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The Joint Nuclear Ambitions Iran-North Korea Relations Determinants and Risks

Abd Elraouf Elghonemi

Political Researcher at the (AGCIS)

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed significant growth and expansion in the scope, range, and content of Iranian-North Korean relations in every field, with an increase in the number of visits, both overt and covert, by officials of the already closely allied nations to one another's countries. Iran and North Korea are also closely coordinating their political stance on regional and international issues, with their bilateral cooperation in the field of nuclear energy policies worthy of close study and analysis, given the alarming ramifications of the two rogue states' cooperation on regional and international peace. Both states possess the theoretical and practical wherewithal to deploy nuclear weapons, with both having aspirations to becoming fully nuclear states. In Iran's case, its objectives are even more alarming, given its regional ambitions and expansionist designs on its Arab and Gulf neighbors, while North Korea's aims are more concerned with protecting the Kims' hereditary regime.

This study looks into the effects of the recent nuclear deal and the regional and international implications of growing closeness in Iranian-North Korean relations in the fields of nuclear energy, which the Iranian regime wants to use to tip the strategic Middle East balance in its favor, and help in implementing its expansionist plan, particularly in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

Internationally, meanwhile, Iran wants to create a new international balance and a more multipolar world order shifting away from the unipolar United States as the main superpower. The regime is intent on the completion of its nuclear program, despite signing the 2015 nuclear agreement with the (5+1) Group, giving it more control in regional security issues and of the Gulf region. Research indicates that if the Iranian regime is not stopped, it will continue to threaten the people, sovereignty, and security. The evidence also indicates that the Iranian and North Korean leadership are both implementing their nuclear programs with the knowledge of the US, with several credible documents revealing this collusion, despite both of these nations signing treaties agreeing to end their nuclear programs. The study focuses on the analysis of evidence demonstrating the US role in facilitating Iran's nuclear program, and the implications of this for Middle East security, and what might change for the nuclear deal with the arrival of a new US president in January 2017.

Given the massive significance and complexity of the issue of Iranian-North Korean relations, the study is divided into four parts: the first section analyses the extent and character of the relations between the two nations; the second section deals with the factors affecting the relationship, particularly given the similarities between the political systems of the two totalitarian regimes, including a shared antipathy towards the US, their joint recognition of the strategic advantage of possessing nuclear weapons as a deterrent force, and their shared interest in forming an 'Anti-US-Coalition Alliance' ranged against Washington-Seoul and Tokyo. The third part touches on the dangers to the Arab and Gulf region's regional security of Iranian-North Korean military cooperation, while the fourth and final section focus on the Iranian nuclear deal and the possible changes wrought by the arrival of a new US President in the White House, before delivering the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

First: The size and scope of the Iranian-North Korean relations:

According to the literature of strategic international relations, the Iranian-North Korean relationship is classified as a "strategic international partnership of a military nature," one based on mutual cooperation in building an arms system built around sophisticated missile and nuclear capabilities (atomic bombs, neutron bombs, hydrogen bombs) and on the transfer of expertise necessary for the production of uranium materials and nuclear materials, as well as on individually and jointly resisting the threats posed by regional and international powers seeking

to abort the two nations' nuclear programs. Another feature of this partnership is convergence between the states themselves, between the states and their allies, and between their allies, with a tacit agreement to remain steadfast in their joint opposition to their adversaries and to resume the depth of relations enjoyed by the two countries during the era of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) through pursuit of Pyongyang's 'sanctions-busting' sale of arms to Tehran at the time. During the war period, North Korea equipped Iran with large amounts of essential military equipment, especially specialist gear designed for countering and deterring Iraqi missile attack. Indeed, North Korea first became Iran's principal source of equipment for missile manufacturing at this time, as well as providing Tehran with the specialist equipment required for the nuclear program, including materials for uranium production and centrifuges.⁽¹⁾

After the Iran-Iraq war ended, Iran adopted a "self-reliance" policy, intent on maintaining an independent missile development and production capability, going on to construct a massive industrial infrastructure dedicated to weapons design and manufacture, both to avoid future Iraqi missile strikes and to ensure possession of an advanced anti-missile system as a deterrent to anyone planning attacks.

