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## **NORTH KOREA'S STRATEGY OF MAXIMUM DETERRENCE AGAINST US**

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### **Abstract**

North Korea has developed its nuclear weapons and is striving to modernize them to deter threats from US. This research article examines the Nuclearization of North Korea through the lens of maximum deterrence. North Korea has adopted the policy of maximum deterrence which requires the state to adopt first use policy regarding nuclear weapons and to rapidly develop its nuclear weapons and multiple delivery systems to counter any potential threat posed by US. North Korea felt threatened by presence of US forces in Korean Peninsula and US-South Korea security alliance. Moreover, the nuclearization of North Korea and its relationship with Russia and China has caused apprehensions in US as it endangers US' interests in region such as maintaining security alliances with Japan and South Korea and curtailing Chinese and Russian influence. Therefore, US has imposed several sanctions upon North Korea and also conducted diplomatic talks with the state but both sanctions and diplomatic negotiations have proved to be ineffective in pursuing North Korea for denuclearization as the state deems its nuclear program to be essential for its security and survival.



### **Keywords**

Nuclearization of North Korea, Maximum Deterrence, US forces in Korean Peninsula, US-South Korea security alliance. Impact on

## **1. Introduction**

In this international system, survival and security are top priorities of every state and they strive to ensure their survival, security and national integrity

through maximizing their power. To deter any threat to the national interest or security, different strategies are formulated by states such as military

modernization, economic development and technological advancements. North Korea has antagonistic relations with US since its independence and this hostility causes insecurity to the state regarding its stability (Hecker, 2010). Hostility with a much powerful state motivates the state to increase its power to deter any threats from US. Moreover, North Korea feels threatened by the presence of US forces in Korean peninsula and US-South Korea security alliance. Therefore, North Korea is modernizing its military and also developed nuclear program. North Korea asserts that its nuclear program is essential for its defense and security (Naidu, 2006).

This research article analyses the nuclear program of North Korea through the theoretical framework of maximum deterrence. Maximum deterrence refers to formulation of credible deterrence strategy to refrain enemy from taking any particular action which can cause you any harm. It includes management of military and nuclear resources to tackle threat dynamics. Maximum deterrence emphasizes upon possession of modernized and as large number of nuclear weapons as a state is capable of making to deter a potential aggressor and stresses upon first use policy regarding nuclear weapons in case of any confrontation or war (Ritchie, 2014). North Korea has adopted strategy of maximum deterrence and is modernizing its nuclear weapons rapidly. Maximum deterrence operates at all three levels of policy i.e. operational, declaratory and force structure and North Korea strives to pursue maximum deterrence at all these levels. All these three policy levels with regard to

maximum deterrence of North Korea are later discussed in this article. North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests successfully to the date and these nuclear tests caused apprehensions for US as the vital interests of US in the region such as security alliance with South Korea and curtailing influence of Russia and China are threatened (Lewis, 2007; Park, 2001). Therefore, US has imposed different sanctions on North Korea and also tried to persuade the state for denuclearization through diplomacy but no such efforts could be successful in persuading the state for denuclearization as North Korea considers its nuclear program essential for its survival and security.

## **2. Maximum Deterrence:**

Deterrence is a strategy adopted by an actor to prevent its adversary from taking any particular action or to prevent an attack on itself or its allies by threatening to use force (Jervis, 2014). Maximum deterrence is one of the primary types of nuclear deterrence and emphasizes upon the use of nuclear weapons in the defense posture of a state. It emphasize upon deterrence by denial<sup>1</sup> and the first use of nuclear weapons by a state when its survival is at stake. Maximum deterrence asserts that a state's ability to conduct a pre-emptive nuclear strike when it receives tactical warnings or is under attack by an adversary state is important for its survival and security (Sauer, 2009). Maximum deterrence is

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<sup>1</sup> Deterrence by denial refers to denying the enemy from achieving its operational objectives and persuading the enemy not to take any particular action or not to attack through the use of threats of catastrophic loss

defined by Barry Buzan as the strategy in which states are capable enough to engage in war at all levels (war fronts, strategies, planning, alliances etc.) (Buzan, 1987).

