



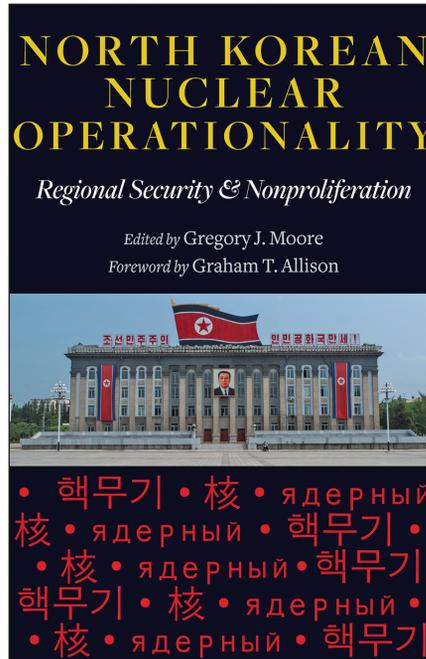
Book Review

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North Korean Nuclear Operationality

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Richly detailed and logically laid out, Moore's book is an excellent analysis of North Korea's acquisition of nuclear arms and the consequences to its neighbors. A wide spectrum of issues concerning this threat to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) are examined including the long evolution of the crisis, the motivations behind the North Korean regimes seeking nuclear weapons, and the uniqueness of the predicament that has trapped North Korea in its competitive dilemma with South Korea and leaving the six nations dealing with the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) more or less impotent to punish it or deal effectively with it. This effort utilizing the expertise of twelve specialists from Japan, Australia, China (the author is based in Zhejiang University), South Korea, Russia, and the United States, brings the reader a very broad perspective and in so doing elevates the examination well beyond the U.S. vs. DPRK ("us vs. them") argument. The language is very accessible, free for the most part of political science jargon, and not until the much appreciated last summary chapter, also free of political science analysis—a plus for nuclear scientists seeking to understand the nuts and bolts of the crisis.



This is a well-constructed read, taking the curious through the DPRK's current nuclear status (just shy of operationality until and if weapon miniaturization and missile capability reach a mutual accommodation). But does that matter? As stated later in the book, the damage to the NPT is done: the DPRK created nuclear weapons after disengaging from its treaty obligations. However, before addressing the affects the crisis is having on the nonproliferation regime, the reader is treated to a discourse on the U.S. failure to address the issue, and how it might rectify the lack of success by putting the DPRK on the defensive through the use of incentives it would find difficult to refuse and that would leave it vulnerable to severe international repercussions if after accepting them it con-

tinued its brinkmanship and antagonistic behavior. This discussion is followed by others written by the aforementioned regional experts who seek to explain how nuclear operationality by DPRK affects their nations. This regional dialog is the book's strength. Many golden nuggets of information covering the history of the region and its potential future can be found here.

The dissertation reflects on neighboring Japan for example. Japan is a major contributor to the nonproliferation regime and as the only nation on the planet to have suffered the consequences of nuclear warfare, stands as the regime's moral conscience that would lose much should the DPRK operationalize its nuclear bombs and motivate Japan down the same road. Consider that should operationality include the targeting of the U.S. west coast, would the U.S. nuclear umbrella continue to protect Japanese territory? Even if the promise of U.S. protection was continued, would in fact the Japanese believe it to be true if the U.S. must protect itself? Does this portend a nuclear Japan and by consequence, the end of the NPT as it now stands? Such are the questions that precipitate from the richly detailed discourse found in this book.

Perhaps as enlightening as any is the chapter on China's perception of the North Korean crisis. Here, the editor is author and analyst. His studied approach reveals that Chinese policy must both prop up the North Korean regime and curtail its ambitions. China does not

desire a failed regime in North Korea. It desires regional stability to reinforce its economic ambitions. A flood of North Korean refugees fleeing a collapsed nation will cause neighboring China untold problems. At the same time, advances in North Korean missile technology not to mention its nuclear armaments, threaten China's regional trading partners and in the long term may invoke a U.S. intervention in China's own backyard. Imagine for example a violent takeover of a collapsed North by the South Korean military supported by the U.S. North Korean antagonism also has the potential to drag down China's international reputation via Chinese protectionism (not so prominently displayed in recent years as exemplified by Chinese affirmations of UN sanctions against the DPRK). Consider also that the nuclear plans of South Korea, Taiwan, and, as just noted, even Japan may be influenced towards proliferation by the North's provocations the results of which may shift regional power ever so slightly away from China.

