

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



Department of Peace and Governance

US-NORTH KOREA CONFRONTATION A LOOMING WORLD WAR THREE?

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DISSEERTATION SUBMITTED TO BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION (BUSE) DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE IN PARTIAL FULFILLEMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

BINDURA, ZIMBABWE APRIL 2019

RELEASE FORM

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WAR THREE?

Degree to which dissertation was presented. Master of Science Degree in International Relations

Year granted: 2019

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Munyaradzi Florence Marume and my daughter Layla Wezana who encouraged me to achieve my academic dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my supervisor Dr R Chipaike for his constructive criticism and guidance and various respondents for making this project a success.

ABSTRACT

This research sought to explain and interrogate the possibility of the current United States of America and North Korea's confrontation degenerating into third World War (WWIII). The tense relationship between the two countries have put international peace and security at risk. The situation was exacerbated by the failure to hold meaningful talks as previous talks were punctuated by threatening actions from both countries. This standoff has also exposed United Nation particularly the Security Council which should preserve and promote world peace. The study targeted 17 respondents and 9 managed to respond. The population was unique in the sense that they had a deeper understanding of the current stand off between the countries. The views were gathered through in-depth interviews and questionnaire. The respondents comprised of 3 US embassy officials, 2 South Korean embassy officials, 1 Japanese embassy official, 2 academia and one from ministry of foreign affairs. Moreso, documentary reviews were used to complement in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The key informants explained the relationship between US and North Korea and the geo-political trends which have influenced the stand-off. The study concluded that the US-North Korea confrontation has the potential to result in a World War if not properly managed. However, the study noted that both US and North Korea are very much aware of the human and economic consequences of going to war. As a result, the two will refrain. Additionally, the researcher discovered that the multiplicity of various countries with different and often conflicting interests such as China, South Korea, Japan and Russia among others is one of the reasons that might delay the normalisation of relations between the US and North Korea.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background of the study: The context of analysing US – North Korea relations

In 1945 after the end of the World War II, the Korean Peninsula was divided along the 38th Parallel. The Soviet Union occupied the northern half of the peninsula while the United States occupied the Southern half (Wertz and Gannon 2015). Assisted the two (2) powers, the separate Korean self-standing groups established two autonomous states in 1948; the de jure and de facto division of the Korean Peninsula was thus established (Hum 2017). Both countries did not recognise each other and declared their need for unification of the peninsula under their respective constitutions. The attempts made by the two sides in their initial hopes for unified sovereignty by force led to the Korean War. The DPRK invaded the South, sparking a full-scale conflict on June 25, 1950 (Wertz and Gannon 2015:6). At the behest of US leadership, United Nations forces intervened on defense of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and forced Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its forces north of the 38th Parallel, shortly thereafter, a counter-offensive led by Chinese People's Volunteer Army troops reversed the UN force's advance, pushing them southward with the front line eventually settling near the 38th Parallel (McInnis et al 2017). The involvement of the great powers China and United States in the war greatly worsened the military and political situation on the peninsula and intensified the conflict between the US led and the Soviet led allying forces in the Cold War. The conflict nearly sparked another World War as both South Korea (ROK) and North Korea (DPRK) were merely pawns in the game influenced over by the big powers to achieve international dominance.

The visit to China in 1972 by former US President Nixon clearly presented major progress towards the reestablishment of cordial relations for US-China and US-DPRK relations. In spite of the initial shared interest in striving towards diplomatic normalisation.

Wertz and Gannon (2015) notes that

the U.S. later became reluctant to make concrete efforts, mainly due to the strategic consideration that the diplomatic recognition of South Korea by China and the Soviet Union

ought to be made prerequisite for the U.S.–DPRK normalization. On one hand the U.S. deemed the assurance of South Korea’s diplomatic normalization with China and the Soviet Union as the indisputable prerequisite for normalizations with North Korea.

On the other hand, China in support of North Korea shared disapproval on the cross-recognition proposal (Zhang 2014). This painted a gloomy picture of any meaningful prospects for peaceful resolution of the longstanding dispute, and posit a possible catalyst that might have dragged the two alliance in a third world war. However, the ultimate breakdown and demise of the Soviet Union and the coming to an end of Cold War cast the shadow of “peaceful evolution” on China and North Korea’s future as the balance of power on the Korean peninsula tipped in favour of ROK sided by the US. China and USSR normalised relations with the ROK without taking into cognisant the terms of the cross-recognition proposal.

By end of the Cold War in 1990s, the former Soviet-led alliance constituting USSR, China and North Korea disintegrated the US-led alliance triangle of US, Japan and ROK remained intact.

Wertz and Gannon (2015) notes that

this landed South Korea in an advantaged position in its competition for power over the peninsula, in that it surpassed North Korea in terms of economic and military strength in virtue of its diplomatic normalization with the great powers as a strategically significant move. In reaction to this dramatic shift of balance of power on the Korean peninsula North Korea grew more inclined to procure nuclear weapons for security reasons. The North Korea nuclear program has been a troubling issue in the six party Talks incorporating United States, Japan and South Korea on one and China, Russia and North Korea on the other hand.

However, since 1992 the Korean Peninsula bore witness to five nuclear crises over the years of 1992, 2002, 2013 and 2016 (Zhul 2017). Although the need to promote peace agreement and diplomatic normalisation remained one of the primary concerns for US and North Korea, both countries employed a nuclear brinkmanship policy. Indisputably, the nuclear brinkmanship policy escalated the standoff in the region as it was consistently eclipsed by the possibility of nuclear war at the world scale.

Given this background, there is need to critically examine the ongoing negotiations between US and North Korea in order to empirically ascertain the possibility of either obtaining an everlasting peaceful resolution to the long-standing nuclear crisis or degeneration of the bilateral diplomatic standoff to military confrontation thereby providing the spark for World War III. The nature and the rationale behind US-North Korea confrontational relations need to be systematically examined to provide conflict management and resolution insight in the UN's quest to avoid and prevent another world war.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to critically examine the bilateral relations between US and North Korea in order to empirically ascertain the possibility of either obtaining an everlasting peaceful resolution to the long-standing nuclear crisis or degeneration of the bilateral diplomatic standoff to military confrontation thereby providing the spark for WW (II1).

1.2 Statement of the problem

United States and North Korea relations had been tense, with periods of negotiated peace regularly characterised by threatening actions from both parties, such a relationship represent a significant problem for policy makers who were trying to achieve effective conflict management and resolution to meaningfully address the long standing bilateral conflictual relations with the possibility of dragging the world into a nuclear war.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of this study was to examine the possibility of the US-North Korea confrontation looming into World War three.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- ❖ Examine the nature of the US-North Korea relations.
- ❖ Analyse the effects of the involvement of other countries in the US-North Korea bilateral relations.
- ❖ Assess the effectiveness of the United Nations in responding to the US-North Korea bilateral dispute.

1.4. Research Questions

- ❖ What is the nature of US-North Korea relations?
- ❖ How has the involvement of other countries impacted on the US-North Korea bilateral relations?
- ❖ How effective is United Nations in responding to the US-North Korea bilateral dispute?

1.5. Assumptions of the study

- ❖ There are possibilities of the US-North Korea confrontational bilateral relations looming into third World War, only if when the international community failed to manage and resolve the conflict timeously.
- ❖ US, North Korea and all the involved countries are likely in favour of the status quo as it is presumed to be safeguarding their strategic security and economic interests in the international system.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study intended to advance an empirical inquiry on the US-North Korea confrontational relations and the possible elevation of the nuclear crisis into a third World War. Undisputedly, the analysis of the US-North Korea relations is comparably or synonymous with the study of the foreign policies and national interests of both states. The confrontational bilateral relations between US and North Korea are shaped by the need to safeguard their national interest through adaptation of hostile foreign policy towards each other. Foreign policy is a vital international political tool for any government or country as it gives a country the direction to navigate in the anarchic international political system in pursuit of national interests and how it relates to other countries or other foreign non-state actors. Therefore, the study meaningfully contributes and generating policy insights on the US-North Korea relations in the 21st century. This helps policy makers to make informed decision in foreign policy rather than based on cosmetic behaviour of another state.

The existing literature captured the US-North Korea confrontational bilateral relation since the Korean War to the present-day nuclear crisis. However, this abundant literature has revealed the existence of an informational gap which critically analyse the possibility of the diplomatic standoff

degenerating into a third World War. World peace and security is persistently threatened by the perpetual confrontation between the US and North Korea as both, are considering the use of nuclear weapons to safeguard their dubiously perceived sovereignty and national security. Compelled by this observation this study significantly aimed at examining the effectiveness of the UN in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts involving countries which possess of nuclear weapons or one of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

1.7. Delimitations of the study

This research study was centered on US, North Korea members to the agreement in the six-party talk and other nuclear power. The criteria for the selection of the countries to be included in this study will be based on the discretion of the researcher taking into considerations how these Countries relate with either US or North Korea. The study will also incorporate the UNSC as a body empowered by the United Nations General Assembly to resolve conflicts within and among member states.

1.8. Limitations of the study

The study faced difficulties in accessing useful first-hand information due to the geographical disparity between the researcher and Korean peninsula and the US, as well as the exorbitant costs involved in such a field work. How the researcher proactively opted to conducting interviews with some key respondents well versed with the international relations issues like the academics, experts, and personnel in the diplomatic fraternity in Zimbabwe. The research also exhausted secondary sources such as textbooks, international political magazines, newspapers, internet articles, online-journals, and international broadcastings on television channels to bride and complement primary data collect from limited interviewees residing in Zimbabwe.

1.9 Definition of key words

Nuclear proliferation

Nuclear proliferation can be defined as the rampant use and exchange of nuclear weapons, materials and the application of nuclear technology and information to nations not recognized and considered as nuclear weapon states by the treaty on the Non- Proliferation of Nuclear weapons.

There are two types of nuclear proliferations which are horizontal proliferation and vertical proliferation. Sidel and Levy (2007) notes that horizontal proliferation refers to nation-states or nonstate entities that do not have, but are acquiring, nuclear weapons or developing the capability and materials for producing them. Sidel and Levy (2007) also note that vertical proliferation refers to nation-states that do possess nuclear weapons and are increasing their stockpiles of these weapons, improving the technical sophistication or reliability of their weapons, or developing new weapons. The proliferation of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula can be classified under horizontal proliferation as the possession of nuclear weapons is a preserved of five countries namely US, UK, France, Russia and China in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970.

