universität wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„The hidden value of nuclear weapons: a comparative case study between North Korea and Iran "

verfasst von / submitted by

Margherita Gallucci

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2020 / Vienna 2020

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt Postgraduate programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	A 992 940
Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt Postgraduate programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Internationale Studien / International Studies
Betreut von / Supervisor:	Professor Dr. Arthur R. Rachwald

diplomatische akademie wien
Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

"On my honour as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it"

Abstract (English Version)

Since the discovery of nuclear weapons, the world has interpreted its existence in two ways: stabilizing or de-stabilizing for the international sphere. Some have argued that the proliferation of Weapons of Mass destruction is a threat to the world's security. In contrast, others argue they aid the development of the security equilibrium. Nevertheless, they have posed an ongoing dilemma to the international arena. The purpose of this thesis is to uncover firstly what the causes of nuclear acquisition are. More specifically, it will focus on whether atomic arms are a means to uncover internal and external weaknesses. The analysis will then be extended to whether nuclear weapons are de-stabilizing or stabilizing in the domestic and international arena. The case studies used to answer these questions will be North Korea and Iran.

Through Mearsheimer’s offensive realism theory and in the fields of international relations and comparative government, this thesis aim is to fill the literature gap surrounding North Korea and Iran's studies within both the local and international arena taking into account offensive realism. The significant findings can be summarized as the following: 1) After analyzing the development of the countries and their statuses, in both North Korea and Iran's case, nuclear weapons do disguise internal and external weaknesses 2) In North Korea's case, the acquisition of nuclear weapons was de-stabilizing domestically and internationally while in Iran's case it can be concluded that atomic weapons have had a stabilizing effect domestically but de-stabilizing internationally.

German Version

Seit der Entdeckung der Atomwaffen hat die Welt ihre Existenz auf zwei Arten interpretiert: Stabilisierung oder Destabilisierung für die internationale Sphäre. Einige haben argumentiert, dass die Verbreitung von Massenvernichtungswaffen eine Bedrohung für die Sicherheit der Welt darstelle. Im Gegensatz dazu argumentieren andere, dass sie die Entwicklung des Sicherheitsgleichgewichts unterstützen. Trotzdem haben sie die internationale Arena vor ein anhaltendes Dilemma gestellt. Der Zweck dieser Arbeit ist es, zunächst die Ursachen der nuklearen Akquisition aufzudecken. Insbesondere wird der Schwerpunkt darauf liegen, ob Atomwaffen ein Mittel sind, um interne und externe Schwächen aufzudecken. Die Analyse wird dann dahingehend erweitert, ob sich Atomwaffen auf nationaler und internationaler Ebene stabilisieren oder destabilisieren - Um die Fragen angemessen zu beantworten werden Fallstudien die sich mit Nordkorea und dem Iran befassen herangezogen.

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, durch Mearsheimers Theorie des offensiven Realismus und in den Bereichen internationale Beziehungen und vergleichende Regierung die Literaturlücke zwischen Nordkorea und den iranischen Studien sowohl auf lokaler als auch auf internationaler Ebene unter Berücksichtigung des offensiven Realismus zu schließen. Die wesentlichen Ergebnisse lassen sich wie folgt zusammenfassen: 1) Nach Analyse der Entwicklung der Länder und ihres Status verschleiern Atomwaffen sowohl in Nordkorea als auch im Iran interne und externe Schwächen. 2) Im Falle Nordkoreas hat der Erwerb von Atomwaffen dazu beigetragen, dass sich die Lage sowohl im Inland als auch im Ausland destabilisierte, während im Fall des Iran der Schluss gezogen werden kann, im Inland eher stabilisierende Wirkung zeigten, jedoch im Ausland eher zur Destabilisierung der Lage beitrugen.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

I give special thanks to my mom Cristina, my dad Stefano and my grandmother Annalisa, for their love and support during my studies. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities they have given me.

A special thanks to my supervisor, Professor Dr. Arthur R. Rachwald for his precious guidance along this journey.

Introduction

"A world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us"

In 1987, Margaret Thatcher gave a speech on the occasion of the Soviet Official Banquet at the Kremlin[1] voicing the importance and relevance of nuclear weapons in the global hegemony. She then continued, "The fact is that nuclear weapons exist and how to make them cannot be erased. Conventional weapons have never been enough to deter war. Two world wars showed us that. They also showed us how terrible a war fought even with conventional weapons can be yet nuclear weapons have deterred not only nuclear war but conventional war in Europe as well. A world without nuclear weapons may be a dream but you cannot base a sure defence on dreams"[2]. This statement can be regarded as accurate. Since 1945, the world has enjoyed an unprecedented state of general peace.

Advancements in technology, communication, and global interaction have aided the collaboration of states, creating an interconnected spider web of information. However, this has also threatened the hierarchical order established over the years. Traditional security issues such as internal conflicts and political and social

[1] Margaret Thatcher Foundation (2020) Margaretthatcher.org
[2] Margaret Thatcher Foundation (2020) Margaretthatcher.org

changes have been fuelled by the rising of new threats such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. New threats have highlighted their impact globally by being at the centre of the security agenda, specifically regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Undoubtedly their popularity has grown over the last decade, and uncovering the reasons for this increase has become crucial. Thus, the main aim of this thesis will be to uncover why countries develop nuclear weapons by focusing on both the international and domestic scenarios. However, the focus will also extend to the internal weaknesses (if any) of my two chosen case studies: North Korea and Iran. The thesis will answer the following research question***: does the acquisition of nuclear weapons disguise nations' internal and external weaknesses? Does the possession of atomic weapons have a destabilizing or stabilizing effect on the international system and domestic matters?***

To analyze the motifs of acquisition, it is essential to consider five main scenarios: a state's desire to acquire nuclear weapons may 1) stem from the aspiration to reach its military superiority over an enemy or potential enemy, this may also include the acquisition of a high-status quo, 2) derive from a perceived threat or potential future threat 3) stop other states from reaching their inherent military superiority and therefore lead to disruption in the global security equilibrium 4) derive from the idea that, considering less economically developed countries, the acquisition of nuclear weapons would free them, both financially and politically, from dependence on superpowers and lastly 5) the economic cost of going nuclear is lower in comparison to other sources of energy or industrial

power[3] . The reasons mentioned above lead to states wanting to acquire a security deterrent, often causing nuclear programs. However, security reasons to acquire nuclear weapons seem to conceal and embed with other justifications. These may include internal weaknesses such as unstable regimes, civil wars, lack of leadership, or, psychologically speaking, a state's feeling of lack of inclusion from the international arena. However, the research question of this thesis will also focus on considering the external weaknesses of nations; in other words, if the country is affected by wars, it is regarded as an enemy by powerful states or marginalized by the global hierarchy.

The hypotheses this thesis will try and confirm or disprove are in North Korea's case, the acquisition of nuclear weapons doe conceal both external and internal weaknesses. When taking a look at the country's status, it can be said that its influence worldwide is limited. Since the proliferation of nuclear weapons in their territory, North Korea has been at the top of security agendas. As a preliminary conclusion, it can be said that the country used nuclear weapons to disguise its weak position and elevate its status. The search for power and the tensions created by the threat to the international security led to the conclusion that nuclear weapons' possession destabilizes the global sphere. Likewise, it has been destabilizing in domestic terms as international sanctions severely hit the country, demolished any possibility of diplomatic ties, and therefore caused its isolation.

[3] Epstein, W. (1977). Why States Go -- And Don't Go -- Nuclear. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 430, 16-28. Retrieved January 22, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/1042354

In Iran’s case, the primary conclusion one can deduce are the following: when looking at Iran’s status and its impact in both the global economy and politics, it can be said that nuclear weapons could have been a valuable tool to exercise more power and gain legitimacy. Further to this, the country is subject to an unsettled political situation. Therefore, it could be concluded that Iran has utilized nuclear arms to mask its internal weaknesses and increase its status in the international arena. The concealment of these weaknesses by nuclear proliferation has de-stabilized the international stage but stabilized Iran's economy and power. Nevertheless, the sanctions imposed on Iran by the United Nations and the United States have taken a negative toll on its economy.

To sum up, this thesis aims to analyze and understand whether the acquisition of nuclear weapons in North Korea and Iran has genuinely been based on security deterrence or whether it can be attributed to external and/or internal weaknesses. Furthermore, based on these cases, it will explore whether the nuclearization of states has a destabilizing or stabilizing effect of the international security equilibrium.

Theory

The scope of this research will be framed within Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism. The model pivots around five basic concepts, which will be taken into consideration when analyzing the countries taken into account in this thesis. The points are the following: the international system lacks a central authority; therefore power is not focused on one specific place, states can resort to the use of violence against one another, every nation wants to preserve its sovereignty, rules are rational actors and military power is used to create fear in the other country's minds. This use of fear and the uncertainty from the outside, push states to use violence and force as a deterrent mean [4]. A core idea within Mearsheimer's offensive realism is the security dilemma [5]. He states: "Striving to attain security from . . . the attack, [states quire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious and power accumulation is on"[6].

[4] Ashfaq Ahmed (2017) The Philosophy of Nuclear Proliferation/Non-Proliferation: Why States Build Or Forgo Nuclear Weapons?

[5] Snyder, G. (2002). Mearsheimer's World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay. International Security, 27(1), 149-173. Retrieved January 22, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/3092155

[6] John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," Wo 2 (January 1950), p. 157-180)

Further to this, he proposed that all great powers try and maximize their relative potential. In other words, it can be said that Mearsheimer believed states are subjects to a never-ending struggle dictated by the constant search of security forced upon the countries by the anarchic global system. Once all states have acquired military capabilities to inflict harm to others, they each feel the need to start developing as much power as possible in order to deter potential attacks. Mearsheimer's offensive realism underlines the critical notion that power and security are limitless, therefore states, although having secured their goals, will always try to expand their capabilities. To prove his point, he stated that "Offensive realists believe that status quo powers are rarely found in world politics, because the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs. A state's ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system"[7]. Furthermore, offensive realism underlines that even if states achieve a hegemonic system, they will not be satisfied and will try to prevent other hegemonies from rising in neighboring regions and countries. This explanation is true for the cases which will be analyzed in this thesis.

When selecting which theory to use to support this comparative analysis, the view offensive realism developed by Mearsheimer seemed to touch upon the significant goal of any state: security. Further to this, while looking at the goals and history of North Korea and Iran's nuclear development, it is visible that the countries' expansion has not stopped. Although both nations have developed

[7] Waltz K. (1979) Theory of International Politics , Addison- Wesley Publishing Company, p.126

considerable nuclear capabilities and, therefore, in the event of an attack, they would be able to secure their countries' survival. The tensions in the international arena to this day have not seized. This indicates that, through this theory, we could then deduce the constant dissatisfaction of states and the possible outbreak of military and diplomatic conflicts.

To summarize, offensive realism provides the best guidance to answer the research question of this theory for three main reasons: 1) the approach focuses on the security of states and how the actions to gain this reflect on the international sphere. This insight will prove useful when analyzing whether North Korea and Iran's nuclearization has a stabilizing or destabilizing effect on the global community. 2) The core interests of states when acquiring nuclear weapons, according to Mearsheimer, revolve around security but also indicate countries want to underline their legitimacy and status. The insight provided by the theory outlines the causes for nuclearization necessary for the analysis of these case studies and allows extending the analysis beyond security. In other words, the approach takes into consideration, and some could say implicitly, the psychological factor of nuclear weapons and fear of great powers. This factor contributes to the consideration of all factors when answering the research question posed in this thesis. It is essential to remember that the country's leader or government dictates the position of a country on nuclear weapons; therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration the psychological aspect.

Lastly, Mearsheimer's view on offensive realism takes explicitly into consideration the effects of nuclear weapons, therefore proving to be a tailored theory for the

examination of the impact of nuclearization on the world but also the motifs behind these actions.

Methodology

Following Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory, the sources this thesis will use comprehend mostly academic articles, original documentation for speeches, official statements, and scholarly analysis. The research will be conducted primarily on online libraries but will also be based on books and historical records. The evaluation of the sources will be inductive. To enhance the level and accuracy of the answer concerning the research question, some elements of the countries chosen as case studies will be inserted in a comparison form. However, this will not be the primary methodology used in this study, and this research will also build upon academic secondary data analysis.

The following thesis aims at filling the lack of studies within the areas of international relations and comparative politics regarding the destabilizing (or not) effect of these arms, whether or not they affect the international relations between states and whether the domestic scene suffers from the acquirement of nuclear weapons. Specifically, there is a gap in the literature surrounding North Korea and Iran's studies within both the local and international arena taking into account offensive realism.

The study will also aim at filling the literature gap on the hidden motives for North Korea and Iran's nuclearization program, analyzing if, behind the acquirement of

such powerful tools, countries conceal weaknesses. In other words, following offensive realism, the analysis will uncover whether there is a positive correlation between weak regimes, weak economies, or problematic societies, and nuclear weapons possession.