If the book has a weak point, it can be found in Chapter 9. Here, Daniel Twining (German Marshall Fund) reflects on the U.S. special nuclear cooperation agreement made with India outside the standard norms of the NPT. The questions of whether the agreement undermined the NPT regime and whether such an agreement would be a suitable model for inducing North Korea back to the fold are posed. He quickly answers no to both questions and proceeds to expound on how the Indian arrangement actually strengthens nuclear non proliferation. It is not clear why this approach to the North Korean dilemma is relevant. As Twining himself points out, these are two different nations: one which signed the NPT then pulled out of it and one with

apparently deep convictions, that never signed. One has a track record connecting it to A. Q. Khan's underground nuclear supply chain and one that has utilized a Canadian reactor supplied strictly for peaceful purposes in 1954 to construct a military nuclear program—but has by and large, complied with most international nuclear norms over the decades. One is seeking regime survival while the other seeks to be a player on the world stage. Though in both instances, nuclear weapons were sought for the same reason as all other nations do: mere advantage, it is clear from the earlier chapters of the book that North Korea is playing its dangerous game in the vacuum of isolation while India, seeking economic growth and influence, chooses internationalism, trade and participation in world affairs. So what can we learn from the Indian nuclear agreement that can possibly be of assistance dealing with North Korea? The answer is precious little. Instead this chapter devolves into an argument touting the advantages of the Indian nuclear agreement. It leaves the reader wondering what a discussion of this Bush II-era handshake—largely designed to provide a bulwark to China's growing influence—is doing here.

As is well known, the U.S.-India agreement is controversial and has been challenged by non-proliferation experts on many grounds. For background on this unprecedented arrangement, seek out the paper by Leonard Weiss entitled U.S.-Indian Nuclear Cooperation, Better Later than Sooner, (*Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 14, No. 3, November 2007). Other papers, particularly those of Sharon Squassoni, Director and Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (*The U.S.-India Deal and Its Impact*, 2010 for the Arms Control

Association), and George Perkovich of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (*Toward Realistic U.S.-India Relations*, 2010) also discuss the various flaws, negative repercussions and fall-out of the agreement. These issues and their ramifications may still be played out on the world stage. It will be interesting to see the U.S. reaction to an Indian nuclear test (the deal abrogates – or could/should that ever occur). Although Dr. Twining's account may hold merit for many, his chapter seems oddly misplaced. It reads, at least on the face of it, as a political defense of the agreement rather than an addition to the book's discourse. It does not appear at first blush to bring significant value to a discussion about an intransigent regime so different from India's democratic system and so dead set on acquiring operational nuclear weapons with the intent to leverage them in a hazardous game of saber rattling, false promises, and threats.

All is not lost for the way forward for dealing with the DPRK is mapped out by Moore in his final summary chapter. Using the conclusions developed in the previous chapters it seems a pragmatic and realistic plan. The concepts include creation of a Japan-Korea nuclear weapons free zone, the formal ending of the Korean War by treaty, recognition of the DPRK and the opening of full diplomatic relations (in that order) to build confidence between the U.S. and the DPRK. The softening of trade restrictions on the North to allow for domestic reforms to take root is also proffered. The idea is to first build good will over time between the U.S. and North Korea, by giving the latter what it seeks so dearly. Once these "gifts" are delivered (recognition by the U.S., a formal end to the war and with it some security assurances by the



U.S.), it should prove difficult for the DPRK to back away on the contingency to the plan: denuclearization—lest it face serious international condemnation and subsequent pressure. A better domestic standard of living will also alleviate some of the embarrassing disparity between the North and South that Pyongyang expends much energy and resources on to keep secret from its populace.

This is a well-written and deeply researched volume (more than forty pages

of references and nicely indexed). It is recommended for its straightforward analysis, readability and conciseness. Its international perspective lends it an exceptional level of interest that will keep the curious reader engaged. Except for the one miscue concerning India, it is a thoughtful approach that engineers, nuclear scientists, and others outside the political science world with an interest in this most important of international crises, will find accessible and useful.

End Note

1. Ironically, India's use of plutonium produced from the Canadian reactor spurred creation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the same group that eventually granted India an exemption from its supply restrictions in support of the U.S.-India agreement.