

A Coevolution Strategy for North Korea's Post Military- First Policy



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Contents



Goal of "Strong and Prosperous Nation" and Military-First Politics



Decline of Military-First Politics



Short-Term Stability and Long-Term Dilemma of Kim Jong-un Regime



The First Step of Coevolution Strategy : Transition and Reform



The Second Step of Coevolution Strategy : Transformation

I . Goal of "Strong and Prosperous Nation" and Military-First Politics



Goal of “Strong and Prosperous Nation” and Military-First Politics

- North Korea's three hardships faced in the 1990s
 - ✓ 1) Collapse of the Soviet Union, 2) Death of Kim Il-sung, 3) “Arduous March”
- Tenth Supreme People’s Assembly in 1998
 - ✓ Revision of DPRK constitution to establish military-first politics
- Kim Jong-il's banner of “Strong and Prosperous Nation”
 - ✓ The three pillars: “nation of strong ideology, powerful army, and prosperous economy”

II . Decline of Military-First Politics: The Vicious Circle of Failing Security, Economy, and Politics



[Security] Vicious Circle of the DPRK Nuclear Issue

- **U.S.-DPRK unresolved disputes**
 - ✓ **U.S. : verifiable nuclear abandonment first**
 - ✓ **DPRK : abandoning U.S. hostile policy toward DPRK and normalization of U.S.-DPRK relations first**

- **Nuclear weapons: a warrant not for life but for death**
 - ✓ **U.S. top priority: eliminating weapons of mass destruction and terrorism**
 - ✓ **Rejecting the strategic decision to abandon the nuclear program will only intensify U.S.-led economic sanctions**

[Economy] Failing Economic Growth

- **Military-first economic strategy**
 - ✓ **Prioritizing the defense industry over light industry and agriculture**
 - ✓ **North Korea's GDP remains at 500 to 1,000 dollars per capita, one of the lowest in the world**
- **Dichotomy of self-reliance and subordination under military-first politics**
 - ✓ **With closed economic policies and distorted resource allocation, DPRK will inevitably fall deeper into financial crisis**

[Politics] Establishing a System for Succession

- Establishing core group for the survival of the Kim family
- ✓ Kim Jong-il filled key posts in the party and the military with his blood relatives
- Kim Jong-il's failing health in 2008
- ✓ Not sufficient time to prepare power succession compared to the previous one



III. Short-Term Stability and Long-Term Dilemma of Kim Jong-un Regime



Short-Term Stability of Kim Jong-un Regime

- **Kim Jong-un, the supreme commander, supported by the duumvirate**
- ✓ **Party (WPK): Jang Song Thaek (65, Administration Department Director), Kim Kyong Hui (65, Member of the Political Bureau), Choe Ryong Hae (62, Member of the Central Military Commission), Kim Ki Nam (85, Secretariat), and Choe Thae Bok (81, Secretariat)**
- ✓ **Military (KPA): Ri Yong Ho (69, Vice-Chairmen of Central Military Commission), Kim Jong Gak (70, Senior Deputy Director of Ministry of People's Armed Forces (MPAF) General Political Department), Kim Yong Chun (76, Minister of the MPAF), and U Tong Chuk (69, Senior Deputy of State Security Department)**

Short-Term Stability of Kim Jong-un Regime

- **Changes after the 12th Supreme People's Assembly**
- ✓ Vice Marshal Choe Ryong-hae was appointed to be the Director of the KPA General Political Bureau and was also promoted to serve as Presidium Standing Member of the Politburo, and as Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission.
- ✓ General U Tong Chuk, Senior Deputy Director at the State Security Department was overthrown.
- ✓ Minister of People's Armed Forces Vice-Marshal Kim Yong-chun was replaced by Kim Jong-gak.

Short-Term Stability of Kim Jong-un Regime

- **Serious limits in creating legitimacy**
- ✓ **Third generation of leadership succession from father to son**
- ① **Consolidating its power base through utilizing the slogan at the "behest of Kim Jong-il" as its most valuable political asset → military first politics will continue**
- ② **Embracing the existing military and political elites who tend to favor hard-line policies toward ROK**
- ✓ **The key concern is how the regime will make its next move after it has managed to establish legitimacy and stability in the short run**

Long-Term Dilemma of Kim Jong-un Regime

- North Korea's long-standing triple dilemma
 - ✓ Securing legitimacy in domestic politics; Stabilizing the international environment by resolving the nuclear crisis; Alleviating the economic hardships → all interlinked in mutually contradicting ways
 - ① Possessing nuclear weapons to sustain totalitarian *Suryong* system only intensifies a worsening economic crisis
 - ② Ongoing economic difficulties will eventually become a threatening factor for regime stability
 - ③ Giving up nuclear weapons in order to make an advance in economic development will jeopardize the regime stability

Kim Jong Un Speaks at Military Parade (2012/4/15)

- “The far-reaching strategy and final victory of the Korean revolution lie in advancing straight along the road of independence, the road of *Songun* (Military-first) and the path of socialism indicated by Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il.”
- “It is the firm resolution of the Worker's Party of Korea to enable our people, overcoming all difficulties, to live, without tightening their belts any longer, and fully enjoy wealth and prosperity under socialism.”
- “Peace is more important than anything else for the Party and the Republic in achieving *Gangseongdaeguk* (Strong and Prosperous State) and improving people's living standards. National pride and sovereignty of the republic, however, is more important than this.”