To do so, the thesis will follow the following structure: the first chapters will analyze in detail the histories of the proliferation of both case studies. This will provide the basis for answering the research question and will give an in-depth depiction of the countries' behaviors, both internationally and domestically. Building upon the development of nuclear weapons, the second chapters will explore the reasons behind the acquisition of nuclear weapons. These chapters aim at providing the answer to the first part of the research question: does the acquisition of atomic weapons disguise internal and /or external weaknesses? Following the in-depth examination of the historical and psychological dimensions, the third chapters will be aimed at answering the second part of the research question: whether nuclear weapons are stabilizing or destabilizing both in the domestic and global sphere. The last chapters of the thesis will be designed to draw a comparison between North Korea and Iran, highlighting both the differences and similarities of these case studies. To conclude, the conclusion will summarize the finding and prove or disprove the hypothesis presented in the introduction and therefore answer the research question.

North Korea

The history of Nuclear Weapon Acquisition

Early Developments 1950s – 1990s

North Korea's nuclear projects date back to the early 1950's and have led the country to obtain an increasingly sophisticated nuclear arsenal. However, it is necessary to unravel all the events leading to present times to answer the research question of this thesis.

In December 1952, the government established the Atomic Energy Research Institute for scholarly and research purposes. However, the process to initiate a nuclear arsenal and the production of nuclear weapons only began with the collaboration of the Soviet Union[8]. Soon after, in 1956, the leader of North Korea signed the founding charter of the Soviet Union's Joint Institute Nuclear Research and started sending scientists and technicians to the USSR to train and learn. In 1959 North Korea and the Soviet Union signed an agreement that stated the peaceful means of the nuclear energy they were utilizing. This included a provision that stipulated the Soviets could create several research areas in the provinces of Yongbyon and North Pyongan. The cooperation between the two countries intensified when in the early 60s, the USSR constructed, alongside North Korea, the Yongbyon Nuclear Research Centre, which also included Soviet

[8] 북한개요 2009 [North Korea Introduction 2009] (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2009), p.322.

nuclear reactors. The facilities were used to produce radioisotopes[9] and train personnel [10].

Fostered by the early assistance of Moscow and later Beijing, North Korea's nuclear program developed without significant foreign intervention. In the late 1960s and through the whole decade it expanded and developed both supported by civilians and the military. By the 1970s, the program had grown exponentially and started to use indigenous technology to expand its existing reactors and acquire plutonium reprocessing technology from the USSR[11]. In 1977 North Korea, the Soviet Union, and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) signed a trilateral safeguards agreement that brought the IRT-2000 nuclear reactors and the Yongbyon centre under IAEA restrictions. This assured that North Korea would oblige to the rules and use the nuclear reactors for energy purposes.

Nevertheless, although under strict IEAE review, in the 1970s North Korea constructed uranium milling facilities, expanded its complexes by building a fuel

[9] An unstable isotope of an element that decays or disintegrates spontaneously, emitting energy (radiation). Approximately 5,000 natural and artificial radioisotopes have been identified. Some radioisotopes, such as Molybdenum-99, are used for medical applications, such as diagnostics. These isotopes are created by the irradiation of targets in research reactors.

[10] Gregory Karouv, "A Technical History of Soviet-North Korean Nuclear Relations," in James Clay Moltz and Alexandre Y. Mansourov, eds., The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 17.

[11] Gregory Karouv, "A Technical History of Soviet-North Korean Nuclear Relations," in James Clay Moltz and Alexandre Y. Mansourov, eds., *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 17.

rod fabrication complex[12] , more research centres and a 5MW(e) nuclear reactor[13].

Following their initiations in the nuclear sector, in 1985, North Korea ratifies the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, signifying the start of a possible atomic coexistence within the atomic states. In 1991, the United States of America withdrew nuclear weapons from South Korea, initiating the Start Treaty, signed with Gorbachev. This gave the international arena hopes of reducing atomic arms and using the present ones for beneficial means. This was then confirmed by both North and South Korea, as they decided to "not test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy, or use nuclear weapons," as well as ban nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities [14]. This also led South Korea's President Roh Tae Woo to declare a "nuclear free" South Korea.

The Agreed Framework and the 1994 Crisis

In 1992 North Korea signed, together with the IAEA, a safeguard agreement and further ratified the agreement in 1992. Under this treaty, North Korea was obliged to provide an initial report of all its nuclear facilities and material and allow IAEA inspectors inside the centres. In May 1992, North Korea went through six rounds of inspections, which were terminated in 1993. The reports given by the inspectors and the ones provided by North Korea were discordant: North Korea

[12] "Sixth Nuclear Test Detected at Punggye-Ri, Declared to be a Hydrogen Bomb," 38 North, 2 September 2017, www.38north.com

[13] Graphite-moderated and gas-cooled reactor with a thermal power range of 20-25MW. The construction of the reactor began in 1979 and was completed by 1986. It was modeled after the U.K.'s Calder Hall reactor. [1] This type of reactor had several advantages for North Korea: it is fueled by natural uranium, which is abundant in North Korea; it is cooled by a carbon-dioxide gas rather than challenging to acquire heavy water; and it is moderated by graphite, plentiful in North Korea.

[14] Council on Foreign Relation, North Korean Nuclear Negotiations. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations

officially declared a small amount of plutonium and claimed this was reprocessed from damaged spent fuel rods that were removed from the 5MW(e). However, the reporters stated that these interventions were done on three occasions and therefore requested access to these suspected nuclear waste sites. In 1993, Pyongyang rejected the IAEA's investigations. As a response, the Agency asked the United Nations Security Council special permission to conduct these investigations without the countries' consent. This caused tensions to rise and pushed North Korea to announce their intent to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Following talks with the United States, in the same year, North Korea agreed to participate in IAEA investigations. In 1994, the first investigation took place, and President Jimmy Carter visits North Korea, starting a dual alliance. However, Kim dies and is then replaced by Kim-Jong-Il. This left the international community in the unknown, while Kim's successor came to power and took the nation's reins. In the upcoming years, the United States and North Korea continue their coalition, signing the Agreed Framework, in which North Korea commits to freezing its illicit plutonium weapons program and halting construction on nuclear reactors, in Geneva. In exchange, the United States pledges to provide sanctions relief, aid, oil, and two light-water reactors for civilian use. The alliance continued to ease sanctions on North Korea in exchange for denuclearization of the country.

The New Decade and The Collapse of the Security Regime

In the year 2000, the relationships between the North and South side of the Korean peninsula agreed for the first time in five years, paving the way to new

projects. Following, Washington and Korea host pleasant, willing visits from the leaders of both countries. At the same time, Clinton's presidency ends, and George Bush takes over, imposing new sanctions on North Korea and underlining the Agreed Framework's invalidity due to rocket testing to Iran. The first years of the 21st decade destroyed the nuclear equilibrium created in previous years. Pyongyang admits to owning a secret uranium-enrichment program to power nuclear weapons, a violation of the Agreed Framework, the NPT, and agreements between North and South Korea. By December, the country says it will reactivate its nuclear plant in Yongbyon. This causes North Korea to withdrawal from the NPT and expels IAEA inspectors.

To cease and avoid further nuclear plants' escalation, the Six-Party Talks are initiated between South and North Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States. In 2005 the USA froze North Korea's assets; however, the talks seem to be successful, and North Korea commits to abandoning nuclear weapons, and the United States states their intention for peace. Although equilibrium and harmony appear to be reached, in 2006, North Korea carries out an underground nuclear test, estimated around one to two kilotons. These tests included seven short-, medium-, and long-range ballistic missiles. The U.N. Security Council then issues unanimous condemnations and trade sanctions to avoid North Korea from attacking other countries or gaining more nuclear power.

In 2007, after the United States released the $25 million in frozen North Korean funds in June, the Six-Party Talks resumed. The outcome of the talks included North Koreas' commitment to disabling its facilities and stopping the export of

nuclear material and technology. In exchange, North Korea asked for nine hundred thousand tons of oil and the United States' word to remove the country from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. In July 2007, North Korea began to shut down and seal its primary operations in Yongbyon, strictly supervised by the IAEA. However, while conducting the disablement activities, North Korea failed to submit its nuclear declaration[15]. In 2008, North Korea declared its nuclear sites in Beijing, and Bush agrees to unlock some trading agreements.

However, the talks stagnate due to arguments of verification procedures. Despite the disagreements, Obama starts the first bilateral talks with North Korea, and Pyongyang reveals its new centrifuge for uranium enrichment, which was built secretively, as well as a light-water reactor under construction, suggesting that despite sanctions, the regime was committed to advancing its weapons program. The news comes amid escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula after forty-six South Koreans were killed when a patrol ship, the Cheonan, was torpedoed and then sank in March. The South blames North Korea for the attack and cuts economic ties. The North denies its involvement and later fires artillery at the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong. The peninsula's tensions build up.

On the 11th of October 2008, the United States dropped the terrorism charges on North Korea. This led to a deal between the two countries, which stipulated that North Korea would be able to resume its nuclear activities only if they allowed IAEA inspectors to access the site. However, the agreement failed to achieve its

[15] Choe Sang-Hun and Steven Lee Myers, "North Korea Says It Met Nuclear Disclosure Deadline in Previous Declaration," The New York Times, 5 January 2008; Blaine Harden, "All Nuclear Efforts Disclosed, N. Korea Says; U.S. Calls Pyongyang's Declaration Incomplete but Says Negotiations Will Continue," The Washington Post, 5 January 2008; Paul Richter, "N. Korea Says It Has Met Nuclear Criteria; U.S. Officials Say a Full List of Activities Has Not Been Produced," Los Angeles Times, 5 January 2008.

primary goal, and in 2009 North Korea, after a dispute over rocket launches, rejected once more the IAEA and U.S. inspectors and started to rebuild Yongbyon's reactor. This led to their second nuclear test, which went against both its agreements with other the United Nations and the Six-Party Talks. KCNA stated, at the time, that the tests were conducted on anew higher levels in terms of explosive power and technology of its control[16].

After the stalemate of the Six-Party-Talks and re-emergence of nuclear tests, North Korea indicated to the international community that it would not be bound by the agreements it agreed in the past. North Korea's ballistic missile capabilities improved, with more tests of short-, medium-, and long-range missiles. In 2010 and 2011, tensions peaked in the global security arena. The actions of North Korea became very unclear and uncertain: Kim Jong Il visited China three times, indicating the chance of denuclearization. However, the country also engaged in nuclear and military activities with South Korea. This cooperation was then destroyed in March, when North Korea capsized and hit a South Korean ship, killing 46 sailors. Additionally, in March 2010, North Korea announced the construction of a light water reactor In Yongbyon. The development and increased uranium-plutonium showed by a U.S. satellite placed North Korea in a very suspicious light[17].

[16] "KCNA Report on One More Successful Underground Nuclear Test," KCNA, 25 May 2009, www.kcna.co.jp.

[17] "Light Water Reactor Construction Progressing at Yongbyon Nuclear Site," ISIS Report, March 5, 2012, http://isis-online.org; Jack Liu, "North Korea's Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site: All Quiet for the Moment," 38 North, August 11, 2014, http://38north.org; Jeffrey Lewis, “Recent Imagery Suggests Increased Uranium Production in North Korea,” 38 North, 12 August 2015, www.38north.org.

However, in March 2011, Pyongyang announced North Koreas' intent to resume the Six-Party Talks and discuss its uranium enrichment program. Further to this, talks with the U.S. resumed, and these culminated in what is defined as "Leap Day Agreement". In 2012, the United States asked North Korea to renounce to its nuclear testing, uranium enrichment and long-range missile tests in exchange for food aid[18]. The deal was broken when North Korea attempted to launch a satellite in orbit using an Unha[19] Rocket.

Further Developments and Current Status

In February 2013, North Korea conducted its third nuclear test and announced the restart on its 5MW graphite-moderated reactor. In 2014, they announced their intention of conducting a new form of nuclear testing, which raised fears for the whole international arena. Further tension was created when the following year Kim Jong Un released the information declaring the possession of thermonuclear devices. These devices were tested.
Following the tests, the international community started to speculate the possibility that North Korea tested a miniaturized version of the bomb. Therefore their capabilities were much higher than what was registered.

The situation in North Korea deteriorated even further in 2016 when it released some pictures depicting Kim Jong Un examining a miniature nuclear implosion

[18] Steven Lee Myers and Choe Sang-hun, "North Koreans Agree to Freeze Nuclear Work; U.S. to Give Aid," New York Times, 29 February 2012, www.nytimes.com.
[19] The Taepodong-2/Unha is a significant advance over the Taepodong-1. The Taepodong-2 uses more advanced technology than previous North Korean missiles, such as attitude control thrusters and a structural covering for the third stage. The Taepodong-2 also has a much higher range than the Taepodong-1. There is disagreement over the scale of the TD-2/Unha; estimated ranges vary considerably, from 6,000 km to 15,000 km.

and some partially assembled missiles. Soon after this release, North Korea announced a further nuclear test, carried out later that year. After the trial, North Korea's President stated that the states' capabilities increased and were now able to build warheads to fit onto the end of a missile. He added this could retaliate against any attack [20].