North Korea was eager to help Tehran build an advanced missile system to counter possible regional threats and challenges and to intensify the strategic partnership between the two nations by sending military advisers and missile-production equipment and by transferring expertise. The North Korean regime's enthusiastic support for their Iranian counterparts is demonstrated by some of the following items provided by North Korea to Iran in this period:⁽²⁾

1: Construction of underground storage depots for missile warfare system reinforced to protect against airstrikes.

2: Assistance in developing the capabilities of Iran's large quantities of ballistic missiles and anti-ballistic missiles.

3: Help with production of the 'Scud B' ballistic missile system (known as 'Shahab 1' and 'Shahab 2' in Farsi), as well as assistance with the development of the 'Shahab 3' and 'Shahab 4' missiles, both of which have a range of over 1,500 miles.

The first decade of the new millennium, which saw tensions between Iran and the West over the regime's nuclear program, saw relations between Iran and North Korea grow closer. When the Iranian authorities initially expressed dissatisfaction

with the capabilities of the missile systems given them by North Korea, seeking more powerful, long-range missiles, Pyongyang immediately supplied Iranian authorities with 19 advanced 25" ballistic missiles with a range of 2,000 kilometers, as well as an advanced version of their C-802 naval missiles. ⁽³⁾

During the second decade of the new millennium, amid rising tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran's nuclear program, Israel threatened a preemptive military strike to thwart the program. Ignoring all the international resolutions against it and the demands from its P5+1 allies that it halt its uranium enrichment activities in pursuit of materials for a nuclear weapon, Iran spent the first half of the decade developing its nuclear capabilities in partnership with North Korea, blithely disregarding all the warnings to discontinue its nuclear activities, reflecting the strong relationship between the two countries.

In meetings held on the margins of a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Tehran in September 2012, the two countries signed a scientific cooperation agreement and pledged to jointly present a unified front against the United States and Israel, with former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stating, "Just like the case with North Korea, the imperialists also impose political pressure on Iran because they don't want these nations to remain powerful and independent." ⁽⁴⁾

This raised concerns in Washington over the possibility that the Iranian-North Korean agreement included cooperation in nuclear and ballistic missile development that would enhance Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities, enabling it to build a nuclear bomb. This was reminiscent of Pyongyang's help for the Syrian regime in building a reactor in eastern Syria in 2002 to covertly produce plutonium. ⁽⁵⁾

The 2012 agreement did not concern the development of a missile system and the transfer of essential nuclear materials for uranium production from North Korea to Iran but extended to offering training to Iranian military experts in conducting nuclear tests and in missile and nuclear weapon production. In February 2013, Iranian nuclear experts attended a "third nuclear test" in North Korea to benefit from the North Koreans' experience in testing of nuclear weapons as a self-defense against external threats. ⁽⁶⁾

In conjunction with the signing of the P5+1 initial nuclear agreement at the end April 2015 and prior to the signing of the final agreement on July 30 the same year, Pyongyang continued to offer support to Tehran's nuclear program, with regular transfers of materials and visits by delegations of North Korean officials clearly

demonstrating Tehran's lack of seriousness or commitment to the principles of the agreement which it was supposedly committed to. Among these indicators were:

A seven-man delegation of Korean scientists involved in a nuclear warhead and ballistic missile testing and development visited Iran three times between January and April 2015 alone.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-soo visited Iran in mid-June 2015 to sign an agreement on the construction of joint scientific research facilities and on scientific and technological exchanges between the two nations.⁽⁷⁾

According to a report in the Washington Free Beacon, Washington received notification on July 14, 2016, that Iran had violated UN resolutions with the P5+1 group, receiving two shipments of missile components from North Korea. Although detailed reports on this were delivered to president Obama, however, the report said, he declined to inform the UN committee tasked with monitoring breaches of the agreement.