Nuclear non-proliferation

Nuclear non-proliferation refers to efforts be it diplomatic or political aimed at to dissuade states from developing, acquiring, or maintaining nuclear weapons. According to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), nuclear weapon states are prohibited to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons directly or indirectly and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons (article I). The non-nuclear weapon states are prohibited to receive whatsoever of nuclear weapons directly, or indirectly and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons (article II).

Nuclear Brinkmanship

<http://www.britannica.com> (2018) defines brinkmanship as a [foreign policy](#) practice in which one or both parties force the interaction between them to the [threshold](#) of confrontation in order to gain an advantageous negotiation position over the other. Nagal (2017:17) notes that “brinkmanship strategy is a deliberate choice of a dangerous policy to achieve a strategic outcome, and is based on manipulating the shared risk of war, creating a threat to force the adversary to relent, or else, the consequences are far worse than mere loss of face”. The practice is aimed at getting an upper hand by creating the impression that one is willing and able to push a highly dangerous situation to the limit rather than concede. White (2017) defines brinkmanship as a shared risk of war in which each side pushes the other towards the brink of disaster or war ever closer in order to force the other side to capitulate at the last second. The US-North Korea

interactions manipulates nuclear situation in order to extract favourable gains hence nuclear brinkmanship.

Nuclear Deterrence

Nalebuff (1956:19) notes nuclear deterrence involves “a fundamental trade-off. There is a value in being able to make the threat of mutual assured destruction. Nuclear deterrence requires accepting the risk of mutual assured destruction.” Kim (2016) notes that “it should be noted that North Korea explains that developing its nuclear deterrence capability is the key to creating a virtuous cycle of stabilizing the external environment, which then enables North Korea to focus more on economic recovery.” This is a real and shared risk that the confrontation will end in a catastrophic nuclear exchange

National Interest

National interest is the most crucial factor in International politics which largely shapes the actions of the Nation-States in their interactions with other states. Morgenthau (1957) notes that, “national interest is the political tradition & the total cultural context within which a nation formulates its foreign policy.” Frankel (1978) concurs that “it is the sum total of all the national values.” National interests encompass a country’s goals and ambitions whether economic, military, social or cultural. The national interest of a nation is influenced by a number of factors such as national leadership, governmental set up and ideologies, customs and cultural values, predominant social groups and geographical locations, neighbour States and their attitudes and general global trends.

Foreign policy

Foreign policy is one of the wheels within which the process of international politics operates. Northedge (1968) defines foreign policy as the use of political influence in order to induce other states to exercise their law-making power in a manner desired by the state concerned. It is an interaction between forces originating outside the country’s borders and those working within them. Hermann (1987) notes that foreign policy consists of the development and conscious pursuits of some preferred goal or goals of a sector through the selective use of foreign policy behaviour. Accordingly, these definitions connote that foreign policy is not separate from national policy, instead it is a part of it. Almost all the states determine the course of their foreign policies

within the limits of their strengths and the realities of the external environment. It consists of national interests that are to be furthered in relation to other states. The foreign policy of each state is determined by specific interests termed as factors which help in shaping and moulding foreign policy. Firstly, internal factors include historical and national values, geography and public opinion, national capacity and the political organisation. Secondly, external factors such as international environment and international organisations, world public opinion and reaction of States. Finally, there are three important styles of foreign policy making which include charismatic revolutionary, ideological and bureaucratic- pragmatic.

Collective Security

The UN Collective Security System is initially captured in Article 1 of the UN charter which postulates that “the purpose of the UN is to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace”. According to Article 24 of the UN Charter, “member states confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” and “agree to accept and carry out the decision of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter,” (Article 25 of the UN Charter).

1.10 Chapter Outline

The study will be subdivided into five (5) chapters. The first chapter introduce the research topic and discuss the following: background and statement of the problem, objectives and justification of the study. The chapter conclude by discussing delimitations and limitations of the study and provides definitions of key terms for this study. Chapter Two (2) will discuss the historical development of the US-North Korea relations. This includes US foreign policy towards North Korea nuclear Programme and North Korea’s foreign policy towards US. The Chapter also unpacks the theoretical underpinnings of the US-North Korea bilateral relations. Chapter three (3) will discuss the methodological aspects of the research which includes research design, sampling technique, data collection, presentation and analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter four (4) focus on data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter five (5) delves on summary, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

Any attempt to understand US-North Korean relations in the post-Cold War world is to be confronted with a genuine puzzle of both real-world and theoretical significance. US-North Korea nuclear brinkmanship diplomacy has become a focus of regional and global prime-time coverage. It has also catapulted the position of primary driver of Northeast Asian geopolitics through strategic use of nuclear brinkmanship diplomacy. This chapter therefore seeks to unravel the genesis and structural manifestations of the US-North Korea confrontational relations. The chapter will also utilise deterrence theory and realism to unpack theoretical underpinning of the US-North relations. of these tensions between the two tracing their foreign relations history.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.2 Deterrence Theory

Deterrence is a theory, a tactic, a national security strategy, a larger defense policy approach, and a “critical component of security for the international system” (Freedman 2004). The theory arose as a response to the enormous impact of nuclear weapons and the awareness that they constituted a class apart, that is, the “absolute weapon,” or an “uncontestable weapon,” Shaw (2005).

Freedman (2004) notes that,

given their unparalleled destructive power and the difficulties of defending against them on the battlefield when used as a weapon of war or when used against cities as a weapon of strategic coercion. Deterrence theory is that states are rational actors and that they make cost-benefit calculations about whether and when to initiate a conflict. Logically, if the costs are higher than the benefits produced by some type of initiative, states will be deterred from taking some aggressive move against their opponents.

U.S. policy has increasingly relied on nuclear deterrence and corpulence as a way to prevent and pre-empt a chemical or biological attack on the United States, its military forces stationed abroad, and its allies (Paul et al 2009). Nagal (2017) emphasised that nuclear deterrence is based on a

‘threat that leaves something to chance.’ Moreover, deterrence is not only a theory, but a powerful policy instrument.

2.1.3 Conditions for Successful Deterrence

According to Sauer (1998:8) “there are critical aspects to deterrence that can render it successful as a tactic. And these include effective communication, capabilities and credibility”. For deterrence to succeed in the first place, a deterrer must have enough capability. Nagal (2017) notes that there must be capability to execute the choice or the threat. Here, the capability must be demonstrable or must have existed in the past. Nuclear weapons capability is realistic once deployed with tested means of delivery. For instance, “the relatively mooted nature of the attack that Trump ordered against Syria after Assad’s latest use of chemical weapons suggests he might try similarly restrained military action against North Korea. But Syria does not have North Korea’s ability to strike back” (Helfand 2018). Al Jazeera (2018) notes that “the Hwasong-15, North Korea’s further-reaching intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) could theoretically travel about 13,000km. this potentially puts the whole world within range except for Latin America and Antarctica.” Holsti (1995: 220) notes that “decisions by both the defender and the challenger should be based on rational calculations of probable costs and gains, accurate evaluations of the situation, and careful assessments of relative capabilities”. The deterring party has to have the ability to impose high cost on their opponent, and the opposing party has to perceive that the deterring party is willing to do what they say they will.

Secondly the threat should be credible. Freedman (1981: 96) notes that credibility is “the magic” ingredient of deterrence. Nagal (2017:2) notes that “the capability must of necessity be credible to execute the threat to cause the stated punishment or damage, overpowering the denial ability of the adversary”. Center for international Security and Cooperation (2017) notes that, “deterrence theory holds that nuclear weapons are intended to deter other states from attacking with their nuclear weapons, through the promise of retaliation and possibly mutually assured destruction”. Al Jazeera (2018) notes that “in January 2018, CIA Director Mike Pompeo predicted that North Korea will be capable of striking the US with nukes within a handful of months” Al Jazeera (2018) further notes that “US officials estimate that North Korea has 60 nuclear weapons whereas independent experts estimate it has enough uranium to produce six new nuclear bombs a year”. Baylis and Wirts (2016: 389) note that “deterrence, in its simplest form, entails the action of

discouraging an action or event through instilling doubt or fear of the consequences” Credibility again is a result of two central variables: the balance of military capability between challenger and defender as well as challenger and defender’s level of resolve.

Thirdly, the deterrer should be able to communicate the threat to its opponent. Nagal (2017: 5) notes that a threat is “a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done”. Freedman (2004:36) defines a threat as “a declaration of an intention or determination to inflict punishment, injury, etc., in retaliation for, or conditionally upon, some action or course; and, menace is an indication or warning of probable trouble”. During the 2018 New Year’s address, North Korea leader Kim Jong-Un stated that “The entire mainland of the US is within the range of our nuclear weapons and the nuclear button is always on the desk of my office” (Al Jezeera 2018). In response US president Trump tweeted, you talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God they will never have to be used.....I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger and more powerful one than his and my Button works (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2018).

Clarity is critical for deterrence to succeed as there should be effective communication between the deterrer and the deterred that is to say the threat should be clear the connotations and repercussions of taking a certain action clearly stated. According to Freedman (1981:97) is the quality of being clear and easy to understand that is to say the message one is conveying is easier to decode or interpret. This threat was clearly outlined and the message well received by the intended subject hence clarity of threats is critical if deterrence is to be successful. However, “nuclear weapons are meant to ensure national security and peace through deterrence, and not support sub-conventional war” (Nagal 2017:5). The whole gist was primarily based on the notion of threatening an enemy into not taking a certain course of action due to fear of repercussions that came with taking that certain action.

2.1.4 Realism

According to Realism school of thought the structure of the international system is centered on the ideas of state centrism, anarchy, survival, self-help and power. To start with realist argues that the international system is predominantly anarchical. In anarchic environment, “each unit’s incentive is to put itself in a position to be able to take care of itself since no one else can be counted on to

do so” (Waltz 1979: 107) Each state is a separate autonomous, and formally equal political unit that must count ultimately on its own resources to realise its interests. Mearsheimer (2006: 74) notes that this danger is compounded by the fact that states operate in an anarchic system, which means that there is no night-watchman who can rescue them if they are threatened by another country. When a state dials the emergency services for help, there is nobody in the international system to answer the call.