In 2017, president Donald Trump placed North Koreas as a perpetrator of terrorism again, and North Korea menaced the U.S. with a nuclear attack. Unexpectedly, in 2018, the two leaders meet in a historically unprecedented meeting. Kim and Moon, the two leaders of the Korea's, also reach for the first time at the border and agree to share the denuclearization goal.

Following a failed meeting of Trump and Kim, in 2019, the two leaders meet again in Vietnam. The leaders disagree over sanctions relief and denuclearization and leave Vietnam early, without signing a planned joint statement, but indicate talks will continue. However, at present times, the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is still on-going, and countries are still hostile to the continuously changing nature of North Korea.

Motives Behind the Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons

Intelligence systems worldwide have long assessed the reasons behind Kim Jong Un's chess game in nuclear affairs. The global community has also tried to

[20] Anna Fifield, "North Korea conducts a fifth nuclear test, claims it has made warheads with 'higher strike power,'" The Washington Post, 9 September 2016, www.washingtonpost.com.

analyze in-depth why North Korea's values have been so entrenched with building and exposing its nuclear capabilities. This chapter will focus on the analysis of the reason behind the country's acquisition of nuclear weapons, taking into consideration the domestic perspective of North Korea.

Since the start of North Korea's nuclear interest, its aims were to be intended as deterrence, international prestige, and coercive diplomacy. Kim Jong Un's perspective on owning nuclear weapons can be traced to six main objectives: 1) regime survival 2) Source of national pride 3) Domestic Legitimacy and international prestige for the leadership, 4) Military Power 5) Leverage for coercive diplomacy and 6) Undermining the American-South Korean alliance.

Regime Survival

North Korea's state is based on a one-party rule system, where an ideological ruling party is placed and the apex of politics and the power structure. This party is then free the exercise legislative, administrative, and judicial powers. In North Korea, the ruling party is the KWP, also known as the Korea Workers' Party. The system is also characterized by a "one-man ruling". This feature conveys the regime characteristics similar to a dictatorship, therefore while the state powers lie within the Party, the power within the Party belongs to a single ruler. Further to this, North Korea possesses a unique last characteristic: its Stalinist government has been a successful dynastic succession, where the skills and thoughts are passed on from father to son[21]. These characteristics can be seen as distinctive

[21] Smeltz, D. (2013). (Rep.). Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

in a mostly democratic world; this is why North Korea's leader, over the decades, has utilized nuclear power to protects the regime.

Furthermore, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, in his speech in 2018, claimed that nuclear forces constitute a powerful deterrent to prevent states, in particular the United States, from starting adventurous wars. The Pyongyang nuclear site was then presented as a "guaranteed protection and prevention against the United States hostile policy of intimidation, military attacks and regime change against authoritarian regimes"[22] . Therefore, Kim Jong Un's objective was to utilize nuclear weapons to protect North Korea from the potential military but also political attacks by more significant powers such as the United States.

Nevertheless, it can be said that this is not the only reason for the country's' nuclearization. The threats imposed by Pyongyang's site, including the attack on Seoul and Washington, have been depicted majorly as a response to Us attacks. North Korea's intents have often been highlighted only as defensive. In 2018, Kim Jong-Un gave a speech stating that: "As a responsible nuclear weapons state, our Republic will not use a nuclear weapon unless its sovereignty is encroached upon by any aggressive, hostile forces with nukes"[23].

Source of National Pride as a Response to US Attacks

However, despite North Korea's leader pledging to be a peaceful and reasonable nuclear state, the country's history suggests otherwise. The second reason for

[22] Jackson V. (2018) On the Brink: Trump, Kim and the Threat of Nuclear War, Cambridge University Press
[23] North Korea 'will not use nuclear weapons' unless threatened, 2016, BBC.

the acquisition of nuclear arms can be scouted within the need to reinforce national pride by achieving equal status to the United States, one of the world's most powerful countries. To do so, the country needed allies, which it lacked throughout the decades. North Korea has always felt endangered by its neighbors, in particular, due to the close relationship between China and the United States. The hostile atmosphere between the three countries has led North Korea to be named a "shrimp amongst wales". The perception that the state couldn't rely on its superpower allies, and neither could it count on its neighbors led to the formation of the nuclear program in the 1960s. Both the Soviet Union and China did not provide reliable protection to North Korea. According to North Korea, Moscow was seen as having left Havana during the Cuban missile crisis. Beijing refused to cooperate with the sharing of information on nuclear tests and arms.

Despite other countries being bigger menaces, North Korea has always perceived the United States as the biggest one. This perception has caused huge tensions between the countries, leading to North Korea's desire to gain equal status. Samuel King[24] argues that Pyongyang's nuclear strategy was significantly shaped by the perceived threat of the United States. Nevertheless, these perceptions have been a central part of the mutually vicious cycle of security dilemma looming around North-Korea-US relations. Undoubtedly, after the Cold war, the United States rose as a sole superpower, casting a shadow on the rest of the global powers. The significant threats perceived by North Korea lay within the U.S.'s multinational and multidimensional nature, which, according to its

[24] Kim, S. (2010). North Korea's Nuclear Strategy And The Interface Between International And Domestic Politics. Asian Perspective, 34(1), 49-85

leaders, threatened the country's' regime security, economic development, and global status. America's global base structure and its enormous military budget mainly affected the domestic perception of North Korea, who, since the 1950s, began its search for a powerful, self-reliant deterrent. Despite the regional size difference and the economic and military difference, North Korea was and is, at present, determined to build its status and participate as a global power in international discussions.

Domestic Legitimacy and international prestige for the leadership

A further reason for the acquisition of North Korea's nuclear weapons is strictly linked with the projection of the national leadership of the country into the global scenario. Even more so than his predecessors, Kim Jong Un has related his personal prestige and figure to the nuclear program and Pyongyang. In comparison to his predecessor, namely his father and grandfather, Kim came to power lacking revolutionary credentials and leadership skills. To build his image, he embraced the programs and breakthroughs in nuclear studies, contributing to the fulfillment of the country's goals, such as defense and regime survival.

It can be said that the ownership of nuclear weapons and Kim's decision to strengthen the nuclear field has completely shifted his image. Some, such as Choe Sang-Hun[25] have argued that the nuclearization of North Korea has legitimized his leadership. Surely, Kim Jong Un's image was portrayed as the

[25] Choe Sang-Hun and Steven Lee Myers, "North Korea Says It Met Nuclear Disclosure Deadline in Previous Declaration," The New York Times, 5 January 2008

man who: ordered the execution of his family members, spent millions developing and later testing hydrogen bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles as his people suffered starvation, exchanged threats of nuclear with the most powerful country in the world and lastly, called President Trump a "mentally deranged U.S. dotard".

With the development and extension of the nuclear program, Kim was able to organize an unprecedented scene in history: a meeting between the American President and a leader of North Korea. He also used the denuclearization of his own country to entice South Korea and the United States into negotiations, which enormously increased his popularity in the South. In other words, North Korea's nuclear program served as a solid foundation for Kim's reign, as he constructed his personality and leadership traits around it. Therefore it can be argued that nuclear weapons were not only acquired for security issues but were also aimed at consolidating the leaders' rule and, with this, consolidate his power on society. Chung Byung-Ho[26], an anthropologist at Hanyang University, South Korea; stated that "The reason the world pays attention to him (Kim Jong Un) is not just because he has a few nuclear weapons, but more because of his image as a leader with mystical power, his absolute control over a highly consolidated, regimented and disciplined country".

[26] Kwon H, Byung-Ho C. (2012) North Korea, Beyond Charismatic Politics), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Military Power

Throughout decades and centuries, military power has always been directly associated with the economic and social influence of a state. In North Korea's perspective, the possession of Nuclear devices and enhanced military capabilities is the ultimate deterrent to menace its neighbors and avoid attacks from the United States. The main aim of the Pyongyang nuclear site was to increase North Korea's power over South Korea. In 2010 the nuclear site was capable of targeting the Southern part of the country and the Japanese mainland. Nevertheless, since the 1950s, the aim of these weapons has been to menace the U.S. with its longer-range missiles.

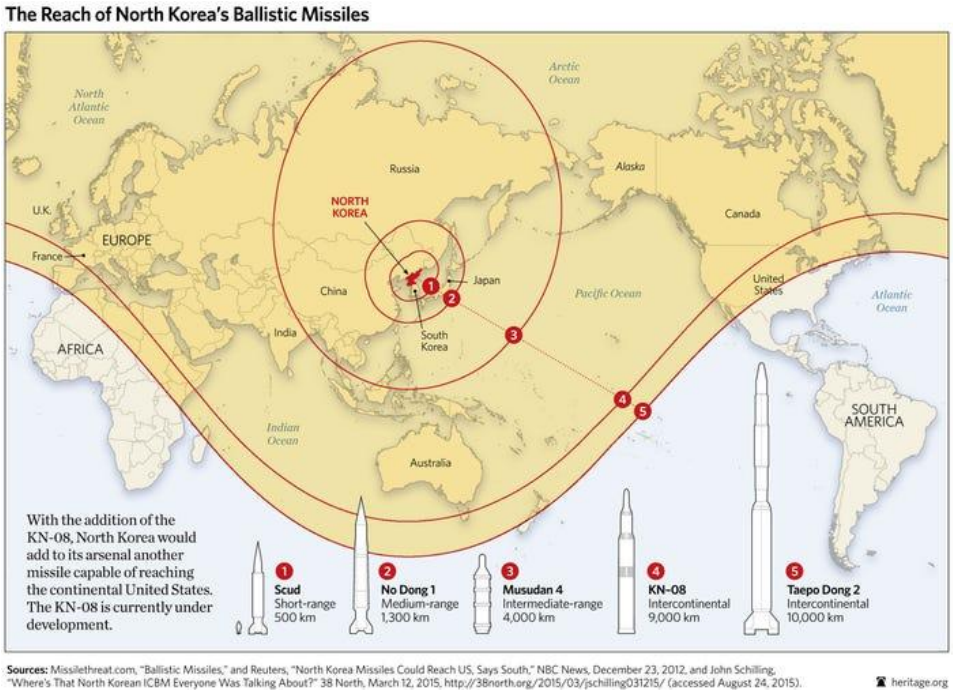

Figure 1: Military Capability of North Korea and Nuclear Reach

Stabilizing or Destabilizing Effect on the North Korea Case

One of the main reasons for any country to acquire nuclear powers is strictly linked to the security dilemma and the increase of military power. This is also one of the basic concepts of offensive realism. Mearsheimer underlined that "Striving to attain security from . . . the attack, (states) acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious and power accumulation is on[27] ". This also explains why North Korea would steadily increase their potential nuclear force.

However, this thesis's main scope is to analyze whether nuclear weapons have a destabilizing effect, or stabilizing, in the case of North Korea. This section will aim to answer this question. Soon after the first bomb was ever launched, scholars and analysts have tried to analyze their effect on both the domestic and international levels, the diplomatic relations between states, and the possible impact of allowing states to conduct nuclear operations. Nuclear weapons have created what can be described as a stability-instability paradox[28]. This means

[27] Snyder, G. (2002). Mearsheimer's World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay. International Security, 27(1), 149-173

[28] Roehrig, Terence. (2016). North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and the Stability-Instability Paradox. Korean Journal of Defense Analysis. 28. 181-198.

Figure 1: Missilethreat.com "Ballistic Missiles and Reuters, "North Korea Missiles Could Reach the U.S., Says South" (2012) NBC News

that nuclear weapons can have two effects simultaneously, perhaps opposite to each other, depending on the sphere of influence and approach to it.

In North Korea's case, it can be said that internationally, in the long term, nuclear weapons create stability. This can be explained through offensive realism, where Mearsheimer's deduced that all states fear each other and therefore, will always try and maximize their power and translate it within the global arena. The constant fear and the research of the maximization of capabilities create a global hegemony, which then creates absolute stability. When analyzing North Korea's case, it can be seen that the country only ever posed hypothetical threats to global security and increased its status. The stability given in this case could also be explained by Mearsheimer's statement that often, the best ways for states to survive is to take advantage of other countries and gain power at their expense. If states were irrational actors, this would create competition within the international sphere and therefore, would cause an arms race. However, according to offensive realism, all states are rational actors; consequently, the formation of competition would be futile if not counterproductive. This is to say that nuclear weapons simply create a new one, where states take advantage of one another rather than destroy the security equilibrium in the world, trying to gain as much power as possible. In North Korea's case, the possession of nuclear warheads allowed the country to gain more power, changing their status in the world, however not necessarily causing noticeable security fluctuations in the world.