Speaking about the two countries' "strategic partnership" for 2013 and the possibility of pre-emptive US strikes on either, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Brigadier General Massoud Jazayeri said that Iran "will stand by Pyongyang and defended in its standoff with Washington," adding, "America and its allies would suffer countless casualties if they attacked North Korea, with the number of their victims reaching thousands." Pyongyang also stressed that it would stand alongside Tehran in the event of any US-Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear program.⁽⁸⁾

The strategic relationship between the two countries has also extended to include Iran's regional allies, with the stronger Iranian-North Korean alliance leading to deteriorating relations between Pyongyang and Arab states over Iran's regional intervention and its expansionist policy at the expense of their own security. As a result of this, only five Arab nations now have embassies in North Korea. These are Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, and Algeria.⁽⁹⁾

In Syria, North Korea supported Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to construct a nuclear reactor in 2003 in the east of the country : North Korea supported the Syrian President "Bashar al-Assad" to build a nuclear reactor in 2003 near Deir el Zour in eastern Syria, with Washington claiming that the Israeli bombing of the Syrian reactor in 2007 and the resulting death of the North Korean experts there revealed the North Korean role in Assad's nuclear program.

For Hezbollah, meanwhile, North Korea has provided military training for Hezbollah, as well as assisting in the construction of underground networks and shelters. The Second Lebanon War in 2006 showed that the underground networks and other North Korean assistance played a major role in Hezbollah's combat against Israel, with Pyongyang also helping the party with manufacturing missiles and launching them against Israeli targets.⁽¹⁰⁾

Second: Factors Affecting Iranian-North Korean Relations

A number of variable issues affect relations between the two regimes, with fluctuating international factors affecting the political behavior of the two states and their interactions, both with one another, with their allies and with the international community. The prevailing geopolitical conditions at any given moment can have an impact, along with which powers wield the greatest influence, with these and other factors influencing Tehran's and Pyongyang's foreign policy. The interaction and complexity of these variables ultimately shape the relations between Iran and North Korea. In light of the above, we can analyze the primary determinants influencing relations between Iran and North Korea according to analysis of the available data as follows:⁽¹¹⁾

1-The nature of the ruling political regimes in Tehran and Pyongyang

Despite the differing character of the two nations' governing systems – theocratic for Iran and communist in North Korea – both have important shared characteristics that bind them together, being totalitarian states based on autocratic rule by a single, "divinely appointed" supreme ruler of regimes whose form is fundamentally oligarchic in nature. Given the Iranian and North Korean rulers' nominally divine status, they are deemed infallible and may not be opposed or criticized, commanding absolute obedience and amending laws according to their personal wishes, and issuing statements or edicts to media only on subjects which they consider merit a pronouncement.

The autocratic nature of the regimes means that the leader wields absolute power and is deemed the sole and unquestionable official source of truth for the entire state. All media, including the press, radio, and TV, exist primarily for the purpose of disseminating the leader's statements and are absolutely controlled with no expression of opinion contrary to the leader's or party's allowed.

In both cases, the state's economic activities and its production facilities are also subject to the leader's control and are considered his assets. This authoritarian

mindset also governs the formulation of state foreign policy, although this is considered of secondary importance.⁽¹²⁾

In Iran, the Jurist Leader system first implemented under Khomeini controls every aspect of the political system, as well as being the basis of constitutional and religious law. Once elected, the designated Supreme Ruler, currently Ali Khamenei, holds office for life and dominates Iran completely, controlling the political system directly and indirectly. As well as having ultimate control of all constitutional and religious issues, the Supreme Leader also sets or guides public opinion, decides on the membership of the Council of Guardians, the Council of Expediency, the Council of Experts, and the National Security Council, with all these bodies subject to his control. His powers also extend to cover all security institutions, including the Revolutionary Guards, as well as cultural and religious institutions and authorities based both in and outside Iran.⁽¹³⁾

Being invested with all these multiple powers gives the Supreme Leader the ability to wholly control the Iranian economy since he also chairs the ' Executive Headquarters of Imam's Directive', a body originally established to supervise the sale and management of all real estate and property abandoned by its owners following the 1979 revolution, which has since expanded to become a massive economic entity which owns stakes in all sectors of the Iranian economy, ranging from the oil sector to industry and the production of medicines.