Following are the key postulates of maximum deterrence.

- First use policy regarding nuclear weapons is preferable for states.
- States should have the capability to attack opponents' forces as well as its important cities and industrial areas (Counterforce and counter-value targets).
- The nuclear weapons of states should be modernized and multiple delivery systems must be developed.
- Deterrent state must opt for developing triad system for nuclear weapons.
- Uncertain and ambiguous nuclear doctrine or nuclear posture is preferable for states.
- The deterrent state should have the capability of launch under attack, launch on warning and conducting pre-emptive strikes.
- The deterrent State should possess large number of nuclear weapons to prevent potential aggressor from attacking (Sauer, 2009).

All these assumptions of maximum deterrence indicate that to deter a potential enemy and to secure national interests and stability of a state, a state must adopt these measures. The nuclear policy of a state is reflected at three levels i.e. operational, declaratory and force structure (Siddique & Faisal, 2016). It is significant to understand the operational, declaratory and force structure policies with reference maximum deterrence.

### *2.1. Operational Policy under Maximum Deterrence:*

The operational policy under maximum deterrence of a state requires that the forces and nuclear weapons must be put on high alert and ready for launching launch under attack (LAU), launch on warning (LOW) and preemptive strikes. The targeting policy in maximum deterrence is also very important as the state has to determine different targets and target categories and to make a nuclear war plan accordingly. Counter-force and counter-value targets<sup>2</sup> are planned although attacking cities is considered illegal and immoral by democratic states but sometimes conventional forces, control centers and different industrial sites are situated within the cities. Counterforce targets refer to the targeting of forces of enemy whereas counter value targets include targeting of adversary's cities (Feaver, 1992). Furthermore, conducting attacks with massive intensity are required by operational nuclear policy of state under maximum deterrence.

### *2.2. Declaratory Policy under Maximum Deterrence:*

The declaratory policy of a state communicates its nuclear posture with its public and international community (Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003). According to declaratory policy under maximum deterrence, a state's nuclear doctrine should be ambiguous as it will force enemy to think that nuclear attack can be

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<sup>2</sup> Counterforce targets refer to targeting enemy forces whereas counter value refers to targeting of adversary's cities

conducted in case of any existential threat or warning. Moreover, maximum deterrence suggests that a state should have first use policy regarding its nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Launch on Warning and Launch under Attack are also preferable under maximum deterrence.

### *2.3. Force Structure Policy under Maximum Deterrence:*

Maximum deterrence asserts that a state should acquire modernized nuclear weapons and should try to increase the number of nuclear arsenals it possessed (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). Moreover, Force structure policy under maximum deterrence requires that the state should develop nuclear triad and state should develop multiple delivery vehicle system. Nuclear triad includes land launched nuclear missile, Submarine launched nuclear missile and aircraft launched nuclear missiles (McDonough, 2006).

### **3. Nuclearization of North Korea:**

The nuclearization efforts of North Korea dates back to mid-1950s as during Korean War threat of using nuclear weapons by US was present. When US stationed its forces in South Korea after Korean War and also deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea, North Korea increased its efforts to acquire nuclear technology as the state felt threatened. North Korea sought help from USSR primarily for developing nuclear research reactors (Kovsh, 2014). Although, US imposed some sanctions on North Korea during Cold War for supporting terrorism and violating human rights but the sanctions began to tighten only after the first nuclear test of North Korea in 2006 (Chang, 2006; Berger, 2015). After the first

nuclear test of North Korea in 2006, US and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) several sanctions upon North Korea but all these sanctions didn't hamper North Korea's nuclearization determination and the state asserted that UNSC is manipulated by US.