Further to this, the lingering effects of a nuclear war have prevented any state from launching or merely getting involved with nuclear weapons. This has, as

touched upon by the offensive realism theory, produced a stabilizing effect. States know the consequence of an attack on North Korea and are willing to accept their nuclearization to avoid more significant results. The price of recovery the world would be forced to pay, and the time it would take have discouraged bigger states who own nuclear weapons to attack smaller countries to declare their absolute power. This concept could be described as a "social glue" which holds the hegemony in its place. North Korea has taken advantage of this concept by allowing states to know their nuclearization and, therefore, installing fear while forcing them to produce a response based on diplomatic rather than military means. The construction of these diplomatic ties, although weak, provides a stabilizing effect.

The stabilization brought by nuclear weapons can also be explained by the fact that offensive realism underlines the importance of the deterrence factor in security. When looking at North Korea's nuclearization motifs, it can be said that the prevailing one is to ensure regime survival and defend itself against perceived threats by South Korea and the United States.

However, scholar Roehrig [29] Argues that for deterrence to work, it must be credible. There are no doubts that North Korea has explicitly underlined its nuclear power: the 2008 initial nuclear testing, the 2010 short and medium-range missiles, and the 2014 thermonuclear device tests. The demonstration of the country's possession of nuclear arms has created a "deterrence stability", in other words, North Korea has developed its nuclear plants to counterattack the U.S.,

[29] Roehrig, Terence. (2016). North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and the Stability-Instability Paradox. Korean Journal of Defense Analysis. 28. 181-198.

the United States have also increased their military scope to deter any possible attack from North Korea and South Korea has followed. The directly proportional growth of the military capabilities to deter one another has created an equilibrium in which rational actors would not break.

The same can be said for the domestic sphere. If we refer to Mearsheimer's idea that states use other states to gain more power, in North Korea's case, the multiple approaches by other states and international organizations resulted in an expansion of the country's influence.

Further to this, because of its nuclear expansion, North Korea has obtained unprecedented events such as the various meetings with the United States President and participation in international talks. This has maintained the status quo of the peninsula. As there is little evidence to support the claim that North Korea's nuclear forces have primarily been designed to attack and start a conflict, it can be concluded that they have been created to achieve a higher status quo and forcibly try to integrate the country globally.

Nevertheless, in the short term, allowing North Korea to have and continue producing nuclear weapons has a substantial destabilizing effect on the international sphere. Firstly, because the great powers such as the United States and international organizations such as the United Nations and the IAEA have lost their credibility, they have allowed North Korea to be secretive and continue the pattern of risk-taking and provocative behavior. Two severe episodes are worth mentioning: in 2010, the Korean corvette Cheonan was sunk, causing the

death of 46 sailors. The case appeared unclear, but after further investigations, it was determined that the attack was very likely to be launched by one of North Korea's midget submarines[30]. North Korea denied its participation, and the following November killed two ROK (Republic of Korea) Marines and two civilians pointing its artillery at the South Korean Island Yeonpyeong. However, these attacks are not to be linked with nuclear weapons but can highlight the fact that the international arena did not punish nor sanction North Korea for these acts. Ultimately, the leaders on North Korea acknowledged the system's potential deficiencies and believed they could undermine these even further when it came to nuclear weapons. This created a "domino effect", meaning as great powers and institutions weakened North Korea got stronger and the international system more unstable.

Finally, while looking at the effects of nuclear weapons domestically, the economic toll on the production and maintenance of these plants has huge destabilizing effects. North Korea's total defense scheme is reported to be around 10 billion dollars, which is somewhere between a fifth of its entire gross domestic product. Its military spending to GDP ratio exceeds the one of any other country and, compared to its territory size is very high. Nevertheless, in terms of monetary expenditures, its expenditure is very little compared to its neighbors, including South Korea and Japan. The high cost has had a negative effect also on North Korea's population. Not only the fact that the state has to pay a high nuclear burden affects taxes and public services, but the countless violations of nuclear limits have led to high sanctions. The sanctions have put a tight

[30] Roehrig, Terence. (2016). North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and the Stability-Instability Paradox. Korean Journal of Defense Analysis. 28. 181-198.

constraint on what the government's budget for the population and the services can offer. The sanctions, which initially only targeted North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile program were also extended to other areas of the economy to restrict the government's ability to raise revenues to support their production of nuclear warheads[31].

Lastly, the diplomatic and social effects it has had on the country might also be considered destabilizing. The uncomplying attitude and secretive actions of the country have led to hostile relations with the United Nations, the United States, and the IAEA. Over the last two decades, North Korea has become skillful at avoiding sanctions, restrictions, and importing illegally up to 3.9 million dollars of nuclear material. Without a doubt, this has angered its neighbors and created a hostile environment within the international community. Further to this, the country's inability to respect resolutions and agreements has entrenched a feeling of distrust within the community. The mutual feeling has caused instability within the country itself, as it has isolated itself almost completely. The relations with other countries and the possibility of increasing its diplomatic ties have perhaps, been compromised permanently.

[31] Lynch C. (2020) North Korea Continues to Flout Trump, Advance Nuclear Ambitions, ForeignPolicy.com

Iran

The history of Nuclear Weapon Acquisition

Iran's nuclear program started in the late 1950s, supplied initially by the United States, who constructed the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre. In 1973 the Shah uncovered his intention of installing 23,000 MWe of nuclear power in Iran by the end of the century and founded the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran. By the end of the century, Iran's nuclear capacity had massively grown, and the country has significantly invested in educating personnel and purchasing uranium. Further to this, the country concluded several nuclear contracts with suppliers involved in nuclear training, which prepared them to enhance their nuclear program. In 1976, Iran bought a ten percent stake of Eurodif's Tricastin uranium enrichment plant in France and a further 15% in Namibia. Further to this, in the same year, Tehran signed a substantial contract to purchase uranium in South Africa and started to send Iranian technicians and experts to train for nuclear facilities. With Iran's revolution, the nuclear power of the country was almost abolished. Many citizens fled the country, and nuclear projects such as the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant were cancelled. However, not all was lost: in the 1980's Khomeini expressed a renewed interest in it and sought international partners to complete the original nuclear program and re-start the Bushehr Plan.

Termination of the Revolution and the New Start

When the war with Iraq was over, and the revolution ended, Iran could concentrate all its resources in nuclear power and signed a long- term agreement with Pakistan and China, later also with Russia. The agreement involved training of the personnel and China's provision of a miniature neutron source reactor and power reactors. In 1992, to strengthen the alliance, Russia and Iran signed a bilateral nuclear cooperation agreement, and, in 1995, Russia announced it would entirely complete Iran's Bushehr's plan. Secretly Russia also promised Iran a supply of research reactors, fuel fabrication facilities, and a gas centrifuge plant. However, the United States intelligence services feared the proliferation of clandestine Iranian nuclear power and pressured potential suppliers to stop their collaboration with Iran. This resulted in China's withdrawal of aid and the blockade of Iran's agreement with Argentina for uranium enrichment and water facilities. Although this deal was interrupted, Iran managed to sign a "clear cooperation deal" with Russia and continued the maximization of its nuclear supply.

In 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran revealed to the international community the existence of undeclared nuclear facilities. The IAEA requested an inspection, which was carried out in 2003 and would determine Iran's nuclear program's future. This included a meeting with the Iranian officials. In November

2003, the IAEA board accepted Iran's signature within the Additional Protocol to stop proliferation and stop uranium enrichment.

However, the international community was still doubtful of Iran's secretive actions and requested additional checks. The Board requested the Director-General to take all the necessary steps to uncover Iran's past hidden nuclear activities and further highlight present ones, in order to preserve global security. To avoid interference with the UN Security Council, Iran started a cooperation with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. It agreed to comply with the IAEA regulations, sign the Additional Protocol, and temporarily suspend nuclear and enrichment activities. Nevertheless, these agreements were not withheld, and Iran carried out some small conversion explosions. It also produced, on a smaller scale, centrifuge components. In 2004, despite the ambiguities, Tehran concluded positive talks with the EU-3 and agreed, once again, to suspend nuclear activities.

In 2004, despite the progress made and the certainty that Iran would withstand its commitments, the CIA received thousands of pages from an unknown source indicating that Iran was modifying its nuclear tools to increase their capabilities. It was also discovered that Iran's officials had been hiding blueprints, including projects to develop more powerful centrifuges. The international community called upon Iran's officials to respond; however, they dismissed these documents as forgeries. In need of more detailed answers, the IAEA called on Iran to be more cooperative and answer all questions about nuclear activities. Iran accepted the request and revealed their illegal activities: the import of P1 centrifuges and

the import of P2 centrifuges n 1994. Following these declarations, the IAEA programmed some further investigations to determine the origin of the nuclear material. The studies showed that the traces of highly enriched uranium derived from a foreign intermediary and therefore were provided by other countries.

Failure of Cooperation and the Deals

Talks and cooperation broke down in August 2005, when Iran rejected the long term alliance previously signed and announced it would start nuclear operations again, after the United States of America discovered secret nuclear activity. This happened because Iran felt excluded from major talks and felt the resolutions proposed were too demanding and light on incentives. The Board of Governors responded by adopting a resolution that contradicted Iran's Safeguard Agreement and therefore caused tension in the country. In June 2005, after Iran's breach of regulations and agreements, President George Bush decided to block all individuals and entities' financial assets, which supported the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In response to this, in 2006, Iran ended the Additional Protocol's implementation and re-started the enrichment processes in Natanz. The IAEA then reported Iran to the UN Security Council who then released a Presidential Statement obliging Iran to collaborate with the Agency's demands. Iran's response was a speech delivered by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, where he discussed Iran's position on uranium enrichment. Following these statements, the EU-3 joined by the United States, China and Russia offered Iran a deal that comprehended the supply of advanced civilian

nuclear technology in exchange for the end of uranium enriching activities and the resumption of the Additional Protocol. Iran's response was a letter addressed to President Bush, which did not address the current nuclear situation and angered the UN Security Council, who passed the Resolution 1696 against Iran.

The 1696 Resolution demanded Iran to suspend enrichment activities, banned international transfers of nuclear and missile materials to Iran, and froze foreign assents of individuals involved in such activities[32]. Iran ignored the Resolution and further ones given by the Council.

In November 2007, Iran once again admitted to their crimes and also admitted to purchasing a complete set of P-2 centrifuge blueprints. However, Iran refused to answer the questions about their UF4 conversion activities, high explosive testing and re-entry design vehicle[33].

Iran will refuse to comply and cooperate until 2008 until the EU's foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr met in Tehran. However, days before the talks' conclusion, Khamenei rejected the deals and declared Iran would continue its nuclear path. Tensions increase even more when in 2009, President Ahmadinejad announced he would construct an additional uranium facility. For these actions, Iran was heavily sanctioned. Nevertheless, in the same year, Iran and the P5 states resume their talks, and Iran agreed to permit IAEA inspections. Further to this, they agreed that the

[32]. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1696, adopted July 31, 2006.
[33] "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007) in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Report by the Director-General, International Atomic Energy Agency, 15 November 2007.

country would send 1200 kg of LEU to Russia and France. This trade meant the Tehran Research Reactor was expected to run out soon after 2009 and therefore prompted Iran to replace the fuel and send LEU to a third country for further enrichment. The P5 states and Iran agreed to a fuel swap arrangement in Geneva that same year. However, Iran rejected the deal and proposed an alternative solution: the swap would have to be dealt with in phases. The first one was comprehending a 400kg of LEU swap for fuel on the Gulf Island of Kish. The IAEA and the United States immediately rejected the proposal.[34]

Following the interruption of negotiations, Iran announced it would increase its uranium enrichment to 20%, increasing it even further if necessary. Following the declaration, Russia, the US, and France ensured the IAEA would commit fully to the fuel swap deal and limit Iran's nuclear production. However, shortly after, President Ahmadinejad announced Iran would construct another uranium enrichment facility. This caused high tension within the international community, which started to express their concerns to the UN Security Council once again. Nevertheless, Iran's head of AEOI announced the immediate start of the construction plans prompting the US to announce further the imposition of sanctions on foreign companies helping the process.[35]

In 2009 agency inspectors examined the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant and determined that the facility was built to house 3000 centrifuges. This sparked anger and fear within the international community, who urged the IAEA to stop the construction of this Plant. The Agency acknowledged these complaints and

[34] W.G. Dunlop, "Iran Offers to Swap 400 Kilos of LEU on Kish for Atomic Fuel," AFP, 12 December 2009.
[35] "House Passes Iran Gasoline Sanctions Bill," Reuters, 15 December 2009.

threats and urged Iran to stop the construction, confirm that there were no more facilities and comply with the Resolution passed by the UN Security Council in the previous months.

