

# *North Korea's and Iranian Nuclear Program- Comperative approach*

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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to compare these two cases, to create a clear problematic overview, which representing today these countries to regional and global security, and solving this dispute with adequate means. By comparing the legal, political and diplomatic effects of these two nuclear programs, which affect the most powerful security strategies of countries in the world, this work paper intends to draw a line between their differences. The methodology to be used in this paper, it will be analysis of literature, international legal acts and declarations of the states' representatives which are involved in resolving the crisis or which are part of the problem.

The findings of this study relate to that: even existing of common elements between these cases, there are important differences between them. The same applicable legal instruments and diplomatic means resolution of these crises do not have the same effects on them. This it makes that each of this case to be unique, and unmatched in resolving the crisis.

Taken into consideration the existing literature on this issue, this paper modestly trying to fulfill the scientific gap in terms of finding the differences in these cases, as well as possible application instruments in resolving the nuclear crisis in the future.

**Key Words:** *North Korea, Iran, nuclear program, International community, differences*

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## ***Introduction***

Considering that, in the case of North Korea's nuclear program, in scientific terms we can freely say that the entire international nuclear non-proliferation regime used by international stakeholders to stop DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) of enriching the atomic bomb, has failed. Regarding the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the time of writing this article, the process of enriching uranium is halted up to 5%, as a result of achieving a comprehensive agreement between the P5 + 1 (the US, the Russian Federation, China, Great Britain, France and Germany on one side and Iran on the other hand).

Both of these cases have international legal significance, because a few of a legal instruments (sanctions) are applied, some have been successful in certain periods of time, and later failed. Some have had their effect on the use of a state, while the other did not have the same effect. From political and international relations perspective, both these cases pose challenges during the drawing political strategies by the great powers, in the realizing and protecting their vital interests. Regarding to the security of these countries, also affects the primary in developing security policies, to neighboring states.

## ***Similarities and differences***

The nuclear crisis is a serious confrontation between the defenders of international norms, which offer the best chance for peace and stability of a rouge state who seems to intent on owning weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which give them

opportunity to threaten the stability, only to protect their political regime interest.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously the comparison of Iran's nuclear crisis with the nuclear crisis of North Korea should begin by analyzing and comparing the political regimes in these two countries. Optimists in their point of view on Iran case have in mind, the historical civilization, Iran's major trading power; continuously increasing the oil wealth, a young generation, the most pluralist country than any other country in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Since the division of the Korean Peninsula as a result of the Second World War, North Korea has been led by just three people: Kim Il-sung and his son Kim Jong-il, and recently by grandson Kim Jong-un.<sup>3</sup> North Korea remains the only self-isolated country of the world and its government is one of the darkest in the earth.<sup>4</sup> Both regimes (North Korea and Iran) are formed and led by charismatic demagogue, with high rhetoric level of action against the classes' war and socially riched and corrupted people. But one of the highlighted differences lies in the religious motives and justifications of Khomeini's (spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution, 1979), which can not be found in North Korea's leader. Khomeini has urged his revolution against mismanagement, material misuse and secularism as a domestic

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<sup>1</sup> Gilbert, Rozman, *Strategic Thinking about the Korean Nuclear Crisis: Four Parties Caught between*

*North Korea and the United States*, Palgrave, Macmillian, 2007, pg.27.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick M. Cronin, *Double Trouble, Iran and North Korea as Challenges to International Security*, Praeger Security International, Westport, ConnecticutLondon, 2008, pg.11.

<sup>3</sup> John, Ishiyama, "Assessing the leadership transition in North Korea: Using network analysis of field inspections", 1997-2012, Department of Political Science, University of North Texas, 1155 Union Circle # 305340, Wooten Hall, Room No. 166, Denton, TX 76203-5340, United States, 2014, pg.1.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick M. Cronin, *Double Trouble, Iran and North Korea as Challenges to International Security*, Praeger Security International, Westport, ConnecticutLondon, 2008, pg.79.

leader, while Kim Il-sung, took the initiative together with other nationalists to free his country from foreign colonialists. Khomeini was a religious scholar with the idea of establishing good governance, while Kim Il-sung was an uneducated guerrilla fighter, where the necessity to think about governance it came out only after the defeating of Japan. Kim Il-sung has created an ideological system based on anti-imperialist sense, has incorporated a socialist economy, but ultimately is not an ideology that has the major benefit of a world religion to justify his role or making promises of reward in the next life. It has invested more efforts to promote ideological indoctrination dissent stifle and to ensure his rule. These differences have produced two political systems and different foundations, different type of state. North Korea and Iran are essentially different countries.<sup>5</sup> Although both countries follow some important policies of foreign vital interest to the United States, yet they exist in different regions, cultural divergence, security needs, and extraordinary economies, different ideologies with very different religious and political concepts.<sup>6</sup> But regarding the nuclear programs of two countries, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, has tried to identify as a similar both of them. In his speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, said that Iran should not be allowed to repeat the North Korea's wiles to possess nuclear weapons.<sup>7</sup> Based on their statements by Secretary of State John Kerry, after pressure from the Israeli authorities that the issue of Iran is going on the same

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<sup>5</sup> McEachern, *North Korea and Iran, Drawing Comparative Lessons*, U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, 2011, pg. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pg.20.