In the absence of international government “the law of the jungle still prevails (Schuman 1941: 9). Anarchy not merely allows but encourages the worst aspect of human nature to be expressed. Morgenthau (1973:163) notes that “because no states know the exact intentions of another state and since there are no higher authority, uncertainty prevails in relations to each other”. It is against this background that North Korea has embarked on nuclear proliferation in order to protect and safeguard its territorial integrity and sovereignty against the perpetual threat posed by US foreign policy towards the Korean Peninsula. There both the US and North Korea are utilizing their national resources in furtherance respective interest in an anarchical international system.

The realist assumption of State survival as the ultimate goal of nation state adequately explains the US-North Korea relations. Donnolly (2000:567) highlights that the main objective of all states is survival. Waltz (1977:47) rubber stamps this idea of survival arguing that the driving force of survival is the primary factor influencing the behavior of states in the international system. Mearsheimer (2006: 74) notes that States seek to maintain their territorial integrity and the autonomy of their domestic political order. They can pursue other goals like prosperity and protecting human rights, but those aims must always take a back seat to survival, because if a state does not survive, it cannot pursue those other goals.

Survival is the ultimate goal of every national interest. According to Ganns (2012: 16) the ultimate goal for every state is survival which therefore entails that all foreign policy decisions are formulated and informed by the need to survive. Indeed, critical to states in the international arena is survival. It is comprehensible that survival might be the key driver of US-North Korea confrontational relations, because each state concerns are centered on maximizing the available opportunities to ensure continued survival.

Another critical component of realism is the idea of self-help. Mearsheimer (2006: 74) notes that “fearful of other states, and knowing that they operate in a self-help world, states quickly realize

that the best way to survive is to be especially powerful. The reasoning here is straightforward: the more powerful a state is relative to its competitors, the less likely it is that it will be attacked". Ganns (2012:16) concurs that "states are focused on self-pervations hence one can not rely on another state for survival". Mearsheimer (2006: 74) further notes that "international politics is a potentially deadly business where there is the ever-present possibility of war, which often means mass killing on and off the battlefield, and which might even lead to a state's destruction". This entails that states cannot rely on other states for help but rather its own ability to safeguard its survival. For instance, as it stands both US and North Korean are clinching to possession of nuclear weapons as the guarantor of national security in a self-help system.

For structural realists, power is a means to an end and the ultimate end is survival. Ganns, 2012:15) postulates that "power is the currency of the international system and states behavior is determined by power capabilities". Waltz (1979: 113) notes that "international politics is the realm of power, struggle and the idea that every state will plot out a course of action by force or not that they believe will best serve their interests". Mearsheimer (2001) notes that it makes good strategic sense for states to gain as much power as possible and, if the circumstances are right, to pursue hegemony. The argument is not that conquest or domination is good in itself, but instead that having overwhelming power is the best way to ensure one's own survival.

Mearsheimer (2006: 75) notes that "power is based on the material capabilities that a state control. The balance of power is mainly a function of the tangible military assets that states possess, such as armoured divisions and nuclear weapons". In essence, both US and North Korea are trapped in an iron cage where they have little choice but to compete with each other for power if they hope to survive. Arguably, in a system where there is no higher authority that sits above the great powers and where there is no guarantee that one will not attack another, it makes eminently good sense for North Korea to be powerful enough to protect herself in the event there is an attack from the US.

2.2 North Korea and the Non-Proliferation Treaty

In the 1980s, North Korea started to build nuclear arsenal and the US took notice and started to pressure USSR to force DPRK to accede to NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty). According to Chanlet (2013: 128) the USSR agreed in name not in character as DPRK never acceded and performed its

duty to accept inspection from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in accordance with NPT requirements. Scott (1997: 34) notes that “during that period the U.S. discovered, through satellite imagery, that North Korea was secretly developing nuclear weapons and in line with NPT, the IAEA was required to carry out inspections”. Furthermore Scott (1997:34) postulates that from the period May 1992 to February 1993, North Korea was subject to six unscheduled inspections by the IAEA but disagreed on the objectives and results of the inspections. Ogawa (2015:21) notes that “what North Korea did was to repeatedly defy the IAEA authority and violate the IAEA-DPRK comprehensive safeguards agreement”. In 1993 the IAEA concluded that the DPRK was in noncompliance with the IAEA-DPRK safeguards agreement and referred this noncompliance to the UNSC. IN May the Security Council adapted Resolution 825 calling upon the DPRK to comply with its safeguards agreement, but it was to no avail. Ogawa (2015:21) notes that “the failure of the IAEA and the UNSC to make Pyongyang comply with nonproliferation obligations has generated a serious credibility and reliability problem for the NPT-IAEA regime”.

“On 12 March 1993 North Korea rejected IAEA’s request for a special inspection, announce its decision to withdraw from the NPT, though it later put the withdrawal on hold” (Ogawa 2015: 22:4). According to article X of the NPT, “any state-party to the treaty has the right to withdraw if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country”. “On 10 January 2003 the NPT-non-compliant DPRK announced an immediate withdrawal from the NPT by revoking the June 1993 ‘suspension’ on the effectuation of its withdrawal from the NPT” (Ogawa 2015:22:7). Pollack (2003:13) notes that the DPRK “declares its total freedom from the binding force of the safeguards accord with the International Atomic Energy Agency blaming the US’s hostile policy towards DPRK for the nuclear crisis on the peninsular”. The United States made it clear that it viewed DPRK’s withdrawal as a serious concern. Pritchard and Tilelli (2010: 6) posits that the only red line that remains is the threat (reinforced indirectly by the conclusions of the April 2010 Nuclear Posture Review) that as long as North Korea is outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) it will be treated as the prime suspect and be the target of immediate retaliation by the United States in the event of an act of non-state nuclear terrorism.

Therefore, as long as North Korea remains outside of the NPT and uncommitted to denuclearization, it is suspect number one in the event of nuclear terrorism by non-state actors, and US would consider a retaliatory strike against North Korea.

2.3 Three Party Talks

After the announcement by North Korea to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, “China started to mediate on the Korean nuclear issue and host talks in 2003, at the United States’ sincere request (Ying 2017:1). China, North Korea, and the U.S. held talks in Beijing on April 23-25, 2003 which are widely known as the Three-Party Talks (3PT). According to Ying (2017:9) though the talks were to form a foundation for the next round of talks, they were deadlocked even before they formally began. According Bingguo (2016:208) “President George W. Bush prohibited any member of the U.S. delegation from engaging in any form of a bi- lateral meeting with the North Korean delegation whereas the North Korean side wanted to talk with the U.S. delegation, alone”. The US wanted China to be present and not to have a separate meeting with Pyongyang’s delegation even under the three-party framework. Ying (2017: 9) further postulate that the DPRK delegation reacted by refusing to attend the talks. However, after repeated and hard persuasion from China, North Korean delegation agreed to remain involved in the talks. Indeed, the 3PT were marred by structural contestations between the US and North Korea delegations. Ying (2017: 9) further argues that “in reality, the so-called Three-Party Talks were no more than separate talks between the Chinese and North Korean delegations, and the Chinese and U.S. delegations”.

2.4 The Six Party Talks

Although the Three-Party Talks results were far from satisfactory, “the 3PT attracted keen attention from South Korea and Japan and the U.S. requested the expansion of the talks to include its two allies. In turn China advocated for Russia which was also interested in the issue as well” (Ying 2017:10). “The Six Party Talks were launched in 2003 to deal with North Korea’s nuclear program. The main goal of the talks was to get the DPRK to disarm and fully end its nuclear arms development”, (Joo and Kwak 2007: 28). The first round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing on August 27-29, 2003. The Arms Control Association (2017) notes that the initial North Korea position called for normalisation of relations and a non-aggression pact with the United States, without which Pyongyang maintained a dismantling of its nuclear program, would be out of the question. The Arms Control Association (2017) further notes The United States had previously

rejected a non-aggression pact proposal earlier that summer and remind firm on that point during the talks: this stumbling block precluded any substantive agreement in the First Round.

The second round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing between 22-25 February in 2004. On one hand “the U.S suggested that Pyongyang should follow Libya’s example: to first give up its nuclear program and then accept inspections by the IAEA in North Korea’s denuclearization” (Ying 2017: 11). On the other hand, “China, Russia, and South Korea were more disposed to advocate for the “Ukraine Model” and stressed that if North Korea took the ingenuity to denuclearize, its sovereignty should be respected and its security guaranteed” (Ying 2017:11). Despite this contestation the 6PT issued their first written document in which all parties stated that they wished for peaceful coexistence, and they agreed to resort to mutually coordinated measures to address the nuclear issue and other concerns, (China Daily 2004). This demonstrated a sense of dedication to the objective of resolving the nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue.

The third six party talks were held from June 23 up to 26 of 2004. Ying (2017:14) note that “North Koreans still insisted on “freezing for compensation” but for the first time stated that the freeze was for the final purpose of denuclearization. The U.S also showed some flexibility and proposed a formula for a five-stage denuclearization”. Indeed, each round of the talks presented avenues for peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue as both the US and North activated compromise mode. As the Arms Control Association (2017) note that the parties also agreed on the principal “adopting a progressive method”, a ‘word-to-word’ and ‘action-to-action’ manner” for achieving a solution to the Korean nuclear issue.

The fourth round of Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing and was split into two phases: the first from July 26 to August 7, 2005, and the second from September 13 to 19 of the same year (Ying 2017: 13). On September 19, 2005 the Six Parties announced a "Joint Statement," which outlined the parameters of future negotiations, including the normalization of relations with the United States, Japan and South Korea. Wertz and Gannon (2005: 3) notes that DPRK expressed “commitment to abandoning its nuclear programs and returning to the NPT in exchange for food and energy assistance from the other Six Party members”. On September 23, 2005, almost at the same time the Six-Party Talks were in progress, the U.S. Treasury Department, “designated a Macau-based bank, Banco Delta Asia (BDA), as a “primary money laundering concern” due to its financial facilitation of North Korean illicit activities, leading the Macau government to freeze

approximately \$24 million in North Korean assets in the bank”, (Wertz and Gannon 2005: 3). Americas financial sanctions against North Korea clouded the process and threatened derailing the whole process made.