Increased Tensions and P5+1 Talks: 2010 to 2013

In June 2010, following Iran's rejection of the previous requests and resolutions, the UNSCR passed another resolution: 1929. It was aimed at Iran's nuclear investments towards nuclear-related investments and their sanctioning. The institutions sanctioned included the Islamic Republic on Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps[36]In the same year, Iran wrote a letter to the IAEA to inform them and the rest of the world that they would proceed with LEU's purchase to enhance and supply their reactor in Tehran. Iran requested the IAEA to convey this message to the P5 countries hoping they would comply with Iran's requests. However, the countries did not re-start the talks. With the breakdown of the P5+1 talks, Iran received a new nuclear proposal brokered by Brazil and Turkey. In May 2010, Brazil, Turkey, and Iran issued a joined statement in which their joint venture was explored: Iran would export half of its LEU stock to Turkey in return for 120kg of 20% enriched uranium for its medical research reactor. The Wester Community did not accept these terms and thought the removal of 1200 kg of LEU was not enough to increase Iran's nuclear activities. In October, the P5 states invited Iran to attend other collaboration talks but refused to include Brazil and Turkey. Later that month, talks resumed in Geneva, where the P5 states asked Iran proof of their

[36] Colum Lynch and Glenn Kessler, "U.N. Imposes another round of sanctions on Iran," Washington Post, 10 June 2010.

peaceful nuclear intentions. In return, Iran asked for sanctions to be lifted. The talks ended with Iran's insistence on meeting the preconditions before entering discussions on its nuclear program.

In 2011 the United States pressured the IRISL and other American banks collaborating within the transport of nuclear material for Iran to stop their activities. In the same year, the United States sanctioned six companies in Panama who were accused of working for the IRISL. In the same year, essential developments occurred between the IAEA and Iran's aiding countries. Russia envisioned a five-step cooperation plan with Iran, which would encourage Iran to meet the IAEA's requests and the P5 ones[37]. The plan included Iran capping its uranium enrichment level at 5%, implementing the Subsidiary Arrangements, ratify the Additional Protocol and lastly suspend enrichment activities for three months.

In exchange, the P5+1 states would gradually lift the sanctions that were previously imposed by the UN Security Council. Iran welcomed Russia's proposal. However, the US, the UK, and France did not agree on sanction lifting. The countries believed that the premature lifting would give Iran the possibility to hide nuclear projects as it had done in the past. Nevertheless, discussions never formally took place, and in 2008 the IAEA released a public statement where it described with detail Iran's nuclear program. According to the document Iran

[37] "Russia Proposes 'Phased' Resolution of Iran Nuclear Standoff'," Global Security Newswire, 14 July 2011.

engaged with various activities revolving around nuclear explosive devices[38] Moreover, it included statements that the 2003 ban on Iran was not respected and its activities, could still be in the process. The document led the IAEA's adoption of a new resolution launched by the Boards of Governors, who deeply concerned with the unresolved nuclear issue regarding Iran. More so they were concerned with Iran's inability to comply with the rules and attain to its promises[39].

In 2011, after the Resolution passed, the United States and the European Union planned. A series of unprecedented unilateral measures to safeguard the world's security equilibrium. For the first time in the history of international relations, the United States accused the Iranian Government and all the financial institutions involved with it of money laundering processes. It warned that all future and present cooperations would be severely punished. In December 2011, the United States Congress enacted the Menendez-Kirk amendment, which required the President to sanction the Central Bank of Iran and all the financial institutions which processed transaction fueling the nuclear reactors. The Obama administration launched the measure in 2012 and granted 20 countries particular weavers if they reduced their purchase of Iranian oil and if they froze all Iranian assets in their countries. In February, a further step was taken: the United States froze all assets belonging to the Government of Iran, the Central bank and financial institutions linked to them.

[38] "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Report by the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, (GOV/2011/65), 8 November 2011.
[39] "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Resolution adopted by the Board of Governors, 18 November 2011, GOV/2011/69.

In 2012 the IAEA travelled to Iran, determined to solve the outstanding issues, and oblige them to respect the resolutions. However, Iran refused to grant access to the Parchin Military Complex, and the two sides never found an agreement. In March, Iran changed its mind and announced it would allow the IAEA to visit the compound; however, the following meeting did to produce a structured approach on how to visit would take place[40]. In the following month, satellite images detected signs of items that could be associated with the removal of equipment and cleansing of the site.

In March 2012, the Foreign policy Chief of the European Union announced she wanted to resume talks with Iran and therefore organized a meeting in Turkey, including the P5+1 countries. The talks lasted two days and were prolonged to a second session. Iran requested the provision of medical isotopes, cooperation in nuclear safety, and the supply of parts for Iran's aviation. In exchange, the country was asked to stop the uranium enrichment proceedings and close the Fordow Nuclear Plant. Once again, the meeting was inconclusive as both parts were unable to agree on substantive actions.

In 2013, Hassan Rouhani won Iranian elections and declared that he would continue to elevate Iran's national interests and lift the oppressive sanctions. In 2013 secretive talks start between the P5 and Iran, but the result inconclusive. While these talks took place, Iran went through severe political changes in its domestic sphere. Through 2014, 2015, and 2016 Iran and the P5 states sign the

[40] "U.S. says Iran "demolishing" facility at Parchin site," Reuters, 13 September 2012.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of action. However, the plan does not follow its goals as Iran reduces its compliance with the JCPA in five main ways: it exceeds the limit of uranium by 300kg, it enriched uranium above the level allowed, it stocked more than 12'30 metric tons of heavy water, and it finally exceeded the limits regarding nuclear centrifuges. This has led to the threat of Iran abandoning the NPT and further evading the limits put by international organizations and the UN Security Council[41].

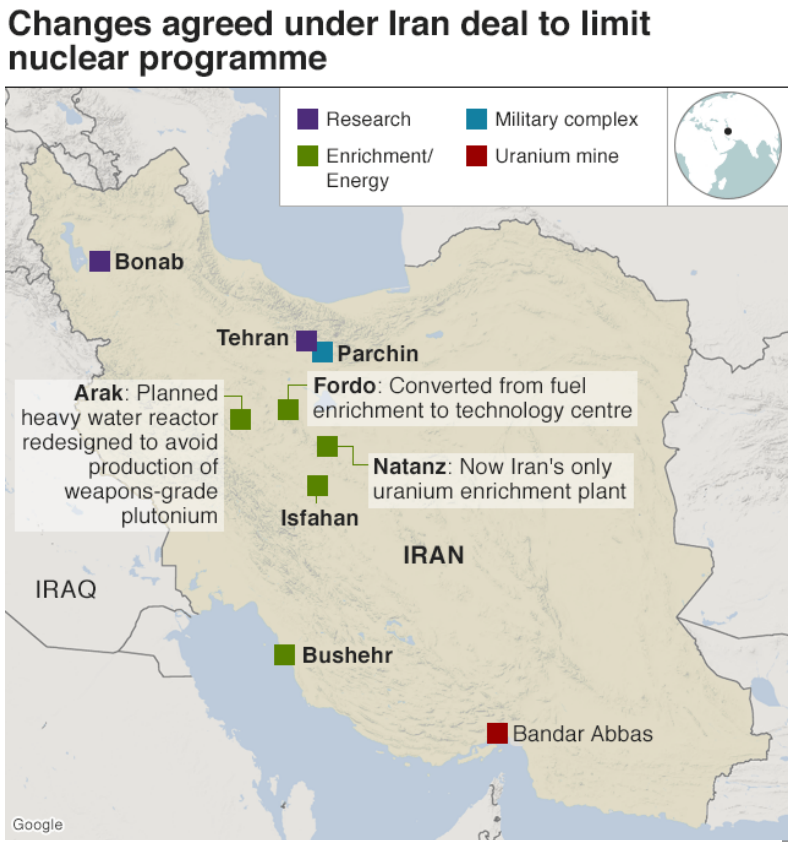

Figure 2 Iran's distribution of Nuclear Plants

[41] Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2019, Available at https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iran/nuclear/ Figure 2: Iran Nuclear deal: key Details (2019)

Motives Behind the Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons

Since the 1990s, Iran's nuclear program has been at the center of the international security dilemma. Many scholars have argued that a multitude of reasons have dictated the proliferation of Iran's nuclear plans. This chapter will analyze three dimensions of the state, which can be traced back to fueling the primary motives for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The two spheres which will be scrutinized are the domestic and the international one.

Domestic Security

In the domestic sphere, it can be said that Iran has multiple sources that have pushed the acquisition of nuclear weapons and the expansion of nuclear plants. One of the primary motifs is linked to the security of the country. A state might want to nuclearize because of existential threats or perceived threats. In Iran's case, there is evidence that the country's acquisition and development of nuclear bombs could be explained by the complicated relationship held with the United States. Since the Iranian Revolution and the US embassy hostage crisis, Iran has been labeled as a terror-supporting state. Until 2019, minimal efforts were made by the President of the United States to approach Iran. Since the early 1980s, Iran has been isolated politically and economically through sanctions and military embargos imposed by the US. This has created tensions between the countries and has sparked a sense of insecurity and threat in the Iranian Government. Further to this, the United States has also severely damaged the strength of the

Iranian army. Before the revolution, the Iranian army was considered one of the most influential and large armies in the world. Due to the imposed isolation and heavy sanctions during the years lead by the US. The Iranian army could not provide the necessary equipment to its soldiers during the Iraq-Iran war [42]. This was perceived as a threat to Iran's state security for two reasons: 1) Iran perceived the US's attack on its army as an attack on the state, diminishing its force and status in front of the whole global community 2) the lack of support from the international community and weakening of the army had serious repercussions In the Iraq war. This pushed Iran to develop an alternative deterrence method that relied on nuclear weapons and the production of nuclear warheads.

Security threats were not only posed by the eagerness of the United States to shut down Iran's nuclear program, but the country also felt pressured by its hostile neighbor Iraq against whom it fought a devastating war from 1980 to 1988. During the war, the Iraqi regime used biological and chemical weapons against Iran, threatening the country's security. The bitterness between the two states and the lack of international support and acknowledgment of these events could have led to Iran's re-opening and strengthening its nuclear program.

After the Gulf war in 1991 and the removal of Sadam Hussain from power, Iran intensified its relations with Iraq, therefore lowering the threat by its ever-present neighbor. However, the reconciliation of the two only led to a more hostile

[42]Farzamnia, Irán. De la Revolución Islámica a la Revolución Nuclear. (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2009)

diplomatic cooperation with the United States. Since 2003 the US has labelled Iran as a member of the "axis of evil" together with Iraq and North Korea. It can be said that Iran has never kept its promises in terms of agreements and resolutions. However, the United States has forcefully tried to end its nuclear power by hurting the state and its population. Also, to mention is the invasion in Iraq, which caused enormous bloodshed. Hence it can be said that the Iranian Government had developed and acquired nuclear weapons firstly as a deterrent against its neighbor and later to provide security to its regime and assure Iran's political survival against the United States.

The influence of elite members on internal decision-making processes

Iran's nuclear program has been, without any doubt, has been constructed and led by Iranian leaders. In this case, it can be said that the beliefs of the individual decision-makers within the country's domestic sphere are one of the motifs for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. According to the myth-maker model, envisioned by Peter Lavoy[43], The elites of the country are responsible for creating the false belief that nuclear programs assure security and increase stability. This creates a further illusion within the Government that pursuing nuclear proliferation, although against the international community's will, assures power.

Iran's political and domestic dynamic is complex but, more specifically, is mainly financed by external sources such as the Central Bank of Iran and private investors. However, the final decisions are taken by the Supreme Leader of the country. Nevertheless, throughout Iran's nuclear program, leaders have been

[43] Lavoy P.R (1993) Nuclear Myths and the Causes of Nuclear Proliferation, Security Studies, pp.192-212

highly influenced by the advisors they were surrounded by. Two specific cases can be outlined to explain Iran's nuclearization motifs: the influence of Ayatollah Rafsanjani and Asgar-Khani.

Rafsanjani was the head of forces and served two terms as President of Iran for almost two decades. He believed nuclear weapons were essential deterrents in promoting Iran's security and shaped the country's mindset to accept that acquiring them was a value rather than an act of violence and threat against the international arena. In an interview carried by the IRNA news agency in 2015, he stated that "when Iran began the plan, we were at war and we sought to have that possibility for the day that the enemy might use a nuclear weapon. That was the thinking. However, it never became real."[44] He continued by saying that "Iran's basic doctrine was always a peaceful nuclear application, but it never left our mind that if one day we should be threatened and it was imperative, we should be able to go down the other path". Rafsanjani started Iran's culture on the nuclear program, which was then intensified by Prime Minister Khani, considered the founder of Iran's Nuclear Programme.