### **4. Maximum Deterrence in Case of North Korea:**

North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests successfully till date and is modernizing its nuclear weapons program (Kristensen & Norris, 2018). The recent test of thermonuclear device was conducted in 2017 and the yield of explosion was quite large and North Korea claimed that it was a thermonuclear or hydrogen bomb test. Moreover, North Korea asserts that its nuclear weapons aim to deter US threats. There are almost 28,000 US troops stationed in Korean peninsula which is considered as a threat to the stability and survival of the North Korea (Davenport, 2016). North Korea is modernizing its nuclear weapons and with each test the yield of nuclear test increases (Zhang & Wen, 2013). Furthermore, North Korea has the capability to deliver nuclear weapons on Medium range ballistic missiles (MRBM) and Inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM). The state conducted an ICBM test (Hwasong-15) successfully in 2017 which has the potential range to target US. The ICBM of North Korea believed to have range of 13000 kilometers which can target most of US areas. It caused tensions and concerns among US policy makers as North Korea is able to target US territory with nuclear weapons (Park, 2020). North Korea claims that the whole US mainland

in in reach of North Korean's ICBM but international community suspects this claim of North Korea and elaborates that although important US cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C. might come in the range of North Korea's ICBM tested in 2017 but it depends on the weight of payload carried by ICBM (Lendon, 2017). Moreover, North Korea is producing both fission and fusion based nuclear weapons. According to a US government's estimate, North Korea has developed 30 nuclear weapons and is producing enough nuclear material to develop 12 more nuclear weapons each year (Panda, 2017). North Korea's nuclear arsenals are far less than the nuclear arsenals of US, therefore, North Korea is rapidly developing more sophisticated nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles to compensate this situation somehow.

Kim Jong Un of Pyongyang proclaims that North Korea will use its resources to achieve credibility of threat and enhance capability of the state to retaliate any attack on its integrity or national interests. North Korea emphasizes deterrence as a rationale for developing nuclear weapons and long range missiles. North Korea declares that any military confrontation whether conventional or nuclear will lead to a nuclear retaliation and the attacker's military forces as well as its cities will be attacked by North Korea (Allard, Duchatel & Godement, 2017). Moreover, the state perceives that due to security alliance with South Korea and hostility with North Korea, US can take any aggressive measure against the state. Therefore, North Korea deems its nuclear program to be essential for its survival.

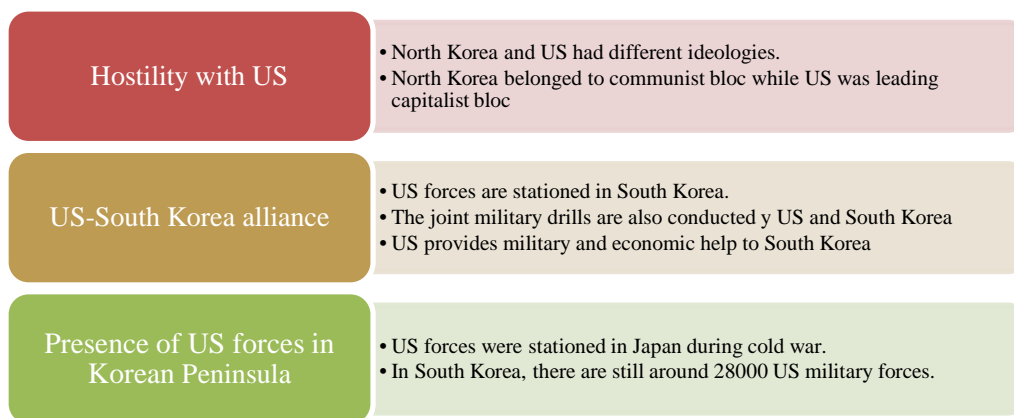


Figure 1: Main factors behind North Korea's Nuclearization

Source: (Hilpert & Meier, 2018; Armstrong, 2004)