With the Supreme Leader given even greater powers in recent years, it is now impossible in Iran to criticize him or hold him accountable for any wrongdoing. In addition to his political and economic power, he also enjoys vast religious influence both in and outside Iran, being the supreme authority of Shiites in Iran and worldwide.⁽¹⁴⁾

In North Korea, Kim Jong Un, has absolute constitutional power, like Iran's Jurist Leadership authorities, albeit from a different ideological orientation, controlling the state, its ministries and all organs of the armed forces, and monopolizing the means of production and distribution, despite the Korean Constitution stipulating state ownership of natural and manmade resources such as railways, transport, aviation, communications, media, factories, institutions, and facilities, including banks. Theoretically, ownership of personal property in North Korea arises from socialist distribution according to the work performed by individuals. According to Article 37 of the Constitution, Korean private and foreign investments rely on the establishment of a joint management, investment and economic body to oversee such projects run by the state and any investors, a factor which discourages any such investment in the country.⁽¹⁵⁾

2-The realization of the strategic advantage of nuclear weapons as a deterrent force

Both countries have realized the comparative advantage of possessing nuclear weapons as a “deterrent force” in providing more benefits and autonomy in making decisions without external intervention. Both see nuclear weapons as ensuring that their desire to improve their states’ position and rank cannot be bypassed or ignored in regional and international equations, viewing nuclear weapons as a means to efficiently and effectively achieve its foreign policy goals and guarantee their survival since other countries will think twice before attacking any nuclear power.

The decision by any state to launch a military nuclear program is based on a number of factors:

- The absence of effective security guarantees.
- The need to assert national identity.
- Providing expertise and substantial capital.
- An existing threat or the perception of a serious threat to the country.
- The wish to play a greater role in the regional and international arena.⁽¹⁶⁾

Both North Korea and Iran recognize the extent to which nuclear weapons can act as a “deterrent force” to protect their sovereignty, as defined in terms of national security. Henry Kissinger, the prominent American diplomat and political scientist and former US Secretary of State, called nuclear weapons a “deterrent force”, offering a state the ability to prevent or neutralize threats or certain risks and avert direct action in order to face threats or imminent dangers. This deterrent force is considered a manifestation of the threat-confrontation strategy when rapid changes in advanced military technology mean that conventional strategic weapons are unable to cope with intercontinental ballistic missiles. When other powers possess deadly nuclear weapons, this threat can only be countered by possessing similar weapons in order to achieve a military balance between the two conflicting sides, a concept referred to by some researchers in strategic studies as the ‘balance of terror’.⁽¹⁷⁾

North Korea’s desire “to boost its nuclear capabilities” is consistent with the above strategy, with the leadership viewing the nuclear program as a top priority in light of the growing threats posed to it by America and its allies in East Asia, Japan, and South Korea, which have threatened pre-emptive strike on North Korea’s nuclear program.

The US’s ability to easily destroy the Iraqi army during the 2003 invasion of Iraq proved to North Korea’s decision-makers that no matter how powerful their conventional military forces, without nuclear weapons the country would be vulnerable and the regime could be easily defeated.

Since then, the North Korean leader has asserted that “Those who don’t possess nuclear weapons will have the fate of Saddam Hussein.” It is believed that North Korea currently possesses sufficient fissile materials to produce more than 10 nuclear bombs.

Iranian decision-makers, meanwhile, concluded that only the possession of weapons of mass destruction would give the regime the necessary deterrent force to prevent the implementation of US-Israeli threats against it and allow it to achieve territorial gains regionally at the expense of its Arab neighbors without being attacked by the US.

North Korea has continuously assisted Iran in its relentless pursuit to acquire nuclear weapons, which bases its drive to attain them on the following:

From the Iranian perspective, the US military buildup in surrounding nations leads to a “beleaguered and surrounded Iran”, with the regime viewing this military presence as a direct threat to its strategic interests within the immediate region, including Iraq and the Gulf States, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and with the Central Asian states, especially those bordering on the Caspian Sea.

