer 2003.*

²⁵⁷ *Wines 2003.*

²⁵⁸ *Brooke 2003a.*

²⁵⁹ *Sanger 2003f.*

talks with South Korea.²⁶⁰ Talks with the United States began on April 23rd. *North Korean officials claimed that they already possessed nuclear weapons, and were reprocessing the plutonium in the 8000 fuel rods.*²⁶¹ Some debate remains over when the rods were reprocessed; see Chapter 6. Talks ended abruptly afterwards, leading to a temporary lull in the crisis, until a statement on May 12 “nullifying” the North-South Denuclearization Agreement, which went into effect in early 1992. The DPRK’s withdrawal statement from the North-South agreement was scheduled the same day that the new South Korean president, Roh Moo Hyun, made his first official visit to the United States, and so is likely to have been an attempt to overshadow that visit.²⁶²

A final nuclear status provocation came late in August under similar circumstances as the previous ones; during the first round of six-party talks, *North Korea asserted that it would soon break two nuclear status thresholds: testing a weapon and declaring itself a nuclear state.*²⁶³ However, the former has not happened, and without proof of a nuclear test, North Korea’s nuclear weapons program remains in an ambiguous state.

Summary

Unlike the first crisis, few actions by North Korea during the second crisis seemed to be directly related to US actions. The tit-for-tat North Korea replies to negative comments preceding the crisis itself are evidence against hypothesis H3b (Social Disincentives). The suspension of heavy fuel oil deliveries preceded the first announcement of resumption of nuclear activities by a month, evidence against hypothesis H2a (Economic Disincentives). This period provided substantial evidence against hypothesis H3a (Social Incentives); overtures in early January by the Bush administration were followed by the North Korean withdrawal from the NPT and testing of the power system at the reprocessing plant, while the April talks ended when North Korea announced that they possessed nuclear weapons. Similarly, there is evidence against Military Disincentives (H1b): North Korea condemned aircraft carrier movements in late January (and moved fuel rods soon afterwards); Rumsfeld’s

²⁶⁰*New York Times* 2003.

²⁶¹*Sanger* 2003e.

²⁶²*Sanger* 2003a.

²⁶³*Sanger and Kahn* 2003.

alerting of long-range bombers on February 3 was followed by resumption of operations at the 5 MWe reactor. The invasion of Iraq (an indirect threat, but made salient by the linking of Iraq and North Korea in many public speeches) was followed by a declaration that North Korea would seek a “tremendous military deterrent.” Threatened economic sanctions also seemed to lead to additional negative actions, evidence against H2b (Economic Disincentives).

Domestically, both the executive and legislative branches were aligned against a deal with North Korea during the crisis. It is unclear whether individual statements regarding North Korea would have undercut US policy or not, since efforts at reconciliation were half-hearted at best; consequently, hypothesis H4a is neither supported nor refuted. By contrast, positive feedback (H5) is well supported both before and during the crisis. Military moves were made by both sides in response to each other (North Korea’s ballistic missile test; US movement of long-range bombers to Guam; North Korea’s attempted interception of a reconnaissance plane; US public consideration of repositioning troops; another missile test, etc.) Social moves also mirrored each other, but in reverse; diplomatic overtures were rejected, only to be renewed again.

Were the root causes of North Korea’s nuclear actions structural or did they spawn from interaction? Although some interaction hypotheses seem to be supported, the lack of direct connections made by North Korea in statements between actions by the United States and North Korea’s nuclear actions makes it likely that an underlying structural shift—in this case a social structural shift—contributed to North Korea’s decision to abandon the Agreed Framework, supporting hypothesis H6b (Structural Motivation). When the Bush administration broke off high-level talks for over two years, they deprived North Korea of the recognition and equal treatment they clearly valued, then continued to take actions that heightened North Korean suspicions, leading to a fundamental, structural shift in how North Korea viewed its social relationship with the United States (as was evidenced by North Korean reactions to US actions), such that the short-term social benefits offered through interaction no longer led to reciprocation. This lends support to hypothesis H6b (Structural Motivations). Finally, Chinese, South Korean, and Japanese efforts to close the gaps between the United States and North Korea failed, evidence against hypothesis H7

(Multi-party Interactions).

4.4 Conclusions

While realist, liberal, and constructivist hypotheses are all supported (in that military, economic, and social incentives or disincentives played a significant role), evidence for each hypothesis is very mixed; the results are summarized in Table 4.3. One of the most striking

Table 4.3: DPRK: hypotheses supported by qualitative analysis

+ = *evidence weakly for*, ++ = *evidence strongly for*,

– = *evidence against*, — = *evidence strongly against*,

* = *agrees with quantitative analysis*

Hypothesis	Dates			
	Mar 1993– Jun 1993	Jun 1993– Mar 1994	Mar 1994– Oct 1994	Oct 2002– Jun 2003
H1a (Military Incentives)	++	+		
H1b (Military Disincentives)		—	+*	—*
H2a (Economic Incentives)			++	
H2b (Economic Disincentives)	+	–	++*	—*
H3a (Social Incentives)	++	+	++*	—*
H3b (Social Disincentives)		—		
H4a (Veto Players)				
H4b (Coalition Politics)				
H5 (Positive Feedback)			Yes*	Yes*
H6a (Interaction Motivation)	Yes	Yes		
H6b (Structural Motivation)			Yes	Yes
H7 (Multiparty Interaction)	Yes	Yes	Yes	

results of both the quantitative testing and the qualitative analysis was how much North Korean responses to US actions varied not only between but within the two administrations. For example, while economic disincentives were useful in the first few and last few months of the first crisis, they were counterproductive during the intervening months. Similarly, they were ineffective during the second crisis. This is largely due to a lack of credibility; without alignment of the other parties to the crisis, the threat of sanctions was empty.