In the face of increased U.S. sanctions, “North Korea retaliated by abandoning the six party talks and publicly stated that it would not return to the Six-Party Talks until the U.S. removed its economic sanctions” Ying (2017:14). Wertz and Gannon (2005: 3) though there was the fifth and sixth round of talks the level of mistrust was rife and as a result though the six party talks led to a process of denuclearization the talks just collapsed in 2008 and did not follow in subsequent years thus not resolving the North Korea’s conundrum. Zhu (2017: 7) note that “the North Korean nuclear issue was perceived to have entered a downward spiral of, Nuclear Test, Sanctions, Threat of Force (Military Drill), Negotiation and the development of events deprived any remaining trust between North Korea and the U.S”. The escalating sanctions by the U.S. did not stop or slow down the pace of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program”. Although the 6PT failed to continue after 2008, Ying (2017: 15) note that “more importantly, the talks kept all parties moving in the direction of denuclearization and a peaceful settlement of their differences”.

2.5 The Paradox of US-North Korea nuclear issue

The U.S. and North Korea’s fruitless embroilment over the confrontation was by virtue of the entangled interest involved which put restraint on the political leeway which both parties could take. Cheng (2009: 62–63) notes the development of nuclear weapons became the optimal option for North Korea as it is valued for its potential in improving regime survivability, defending its sovereignty, and in providing an effective bargaining chip in compelling Washington to engage in dialogues and negotiations to disintegrate the diplomatic blockade. Indeed, the nuclearization of the Korea peninsula is mainly attributed to North Korea’s sense of insecurity and the perceived effectiveness of the nuclear deterrence in countering the long standing diplomatic stand off and military threat exerted by the United States. As Collins (2014:4) notes that denuclearization is unlikely unless the conditions of either diplomatic normalization with the U.S. or pledge of security from a great and credible power are met. Therefore, the regime security and survivability has rendered the dismantlement of the North Korea’s nuclear program increasingly difficult.

On the other hand, for the U.S., the North Korean nuclear issue is a double-edged sword wielded to achieve multiple purposes. Wertz and Gannon (2015:4) notes that firstly, the nuclear issue

enabled the US to maintain its military presence in Northeast Asia, on the Korean peninsula to deter North Korea at proximity as well as achieve other mentioned strategic interests. Secondly, the nuclear program has provided the legitimate footing for the US to alienate and antagonize North Korea as the 'state sponsor of terrorism,' 'rogue state' and an 'axis of evil.'

It is comprehensible that the issue of nuclear deterrence capabilities has provided legitimacy for US to station troops in South Korea and the negative portrayal of North Korea acted as an obstacle for the American public and government against seeking better chances of diplomatic normalization. Therefore, on the part of the US, Washington publicly condemn North Korea nuclearization but deem it necessary to save their strategic interest in the northeast Asia as the normalisation of the US-North Korea relations diminish the reasonable grounds for any military presence in South Korea. It is indisputable that South Korea has long remained a palpable obstacle against the improvement of U.S.–DPRK relations. While both North and South Korea mutually denies the sovereignty of their counterparts, they pay mutual recognition of administrative power of both parties. Denmark (2011:5) notes that “the antagonism between the two political powers has strained the relations to such an extent that there is little room for mutual tolerance or reconciliation for strategic gains”. Yoon and Han in Park (2010) echoes that “the DPRK proposes the Democratic Confederal Republic of Korea (DCRK) as a federation model of “one nation, one state, two systems, and two governments. South Korea on the other hand pursues to establish a unitary state or a Korean Community”. Along this line of thought, therefore, South Korea is likely to remain reluctant to see normalization between the U.S. and the DPRK. South Korea hopes that the elevation of the confrontation between the US and North Korea results in the balance of power in the region favouring the south rather than the north.

The paradoxical aspect to the US-ROK alliance and normalisation of US-DPRK has perpetuated tension on the Korean peninsula and magnified to a global scale. Wertz and Gannon (2015:6) notes that in cases where tension on the Korean peninsula elevates, South Korea becomes reluctant in seeing normalization between the U.S. and North Korea as it will inevitably lead to breaking the balance in favour of the North. On the contrary, for the US, in scenarios where the two Koreas either conclude a peace agreement or reach an accord on reunification, the very foundation of the U.S.–ROK alliance and its strategic foundation in Northeast Asia will be undermined.

Therefore, this vividly demonstrates the complexities imbedded in the US-North Korea relations. Paradoxically these unthinkable bilateral relations contradictions between the US-ROK relations, US-DPRK relations and the ROK-DPRK relations has provided exploitable opportunities for all parties to secure their national interests. US, ROK and DPRK have therefore strategically fuelled the existing conflict on the Korean peninsula, thereby minimising prospects for peaceful resolution but dragging the world to the brink of war. As the normalisation of one of the above bilateral relations, probably contribute to reconciliation between the other two bilateral relations thereby deescalating the nuclear dispute.

Undoubtedly, the ever-growing influence of China has dismantled the US unipolar structure in international relations particularly in Northeast Asia. The dual power structure between the U.S. and China has rendered the cooperation on grounds of shared interests with co-existing differences on the North Korea nuclearization issue. Comparably similar to the Cold war bipolar US-USSR structure, the US is concerned about securing leadership role in international security and China is focused on growing its economy through international trade. Zhang (2014:62) note that “China is inclined to bolster cooperation, increase engagement and agreeably manage their relations. In spite of the foregoing, the U.S. persists to recognize China as the greatest threat to its global hegemony and thus the target for the Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy”.

The conflictual interest has exacerbated uncertainty of attaining a long-lasting peaceful arrangement on the Korean peninsula. Most importantly superpower status and global hegemonic ambitious has caused both US and China refrain from making further compromise on any of its strategic interest on the peninsula and to strategically surpass each other by maximising any opportunity that appeared.

Arguably, the structural contradictions and dissonance have resultantly created favourable conditions for North Korea’s nuclearisation programme but exposing the world to the possibility of a nuclear war. Wertz and Gannon (2015:8) notes that the structural contradictions between the China and the U.S. provided exploitable opportunities for North Korea to secure its interests. North Korea has therefore strategically fuelled the existing conflicts between U.S. and China,

The U.S.–China discord resulted in the failure to issue a joint condemnation on North Korea at the Security Council meeting (Nichols 2016:2). For instance, China has lightened sanctions on North Korea by suspending its coal imports in 2017 according to UN security council resolutions but it

failed to stop the deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), which however worsening the situation of Northeast Asia. The existing structural contradictions between the US and China would provide the spark for another world war involving the use of nuclear weapons.

2.6 Japan's position on US-North Korea's confrontation

The North Korea's nuclear issue is not of concern to US only. It poses the biggest threat to Japan as well. Suzuki (2018:3) notes, "A number of North Korea missiles have already flown over Japan. The risk that one may strike a Japanese city, even if due to malfunctioning or miscalculation, would prove disastrous. Such fears have a strong psychological impact on people in Japan." Additionally, Suzuki (2018) notes that, "Based on the extent of possible military actions by North Korea, it is conceivable that a first target of attack could include US bases in Japan. However, if North Korea missiles reached a level of capability that would allow attacking the US mainland, the US may not fully commit to protect Japan and South Korea." One can also note that, in an event of warfare US and North Korea, it would result in a huge influx of refugees into Japan. "The border with South Korea is heavily militarised and would probably be a frontline. The border with China is also heavily protected given Chinese measures implemented in anticipation of such eventualities." Ibid.

One can thus note that North Korea presents a critical threat to Japan as it raises significant questions on Japan's security and relationship with allies. As a result, Japan has stood by the US and it encourages sanctioning North Korea. After the Singapore Summit, Japanese Prime Minister, Abe argued that, "We see this as a step in a comprehensive resolution." (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-summit-japan/japan's-abe-says-trump>)

One can therefore note that due to the threat of a nuclear warfare to Japan, the country is fully committed to support any resolution that will result in normalisation of relations between the US and North Korea. Japan's stance would therefore see the normalisation of relations and avoid WW3.

2.7 The June 2018 Singapore Summit

For decades, the rogue North Korea dictatorship has posed a unique and dangerous threat to its neighbours and the US. After years of confrontations with Washington, North Korean leader, Kim agreed to meet the US president, Trump on 12 June 2018 in talks that became to be known as the Singapore Summit. This development has been hailed by analysts as a positive thing to have happened between Pyongyang and Washington as they set the foundations for future talks. As the

UN chief, Guterres stated, “The two leaders are seeking to break out of the dangerous cycle that created so much concern last year. Peace and verifiable denuclearisation must remain the clear and shared goal. The road ahead will require cooperation, compromise and common cause.” (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44435035>). After the summit, the two leaders signed a comprehensive document promising a new relationship between their countries. The document commits North Korea to work towards “The complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and promises new relations between Pyongyang and Washington.”(Ibid). It is however important to note that although analysts remain divided on what the Summit will ultimately achieve, the summit itself is a welcome gesture in the road to normalisation of relations and avoid a nuclear warfare. The Summit might therefore signal a new era in US- North Korea relations.

2.8 Realignment of relations between DPRK and ROK

Relations between North Korea and South Korea appear to be normalising after decades of dispute. The two leaders of the two Korean states met in September 2018. As noted by Haas (2018:1), “The leaders of North and South Korea have promised after a landmark Summit to bring lasting peace to the Peninsula with a commitment to denuclearisation and to ending decades of hostilities.” The two leaders’ joint statement offered great cause for optimism in as far as normalisation of relations between the two Koreans is concerned. In their summit, the two vowed to work together on a number of bilateral issues including reunifying families divided by the Korean war as well as improving cross border transport links. As noted by Haas (2018), Kim noted, “We declare that we will cooperate to bring about an everlasting peace on the Peninsula”. Additionally, Moon also cemented, “There will be no going back. We are giving a great present to the citizens of the two Koreas.” It is however critical to note that although the current thawing of relations between the two Koreas is a positive development to stop the Korean war which might also see them dodging a possible WW3, analysts and politicians are very cautious. The then UK Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson argued, “I don’t think that anybody looking at the history of North Korea’s plans to develop a nuclear weapon would want to be overoptimistic at this point. But it is clearly good news that the two leaders are meeting.” (Ibid). Despite the unpredictability of Kim, one can however note that the Summit between the two leaders is a positive sign, one that would help in averting WW111.

2.9 Failure of the Vietnam Talks

As normalisation of relations between the US and North Korea was going in the right direction as was shown by the Singapore summit where the two countries' leaders showed great desire towards North Korea's denuclearisation program, it was however a totally different story at the 2019 North-Korea-United States Hanoi Summit. This was the second meeting between the two leaders following the June Singapore summit of 2018. The summit ended in failure as was witnessed by its abrupt end. Borger (2019:1) notes that, in his version of events, Trump noted that the deal had broken down because Kim wanted complete sanctions relief for dismantling the main nuclear complex at Yongbyon, but the US wanted other nuclear facilities, including covert sites, disabled as well. After the failed Summit, Trump was quoted saying, "They wanted the sanctions lifted in their entirety and we couldn't do that...sometimes you have to walk and this was just one of those times."