<sup>7</sup> Lazaroff, Tovah, "Netanyahu to compare Iran with North Korea in UN speech", *The Jerusalem Post*, 24.092013, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Netanyahu-to-compare-Iran-with-North-Korea-in-speech-to-UN-326918>, 26.02. 2014.

path as North Korea's one, Kerry refused to make comparisons between the nuclear deal with Iran and the agreement negotiated in the past with North Korea<sup>8</sup>. During an interview on CNN, on 25 November 2013, Kerry was asked in this form: "*Many people say that Iran will be the same as North Korea, a country that temporarily agree to stop its nuclear ambitions in order to lift the sanctions and then secretly goes forward and continues with its nuclear program. Why do you think that the case of Iranian nuclear program is not similar to the case of the North Korea's nuclear program?*" US Secretary -Kerry responded in that way, comparing the details of the two cases, where:

*First*, Iran is "a member of the NPT".

*Second*, Iranians "are involved in the negotiations".

*Third*, Iranians "are being committed daily inspections to a certain facilities and to limit their activities with these inspections."

*The fourth-* Iranians "have stated publicly that they would not build nuclear weapons," In contrast with Iran, he added that "*North Korea already has nuclear weapons and tested them and has not declared any denuclearization and disarmament policy. So there are many different things, and that we should try to find the possibility of using a diplomatic solution with Iran*".<sup>9</sup> But critics to the above mentioned declaration cite other facts adding that the Clinton administration had negotiated with North Korea and signed Agreement Framework in Geneva almost two decades ago, North Korea was also "a member of NP", and it had threatened in 1993 to withdraw from the treaty. North Korea also had

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<sup>8</sup> The Framework Agreement signed in 1994 between the United States and North Korea,

<sup>9</sup> Patrick, Goodenough, "Kerry Misleads in Saying There's No Comparison Between Iran and N. Korea Nuke Deals", CNN, news, November 25, 2013, <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/kerry-misleads-saying-theres-no-comparison-between-iran-and-n-korea>.

"negotiations" (Reconciliation Framework was signed after four months of bilateral talks between Washington and Pyongyang).<sup>10</sup> North Korea had also stated publicly that they would not build nuclear weapons "(Common Declaration of the South - North for Decnularisation of the Korean Peninsula" signed in 1991). Pyongyang said it would try to produce, acquire, own, decide, or use one of these nuclear weapons. According to the critics only one of the four reasons quoted by Kerry was probably correct. Unlike the agreement with Iran, in the Declaration of Conformity is not determined "daily inspections" of nuclear IAEA facilities in North Korea, but it had allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency to "monitoring" to specified nuclear facilities, and to conduct "ad hoc routine inspections of facilities".<sup>11</sup>

Efforts to understand what military capabilities have two countries; it is certain that both of them have the ability to influence in formulating the United States security policies and their neighbors. The US has decided to expand its missile defense in Alaska, to counter a possible military attack with ballistic missile from North Korea. Also the threat from Iran similarly has driven US planning missile defense, arms sales and other political decisions. Iran and North Korea also share some important features, both governed by authoritarian regimes, both countries have issued threats of concern for neighbors who are allies of the US and both have remained inconsistent, despite the severe punishment and stringent international sanctions. However, in terms of capacity, countries should not technically be grouped in the same category for a very clear reason for North

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<sup>10</sup> Agreed Framework between The United States of America and The Democratic People's Republic Of Korea, Geneva, October 21, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick, Goodenough, "Kerry Misleads in Saying There's No Comparison Between Iran and N. Korea Nuke Deals", 25.11. 2013 <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/patrick-goodenough/kerry-misleads-saying-theres-no-comparison-between-iran-and-n-korea#sthash.YInGfm7I.dpuf>, 11.03. 2014.