#### 4.1. US-North Korea Hostility:

After Japan's defeat in WWII, US and USSR divided North Korea and South Korea along 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. North Korea was under USSR supervision and was influenced by communist ideology whereas South Korea was influenced by

capitalist ideology and was facilitated by US. Moreover, North Korea also attacked and invaded South Korea in 1950 after which US lead UN forces fought with North Korean forces. The war ended with a ceasefire agreement in 1953 (Stueck, 2013). The ideological differences and

belonging to two different blocs were the main reasons of hostility between US and North Korea. Moreover, the Korean war of 1950 further added to the already complicated relationship between both states. Later on, when US deployed its military forces in South Korea, North Korea perceived this situation as an existential threat as US forces can conduct any operation against North Korea. Therefore, North Korea started developing its nuclear program. Although, the state claimed that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes but international community particularly US were suspicious about it and there were many information reports by South Korean and US intelligence agencies about the development of nuclear weapons program by North Korea. During cold war, US imposed sanctions on North Korea for belonging to communist bloc and due to its nuclearization program (Rennack, 2006). Moreover, US also imposed sanctions on North Korea for supporting terrorism. All these reasons caused crevice in US-North Korea relations and added to North Korean insecurities. Although, many times both states tried to normalize the situation and their relations through diplomacy but could not be succeed.

#### *4.2. Presence of US forces in the region:*

US have almost 25000 troops stationing in South Korea and has almost 50,000 troops in Japan. Moreover, US have different bases in Japan under Japan-America security alliance (Hughes, 2013). During Cold War, almost 950 nuclear warheads were deployed by US in South Korea as well. South Korea and Japan come under the umbrella of US extended deterrence. US have

conducted security pacts with both Japan and South Korea which state that in case of any foreign aggression on these states, US will help them to counter it.

#### *4.3. North Korea's Law on Consolidating the Position of Nuclear Weapons State:*

Maximum deterrence also determines the nuclear posture of a state (Freedman & Michaels, 2019). Nuclear doctrines of states describe the way a state will react and will use its nuclear weapons under some circumstances and without a nuclear doctrine it is difficult to understand the nuclear posture of a state. Although, North Korea doesn't have an official nuclear doctrine but the nuclear stance of North Korea can be understood through the statements of leadership regarding nuclear weapons on official media. The official pronouncements of state indicate a pre-emptive nuclear doctrine for North Korea. Furthermore, the nuclear weapons state law also provides hints about the state's nuclear policy.

In 2013, when North Korean assembly adopted nuclear weapon state law, it included some important aspects which are following.

- The law included that Pyongyang is developing nuclear weapons for self-defense and the US' hostile policies and actions have persuaded the states to develop nuclear weapon program.
- Nuclear weapons are being developed for deterring any act of aggression against the state (Kim & Cohen, 2017).

- The retaliatory power and nuclear deterrence of the state will be reinforced more in terms of both quality and quantity.
- The supreme commander of Korean people's army will have the power to authorize the use of nuclear weapons.
- Nuclear weapons will be used against nuclear weapons state and non-nuclear weapons state will not be attacked with nuclear weapons until they have alliance with the nuclear aggressor trying to invade Pyongyang.
- North Korea supports the international system's efforts to safeguard nuclear material, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.
- North Korea has developed a successful mechanism to prevent any possible illegal transfer of nuclear materials (Bermudez, 2015).