However, North Korea disputed Donald trump's explanation. As noted by Borger (2019), North Korean foreign minister, Ri Yong Ho said, "Pyongyang had only demanded partial sanctions relief in return for closing Yongbyon." The foreign minister also elaborated that the US had wasted an opportunity that "may not come again" and North Korea's position will not change. One can therefore note that the abrupt end of the Vietnam talks is a signal that the relations between the two countries might not normalise anytime soon despite the positive strides that have been achieved at the Singapore Summit. Additionally, the fact that both countries' explanations as to why the summit failed are conflicting is a worrying sign in as far as the normalising of relations is concerned.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focus on discussing the methodological considerations that will guide data collection, analysis and presentation. Qualitative research has been identified as the fundamental basis for conducting this study. Therefore, this chapter will discuss qualitative data collection and data analysis techniques that will be utilised by the researcher to empirically examine the US-North Korea confrontational relations.

3.1 Research Methodology

William (2005:85) argues that qualitative methods are often regarded as providing rich data about real life people and situations” Brink (1993:34) emphasise that “qualitative researchers are not interested in causal laws but in people’s belief, experience and meaning systems from the perspective of the people. The reasoning behind was captured by Guba and Lincoln (1989: 17) in writing that qualitative researchers generally contend that “reality is socially constructed”. Patton and Cochran (2002:2) also emphasise that “qualitative research is characterised by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis.” In this regard, guided by qualitative research underpinnings, this study will use purposive sampling in the selection of key informants, qualitative data collection methods such as in-depth interview will be utilised and thematic and content data analysis techniques will also be used to analyse the qualitative data collected through interviews and documentary research.

3.2 Research Design

This study was based on a case study design. Yin (2002:2) defines a case study as “a research that examines a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”. Neale et al (2006:1) also note that case study “provide the context and a narrative behind particular results by capturing what

actually happened”. Baxter and Jack (2008:544) emphasised that “qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of sources.” This study intends to analyse, US – North Korea confrontational relations, particularly focusing on portends of the nuclear dispute looming into a Global War. This will help experts in international peace and security to determine the effectiveness of the UN Security Council in resolving international disputes involving any of the UNSC permanent members.

3.3 Target Population

A target population is a complete group with relevant characteristics from where the data is to be obtained. Neuman (2011:247) defines population as “an abstract idea of a large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalised.” According to Parahoo (1997:218) a target population refers to “the total number of units from which data can be collected”. Burns and Grove (2003:213) describe a target population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. It is often impractical to study an entire population thus the notion on the target population. In addition, Neuman (2011:252) defines target population as “a concretely specified large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from the sample are generalised.” This study chose key informants as the target population. In this regard the target population for this study comprised of the officials from US embassy and North Korea embassy, particularly those residing in Harare. International relations experts, US and North Korea military officers at Zimbabwe Defence Staff College and University, lecturers and students also constitute the target population for this study. These people were singled out as the target population because of their experience and knowledge in international relations, particularly in US-North Korea relations.

3.4 Sampling

Burns and Groove (2003:31) define sampling as “a process of selecting a group of people, event or behavior with which to conduct a study”. This study will utilize non probability sampling techniques which Burns and Groove (2001:804), define as “a sampling technique which involves a sampling process where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected”. This study further narrowed to consider purposive sampling as most appropriate for this study. Oliver (2006:1) postulates that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which decisions concerning the

individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.” Parahoo (1997:232) defines purposive sampling as “a method of sampling where the researcher purposefully chooses who to include in the study basing on their ability to provide necessary data”. For this study the researcher will use purposive sampling in the selection of experience and knowledgeable people in international peace and security matters. In this case, purposive sampling will enable the researcher to select respondents based on the qualities they possess, proficiency and their knowledge of the US-North Korea confrontational relations.

3.5 Data Collection

For this study, the researcher will made use of qualitative data collection instruments to gather both primary and secondary data. These data collection instruments include in-depth interview and documentary research.

3.5.1 In-depth Interviews

Given the sensitiveness of the subject under study, this research will utilise in-depth interviews to collect data from the selected participants. Boyce (2006:3) defines in-depth interviews as “a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation.” For the study, the researcher will set appointment and conduct in-depth interviews with officials from US embassy and North Korea embassy, particularly those residing in Harare, International relations experts, Lecturers and Students that are knowledgeable in US-North Korea relations. Gill et al (2008:292) also emphasise that Interviews are the most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participants”. In this study little is known about the US-North Korea confrontational relations and the possibilities of a Global War as a result of the current US-North Korea nuclear crisis.

3.5.2 Documentary Research

The researcher will also utilise documentary research to compliment the primary data from field research. Payne (2004:8) describes the documentary research as, “a technique used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain.” Documentary research simply refers to the

utilisation of secondary data to enhance an empirical inquiry. Schwab (2005:1) notes that secondary data is data which has been gathered and recorded by someone else prior to and for the purpose of other than the current project. For this study the research will make use of both print (textbooks, newspapers, journals, reports) and online material that discuss US-North Korea relations, as a supplement to primary data collected during interviews. Bailey (1994) characterized documentary research methods as a cost-effective way of obtaining and analyzing information from documents that refer to the study.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Simon (2011:1) notes that “in quantitative research, reliability refers to the ability to replicate the results of a study. In qualitative research there is no expectation of replication and it is common to see the term dependability instead of reliability.” For this study dependability will be achieved by outlining a detailed account of the methodology used in data collection and analysis. Bashir et al (2008:39) note that “qualitative researchers are of the view that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, but at the same time, they have realized the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research.” “It is common to see the terms quality, rigor or trustworthiness instead of validity”, (Davies and Dodd 2002:3). For this study, in order to ensure dependability, quality, rigor or trustworthiness of this research, the researcher will triangulate the data collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. In line with obtaining accurate primary data the researcher is prepared to spend considerable time in the field, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of subject under study. The researcher’s subjective tendencies towards the study will be reduced or minimised by the researcher’s supervisor who will act as an external auditor thereby providing an objective assessment of the US-North Korea confrontational relations.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The research should both benefit the society and minimise any potential harm to participants and the community as a whole. In order to achieve this, beneficence and non-maleficence was considered by the researcher in preparation of this study. Ford and Reutter (1990:15) distinguish beneficence and non-maleficence, in writing that that "beneficence relates to the benefits of the research, while non-maleficence relates to the potential risks of participation". Beauchamp and Childres (2001:23) note that “the principle of beneficence includes the professional mandate to do

effective and significant research so as to better serve and promote the welfare of our constituents". In this regard, the research provides intellectual policy insights concerning the maintenance of international peace and security particularly on resolving international conflicts involving the threat of an outbreak of a nuclear war.

The study also observes the principle of informed consent. Ford and Reutter (1990:15) of course individuals can make informed decisions in order to participate in research voluntarily only if they have information on the possible risks and benefits of the research. Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:4) concurs that it means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent". The researcher will ensure that participants freely and voluntarily participate in the research, this will also include right to freely decide which questions to answer and to withdraw participation during the research.

The researcher will strictly respect anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:4) argue that "anonymity is protected when the subject's identity cannot be linked with personal responses." Levine (1976:12) contends that "confidentiality means that individuals are free to give and withhold as much information as they wish to the person they choose." In this regard, the researcher will not reveal the identity of the participants at any point of the study. That is to say, during data collection and data presentation and analysis, the researcher will respect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Given the sensitiveness of states interactions in the international system, anonymity and confidentiality will guarantee the safety of the participants during and after the research.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

In any research, data analysis techniques influence data presentation. This study utilised qualitative data analysis techniques. However, it is also important to understand what data analysis is in research. Yin (2006:21) defines data analysis as "the process of making sense out of the data. Merriam (1998:178) emphasise that making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning". For this study the researcher will utilise thematic data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) note that "thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Boyatzis (1998:1) emphasise that "data is encoded into themes and the emerging themes become categories for analysis." For this study data

presentation and analysis, the researcher will develop themes and then make use of those themes to analyse and report patterns with the data collected.

On the other hand, the data collected through documentary research will be incorporated into the study through content analysis. Hancock et al (2009:14) notes that “this term often refers to a technique rooted in quantitative approaches, in which the researcher would count occurrences of a word, phrase or theme.” However, in qualitative research, Patton (2002:453) defines content analysis as “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings.” For this study, the researcher will utilise content analysis in deducing secondary data to support or refute an opinion raised by a participant during interviews.

3.9 Summary

This Chapter’s discourse was centred on the methodology intended to be adopted by the researcher in studying the US-North Korea relations. It is comprehensible that this study was based on qualitative research techniques. The target population of this study included officials from US and North Korea embassies in Harare, military officers from US and North Korea at Defence College and University in Harare as well as academics in international relations. This study employed in-depth interviews to collect data from participant, who were selected on basis of their knowledge and experience on the phenomenon understudy (purposive sampling). Documentary research was also used to substantiate primary data gathered through interviews. This study utilised both thematic analysis and content analysis to deduce the collected primary and secondary data respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this Chapter is on the presentation of data collected from various sources through various means. In gathering data, the researcher significantly utilised two broad approaches and these are interviews and documentary search. The researcher utilised documentary search for its strengths, apart from being fairly economical, they are also a good basis of background information. Thus, documentary search was chosen so as to counter the deficiencies of in-depth interviews. The researcher engaged two forms of interviews which are semi-structured and unstructured. The benefit of using both forms is because shortcomings of each are complemented by the strengths of the other. The researcher also consulted documentary sources and among those used includes newsletters, conferences publications, websites, and electronic journals, among others. The data was evaluated through a combination of thematic and document analysis. The researcher used codes, emerging patterns and themes to analyse the findings of the research. The research findings are thus presented under thematic sub-headings as shall be presented in this ensuing discussion.

Table 1

Code	Description	Code	Description
USE 1	US embassy 1	JPE	Japan embassy
USE 2	US embassy 2	A 1	Academic 1
USE 3	US embassy 3	A 2	Academic 2
SKE 1	South Korea embassy 1	FAM	Foreign Affairs Ministry

SKE 2	South Korea embassy 2		
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Table 1 shows the people who were interviewed by the researcher in the data gathering process. To avoid identification of the research respondents, as per the guidelines of research ethics, various codes are employed. From the US embassy, a total of three respondents were interviewed and these are presented as USE 1, USE 2 and USE 3. Two officials from the South Korea embassy were also conducted for the interviews and these are represented by the respective codes, SKE 1 and SKE 2. From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one official was also interviewed and is represented by the code FAM. Lastly, the codes A1 and A2 represent two academia.

