

## **How do we solve the North Korea dilemma?**

**In addition to economic sanctions, we need to focus on spreading democracy.**

*This piece is a translation from Korean.*

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To properly solve the North Korea dilemma, we must first accurately diagnose the current state of North Korea.

Reflecting on past examples of North Korea’s role models, the former Soviet Union and China, the reason these countries chose to change on their own rather than succumb to external pressure is because the structure of authority in these countries was not a firmly established “one-man rule” regime. Communism is not feudalism. Thus, hereditary succession was not possible in most socialist countries. North Korea, however, has undergone hereditary succession two times and can no longer claim that it is a socialist country by ideological standards.

A “one-man rule” regime perpetuates extreme idolatry and justifies acts that are purportedly “above the law”. Under North Korea’s “one-man rule” system, the leader’s orders carry more weight than that of law, and all political prisoners are eliminated by the authority of the leader.

This “one-man rule” regime is the very reason North Korea has clashed with countries like China to become the most threatening and hostile country among allies. A change like that of the former Soviet Union and China is only possible when this “one-man rule” regime is abolished. By sustaining an authoritative dictatorship, North Korea has inevitably clashed with China’s policy of opening and reform.

Despite such clash, China’s hesitance to change North Korea is because China is uncertain whether the collapse of North Korea will help China’s national interests. Rather than the collapse of North Korea, China wants a Chinese-style reformed government established in North Korea. Therefore, when comparing the North Korea policies of the U.S. and China, a fundamental difference exists. The U.S. places its focus on the nuclear issue, whereas China pressure North Korea towards an opening and reform policy like its own.

Twenty years have passed since the North Korean nuclear issue has come to light. Nevertheless, with these differences in approaches, the failure to approach the fundamental problem of North Korea has led to the delay in resolving the North Korean dilemma.

The core of the North Korea dilemma is not the nuclear issue, but the “one-man rule” regime from which the dictatorship stems. Unless this dictatorship is dissolved, the nuclear issue can never be solved. Finding ways to dismantle this dictatorship is the most crucial factor in solving the North Korea dilemma.

Here, a military option can be one method to resolve the problem. In 1994, when President Bill Clinton was about to bomb the North Korean nuclear base, military options were available. At that time, North Korea was in the early days of developing nuclear weapons and missiles, so it could not prevent an attack by the U.S. But now that North Korea has succeeded in upgrading its nuclear and missile capabilities, it is no longer possible to fully control such capabilities. Therefore, military means to resolve the North Korea dilemma are limited.

In addition, looking at the anti-government sentiments among the public within North Korea, military measures cannot help the democratization of North Korea. If so, the key to resolving the North Korean dilemma can be narrowed down to three options.

The first option is a sanction against the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors by the Chinese government. This is of utmost importance because the fact that the Chinese government sends North Korean defectors back to North Korea is the largest hurdle preventing the collapse of the North Korean government. Nonetheless, the U.S. and the international community are not sufficiently addressing China's forceful repatriation of North Korean defectors and are only concentrating on economic sanctions. What is more powerful than the sum of all the economic sanctions is the pressure to stop the forceful repatriation of North Koreans.

The second option is information dissemination inside North Korea. When looking at past examples from Eastern Europe or dictatorship countries, change began with the inflow of external information. If the worst information control in history is dismantled and an information revolution occurs, change of North Korea could start soon. However, such strategic sanctions have been ignored thus far.

Lastly, the third measure is a change through exchanges and cooperation with the North Korean regime. Until now, the United Nations and many civic organizations have tried to change North Korea through exchanges, cooperation, and support. Such engagement policy, however, is only feasible after North Korea transitions from a “one-man rule” to a system with group power dynamics. Therefore, support and aid for North Korea can be used as a method to transition North Korea from a “one-man rule” to a more relaxed system. This would be similar to the reciprocal exchange and cooperation that the government of former West Germany implemented towards East Germany. If cooperation is achieved under the conditions of improving human rights change, this can be a new attempt to change the North Korean regime.



The reason North Korea avoids UN-level assistance to the extent possible and favors control over civilian assistance is because the monitoring process can lead to a change in the system. Therefore, to help North Koreans without being under the control of the North Korean regime, cooperating with international organizations such as the UN is important.

In conclusion, despite all types of methods, the lack of resolution of the North Korea dilemma is because of the absence of a North Korea policy directed at the core. The reason North Korea has been able to sustain itself despite economic sanctions is because the international community has neglected the means to change the country, which are the very things that North Korea fears.

Leaders of the international community should avoid absurd statements indemnifying the North Korean regime in exchange for a resolution of the nuclear issue. True change and problem solving are in the hands of the North Korean people.

## Research Resources

<https://www.unwatch.org/north-korea-4-years-late-rejects-all-meaningful-upr-recommendations/>

<http://www.ishr.ch/news/democratic-peoples-republic-korea-accepts-none-uprs-167-recommendations>

[https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/korea\\_dpr/session\\_19\\_-\\_april\\_2014/a\\_hrc\\_wg.6\\_19\\_prk\\_1\\_annex\\_e.pdf](https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/korea_dpr/session_19_-_april_2014/a_hrc_wg.6_19_prk_1_annex_e.pdf)

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/04/18/universal-periodic-review-north-korea>

<http://38north.org/2014/10/dhawk101614/>

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/dprk-north-korea/>

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiGjbGTq4HTAhVB6oMKHU9WCFcQFghCMAc&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eahrnk.org%2Farticles%2Fpolicy-and-research%2Fdownload%2F6\\_f628e5efbfd2b7e738fcd729d5d8b5b7&usg=AFOjCNE4tfvDn-ASBgLqO2xUcAqu-goUig&sig2=qlUgsBlrJME56kUAxEg6uQ](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiGjbGTq4HTAhVB6oMKHU9WCFcQFghCMAc&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eahrnk.org%2Farticles%2Fpolicy-and-research%2Fdownload%2F6_f628e5efbfd2b7e738fcd729d5d8b5b7&usg=AFOjCNE4tfvDn-ASBgLqO2xUcAqu-goUig&sig2=qlUgsBlrJME56kUAxEg6uQ) (EAHRNK)

### *From UPR*

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/KPSession19.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRImplementation.aspx>

### *About using UPR*

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