After his position as Prime Minister, Khani and IRGC force commander Rahim Safavi formed the close inner circle to the Supreme leader and encouraged the development of the nuclear program based on three central motifs: 1) Iran's security was at extreme risk of being bombed by Israel or the United States 2) the necessity of developing a nuclear plant was directly linked to the isolation the country was into 3) the threat of Zionists/Imperialists could only be counteracted

[44] RFE/RL, Rafsanjani: Iran Considered Nuclear Deterrent In the 1980s, October 29, 2015.

by developing the most powerful means of self- deterrence: nuclear weapons. The President then decided to opt for nuclear plants and continue with the development of their nuclear plan.

Expanding Regional Influence and State Status

Iran's interest in Nuclear Weapons also lies within the expansion of its regional interest and the maintenance of its state status[45]. Since the Persian Gulf War, Iran has tried to exert its power and resist the West and the United States' imperialism. Since then, the country has provided increased military support to all its close allies, including Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria, and Iraq. By constructing nuclear weapons, Iran wanted to neutralize the US's conventional military superiority and affirm its leadership within the closer regions. Further to this, obtaining nuclear warheads would have meant that the country could counteract military attacks and threats but also assert its status within the international sphere. Holding a powerful nuclear plant would balance power between states and with the fear caused by an attack, other countries would have had to cooperate with Iran and establish diplomatic relations.

Warfare Advantage

The possession of nuclear arms, although Iran's various statements on their peaceful means, may be seen as a method of achieving advantage if the deterrence method should fail. As pointed out by scholars such as Goldman and

[45] Davis, L., Martini, J., Nader, A., Kaye, D., Quinlivan, J., & Steinberg, P. (2011). Influencing Iran. In Iran's Nuclear Future: Critical U.S. Policy Choices (pp. 7-18). RAND Corporation.

Eliason, small and middle-range powers may seek tactical nuclear weapons in order to defend themselves against conventional attacks by a superpower or a regional enemy. Playing to Iran's advantage was the high level of mystery and low level of transparency, the country kept with the global sphere. This created two scenarios: 1) an incredible distrust between states and Iran, as it never complied with the rules and never allowed international organizations to have a clear picture of its nuclear activities, but also 2) an enormous advantage as the secrecy behind its nuclear weapons allowed them to leave the international community with a sense of imminent risk. The threat of Iran utilizing nuclear bombs if attacked or threatened with military actions acted as a perfect deterrent. Further to this, keeping precise numbers and blueprints hidden from the United Nations of the IAEA allowed Iran to produce nuclear material at an unknown quantity, also hiding its potential military strength.

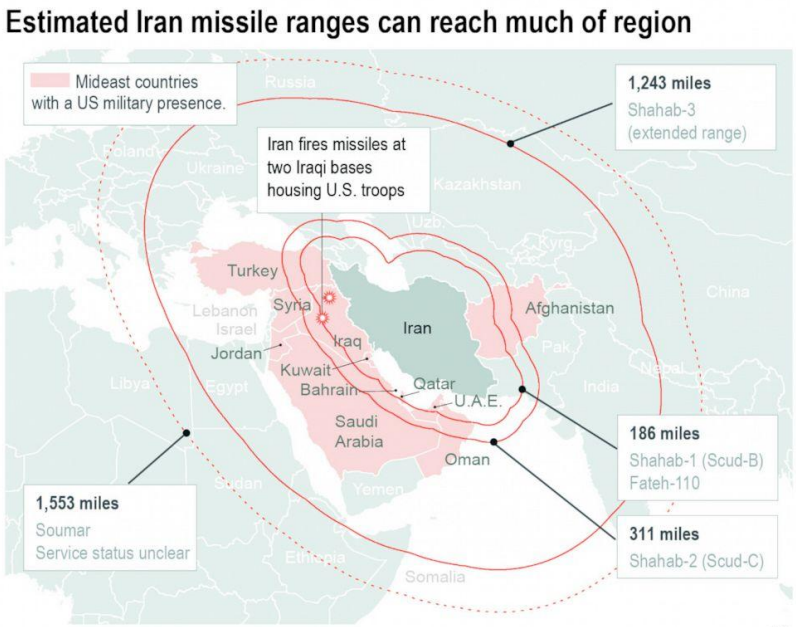

Figure 3: Nuclear Missile Range of Iran

Regional Threats

A further explanation of Iran's strong tie with the need for nuclear weapons is the regional threat posed by Israel. The animosity between the two countries dates back to the 1980s and Iran's involvement with the creation of Hezbollah and its relationship with Syria, who then signified its heavy involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The connection with Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Jihadist groups installed fear in Israel, who feared Iran would use such a link as a platform to launch an attack. To this fear, Israel reacted with a hostile attitude. Tensions between the two have risen when in 2002, Iran revealed its unlawful nuclear activities, and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad threatened to "wipe Israel off the map."

However, Iran argued that Israel's threats were a response to Israel's nuclear status, which was of great concern to Tehran. Since the 1970's Israel was able to develop, with the aid of the United States and other European powers, nuclear power on land, water, and air. With developments through the years, the country at present possesses between 100 and 400 nuclear warheads. Further threatening Iran is the fact that Israel possesses one of the most sophisticated military manufacturers, meaning that It could potentially develop highly refined weapons to launch an attack. Lastly, Israel's position within the global scenario is more robust than Iran's one: Israel is one of the strategic military alliances of the United States, influencing its foreign policy. In other words, this means that the

two most hostile enemies of Iran are not only allied with each other but are also neighboring the country. The strong influence of Israel on the US has also pushed them to take a more hostile stance, outing in danger Iran's survival. This has been proven by a talk reported by an unknown source in the Foreign Policy magazine where the US reported a plan to attack Iran, using Israel as a platform for the attack[46]. Therefore, Iran has stated multiple times that their nuclear program was created as a deterrent for these hostile behaviors against them, serving as a protection from the alliance of Israel and the United States.

Energy Needs

Iran has disputed that one of the motifs for the acquisition of nuclear tools is the strengthening of their economy. They have argued that nuclear power is an essential incentive for the development of their state: shifting the production from oil to nuclear power allows the state to export more oil and therefore have more revenue, making the economy less vulnerable and more stable. This also entails that the economy is less dependent on fluctuations of oil. The Government has also argued that with nuclear energy, the needs of the country are entirely covered without having to rely on external sources. With a rising population, Iran has encountered a demand of 500%[47] in the last decade. This is to say that Iran's per capita energy consumption is at present fifteen times higher than Japan and ten times higher than the whole of the European Union. This has placed Iran at

[46] Jett C. Dennis (2018) The Iran Nuclear Deal, Bombs, Bureaucrats, and Billionaires, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham

[47] G. Matthew Bonham and Daniel Heradstveit, 'What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran', Middle East Journal, vol. 61 no. 3 (Summer 2007), 421-40, p. 427-36

Figure 3: Iran launches missiles at US military facilities in Iraq; no Guam Guard soldiers there (January 2020) Pacific News Center.

the top of the global consumption index. The increased pressure on the system has also been due to the doubling of the population. Thus, the use of nuclear fuel would alleviate the pressure on the energy industry and pursue an independent policy. This fits particularly well with the country's geography as Iran is known to have the fifth-largest oil reserve and the third most abundant gas reserve in the world[48].

Stabilizing or De-stabilizing Effect in the Iran Case

Iran's nuclear program has been one of the most puzzling foreign policy challenges for the United States, the IAEA, and the Obama administration. The debate about whether to continue pursuing the country's nuclear weapons acquisition has been centred around the effect it has had on the domestic and international sphere.

Iran's nuclearization and its constant growth have put a considerable amount of pressure in the Middle Eastern World. Iran's failed containment has given scope for the rise of an unstable nuclear competition in the Middle East, also entailing other destabilizing consequences for the outside world. Notably, one of these is the possibility of other states and neighbors producing their own nuclear program. Edelman[49] has claimed that reports from the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States and the Commission on the Prevention of

[48] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html
[49] Edelman, E., Krepinevich, A., & Montgomery, E. (2011). The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran: The Limits of Containment. Foreign Affairs, 90(1), 66-81

Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism have revealed that Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates have announced or already initiated their nuclear programs. Although some of these states might have economic reasons to pursue nuclear programs, this action can be interpreted as a counteract against a nuclear-armed Iran.

Further to the expansion, it has caused Iran's complete avoidance of the various limits, and it has decreased the United Nations' Security Councils' status. This, as mentioned above, has allowed other states to do so too. The states mentioned in the above paragraph have all signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Although this treaty does not ban states from producing sensitive technology required to produce their own fuel, it does ban states from using that same process to build nuclear capabilities for military purposes. However, countries such as Saudi Arabia have states they have already produced nuclear warheads for deterrence purposes, therefore breaching the UN's, IAEA's, and NTP legislations. Therefore, the nuclearization of Iran and their rejection of the limits imposed has caused a "domino effect" between other states. The international organizations have not been able to restrict Iran's unlawful actions until the present day, and these have spilled across the neighbors, tilting the order, and diminishing the power of the international institutions.

Further to this, the nuclear program has had a destabilizing effect also on the international relations and the diplomatic interventions of states. Iran's refusal to stop its nuclear developments and the unclear nature of its purposes have forced the international community to impose harsh sanctions on the country. This has

not aided the relations between them, and Iran's constant rejection of the limits has created a hostile environment. Moreover, all the efforts made to reach an agreement through the implementation of negotiations have been so far failures. In response, Iran has implemented an increasingly aggressive nuclear development plan, threatening to attack and continuously raising the limits imposed. The response of other countries has provoked large amounts of tensions in the security agenda: the United States, after failing to control Iran with sanctions, proclaimed that "all options were on the table[50] ". These tensions, according to offensive realism, are typical within the international sphere. However, they also cause the state to destabilize because of the maximization policy, which is what Iran has been utilizing within the nuclear program. The policy states that, because security guarantees are unreliable, the research and development of military tactics to preserve the regime is the only way to gain more power. However, this causes distrust within the system, which can lead to potential hostile relations, like in Iran's case.

In terms of the domestic sphere, it can be concluded that Iran has perceived an overall stabilizing effect since it acquired nuclear weapons. Firstly, although it has been threatened by the alliance between the United States and Israel, to this day, these have been only hypothetical. If we consider Mearsheimer's perspective that states are rational and therefore dueling for nuclear weapons would be mostly counterproductive, and we evaluate the risks and costs of a nuclear war, we can conclude that no country will resort to this choice. Therefore Iran's nuclear acquisition has created tensions within the international sphere but has overall

[50] Roy D. North Korea goes permanently nuclear — does it matter?, 2019*, The Japan Times*

stabilized the power of the country over its neighbors, both military and leadership wise.

Secondly, Iran's economy also benefitted from the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Although one of their uses is military, nuclear energy is considered one of the most effective and reliable ones. Domestic energy production allowed the country to cut imports and increase exports, therefore boosting its revenues. Once the method of producing energy is established, maintaining it would cost less than importing other types of energy. Further to this, although the cost of making the nuclear plants is initially high, Iran hugely benefitted from the economic support of Elite members of the country. Building nuclear tools also allowed the status of the country to improve. Firstly, Iran started to be seen as a threat to the international sphere, gaining importance in the security agenda. Secondly, by accommodating the Elites' desires, Iran has acquired broad financial support, which has lifted the economy and provided the state with more stability.

However, nuclear weapons' acquisition has also taken a toll on Iran's economy because of the heavy sanctions imposed by the United States. In 2006 the US asked the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions on Iran for the violation of its compliance with the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty. The sanctions were imposed on trade and lasted between 2006 and 2010, including four rounds. The restrictions included financial transactions, imposed assets freezes, and travel bans. This created a recession in Iran's trade, causing the

economy to collapse by 6.6% [51]. The destabilizing effect of the sanctions lasted until 2014, during which the economy grew only by 1%. However, these sanctions have been targeting Iran since 1979, when President Jimmy Carter responded to the hostage crisis. In 1984 the United States imposed further sanctions in response to the bombing of the Marine base in Beirut [52]. The constant sanctions have threatened Iran's economy various times, therefore destabilizing the whole nation.

Domestically speaking, it can also be said that the relations with the South of the peninsula also deteriorated due to the nuclearization of North Korea. The hatred between the two sides has been entrenched decades. However, the situation was worsened when in 1991, North Korea was aided by China, who saw the region as strategically important for its security. However, in 1992 China established diplomatic relations with South Korea. The isolation provoked by the lack of diplomatic ties caused a massive famine to strike North Korea, who was forced to ask the United States for aid. However, this did not stop them from pursuing nuclear weapons, which enraged the South and worsened their relationship. This can be explained by the fear provoked within South Korea. The tensions between the two sides of the peninsula did not aid the diplomatic stability of North Korea, and also deteriorated their security.