Another striking, and initially puzzling, result is how strategies that were consistently effective during the first crisis became ineffective during the second one. Social incentives

were consistently beneficial during 1993-1994, but were completely useless during 2002-2003; similarly, when military disincentives were briefly credible, they contributed towards North Korea's backdown, but otherwise only exacerbated the crises. These differences were not due to a fundamental difference in general approaches; both administrations attempted to use military and economic sanctions to prevent North Korea from taking nuclear steps and attempted to use social benefits to entice North Korea to freeze its program.

The reason for these differences can be traced to key events in the Clinton and Bush administrations. In the first half of the first crisis, the Clinton administration was unable to align the interests of important international actors in order to make deterrent threats credible; consequently, North Korea reacted negatively to material threats. But once North Korea came close to violating the "red lines" the Clinton administration had set up, the administration reacted strongly and the deterrent threat of economic sanctions worked—but only once the administration convinced other actors to support the sanctions, making the threat credible, as well as clear and consequential, and combined the threat with counterbalancing incentives. By contrast, not only were the attempted deterrent moves of the Bush administration verbally unconnected to North Korean actions, but other members of the international community were unconvinced; consequently, such threats (primarily military instead of economic) contributed to a negative reaction on the part of the North Koreans rather than a backdown.

Deterrence was also more successful during the Clinton administration because of the social benefits offered in tandem. While both administrations used high-level talks as a bargaining chip rather than simply as a process or a method of negotiation, the Bush administration used this strategy for much longer period of time, thus depriving the North Koreans of the social benefits of being treated as an equal, raising North Korean suspicions of whether the Bush administration would make a good faith effort to solve the impasse. The consistent (yet vague) targeting of North Korea in 2002 and negative rhetoric (which continued to a limited extent through the crisis) turned this suspicion into reality, as could be seen in the trajectory of North Korean rhetoric; by the time the second crisis began, the North Koreans had abandoned their strategy of social reciprocation, and instead rejected social overtures. By contrast, the Clinton administration followed a consistent policy of

social engagement with the North Koreans. This fundamental shift from social engagement to estrangement undercut the social overtures during the second crisis, depriving the Bush administration of the key bargaining tool needed to balance material disincentives and bring North Korea seriously to the bargaining table.

While occasionally the legislative branch of the US government attempted to play a role in both crises, there was no significant evidence supporting domestic politics hypotheses. There was some variation in individual players' strategies with respect to North Korea; these differences of opinion might have had an effect upon interactions with North Korea, if North Korea seemed to suspect only certain members of the Bush administration. However, it seems that North Korea mistrusted the entire administration, so these differences of opinion had less of an effect than they would have otherwise. The lack of evidence for or against coalition politics in North Korea is probably in part due to the opacity of the North Korean regime; although it is possible to speculate as to whether divisions within North Korea caused certain actions, lack of internal evidence prevents verification of this speculation.

Feedback loops played an important role at the height of both crises, amplifying US strategies; in the case of the first crisis, it helped to bring about the Agreed Framework, while in the second, it assisted in its dissolution. Finally, while multiparty interactions were very important in the Clinton administration's success, they did not play a significant role in the failure of the Bush administration in 2003 to freeze North Korea's nuclear program; rather, the most relevant parties (China, South Korea, and Japan) already favored US negotiations with North Korea.

These results have important implications for both policy towards North Korea and towards other countries. With respect to North Korea, it is clear that social inducements (e.g. high-level talks) are a significant enticement—but in the current situation, will not be sufficient unless North Korea can be convinced that its relationship with the United States has fundamentally changed. The importance of Chinese participation is underscored by the outcome of the first crisis; without Chinese acquiescence, the threat of (additional) economic sanctions is not only ineffective, but counterproductive. While other actors (especially Japan and South Korea) can offer economic benefits, the United States still has the

ability to offer the most enticing social benefit—full diplomatic recognition.

US policies towards North Korea have been focused primarily on the North Korean demand for nuclear weapons. However, this is not the only counterproliferation strategy that the US has followed in the post-Cold War era. Supply-side strategies have also been an intrinsic part of US strategy, and have played a larger role in counterproliferation policy with respect to other states. The role of supply-side strategies is the subject of the next two chapters; Chapter 5 examines US policy towards Iran, while Chapter 6 looks at proliferation networks.