The no first use stance is conditional and if non-nuclear state joins hands with nuclear enemy then Pyongyang can change its stance. This aspect of North Korea's nuclear policy indicates towards South Korea and US alliance. North Korea has issued warnings and threats to US and South Korea. For example, after the launch of two short range ballistic missiles in July 2019, North Korea asserted that South Korea should not take this warning lightly. This warning came after announcement of US-South Korea annual joint military exercises which is considered by North Korea as war preparation against it. North Korea indicates that the full strength of its nuclear weapons will be used in any case of clash or war

with US (BBC, 2019). North Korea emphasized upon role of nuclear weapons in its defensive strategy to ensure protection from threats targeting the survival and stability of the state. Furthermore, the state threatens that it will use nuclear weapons to prevent any attack and will launch first strike against the enemy (first use policy) (Allard, Duchatel & Godement, 2017). North Korea emphasize upon pre-emptive strike capability to achieve effective deterrence. The emphasis upon pre-emptive strike by Pyongyang is due to different reasons such as lack of strategic depth and not having a second strike capability yet. North Korea is striving to achieve a survivable second strike capability. The state is working on Submarine launched nuclear warhead but it is yet to be made successfully (Kuhn, 2019). Due to these reasons, North Korean forces can be vulnerable during an attack by US. To overcome this weakness, North Korea lays emphasis upon pre-emptive strike and launch on warning which indicate that if a state is planning to attack North Korea or issues a warning, North Korea will launch nuclear attack against that state. Furthermore, North Korea has the capability to target both counterforce targets (military forces) and counter value targets (cities and industrial bases) against US in case of any attack which is evident from the maps of North Korea's targets released by the state itself. The tested nuclear missiles of the state have the capacity to reach US mainland. North Korea claims that its nuclear missiles are capable of targeting US Pentagon, White House, Manhattan and some other major cities (counter value) and

also has the capability to target US military bases in pacific (counterforce). Furthermore, cities and capitals of South Korea and Japan can also be targeted by North Korea in case of any attack (Kippe, 2019). The primary notions regarding the state's nuclear weapons under Kim Jong Un are the development of hydrogen or thermonuclear bomb (more powerful than the atomic bomb) and developing modified and diversified nuclear weapons which includes attempts to develop nuclear triad. Survivability of nuclear weapons is very important for North Korea to achieve its

goals of second strike capability and nuclear deterrence (Spring & Bendikova, 2012).

North Korea's force structure policy indicates the state desires to obtain large nuclear arsenals. Despite of suffering from economic sanctions, North Korea has been able to develop short range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Furthermore, the state is modernizing its nuclear weapons program as well.

Levels of Policy	Maximum Deterrence Policy	North Korea Nuclear policy
Force structure policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large number of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles.</li> <li>• Second strike capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Korea possesses 30-60 nuclear weapons.</li> <li>• Striving to obtain nuclear triad but not yet succeeded.</li> </ul>
Operational policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High alert</li> <li>• Counter force targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both counterforce and counter value targets (US cities of Chicago, New York and Los Angeles can be targeted)</li> </ul>
Declaratory policy	Ambiguous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambiguous</li> <li>• No official nuclear doctrine</li> </ul>

**Figure 2:** Maximum Deterrence of North Korea

**Source:** (Lendon, 2017; Evans, Hannah & Schwalbe, 2019; Allard, Duchatel & Godement, 2017)

The state is increasing its nuclear stockpiles through uranium enrichment, and plutonium processing programs. North Korea has the capacity to build 30-60 nuclear warheads (Kristensen & Norris, 2018). The state also possesses capability of land launched nuclear missile and submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) but lacks air based capability to

complete its nuclear triad which is important to develop nuclear triad which is important for state as required by maximum deterrence. North Korea doesn't possess large nuclear arsenals yet but the state is constantly striving for increasing its nuclear arsenals and modernizing them along with modernization of ballistic missiles. The operational



nuclear weapons policy of North Korea is also in harmony with maximum deterrence as North Korea's force is on high alert and is ready to counter any attack with nuclear weapons. Any conventional war can also lead to nuclear war. Furthermore, North Korea emphasizes upon both counterforce and counter value targets. US cities of Washington D.C, New York and Los Angeles come under the range of North Korean missiles and can be targeted. US military bases in Pacific and the important cities of US come under the range of North Korea's nuclear missiles and can be targeted in case of a conflict. Furthermore, the launch under attack (LUA), launch on warning (LOW) and pre-emptive strikes are preferable for North Korea (Roehrig, 2013).