[51] Kimberly A. (2019) Iran's Economy, the Impact of the Nuclear Deal, and Sanctions, TheBalance.com
[52] Kimberly A. (2019) Iran's Economy, the Impact of the Nuclear Deal, and Sanctions, TheBalance.com

North Korea and Iran: similarities and differences between the two cases

For the purpose of this thesis and to answer the research question, it is useful to draw a comparison between the two states. This section will highlight the differences and similarities between the two case studies.

To start with, it can be said that both countries have a limited sphere of influence within the global community. For this reason, the motifs behind the nuclearization of both states are similar. North Korea's main reasons for the construction and maintenance of a nuclear program can be summed up as the following: regime survival, the country constructed nuclear tools to provide a sure security deterrence and assure the regime a stable, secure future, the nuclear program has been developed and supported by the leaders of North Korea since the 1980s; therefore it has become a source of national pride. Leader Jim believes that developing a coercive and persuasive nuclear program reflects the leadership of the country. Therefore, throughout the decades, he has invested in reflecting his status. Thirdly, a nuclear program and the ownership of these powerful deterrence tools have been used by North Korea to obtain international attention. Before its nuclearization, the country was considered a small influence between big powers. However, after discovering their Pyongyang facility and the sophisticated warheads they owned, North Korea gained top priority in the security agenda. Moreover, high power such as the United States and China engaged with diplomatic talks either to convince North Korea to stop producing nuclear material or for strategic reasons. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, for the security dilemma and offensive realism, North Korea develop its program

to achieve more power militarily. It is commonly acknowledged that the stronger a country is in terms of military capabilities, the easier it will be to assure its survival and deter other states from either attacking or threatening its existence.

Similarly, Iran shares the same goals and objectives. Amongst the reasons for nuclearizations lies the necessity to provide security for the country. Like North Korea, Iran has developed hostile relations with its neighbors. The acquisition of nuclear weapons has worsened these ties. However, the weapons pose a strong deterrent against any attack. Comparably, both countries share tensions with the United States. Both have stated that one of the main reasons for the development of nuclear warheads is to avoid the complete takeover of America. Further to this, both states have decided to acquire nuclear weapons as a sign of international legitimacy. It can be said that both Iran and North Korea are rather small in the global scenario; moreover, they have minimal influence on the economy and are not, concerning their position, strategically important. Therefore, the nuclearization of these countries was used as a method to increase their status and legitimize the leadership of President Ahmadinejad and Jim Young Un. The ownership of nuclear arms has positively affected both countries' status: both North Korea and Iran have gained constant attention by the superpowers, the international organizations, and all the neighboring countries. In both cases, the most likely reason for this unprecedented attention is, following offensive realism, the fear caused by North Korea and Iran assuming more military power and, consequently, increasing their status.

Furthermore, in both countries, the ultimate purpose of constructing various nuclear plants has been to increase their military advantage over their neighbors and use these weapons as a deterrent for threats. Ultimately this led to an expansion of their influence. The military expansion of both countries can be linked to another motif of acquisition, which both countries share: the deterrence of external threats. Both countries have hostile relations with their neighbors; North Korea has conflicted with the Southern part of its peninsula since the 1950s, and Iran has been involved in conflicts with Iraq and Israel.

Another similarity that can be observed is the fluctuation of the historical background of both nuclear programs. Comparing the nuclear stories of North Korea and Iran one can highlight that there is a similar pattern that initiates with declarations on Non-proliferation Treaties, evolves into a hopeful phase of diplomatic talks where both parts sign resolutions and deals and then deteriorates into confrontation and nuclear escalation[53]. The patter is evident in both histories: in January 2020, Iran threatened to withdraw from the previously signed NPT (non-proliferation Treaty) if reported to the UN Security Council for the violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of action, signed in 2015. Similarly, North Korea signed various Treaties, including the NPT, which were all later discarded and evaded. Further to this, it can also be agreed that both countries start promising deals of denuclearization or limitation of their nuclear productions with external powers: North Korea signed the 1994 Agreed Framework with the United States which determined that the Pyongyang nuclear complex would have to freeze their program and comply to the rules of the IAEA.

[53] Tuang Liang N. (2020) The Road to a Nuclear Breakout: Comparing Iran and North Korea, The Diplomat

In return, the United States would supply North Korea with Light Water Reactors. However, the Agreement was broken by North Korea by supposedly being accused of engaging in clandestine uranium enrichment activities. Kim declared his retreat from the Agreement and, in 2002, withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Similarly, Iran entered an agreement with the P5+1 states, the Eu, and also joined the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). These obliged the country to permanently close its nuclear weapons facilities and strictly limit their production of fuels. In return, the UN Security Council would lift the heave sanctions. However, in 2018, Washington removed itself from the JCPOA, causing Iran's reluctance to follow the deal and further threatened to withdraw from the NPT.

However, although both countries have a small imprint in the global scene, their economies varied greatly before starting nuclear weapons. Both countries started their programs in the 1950s and exponentially grew them through the decades. However, Iran's society and economy were much more stable in the years before the introduction of nuclear weapons than North Korea's ones. Between the 1920s and 40s, Iran's leader Reza Shah Pahlavi led the country to an era where the overall structure drastically improved, education reforms were put in place, the legal structure was reformed to be more cohesive with the country's values, and modern industries were introduced. During this time, eight-hundred new industrial plants were established, encouraging the country to increase its exports and decrease imports. The country of Iran also flourished in terms of public services: between these years 12, 000 km of road tracks were built, which allowed the

population to travel quickly. In other words, in this period, Iran experienced social, economic, and political change, which led the country to be relatively stable.

In comparison, in the same years, before the introduction of nuclear weapons, Korea was undergoing drastic changes, which led to instability and conflict. Starting from the mid-'20s, the Japanese administration governing Korea started to focus on industrial development; however, this was unsuccessful. The population moved from the North to the agrarian South part of the peninsula. The trend continued, and following the division fo the Korean Peninsula, more than two million people travelled from North to the South into the areas administered by the Soviets and the American Military. In the late 1940s, Korea entered its first war, which resulted in a considerable destabilization within human and natural resources. The wars particularly hit North Korea, and its commerce accounted for only 18% of the peninsula's total trading. The industrialization of North Korea only began in the 1960s; the region struggled to develop because of the lack in support of the Soviet Union, who withdrew after North Korea aligned with China. To sum up, it can be said that the two countries are not similar in terms of development. Even after the implementation of nuclear weapons, North Korea's economy is still more unstable than Iran's one.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that both countries present similar features within the nuclear realm. However, they do differ in others. Nevertheless, drawing from the previous sections of this thesis, the following question can now be answered: ***does the acquisition of nuclear weapons disguise nations' internal and external weaknesses? Does the possession of nuclear weapons have a destabilizing or stabilizing effect on the international system and domestic matters?***

In both cases, it can be concluded that yes, nuclear weapons disguise both internal and external weaknesses. In the domestic sphere, in North Korea's case, when analyzing the history of its social and economic developments, it can be said the country highlights a weak regime, threatened by an unstable economy and the lack of support from other states.

Analyzing the history of nuclear weapons proliferation, the country displays internal weaknesses and fears caused by isolation. North Korea's secretive actions and inability to respect resolutions have induced a diplomatic rejection towards the country. This has caused it to be wholly detached from the rest of the world, majorly affecting the relations with the great powers and the United Nations. This isolation has been intensified by North Korea's strict policies regarding travel, communication, and cellular lines ban. The hostile relations with the United States have also led the country to be limited in terms of aid requests. In other words, it can be said that the adverse attitude held by North Korea's government and the perseverance of actions considered unethical and

threatening by the international community and the United Nations Security Council have secluded North Korea from creating diplomatic ties and relations which perhaps could have strengthened their influence in the international sphere, aided them in case of crisis and contributed to strengthening their economy. On the contrary, both their aggressive policies and incapability of compromising have led the country to be weakened by international tensions and weak leverage of international matters.

Further to the isolationism caused by North Korea's attitude, the region is geographically remote. Bordering with China, Russia, and its rival South Korea, the country has no connections with close allies and has always been limited in strategic terms. The crushing power and territory expansion of its neighbors place North Korea amongst one of the weakest and smallest regions in Asia. For these reasons, it can be concluded that North Korea's lack of status legitimacy caused by their hostile behaviors, the lack of diplomatic ties, and its isolated geographical location nuclear weapons can be seen as a measure to disguise all the weaknesses mentioned above. In North Korea's case, nuclear bombs have been a useful means to have more leverage on international institutions and powerful countries while threatening the community with nuclear arms. Further to this, although the country is not an essential actor in the international area, it has gained top priority on the agenda due to the risk of a nuclear war. Therefore, it can be said that the possession of nuclear weapons disguises internal weaknesses such as isolation from other states and, therefore, inability to participate in the international arena and economic and diplomatic weaknesses attributed to the poor connections with other countries, especially taking into

consideration the P-5 states. Following this conclusion, it is also safe to say that, also shadowing Mearsheimer's theory, when states perceive a threat and believe their security and power to be endangered (and being security the primary goal of states), they will, with every possible mean, try and deter others. In this case, when North Korea felt its status threatened by its neighbors, the US, and the United Nations, it disguised its national weaknesses (which would have been probably not enough to outweigh the attacks) by implementing an aggressive nuclear program.

In terms of the international sphere, the conclusion that can be drawn within this thesis is that yes, nuclear weapons proliferation does disguise external weaknesses. North Korea is a clear example of how the imbalance of power in the international sphere can be disguised and moreover, highlighted by the possession of nuclear tools. The United Nations should have targeted the country not only for its illegal activities around nuclear weapons but also for its numerous grave humanitarian offenses; these include the excessive repressive regime, the use of forced labor, torture and theft[54]. Nevertheless, little has been done to pursue these crimes. Instead, the media and international organizations have majorly focused on stopping its proliferation of nuclear weapons. Could it be possible that the world has purposely shifted the focus on nuclear matters to disguise the inability to intervene in other crimes?

The answer to this question is yes. When analyzing the historical developments of nuclear weapons in North Korea, it is clear that the international arena showed

[54] Human Rights Watch (January 2019) North Korea: No Justice for Human Rights Crimes

its weaknesses on multiple occasions. Not only it failed to restrict the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the North Korea territory, but it also used this as propaganda to conceal its other failures in the human rights field. North Korea has been allowed to act according to its own goals, and the international community has weakly tried to stop it. It can be then concluded that perhaps nuclear weapons and the discourse around them has been a simple disguise for the weak power of action of international organizations such as the United Nations.

Similarly to North Korea, Iran's case confirms the thesis that nuclear weapons are a disguise for a nations' internal and external weaknesses. Iran is, in the international sphere, a rather small influence in the world. Further to this, it does not have the most significant economic impact on the global economy and is not strategically placed in terms of geographical position. Moreover, Iran's strength decreased after the revolution and the sanctions imposed on them by the United Nations. Despite the Iranian government's claims that the nuclear tools were solely for energy purposes, the historical developments previously analyzed and the hostile relationship with Israel and the United States suggest the acquisition and development of nuclear weapons was a tool used to disguise internal weakness.

Firstly, since Iran's revolution, the country has been volatile. Further to this, the heavy sanctions placed by the Western Countries because of its nuclear activities have had many consequences on the imports and exports of oil. Since the start of the 20th decade, the living standards of the population have been steadily

decreasing, and the confrontations with the international arena have proportionally increased. The troubled internal situation was demonstrated in 2019, where unsustainable living conditions were protested and then suppressed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard. Therefore, it can be said that not only is the country weakened by the tensions with the outside world, but it is also threatened by internal uprisings. All these factors jeopardize the security and stability of the country. To disguise these uncertainties, Iran put in place a nuclear program able to conceal not only the economic failure but which could maintain the status of strength in the international arena. Therefore it can be said that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and tools was used by the Iranian government to appear as a stable country in the eyes of the world and perhaps lift the economy by producing domestic energy. Similarly to North Korea, the external weaknesses of the countries were also disguised: this is to say also the weaknesses of the international sphere. When Iran evaded the standards set by the IAEA and the United Nations, apart from heavy sanctioning, there were no other actions taken. Therefore Iran, while paying the sanctions, continued to develop its nuclear arsenals.

However, Iran committed other outrageous crimes against humanity, which were not pursued but instead got lost in the accusations regarding nuclear weapons. The explanation to this could lie within the fact that the international arena is too weak to pursue a country for its human rights crime and therefore wants to shift the attention to an area that affects all countries: the threat of global security. Directing the focus on nuclear weapons' possession disguises the system's

weaknesses and allows the international sphere to be still portrayed as an influential authority.