Korea's nuclear arsenal, while Iran has both similarities. Although Iran has no nuclear arsenal, he can strike militarily in retaliation Israeli and American targets. The confrontation could escalate to a destabilizing regional war in the Middle East, which is volatile and all this does not guarantee that Iran will not be able to rebuild its nuclear facilities several years later. The worst scenario is that premature military action will inspire outrage in Iran and uncertainty, which probably will force its government to launch a full scale of a nuclear weapons program, which has not yet been made a decision. Reason for optimism, unlike the "kingdom of solitude" of North Korea, is that Iran is integrated into the global economy and dependent on international trade. Therefore, economic sanctions should give much more effect with Iran than to the DPRK. With Iran continuing negotiations might provide an opportunity to halt a nascent nuclear program.<sup>12</sup>

A large part of the current diplomatic progress is partly the election of the Iranian president Hassan Rouhani. Soon after his inauguration, the US and Iran have had a meeting directly engaged at the highest levels since 1979. Although Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini remains the ultimate decision-making power in Tehran, he responded positively to Rouhani and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif to allow the necessary time and space to an agreement.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Sahay, Usha, "A Tale of Two Outliers: Comparing Options on Iran and North Korea", *Loblog Foreign Policy*, 22.02.2013, <http://www.loblog.com/a-tale-of-two-outliers-comparing-options-on-iran-and-north-korea>.

<sup>13</sup> On July 14, 2015, the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), the European Union (EU), and Iran reached a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to ensure that Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful. October 18, 2015 marked Adoption Day of the JCPOA, the date on which the JCPOA came into effect and participants began taking steps necessary to implement their JCPOA commitments. January 16, 2016, marks Implementation Day of the JCPOA. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified

North Korea is not in such level of accountability, it doesn't transfer to other Korean authorities where Kim family rules with an iron fist since the early 50<sup>th</sup> of last century. Negotiations between International stakeholders and North Korea began after DPRK was advanced very close to nuclear weapons. When the agreement was signed in 1994, North Korea already had a heavy operational water reactor; manufacturing enough to complete a nuclear weapon. A major part of the interim agreement with Iran was freezing progress on heavy water plant at Arak, which also will be able to produce plutonium. North Korea was determined to build a bomb, while Iran's leaders still have time to take a decision on making nuclear weapons.<sup>14</sup>

According to UN and the US officials' information, North Korea has the ability to produce dozens of nuclear bombs, while Iran on the other hand has only developed the technology to enrich uranium. Iran has also an agreement with the IAEA, which still remains in force, which allows officials to visit Iranian fuel nuclear- reactors. Pyongyang, on the other hand has expelled IAEA inspectors from the Yongbyon complex in 2002. At the moment, North Korea is much more unpredictable and dangerous entity than Iran. Unlike Iran, where religion has more value than the state, North Korea cares much more for its own survival, which may be the believable fact to use its bomb.<sup>15</sup>

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that Iran has implemented its key nuclear-related measures described in the JCPOA, and the Secretary State has confirmed the IAEA's verification. As a result of Iran verifiably meeting its nuclear commitments, the United States and the EU have lifted nuclear-related sanctions on Iran, as described in the JCPOA. *For more visit, US Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/>.*

<sup>14</sup> Hayes, Brown, "5 Reasons Why The Iran Deal Isn't North Korea Redux", Think Progress, 25.11.2013, <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2013/11/25/2989171/iran-deal-north-korea-redux/> #, 22.02. 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Hatttem, Julian, " Why Do We Laugh at North Korea but Fear Iran?", The Atlantic, 04.04. 2013, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/04/why-do-we-laugh-at-north-korea-but-fear-iran/274680/>, 01.04.2014.

Mainly the EU and the United States are deeply concerned about the situation in Iran than in North Korea. A nuclear Iran is considered to be potentially dangerous not only because Europe lies geographically within range of Iran's missiles, but also the region where Iran is mined stretches tense and volatile confrontations. In particular, Israel is determined to prevent Tehran from acquiring the bomb. A nuclear Iran could lead to a new arms race in the Middle East and further destabilizing the region, which lies closer to the old continent. European diplomatic power will be tested depending on how Iran is closer to finalize its nuclear program. The divisions between the EU countries are likely to grow about what to do next, as well as with Europe's main ally (the US). Regarding the North Korea, the European Union has drawn more attention in terms of non-proliferation over the last decade, but taken in consideration geographically distance located far from the Korean peninsula, for European policy makers is at least less strategically important than Iran.<sup>16</sup>

If we compare the actions taken by the international community, particularly by US as global leader, clearly it shows that the US government, not being able to eliminate nuclear weapons in North Korea. In fact, this program is further expanded under the Gorge W Bush administration. According to data based on public literature, during the past six years, North Korea's nuclear reserves were added by a sufficient quantity of material, for a bomb or two or up to six to twelve bombs. Yongbyon reactor is reactivated, so that up to spring 2007 has produced enough plutonium and if divided that material then it can produce one or two bombs per year. So one of the questions