IV. The First Step of Coevolution Strategy: Transition and Reform



Coevolution Strategy

- **Mutual genetic evolution of butterflies and associated plant species**
- ✓ **“The simultaneous evolution of entities and their environments, whether these entities be organisms or organizations”**
- ✓ **Interdependency and mutual adaptation**




Coevolution Strategy

- **Overcoming the limitation of Sunshine Policy and sanctions**
 - ✓ **Sunshine policy: extended inter-Korean exchanges; failed to stop DPRK from developing nuclear weapons and pursuing military-first politics**
 - ✓ **Sanctions: the system of North Korea is able to weather sanctions longer than any other state in the world**
 - ✓ **Simultaneous evolution of the inside (DPRK) and the outside (international community) is required**

1. [DPRK] New Survival Strategy

- **Kim Jong-un regime's strategic decision for survival without nuclear weapons**
- ✓ Replacement of nuclear weapons with traditional weapons as the basis of the DPRK defense system
- **Establishment of a peace system for the Korean Peninsula**
- ✓ Securing comprehensive security insurance: DPRK-U.S. and DPRK-ROK peace agreement with support from China
- ✓ Building a sophisticated comprehensive network: simultaneously engaging the U.S., Japan, China, and Russia

2. [DPRK] Economy-First Politics

- **Transition from military-first to economy-first politics**
 - ✓ **Transitional reform that combines the market system and the planned economy**
 - ✓ **Pursuing economic development in cooperation with ROK**
 - ✓ **Overcoming the outdated distinction between socialism and capitalism, and actively making use of both China and the United States**
- 

3. [ROK and International Community]

- **Three-level complex peace system**

- ① **Inter-Korean peace system**

- ② **East Asian peace system under the guarantee of the United States and China**

- ③ **Multi-channeled peace system such as the Six-Party Talks**

→ **Provide the Kim Jong-un regime with a sense of security**

- **Providing North Korea assistance to succeed in its new economy-first politics**

V. The Second Step of Coevolution Strategy: Transformation



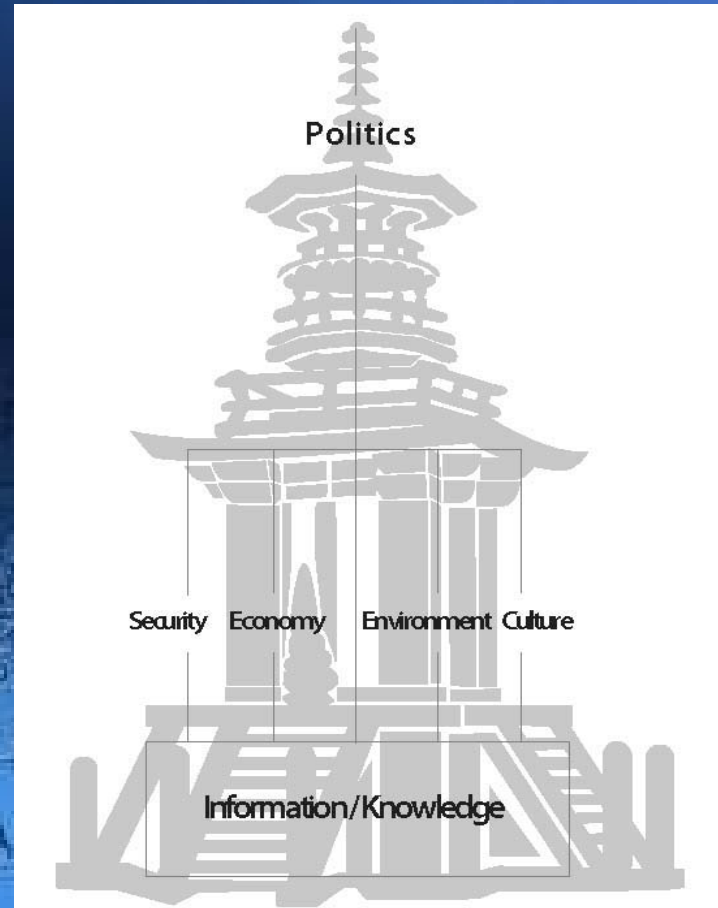
Standard of Twenty-first Century Civilization

- Building Complex Network: “wolf spider (actor) building a *dapo* pagoda (stage)”
- ✓ Combining of two different functions of a wolf and a spider: self-help/balance of power + networking among diversified actors



Standard of Twenty-first Century Civilization

- Establishing three-story complex stage
- ✓ $\{[(\text{Security}/\text{Economy})+\text{Culture}/\text{Environment}) \in \text{Knowledge}] \in \text{Politics}\}$



[DPRK] Establishing Complex Network State

- **China's 2049 model as a guideline for North Korea**
 - ✓ **“Prosperous, democratic, civilized, and harmonious socialist state”** (Hu Jintao's speech at the Meeting Marking the 30th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up)
- **Pursuing complex network in inter-Korean relationship**
 - ✓ **Involving various actors in a comprehensive manner beyond state-to-state relations**

[ROK and International Community]

- **East Asia at the beginning stage in community building**
- **Building complex network to prevent U.S.-China conflicts**
 - ① **Strengthening “dense network”**
 - ② **Expanding “connected network”**
 - ③ **Weaving Knowledge-mediating web to fill in “structural holes” in the network**





THANK YOU!

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