Regarding the second part of the research question, the conclusions reached following the analysis in the previous chapters differs between the two case studies. The effect of nuclear weapons in the domestic sphere of North Korea can be described as destabilizing for the country. North Korea's aggressive nuclear program has wholly disintegrated the economic and diplomatic ties with other countries. This has led to the increased isolation and inability to collaborate in case of a crisis with other states. The disruption of diplomatic ties, more specifically with the United States, caused by the possession of nuclear weapons, has taken a toll on the economic stability of North Korea. The massive sanctions have caused the population to live in poverty and suffer from starvation. Furthermore, the enormous economic toll to build and maintain nuclear plants have grave effects on the nation's stability. Overall it can be said that domestically the acquisition of nuclear weapons has had a destabilizing effect on North Korea.

Similarly, the acquisition of the country has had a destabilizing effect on the international sphere. The inability of an international organization to stop the proliferation has drastically decreased their credibility in the eyes of the international arena. As a result, the security of states has been jeopardized. The fear of North Korea's proliferation is linked explicitly to the mechanism highlighted by offensive realism, whereby states try to maximize their power to the fullest, causing tensions in the international arena. The continuous search for power

unbalances the equilibrium of powers, making the whole international structure unstable. Further to this, because of North Korea's secrecy and untrustworthy behaviors, trust within states diminishes. This also affects international organizations. In North Korea's case, the United Nations' credibility and power severely diminished. As a secondary effect, states were reluctant in their actions and decided to act according to their own will. In North Korea's case, this resulted in rivalry and hostility, making the formulation of a peaceful settlement almost impossible.

On the other hand, in Iran's case, it can be concluded that the acquisition of nuclear power stabilized the country in the domestic sphere. The reasons for this deduction can be summarized as the following: with the acquisition and programming of nuclear weapons, Iran acquired more power in military and leadership terms. The possession of nuclear weapons allowed Iran to take a stronger stance in the international community and have deterrence means against its neighbors and, more generally, all the Middle East. Further to this, nuclear plants have been utilized by the country to reduce the imports of energy and therefore become more sufficient. This has, without any doubt, has stabilized the economy of the nation. This has also allowed exports to increase, causing an increase in profit revenue. Further to energy, nuclear weapons have been tested by Iranian governments as a suitable method of deterrence, stabilizing the security perspective of the country. Further stability can be attributed to the fact that developing a nuclear program satisfied the elite members of Iran who, therefore, to this day continue to support the government and economically contribute to the wealth of the country. However, it must be mentioned that,

although internally Iran stabilized, the continuous sanctions imposed on the country had a toll on the economy, almost outweighing the benefits of possessing a nuclear program.

Lastly, internationally, likewise, in North Korea's case, Iran's nuclear developments created a destabilizing effect. Firstly, neighbors felt threatened by the acquisition of nuclear weapons. As states always try to maximize their power and outweigh the power of others, other countries followed Iran's footsteps and initiated talks on nuclear weapons. This destabilized the world order and preoccupied international organizations such as the IAEA and the UN Security Council. Finally, Iran's nuclear possessions have increased the already existing hostile relationships between Iran, the United States, and Israel, once more, making the dilemma of nuclear weapons harder to uncover. Generally, the hypotheses suggested in the introduction can be said to be true: international nuclear weapons are destabilizing whilst domestically they can increase the status of a country but abolishing all the diplomatic ties one has with the external world. In North Korea’s case this caused the country to be completely isolated. In Iran’s case, nuclear plants gave the country more economical independence but were sanctioned heavily by the international community.

The thesis has highlighted that there are some common features between states that indicate nuclear weapons are a threat to the international order. These can be considered the extortionate amount of money used to respond to nuclear proliferation of one state by the international arena, the impact it has on the domestic economy and the psychological effects these weapons have on

security. Further to this international organizations have lost their credibility when being unable to restrict the proliferation of North Korea and Iran. However, some might suggest that in fact nuclear weapons create a more stable international sphere: Mearsheimer believed that, as states seek maximum power but are never satisfied, the world's order continues to evolve to fit within these desires.

Nevertheless, there is no universal answer on whether the possession of nuclear weapons by all countries would create a new, re-balanced world order. However, it has become clear over the decades that it causes increased tensions between states, which could end in a nuclear war and, eventually, the extermination of the human race.

Bibliography

Ashfaq Ahmed (2017) The Philosophy of Nuclear Proliferation/Non-Proliferation: Why States Build Or Forgo Nuclear Weapons?

Choe Sang Hun and Steven Lee Myers, "North Korea Says It Met Nuclear Disclosure Deadline in Previous Declaration," The New York Times, 5 January 2008; Blaine Harden, "All Nuclear Efforts Disclosed, N. Korea Says; U.S. Calls Pyongyang's Declaration Incomplete but Says Negotiations Will Continue," The Washington Post, 5 January 2008; Paul Richter, "N. Korea Says It Has Met Nuclear Criteria; U.S. Officials Say a Full List of Activities Has Not Been Produced," Los Angeles Times, 5 January 2008

Council on Foreign Relation, North Korean Nuclear Negotiations. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations

Central Intelligence Agency, The World FactBook, Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html

Council on Foreign Relation, North Korean Nuclear Negotiations. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations

Davis, L., Martini, J., Nader, A., Kaye, D., Quinlivan, J., & Steinberg, P. (2011). Influencing Iran. In Iran's Nuclear Future: Critical U.S. Policy Choices (pp. 7-18). RAND Corporation.

Edelman, E., Krepinevich, A., & Montgomery, E. (2011). The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran: The Limits of Containment. Foreign Affairs, 90(1), 66-81

Epstein, W. (1977). Why States Go -- And Don't Go -- Nuclear. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 430, 16-28. Retrieved January 22, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/1042354

The article provides an overview of why (or why not) states decide to acquire nuclear weapons. The incentives included economic, political, social and military reasons, which develop and mutate over time. Epstein presents a scenario which includes countries with acute security problems. He also argues that states decide to possess nuclear weapons to highlight their status within the international scenario. This is what, this thesis is trying to demonstrate. The article also argues that economic reasons and oppression by other bigger countries causes smaller ones to reject deals and evade treaties, to reaffirm their status within the global powers.

Farzamnia, Irán. De la Revolución Islámica a la Revolución Nuclear. (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2009)

Fifiled A (2016) "North Korea conducts fifth nuclear test, claims it has made warheads with 'higher strike power,'" The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com.

G. Matthew Bonham, Heradstveit. D (2007) , ‘What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran’, Middle East Journal, vol. 61 no. 3 p.421-40, p. 427-36

Gregory Karouv (2000) "A Technical History of Soviet-North Korean Nuclear Relations," in James Clay Moltz and Alexandre Y. Mansourov, eds., The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia (New York: Routledge) p. 17.

House Passes Iran Gasoline Sanctions Bill," Reuters, 15 December 2009.

Human Rights Watch (January 2019) North Korea: No Justice for Human Rights Crimes

Huntley, W. (2006). Rebels without a Cause: North Korea, Iran and the NPT. International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 82(4), 723-742

The article analyses both cases within the perspective of the Non Proliferation Treaty, which both countries have menaced to withdraw from. The article argues that the countries in possession of nuclear arms are trying to elevate their status by monopolizing the international scenario. However, the author suggests that the role of the United States and international organizations is essential in aiding the resolution of this “takeover”.

Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007) in the

Islamic Republic of Iran," Report by the Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency, 15 November 2007.

Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Report by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, (GOV/2011/65), 8 November 2011.

Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Resolution adopted by the Board of Governors, 18 November 2011, GOV/2011/69.

Iran launches missiles at US military facilities in Iraq; no Guam Guard soldiers there (January 2020) Pacific News Center. Available at: https://www.pncguam.com/iran-launches-missiles-at-us-military-facilities-in-iraq/

Jackson V. (2018) On the Brink: Trump, Kim and the Threat of Nuclear War, Cambridge University Press

Jett C. Dennis (2018) The Iran Nuclear Deal, Bombs, Bureaucrats, and Billionaires, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham

John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," Wo 2 (January 1950), p. 157-180)

KCNA Report on One More Successful Underground Nuclear Test, KCNA, 25 May 2009, www.kcna.co.jp.

Kim, S. (2010). North Korea's Nuclear Strategy And The Interface Between International And Domestic Politics. Asian Perspective, 34(1), 49-85

Kimberly A. (2019) Iran's Economy, the Impact of the Nuclear Deal, and Sanctions, TheBalance.com

Kwon H, Byung-Ho C. (2012) North Korea, Beyond Charismatic Politics), Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Lavoy P.R (1993) Nuclear Myths and the Causes of Nuclear Proliferation, Security Studies, pp.192-212

Light Water Reactor Construction Progressing at Yongbyon Nuclear Site," ISIS Report, March 5, 2012, http://isis-online.org; Jack Liu, "North Korea's Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Site: All Quiet for the Moment," 38 North, August 11, 2014, http://38north.org; Jeffrey Lewis, “Recent Imagery Suggests Increased Uranium Production in North Korea,” 38 North, 12 August 2015, www.38north.org.

Lynch C. (2020) North Korea Continues to Flout Trump, Advance Nuclear Ambitions, ForeignPolicy.com

Lynch C. Kessler G (2010 June) "U.N. Imposes another round of sanctions on Iran," Washington Post

Mearsheimer. J (2014 Edition) The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, Norton & Company

The book written by John Mearsheimer is an important pivot for this thesis. The book specifically refers to the theory of offensive realism and how it intertwines with the world's hegemony. The second main theme of this book is security. However, through offensive realism, Mearsheimer highlights three main ideas: firstly, the strength of a state derives from the strength of its military. Secondly Mearsheimer debates that the presence of oceans in the world prevents any state from reaching world hegemony. He states that large bodies of water limit the power projection abilities of militaries and therefore naturally distribute power

Margaret Thatcher Foundation (2020) Margaretthatcher.org

Myers S. Sang-hun C , "North Koreans Agree to Freeze Nuclear Work; U.S. to Give Aid," New York Times, 29 February 2012, www.nytimes.com.

North Korea 'will not use nuclear weapons' unless threatened, 2016, BBC

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2019, Available at: https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iran/nuclear

Nuclear North Korea. (2006). Economic and Political Weekly, 41(41), 4303-4304. Retrieved January 24, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/4418793

This short article provides some speculations on the relationships between North Korea and the United States, underlining how these have affected North Koreas actions in the last two decades. The article specifically concentrates on the nuclear tests conducted by the North starting in 2003. It highlights some of the errors which led to the present inconclusive talks.

Ong, K. (2016). Nuclear Terrorism: Assessing the Threat from North Korea. Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, 8(2), 11-16. Retrieved January 24, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/26369586

The article introduces the history of the nuclearization and possible denuclearization of North Korea. Furthermore it connects the possession of nuclear weapons as terrorism, assessing the threat it poses to the international sphere. It is in particular valuable as it gives a prior analysis of what type of nuclearization North Korea possesses, quoting " North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, as with others like Pakistan, is based on the classical concept of nuclear deterrence whereby an inferior power could deter a more powerful adversary by virtue of the threat of use of nuclear weapons". The analysis gives an insight on what position and view North Korea holds within the international arena, and what it wants to achieve with the possession of nuclear arms.

RFE/RL, Rafsanjani: Iran Considered Nuclear Deterrent In 1980s, October 29 2015.

Roehrig, T (2016). North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and the Stability-Instability Paradox. Korean Journal of Defense Analysis. 28. 181-198.

Roy D. North Korea goes permanently nuclear — does it matter? (2019) The Japan Times

Russia Proposes 'Phased' Resolution of Iran Nuclear Standoff'," Global Security Newswire, 14 July 2011.

Sang Hun C. Myers S.L (2008 January) "North Korea Says It Met Nuclear Disclosure Deadline in Previous Declaration," The New York Times

Sixth Nuclear Test Detected at Punggye-Ri, Declared to be a Hydrogen Bomb,38 North, 2 September 2017, www.38north.com

Snyder, G. (2002). Mearsheimer's World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay. International Security, 27(1), 149-173. Retrieved January 22, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/3092155

This article provides an excellent base for the understanding of the offensive realism theory in regards to nuclear weapons. The author suggests five key points that are essential to the theory and highlights that offensive realism supports maximum power and therefore supports the production of nuclear weapons. He also presents the security dilemma, which is essential in understanding why states decide to pursue nuclear programs.

Smeltz, D. (2013). (Rep.). Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Tuang Liang N. (2020) The Road to a Nuclear Breakout: Comparing Iran and North Korea, The Diplomat

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1696, adopted July 31, 2006.

"U.S. says Iran "demolishing" facility at Parchin site," Reuters, 13 September 2012.

W.G. Dunlop, "Iran Offers to Swap 400 Kilos of LEU on Kish for Atomic Fuel," AFP, 12 December 2009.

Waltz K. (1979) Theory of International Politics , Addison- Wesley Publishing Company, p.126

북한개요 2009 [North Korea Introduction 2009] (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2009), p.322.