4.3 Possibility of a third World War (WW111) due to US-North Korea relations.

A number of scholars have discussed on the likelihood of a looming (WW111) which might come as a result of the volatile relations between Washington and Kim. However there has been no consensus on this issue from the respondents that were interviewed.

In a face to face interview, A2 argued that “people might say Kim is young and untested, but he is not that young any longer and he is not that tested anymore”. A2 further elaborated that, “Kim has led North Korea since 2011 and has managed to immensely expand his nuclear resources without triggering a war with either the US or South Korea.” A2 also noted, “Kim might be a ruthless tyrant that is aggressive and vindictive and prone to violence, but he is a rational leader making essentially rational choices as well.” In summation, A2 elaborated that Kim knows how to recalibrate and dial them back down.

On the side-lines of Armed Services Committee hearing in the US Senate in September, Senator Angus King argued, “I have queasy feeling that we are in 1914 stumbling towards Sarajevo.” Dreazen (2018:2). The senator was citing to the murder of the archduke of Austria, which sparked the devastation of WW1. The senator further argued that, “What worries me is not an instantaneous nuclear confrontation, but an accidental escalation based upon the rhetoric that is going back and forth”.

The senator went on to say: That's what worries me, is a misinterpretation, an event: a shooting down of a bomber, a strike on a ship that leads to a countermeasure, and the end result is that if Kim Jong-un feels his regime is under attack, then the unthinkable happens (Ibid).

To cement the above remarks by the senator, respondent A1 also argued, the fact that the US and North Korea had no direct lines of communication that could be used to defuse a tense situation before it springs out of control is very worrying. A1 summed up by arguing that a potential WW111 could be witnessed if the two countries do not find a common ground.

According to respondent JPE, war is unlikely to break out. The respondent strongly believes that both sides want to dodge a full-on war situation which could leave North Korea totally ravaged and economically destroyed. The respondent went on to argue that, "Kim is happy to fight rhetorically, but going into war with the US would be a suicidal mission, one that Kim would want and should avoid at all costs." The respondent also argued that it is also important to note that it's not in United States' interests to go into nuclear warfare with North Korea because of the likely human and material consequences that would come as a result of such a nuclear war. Thus, according to JPE, both Trump and Kim are very careful to avoid a nuclear warfare as it would leave both countries devastated. The respondent elaborated that Kim might be behaving erratically, but he is ultimately rational and on the other hand, Trump will explore the diplomatic route only in a bid to denuclearise North Korea.

Respondent FAM on the possibility of an escalation of a nuclear warfare argued that it is the least likely thing to occur. FAM noted that Kim Jong-un will not like to vaporise himself in a nuclear war with the "mighty US". The respondent further elaborated that, "China will also never like such an eventuality happening near its border and would consequently show off as an intermediary at the time of peak tension." However, on the other hand, although recent trends have shown China gradually being tough on Kim, many policy-makers, FAM believe still doubt that China would stay neutral in the event of warfare between Kim and Trump. This is also because the Treaty (Sino-North Korean Mutual and Cooperation Friendship Treaty) between North Korea and China to defend and secure North Korea against anyone has recently been extended to 2021. FAM therefore believes that because of this treaty, "US will restrain from attacking North Korea."

4.4 Military and political fundamentals which have caused straining of relations.

4.4.1 Advances in North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programs

North Korea has been at the forefront of being labelled a rogue country for many years. It has followed a nuclear weapons program through constructing and exporting ballistic missiles and also aid terrorist acts, among others. This has posed as a threat to US interests and its allies and as a result US stationed forces in South Korea and Japan.

According to Manyin et al (2018:3),

North Korea's rapid advances in missile and nuclear weapons capabilities in 2016 and 2017 have shifted US policymakers' assessment of the regime's threat to the United States. Although North Korea has presented security challenges to US interests for decades, recent tests have demonstrated that North Korea is nearly if not already capable of striking the continental United States with a nuclear –armed ballistic missiles.

This acceleration capability actually made North Korea a top line US foreign policy and national security problem.

FAM also argued that Pyongyang's threats have increased across several domains: nuclear weapons, long range missile technology, submarine-based missiles as well as cyber-attack capacity. According to the respondent, "this is a direct confrontation to the US and thus poses a serious security threat to Trump and his allies." It is because of this according to FAM that the relations between North Korea and US have strained.

According to Manyin et al (2018:3) "North Korea conducted three nuclear tests between January 2016 and September 2017. The last test, its sixth, was its most powerful to date". Also, in 2017, North Korea conducted multiple tests of missiles that some observers assert demonstrate a capability of reaching the continental United States. It is thus because of this North Korea's nuclear weapons program that has seen Washington and Pyongyang straining their relations.

USE 2 also supported the latter's comments by arguing that, "to show that Pyongyang's nuclear tests between 2016 and 2017 did not go well with Trump, and were a perceived threat to the US, the Trump administration reacted by adopting a "maximum pressure" policy that sought to compel Pyongyang into changing its behaviour through economic and diplomatic measures." Many of the elements of the officially stated policy according to USE 2 were similar to those employed by the

Obama administration: ratcheting up economic pressure against North Korea in an attempt to persuade China (North Korea's most economic partner) and others to apply more pressure against Pyongyang and increasing the capabilities of the US- North Korea and US-Japan alliances to counter new North Korean threats.

The US government successfully led the United Nations Security Council including North Korea's friends, China and Russia to pass four fresh sanctions resolutions that have expanded the requirements for United Nations member states to halt/curtail their military, diplomatic and economic relations with the DPRK. This in the eyes of Pyongyang was a direct threat to the country's sovereignty, thus escalating relations.

Additionally, A1 also argued that both the Obama and Trump governments pushed states around the world to significantly cut or eliminate their ties to North Korea, often in ways that go beyond UNSC requirements. Again, this did not go well with the Kim administration which actually viewed it as a threat to the country's interests.

USE 3 also noted, "that the escalation of war of words especially on twitter between Trump and Kim is also evidence of the escalation of relations between the two." USE 3 made reference to Trump's tweet in which he called Kim Jong-un "a madman who doesn't mind starving or killing his people". Trump's tirade, USE 3 noted, came after the North Korean leader chastised Trump calling the president's UN address as rude nonsense. Kim tweeted,

The mentally deranged behaviour of the US president openly expressing on the UN arena the unethical will to totally destroy a sovereign state, beyond the boundary of threats of regime change or overturn of social system, makes even those with normal thinking faculty think about discretion and composure. Trump's remarks at the UN merit the highest level of hard-line countermeasure in history.

From the respondents' views and comments as discussed above, one can note that relations between North Korea and the US have become sour as a result of the two countries' foreign policies towards one another.

4.5 Strategies adopted by both countries to safeguard their interests

The US-North Korea confrontation because of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program has seen both countries adopting various strategies in their bid to realise their respective interests.

4.5.1 US strategy in safeguarding its interests

In a face to face interview, A2 argued that, “evidence from the last few months strongly indicate that the US has no strategy in its engagement with North Korea in as far as safeguarding of its interests are concerned.” The respondent also argued that indications from the Trump administration appear to indicate that policy inclines toward military aggression rather than diplomatic engagement. The respondent further argued that not only is Trump’s foreign policy team in total confusion, but the very people who had the inclination and skill to make talks with North Korea prosperous have resigned or been pushed out. According to the respondent, Trump withdrew the ambassador to South Korea, Victor Cha, on grounds that he was opposed to the utility of pre-emptive military strikes. The respondent also highlighted that the resignation of Joseph Yun over his perception that his job to talk to North Korean officials had been made irrelevant to the administration’s North Korea policy. All these according to A2 shows lack of coherence and strategy.

Respondent FAM’s sentiments are also in line with A2. FAM argued that, “the firing of State Secretary, Rex Tillerson, another resilient activist of diplomatic engagement has added to the confusion over Trump’s approach to North Korea.” FAM further highlighted that when it comes to Donald Trump versus Kim Jong-un, the latter has shown a greater rationality in pursuit of a strategy to achieve his own wealth and prestige. According to the respondent, “Trump is portraying to the whole world that he is the only diplomat that matters in its engagement with North Korea.” This flawlessness of Washington’s strategy in dealing with Pyongyang, FAM argued that it will work in Kim’s favour.

FAM further elaborated that, “United States’ lack of a coherent strategy means that engagement- either through diplomatic dialogues or military threats leads to greater instability on the Korean Peninsula by growing the risks of a miscalculation that could start a war.”

According to Kellog (2018:1), although it is true that the different methods taken by previous administrations (Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barak Obama) were not successful in preventing the development of nuclear weapons in North Korea. “They did however, maintained stability on the heavily militarised Peninsula. Trump’s lack of strategy towards this issue should not be viewed as a radical new approach but rather as an action that interjects a dangerous uncertainty over what the US wants from North Korea and what it is willing to do to obtain it.”

Respondent A1 also noted that the Trump administration has lacked a North Korean strategy since the day it assumed office. The respondent further argued that, “the Trump administration has an attitude about North Korea having nuclear weapons, but they lack a rational policy to link attitude to outcomes.” The same respondent also made reference to Trump’s tweet soon after winning the presidency when he argued “The era of strategic patience with the North Korean regime has failed”. According to the respondent, Trump’s tweet was a declaration of war on North Korea. However, his willingness to open negotiations (Singapore Talks) with Kim shows great contradictions as well as strategy inconsistency.

From the respondents’ views on US strategy on North Korea, there is a coherent consensus that the US does not have a clearly defined strategy in as far as safeguarding of its interests in the Northern Peninsula is concerned.

4.5.2 North Korean strategy in safeguarding its interests

As noted by Sanger (2018), “For seven years, Kim Jong-un has pursued an in-your-face strategy for building his nuclear arsenal: detonating blasts underground and firing missiles into the sky, all to send the message that his country’s nuclear build up is irreversible.”