#### **5. US Threat Perception towards North Korea:**

North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles pose threat to US national security priorities. It can shift the regional balance of Korean peninsula against US and threatens its allies in the region. Reduction of Nuclear arsenals and strengthening Non-proliferation treaty are included in top national security priorities of US. Moreover, the range of North Korean ballistic missiles has the potential ranges to target regional states and has the potential to target areas of US as well (National Security Strategy, 2017). US also has concerns about the aggressive and immediate attitude of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un who has the supreme authority in North Korea. He has the ultimate power to launch any nuclear attack on perceived threats even without confirming it as he claimed that nuclear button is at my table all the time (BBC, 2018). This whole situation makes the nuclear issue of North Korea

unpredictable and dangerous. North Korea possesses short range ballistic missiles (SRBM), medium range ballistic missiles (MRBM), intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM) and also ICBM. The short range ballistic missiles of North Korea have the range to target most of the Korean peninsula while its medium range ballistic missiles have the range to target Japan (Roehrig, 2016). Therefore, US is deploying layered missile defense system to counter any possible North Korean attacks. Layered defense system of US has the ability to defeat missile threats prior to launch. Three main components of layered missile defense system are networked sensors, interceptor missiles and command, control and communication network (Vergun, 2019). Moreover, in 2017, US have deployed two Terminal high altitude area defense (THAAD) launchers to South Korea in response to North Korea's missile and nuclear tests (Macias, 2018). Moreover, Japan also bought missiles used for missile defense system from US. In April 2019, US approved missile sale to Japan worth \$1.15 billion for improving Japan's security (Yeo, 2019). US is taking all these steps to ensure the security of its allies and the stability of Korean peninsula. Moreover, US have asserted its commitment of extended nuclear deterrence to Japan and South Korea in recent Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of 2018 under Donald Trump administration. This NPR of 2018 includes that US needs to maintain nuclear deterrent to deter its adversaries like Russia, deal with non-proliferation challenges posed by North Korea and Iran, and to secure its allies (Peczel, 2018). US have tried to deal with this nuclearization challenge of North Korea through two ways i.e.; imposing sanctions on North Korea

and engaging in diplomatic talks. US have imposed sanctions on North Korea for violating Non-Proliferation Treaty, to persuade the state for denuclearization and due to dictator and harsh attitude of Kim Jong Un towards its people. But these sanctions were unable to persuade the state to roll back its nuclear program. The other strategy adopted by US was engaging North Korea in diplomatic talks. The recent two diplomatic summits between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un in 2018 and 2019 generated hopes for diffusion of this nuclear issue. But although the Singapore summit of 2018 ended in some promises from both sides regarding normalization of relations, the Hanoi summit of 2019 ended without any constructive result (Cheang, 2018; Davenport, 2019).

### *5.1 Impact of North Korea's Nuclearization on US:*

Following are the primary US interests in Korean peninsula:

1. To monitor Russian and Chinese activities in the region.
2. To safeguard the security and alliance agreements with allies in the region i.e.; Japan and South Korea (CSIS, 2019).
3. To persuade China to convince North Korea for denuclearization (Sung-han, 2018).
4. To deter any North Korean aggression against US' allies and troops present in the region.
5. US also claim that the human rights violation should be ended by North Korea and China in the region.
6. To persuade North Korea for denuclearization for preserving peace and stability of the region.

Nuclearization of North Korea endangers these interests of US as North Korea does not share good relations with South Korea or Japan and its nuclear program endangers their security. Moreover, US have adopted different strategies to persuade North Korea for denuclearization such as diplomacy and sanctions. Diplomatic talks were conducted many times like Six party talks in early decade of 2000s, Leap Day agreement of 2012 and recent summits between presidents of both states (Revere, 2012; Davenport, 2019). Moreover, sanctions on financial transactions, trade, luxury goods etc. are also imposed by US. But both policies of diplomacy and sanctions have failed to force North Korea to denuclearize as nuclear weapons program is an important tool to preserve North Korea's stability and it also serves as a bargaining card for North Korea to have strong position in negotiations.