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<sup>16</sup> Renard, Thomas, "Partnering for a nuclear-safe world: the EU, its strategic partners and nuclear non-proliferation, European Strategic Partnership Observatory", ISSN 2254-6391 (print) ISSN: ESPO working pape,r n.3 October 2013, The ESPO website.strategicpartnerships.eu. 10.11.2014.

that we may face obstacles in replaying and in its clarification is: *What is the sum of the amount of plutonium that North Korea possesses today? Is it able to use this material to produce nuclear weapons, and if so, how? What is location of nuclear plutonium or any other weapons? What is the physical size of a weapon? A produced arsenal or ballistic missiles from North Korea, or that can only deliver in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) with cars? What is the exact status of the enrichment program? Does North Korea give any technical knowledge (knowledge), material or nuclear weapons to third parties?* None of these questions are not getting the exact answer up today. These are the main negotiation challenges with North Korea.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, even if such weapons will never be used in the future, or will not cause an accident, the utter goal of their nuclear programs pose a challenge everyday to a global nuclear nonproliferation regime stability, particularly to the nuclear agreement, the Non-proliferation Treaty of nuclear Weapons (NPT) -that have helped in recent decades to contain the threat posed by the rampant spread of nuclear weapons and their supporting technologies. Although in recent five year review of the NPT in 2005, concluded in that way that cast doubt on its importance in the future, Iran has accelerated full nuclear fuel cycle program, while North Korea conducted a nuclear test. Moreover, North Korea has completed a diplomatic process, despite the fact that it has issued NPT. Iran remains a constant threat to the region if international agreement. Expansion of nuclear and missile capabilities of Iran and North Korea change facts on the ground. Iran has abandoned a slow approach to uranium enrichment and North crust accelerated its program before re-entry multilateral diplomacy in February 2007. The two countries have cooperated with the nuclear black market, and the Pakistani scientist A.Q.

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<sup>17</sup> Patrick M. Cronin., *Double trouble: Iran and North Korea as challenges to international security*, Praeger Security International, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, 2008, pg. 108-111.

Khan<sup>18</sup> has provided both these countries with the gas centrifuge technology needed to create a nuclear bomb. If these two countries are allowed to possess nuclear weapons, then some analysts predict that a second nuclear age is inevitable in the Middle East and Eastern Asia. Henry Kissinger writes that "*The world is faced with the nightmarish prospect that nuclear weapons will become a standard and part of national armament and these will fall into the hands of terrorists.*"<sup>19</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

Both of these cases are different because each country (North Korea) already possesses nuclear weapons, while the other (Iran) in "continuity" is an attempt to come to its nuclear capabilities. So the question priority rises to the implementation of disarmament article of nuclear non-proliferation treaty, although it is not a member of the NPT and to the Iranian nuclear program raised the issue of the peaceful use of its nuclear program. Military threat in North Korea's case does not the question at all as an option by the international community, because the consequences would be catastrophic for the region. As in the case of Iran, the threat of the use of force combined with active diplomacy could and so far has achieved the goal of international

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<sup>18</sup> A.Q. Khan has become a pop icon for contemporary proliferation, and is widely blamed for the existence of Pakistan's, Iran's, Libya's, and North Korea's gas centrifuge programs. Technology now dominates how policymakers think about proliferation, and many share the view that, "with the exception of a few advanced industrialized countries, a state's ability to build nuclear weapons generally hinges on its ability to and an international supplier." *For more see at Kemp, R.Scott. "The Nonproliferation Emperor Has No Clothes." International Security 38, no. 4 (April 2014), pg. 39-40.*

<sup>19</sup> Patrick M. Cronin., *Double trouble: Iran and North Korea as challenges to international security*, Praeger Security International, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, 2008, pg. 108-111.

community almost at the moment of writing this paper. Implementing coercive diplomacy instruments as sanctions, pressure, and threats with military intervention, even though they have given their effects, have not given the expected results as to halt the advance of the North Korea's nuclear program, and have not forced the state authorities to sit at the negotiating table. Relations between the United States and other negotiating partners with North Korea, as well as diplomatic means used so far in resolving the nuclear crisis can be assumed that: the most preferred alternatives in resolving the Korean crisis remains active diplomacy. By implementing this diplomacy the United States as the dominant power of the world, "negotiating power" should take the initiative and communicate directly with the new leadership (Kim Young-un). Above all, North Korea must agree to limit gradually throughout program enrichment and disarmament. The US and its negotiating partners must agree to gradually eliminate its nuclear weapons, on the other hand, the international community to lift some of the most severe sanctions. The US and its negotiating partners should agree on a step by step process to remove of all UN sanctions in response to progress further in diplomatic path and to integrate North Korea into the international system.

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