USE 2 however noted that Kim now appears to be changing his tactic, tailoring it to his reading of Donald Trump. According to USE 2, “North Korea is making nuclear fuel and building missiles as actively as ever and this is suggested by publicly available evidence.” The respondent further argued that Kim however now appears to be borrowing a page from such countries as Israel, Pakistan and India. He is keeping quiet about it, conducting no public nuclear demonstrations and creating no crises. According to USE 2, by doing so, “Kim Jong-un is allowing Trump to portray a denuclearisation effort is on track.” USE 2 in summing up, argued that he does not believe that Kim would ever denuclearise as the nuclear weapons are of great importance to the country’s survival in a world where realism takes centre stage.

According to respondent A2, Current and former intelligence officials say new assessments show that Mr Kim has carefully read Mr Trump and come to the conclusion that as long as the optics are good, and the exchanges between the two leaders are warm, he can hold off demands for progress toward disarmament. If Mr Kim does not conduct tests, Mr Trump is unlikely to call out evidence of a continued nuclear build up.

According to Kellog (2018), even one of Mr Trump's frequent defenders, Senator Lindsey Graham indicated that he was concerned that the president might have been manipulated. "Are they playing the US? I don't know," Mr Graham said. "If they are playing Trump, we are going to be in a world of hurt because he is going to have no options left. This is the last, best chance for peace right here".

According to Sanger (2018),

"Mr Kim's strategy now appears to be simple: mimic Pakistan, which conducted a major nuclear test in 1998 and deflected demands for years that it gives up its weapons. Pakistan has largely succeeded. It has a substantial arsenal, and when Mr Pompeo visited Islamabad, there was little public discussion of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

"Kim understands what has protected the Pakistanis. As long as you have a circle of countries that will recognise you, and will trade with you, it is very difficult for the US to succeed in getting the country to dismantle its nuclear weapons apparatus. Trump had strong international sanctions leverage over Kim but squandered it at Singapore." said Nicholas R Burus, the undersecretary of state for political affairs during the George W Bush administration as cited in Kellog (2018). North Korea has actually taken advantage of the situation to step up trade with China and Russia in violation of UN resolutions. In light of this "mimic Pakistan" strategy, one can therefore note that North Korea has adopted a wise strategy in order to safeguard the country's interests.

FAM also highlighted that due to Kim's deceitful attitude, Trump effectively dropped his "maximum pressure" policy of cutting money flows to Kim reserves. That policy according to the respondent resulted in halving international payments to Kim. FAM also argued that Trump in reality got nothing in return. According to the same respondent, "Kim made an assurance that sounded like he was giving up his nuclear weaponries and ballistic missiles but it was illusory." The respondent summarised by saying that Kim is a clever and smart leader who knows how to deceive Trump in order to safeguard his country's national interests.

From the above various views by the respondents, there is indeed a widespread consensus that Kim seeks to deceive Trump that his administration has ceased nuclear weapons production and that it is in the process of denuclearising. The recurrent theme drawn from the discussions is that, nuclear weapons are important for Pyongyang's survival and that Kim will silently continue his program thus deceiving Trump.

4.6 Trump and Kim's recent re-engagement key to the realignment of relations between Washington and Pyongyang?

Trump and Kim became the first sitting US and North Korean leaders to meet. They met on 12 June 2018 after an unprecedented development after a year of exchanging threats. After the high-level summit, the leaders signed a comprehensive document promising a new relationship between US and North Korea. According to Sanger (2018), "The document commits North Korea to work towards the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and promises new relations between Washington and Pyongyang." There are however question marks as to whether this recent re-engagement can contribute to the re-alignment of relations between the two countries.

However, Sanger (2018) notes that:

The agreement the two sides have signed is vague and lacking in detail. It only commits the US and North Korea to the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. There is no mention that the process should be verifiable or irreversible- which is what the US has been pushing for. There is no timetable to disarm North Korea nor is there any invitation for weapons inspectors to be allowed in. The US has said it will provide security guarantees without specifying what that might mean- or if that could involve the removal of some American troops based in South Korea.

USE 1 in a face to face interview postulated that, "the vagueness and lacking in detail of the signed agreement is a great weakness and to that effect, Kim might not honour the agreement." Thus, according to respondent USE 1, the reengagement will not translate to realignment of relations between Washington and Pyongyang.

FAM also echoed almost similar sentiment as that of respondent USE.1. The respondent argued that regardless of enticements, North Korea will not voluntarily give up its nuclear missiles capability. FAM further elaborated that after years of observing North Korea's negotiating behaviour, Pyongyang's demands are tactical moves that Kim sees having a nuclear capability as indispensable to the administration's survival and has no intention of giving up its nuclear armaments for aid and recognition. Pyongyang's numerous statements of its determination according to FAM of sustaining its nuclear weapons program also have led analysts to have reservations to the idea that the pledge at the Singapore Summit has dramatically changed its intentions. FAM also reiterated that in 2010 North Korea restated its demand to be recognised as

an official nuclear weapons government and said it would intensify and revolutionise its nuclear deterrent. FAM thus argued there is no possibility of US- North Korea realignment of relations.

Similarly, according to Manyin et al (2018: 9), “North Korea in 2017 suggested that it will not relinquish its nuclear stockpile until all nuclear weapons are eliminated worldwide.” This is understandable in the sense that North Korea believes that without the security assurance of nuclear weapons, they are exposed to overthrow by a rebellious uprising supported by outside military intervention. It is thus imperative to note that North Korea won’t denuclearise because the WMD’s are a symbol of security in the eyes of Kim. One can thus argue that the recent re-engagement of the two might be a chimera in the realignment of relations between Washington and Pyongyang anytime soon.

From the information gathered from the research’s respondents as well as documentary search, there is consensus that the Singapore talks of June 12 2018, between Kim and Trump will not contribute to the realignment of relations between the two powers because WMD’s are vital in North Korea’s security. According to the data gathered, the 2018 Singapore Summit might have conferred a degree of legitimacy on North Korea as a nuclear state, in the sense that Trump sat down with Kim as he would any other world leader and agreed to the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The Singapore Summit though historic, it did not live up to its promise as a breakthrough moment in US- North Korea relations.

4.7 Defining Geo-political alignments which have contributed to deteriorating relations.

SKE 1 argued that the hostile relations between North Korea and the US date back to 1948 when North Korea was established. The respondent postulated that North Korea’s borders were imposed by outside powers. He argued, once established, North Korea didn’t escape Soviet influence. Moscow sustained it up. The respondent noted that Kim 11 Sung was installed by the Soviets as leader of the North Korea whilst also Republic of Korea supported by the US was also established in the Southern part of the Peninsula. It is therefore such a background of the US-Soviet divisions of the Korean Peninsula in 1948 which actually laid the foundation for hostility that defines US-North Korea relations of today. Thus, according to SKE 1, this background has to a greater extent contributed to deteriorating relations between Pyongyang and Washington.

According to Pennington (2018:2):

The US' standoff with the Soviet Union during the Cold War dictated the first phase of US- North Korea relations. Washington and Moscow emerged from WW11 as the premier global powers. Each sought to weaken the other and build a global alliance structure with proxy states. During this time, the US pursued a containment strategy meant to prevent the spread of Soviet power and influence. This called for taking whatever action necessary to discourage countries from becoming Soviet allies through the adoption of communism.

One can therefore argue that since North Korea was established by the Soviets as a communist state, it automatically became a US adversary, a situation which is prevailing even up to present day. This geopolitical alignment has thus contributed to deteriorating relations between North Korea and US.

In a face to face interview, SKE 2 also argued that China has an important geo-political influence in US- North Korea relations. SKE 2 further pointed out that China is against any policy leading to the installation of a regime that is hostile to China on the other side of the Yalu River or pushing the US army to the Yalu River boundary. SKE 2 also went on to say, as a result, North Korea serves as a valuable buffer state between China and the US military deployed in South Korea. SKE 2 further elaborated that besides the buffer state issue, China seeks to safeguard North-East China. It is against the US adopting unilateral actions against North Korea that could result in an upheaval of a huge number of immigrants into China. As a result, China is and will be opposed to any action that might threaten its security as well. The geopolitical position of China according to the respondent is thus deteriorating relations between the US and North Korea.

According to Scott (2018), "The most dramatic unintended consequence of the Singapore Summit was the revitalisation of leader level ties between China and North Korea." As a result, one of the most daunting tasks the Trump administration now faces is how to induce China to maintain economic pressure on North Korea in the middle of a simultaneously unfolding inter-Korean peace process and Sino-US trade war. Most notably, China's policy has reverted from support for US led maximum pressure aimed at North Korea's denuclearisation to restoration of China's geostrategic embrace of North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un due to its fear of being marginalised in the rapidly evolving peace process.

According to Scott (2018:2), "China's reversion to a policy that emphasises geopolitical interests above denuclearisation carries with it several negative consequences. First, China's influence over

North Korea as its key strategic ally relieves pressure on North Korea to denuclearise”. This has interacted negatively with rising tensions in US-China relations. One can thus note that China’s emphasis on geo-political interest and its reluctance to condemn North Korea’s nuclear program is seriously deteriorating relations between US and North Korea. One can therefore argue that by giving North Korea a leaning shoulder, Kim will not be willing to honour the Singapore Summit pledges as he is assured of economic trade with China and Russia who have kept on trading with North Korea despite the UN’s stance.

4.8 UN role in pacifying US- North Korea relations. Success of failure thus far?

North Korea’s withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003 and its missile tests in 2006 provoked the UNSC to unanimously adopt resolutions condemning North Korea’s actions and imposing sanctions against the country. The UNSC has increasingly ratcheted up sanctions through subsequent resolutions in anticipating of changing Pyongyang’s behaviour or foreign policy particularly its relations with the US.

FAM however argued that although the UNSC has curtailed North Korea’s access to materials, it is not that easy to enforce and regulate international cargo deliveries. The respondent also noted that the UNSC’s efforts are being derailed by China’s assistance to North Korea’s ballistic missile program and its trade assistance to North Korea as well as the lacklustre enforcement of sanctions.

Similarly, respondent A2 noted that although the UNSC has banned financial assistance to North Korea. This has not been successful. According to the respondent, North Korea has a record of missile sales and nuclear technology sharing with such countries as Iran, Libya, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, only to mention a few. A2 also elaborated that, given North Korea’s economic constraints, fears abound that more nuclear material and knowledge could be sold, enhancing the potential for nuclear terrorism.