### **6. Role of China and Russia and North Korean Nuclearization issue:**

#### *6.1 China:*

China is an important state of East Asia and is an important actor in North Korean nuclear issue as it shares border with North Korea and also has economic ties with the state. China also played crucial role in making North Korea ready for six party talks (Diplomatic negotiations of North Korea, China, US, Russia, Japan and South Korea). Although, China has economic ties with North Korea but it doesn't support the nuclear program of North Korea and desires the denuclearization of North Korea. But China is not in the favor of taking harsh actions against the North Korean government. The main concern of China regarding North Korean

nuclear issue is the stability of the region (Xu & Bajoria, 2014). China favors engagement and diplomatic strategies with North Korea. With Chinese efforts, Six Party Talks were held in past as well (Zhu, 2011). Therefore, China is reluctant to adopt a strict and harsh attitude towards North Korea and has been subjected to criticism by US for not forcing North Korea to denuclearize. China has imposed the United Nations Security Council resolution sanctions upon North Korea especially in 2017 after the sixth nuclear test of North Korea. China imposed sanctions upon North Korean exports of coal, iron, aluminum, iron ore and zinc. China supports double-freeze approach to be pursued in Korean peninsula. This proposal requires North Korea to halt its nuclear and missile programs and in return US and South Korea will halt their major military exercise (Pei, 2017).

#### *6.2 Russia:*

Russia is also an important actor of East Asian region. During Korean War and throughout cold war era, USSR supported North Korea in financial, military and technological terms. Main interests of Russia in North Korean issue are to pursue economic opportunities in the Korean peninsula, to limit US involvement in the region and to pursue a prestigious position in the region (Choo, Kim, Lukin & Whishnik, 2019; Buszynski, 2009). Russia opposed the THAAD deployment in South Korea as well. Russia also supports the double-freeze or double-suspension approach proposed by China.

After Valdamir Putin came into power, he adopted a calculated approach regarding foreign relations with other states. Russia wanted to be included in any talks regarding North Korean nuclear issues but it

could not play any significant role. Even in SPT, China played more significant role than Russia.

#### **7. Conclusion:**

Survival, national integrity and security of national interests are on top priorities of states and they adopt different strategies to meet with their goals and to deter challenges to their stability. US stationed its troops in East Asian states of Japan and South Korea and it has security alliance with South Korea with whom North Korea shares antagonistic relationship. Moreover, US supported capitalist states against communist states in the region during cold war. All these measures alerted North Korea that any action can be taken against the state by South Korea with the help of US. Therefore, the state adopted maximum deterrence strategy and started its nuclearization program. After developing nuclear weapons, North Korea is rapidly modernizing multiple delivery vehicles systems and nuclear weapons and emphasizes upon first use of nuclear weapons in case of any war. The strategy of Maximum deterrence is visible in North Korea's nuclear policy at all three levels i.e. operational, declaratory and force structure policy. As maximum deterrence suggested, North Korea started its efforts of rapidly developing force structure to deter threats from US. North Korea has put its military and missiles on high alert and has capability of both counterforce and counter value targets. Moreover, the state has first use policy and has kept its nuclear doctrine ambiguous and uncertain.

The nuclear program of North Korea causes apprehensions in International community particularly US as US interests of securing its security alliance with South Korea and countering

Chinese and Russian dominance in Korean peninsula are endangered. US also imposed sanctions upon North Korea to persuade the state for denuclearization but both sanctions and diplomatic talks proved to be ineffective and North Korea has successfully developed nuclear weapons and is modernizing the nuclear weapons technology as well.

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