Respondent SKE 2 also pointed out that despite UNSC sanctions which are meant to bring North Korea to the negotiating table especially with the US, it has been not successful as a result of Beijing. The respondent noted that imposing tougher punishments on North Korea in international fora such as the UN is recurrently hindered by China’s seat in the UNSC particularly as a permanent member where Beijing frequently waters down US efforts to punish North Korea. As a collective body, the UN has failed to restrain China. This according to the respondent is because

of the veto powers that the P5 members are privileged with. SKE 2 thus summed by noting that the UN is failing to pacify tensions between the US and North Korea.

Maning et al (2008) notes that, “Chinese Companies often have been found to violate sanctions against North Korea, and the Chinese government’s enforcement of sanctions has become uneven, with authorities often turning a blind eye to violations.” The argument by this source thus revolves around the “Beijing problem” whereby UN ambitions to pacify relations between Pyongyang and Washington are frequently hampered by Beijing’s soft stance/ its support for Pyongyang. UN sanctions are therefore in a way failing to achieve their intended goals and objectives.

On the other hand, respondent SKE 1 expressed optimism for the role the UN is playing in pacifying relations between Washington and Pyongyang. SKE 1 made reference to the June 2018 Singapore Summit which was also facilitated by UN as a promising development in ensuring relations between the two. The respondent further pointed to the fact that Kim and Trump agreed to meet in their first ever face to face encounter is a positive sign in as far as normalisation of relations between the two is concerned.

In its efforts to pacify relations between US and North Korea, the United Nations has also put its agencies on standby. Among some of the agencies are the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), “An agency which works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.” as noted by Weston (2018). “The agency has a mandate to apply safeguards on all nuclear material in peaceful use, including all material removed from military programmes” (Ibid).

Furthermore, the Comprehensive Nuclear –Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) could also play a key role in monitoring the DPRK moratorium on nuclear tests. The Secretary General added:

I believe that this Summit is an extremely important event. I believe the two leaders need to be credited for the courage with which they decided to move forward with the summit and to engage in a constructive negotiation to reach an objective that is vital for us all: the peaceful and verifiable denuclearisation of North Korea.

From the Secretary General’s remarks above, one can argue that the UN is in fact doing a great job in brokering and encouraging talks between Trump and Kim in a bid to pacify their relations.

From the information gathered both from the respondents and data sources, there is consensus that the UN has adopted various measures and facilitated talks particularly the Singapore Summit of

June 12 2018. There is consensus also that the world body is very much committed to ensure Washington and Pyongyang realign. However, the respondents alluded to the fact that despite its desire, the UN is failing to ease tensions between the two particularly because of the role China is playing.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This Chapter focused on a comprehensive and unbiased analysis of the gathered findings concerning the issue under study. From the findings discussed above, there is widespread consensus that nuclear warfare is the likely thing to occur. Both countries are aware of the consequences of warfare on their economies. Respondents also noted that Kim and Trump are rational and would thus want to avoid war. The chapter also sought to discuss the strategies adopted by both countries in safeguarding their interests. Various respondents pointed to the fact that the US administration lacks a clear strategy. Indications are that the Trump administration's policy is more inclined toward military aggression rather than diplomatic engagement. On the other hand, the researcher found that Kim's strategy is marred with deceitfulness. Kim seeks to deceive Trump that his country has ceased nuclear weapons production and that it is denuclearising yet it's the other way round. The researcher also noted that due to the importance of nuclear weapons to North Korea, it is hard to believe that the country would denuclearise. The researcher in this chapter also sought to discuss the United Nation's role in pacifying relations between North Korea and the US. The UNSC has been unanimously imposing sanctions on North Korea in a bid to weaken its economy and thus coerce Kim towards denuclearising. However, these sanctions have been less successful as North Korea has a record of sharing missiles and technology with such countries as Iran and Syria. As a result, the sanctions are doing very little in weakening North Korea's economy. The next Chapter focuses on drawing overall conclusions of the entire research as well as giving some recommendations that can be put in place in order to pacify relations between Pyongyang and Washington in a bid to avoid a potential WW111.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

5.1 Introduction

The previous Chapter presented the major findings from the research; hence this Chapter focuses on four aspects which are discussing the summary of findings, conclusions, offering some policy suggestions/recommendations and lastly provide implications for further research. Conclusions will be drawn from the discussions that were done in the preceding Chapters of this research. This section also proffers recommendations which can be put in place in order to pacify the relations between US and North Korea in a bid to avert WW3. The Chapter closes by providing some implications for further studies.

5.2 Restatement of the Research Objectives

5.2.1 Overall objective

- To examine the possibility of the US-North Korea confrontation looming into World War three.

5.2.2 Specific objectives

- Examine the nature of the US-North Korea relations.
- Examine the effects of the involvement of other countries in the US-North Korea bilateral relations.
- Assess the effectiveness of the United Nations in responding to the US-North Korea bilateral dispute.

5.4 Summary of findings

The overall objective of this research was to examine the possibility of the US-North Korea confrontation looming into WW3. This objective was achieved and it has been concluded that the US-North Korea confrontation has the potential to result in a World War if not properly managed. However, the study noted that both US and North Korea are very much aware of the human and economic consequences of going to war. As a result, the two will refrain.

Additionally, the researcher discovered that the multiplicity of various countries with different and often conflicting interests such as China, South Korea, Japan and Russia among others is one of the reasons that might delay the normalisation of relations between the US and North Korea. Apart

from that, the researcher concluded that the United Nations has been ineffective in pacifying relations between the US and North Korea. This is because UN economic sanctions on North Korea have proved ineffectual as long as China and Russia continue to fund the regime through back channels. Thus the intended purpose of the UN imposed sanctions is not felt.

The study also concluded that to date, all initiatives to persuade North Korea that it would be more useful to relinquish their nuclear program than maintain it, whether through threats or enticements have foundered. The administration is hesitant to do so, because they know that the program is the only assurance to avoid external intervention and prolong its survival in a world where realism takes centre stage.

The research findings have also supported the theories that were employed in this research. From the research, it has been proved that realism is still a relevant theory. This can be witnessed for example by North Korea's nuclear proliferation program in a bid to protect and safeguard its territorial integrity and sovereignty against the threat posed by the US foreign policy towards the Korean Peninsula. The deterrence theory has also been supported by the research findings if one is to analyse the US policy towards North Korea. According to the theory, if the costs are higher than the benefits produced by some type of initiative, states will be deterred from taking aggressive action against their adversaries. This can be best explained by United States' reluctance to start warfare with North Korea as it is aware of the costs associated with such warfare.

In discussing the objectives of this research, the theoretical framework of such theories as deterrence theory and realism laid the foundation.

5.5 Conclusions

The research's main objective was to examine the possibility of the US-North Korea confrontation looming into WW3. The findings preliminary showed that the US-North Korea tensions if not properly pacified, will indeed result in WW3. However, there has been widespread consensus amongst the respondents that war is the likely thing to occur. The respondents noted that both the US and North Korea are very much aware of the consequences of warfare to their economies. War would leave each country badly devastated. Furthermore, the role of China is important in subverting warfare between the two powers. This is so because the Treaty (Sino-North Korean Mutual and Cooperation Friendship Treaty) between North Korea and China to defend and secure

North Korea against anyone has recently been extended to 2021. As a result, there is a very big chance that the US will restrain from attacking North Korea.

Additionally, the research discovered that geopolitical alignments are also to blame for the deteriorating of relations between Washington and Pyongyang. The hostile relations between North Korea and the US date back to 1948 when North Korea was established. North Korea's borders were imposed by outside powers and therefore they cannot escape Soviet influence. Additionally, Kim Il Sung was installed by the Soviets as leader of North Korea whilst the Republic of Korea supported by the US was also established in the Southern part of the Peninsula. It is therefore such a background of the US-Soviet divisions of the Korean Peninsula in 1948 which actually laid the foundation for hostility that defines US-North Korea relations of today.

Furthermore, the researcher noted that the UNSC has been ineffective in pacifying relations between the two countries. The UNSC's efforts to weaken North Korea's economy by the imposition of sanctions have not been very fruitful. This is because North Korea has been secretly exchanging technology with countries such as Syria. Additionally, Russia and China are also other countries that are believed to be bailing out North Korea. Moreover, various efforts to punish North Korea have been vetoed against by China. Due to these aforementioned reasons, the UNSC has been ineffective in as far as normalising of relations between the US and North Korea is concerned. The research also analysed how the current thawing of relations between US and North Korea as well as DPRK and ROK can help in averting a looming world war. The research concluded that signs are positive that a world war can be dodged.

Lastly, the researcher concluded that the Singapore Summit of June 2018 should be the basis for future negotiations in a bid to ease tensions between US and North Korea.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher noted that there are no easy solutions to the US-North Korea sour relations. The researcher thus proffered recommendations that can be put in place in a bid to pacify US-North Korea relations and ease the danger of a potential world war.

5.6.1 Need for diplomacy

The crisis with North Korea has time and again showed that it will not end without diplomacy. However, Trump has been reluctant to do so which has been a recipe for failure. The Singapore Talks of 12 June 2018 have laid a foundation for future talks, thus Trump should bring back North

Korea to the negotiating table again until they strike a balance. The researcher therefore encourages a diplomatic process as a way to pacify relations.

The Washington administration should also stop talking about preventive military strikes. The administration should also refrain from publicly discuss the inevitability of a military strike to prevent North Korea from fully fielding a nuclear capable ICBM.

5.6.2 Isolate North Korea from the global economy

Economic pressure is the best lever the US has for increasing the costs Pyongyang bears for maintaining its current weapons trajectory. More economic sanctions can actually increase Kim's incentives to negotiate; give the US additional tools to work with in possible future negotiations and reduce the regime's ability to import expertise components for its nuclear and missile programs. A targeted sanctions strategy that effectively isolates North Korea from the global economy will weaken North Korea's position and subsequently put the US in a stronger position for either diplomacy or containment.

5.6.3 Containment

While engaging North Korea, the US should retain its deterrent against North Korea's military and contain the spread of North Korea's missile technology. In June 2009, the then president of the US, Barack Obama stated that, "North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs pose a grave threat to peace and security of Asia and to the world." Everything should be done therefore to stop North Korea from passing this expertise to other countries or terrorist groups. The US should therefore engage the UN and the Proliferation Security Strategy to help prevent the spread of North Korea's nuclear and missile technology and retaining sanctions to prevent sale of North Korea's arms.

5.7 Areas for further study

- An assessment of North Korea's strategic significance to China.
- The Singapore summit: A critical assessment and implications for South Korea's policy toward North Korea.

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