The Iranian leadership believes that Iran’s historic role in Western Asia and the Middle East necessitates a correction in the current “balance of power”, by which three regional powers (India, Pakistan, and Israel) possess nuclear weapons⁽¹⁸⁾.

The regime wishes to benefit from the lessons of the US war on Iraq, which was classified among the countries defined by the US as belonging to an ‘Axis of Evil’, theorizing that if Iraq had possessed nuclear weapons, the US would have been reluctant to attack it. North Korea arguably provides some evidence to substantiate this hypothesis, with Washington failing to attack it due to the belief that it possesses a deterrent force, including nuclear weapons.

Iran believes that the possession of nuclear weapons constitutes a “new regional equation”, by which it can change the rules of the game in the security of the Gulf and Southwest Asia⁽¹⁹⁾.

It seems that both North Korea and Iran have realized the effectiveness of the balance of terror equation, whereby any power wishing to attack or invade another will be forced to refrain from doing so by that state’s possession of weapons of mass destruction, instead of resorting to diplomatic negotiations and political talks, or bilateral or multilateral mechanisms to resolve any crises.⁽²⁰⁾

3- The American Policy of Encirclement against Iran and North Korea

The end of cold war and the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in a new unipolar international system, allowing the U.S. to act relatively freely in establishing a new world order. The U.S. became the single most important player in the international system and the world's lone superpower. The most notable progress to the U.S policy was the desire to act as world police, guardian of the international legitimacy, and benevolently act to spread democracy.

The United States has always placed its security and interests above everything else. In the aftermath of 9/11, it has become increasingly evident that tenets of the new imperialism are observable. The United States foreign policy has contained imperialist ambitions, attributing those ambitions to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. In fact, the United States is ruled by a liberal imperialist regime that considers expansion on the expense of other countries as the best way to dominate the world, which was evident in the containment, and aggressive policies through the use of extensive power, which were codified in the National Security Strategy of the United States in September 2002, and classified countries in terms of threats to the American interests as follows;⁽²¹⁾

Friendly Countries	Evil Countries	Repent countries
<p>The United States count on these countries in countering terrorism such as Egypt and the GCC.</p>	<p>Countries accused by the United States of launching terrorist attacks by themselves or support them against the American interests such as Syria and Iraq that was classified by the United States as Axis of Evil, side by side with Iran and North Korea.</p>	<p>Countries that were blockaded by the United States before 11/9 for being involved in terrorism or supporting it, but later changed its policies and helped in countering terrorism after 11/9 such as Sudan, Yamen and Libya⁽²²⁾.</p>

This view formed the new world order after 9/11. Countering terrorism became the first priority for the U.S. followed by overthrowing dictatorships that support

terrorism in the world. As a result, the US firmly established its strategy of “Superiority in East Asia and the Middle East, in addition to the importance of maintaining a military presence to maintain the political economic framework of the two regions for the U.S. benefit.” Proceeding from that view, President Obama criticized the presidential candidate, Donald Trump in April 2016 when he said; “It is time for Japan and South Korea to defend themselves by themselves and help them get nuclear weapons.” He added, “We will withdraw the American troops from Japan and South Korea unless they provide more support to the U.S. troops on their lands.”⁽²³⁾

Based on that assumption, the United States had imposed economic sanctions on Iran to bring the regime to its knees and force it to stop its nuclear activities (1). The U.S. sanctions initially targeted investments in oil and business dealings with Iran’s Central Bank. This encompassed banking transactions and freezing the accounts of financial organizations dealing with Iran. Over years, sanctions have taken a serious toll on Iran’s economy and people. The U.S. had led international efforts to use sanctions to influence Iran’s policies, including Iran’s uranium enrichment program; nevertheless, Iran had never stopped its program, claiming that this program is for civilian purposes. To counter Iran’s threats and protect the Western interests, the American support to Israel continued and achieved an Israeli superiority over its neighbors. It also signed armistice agreements with its Arab allies and maintained a military presence in the Gulf States. To complete the blockade on Iran before the nuclear deal, The United States had expanded the NATO operations to Central Asia to isolate Iran from Russia and China.

As for North Korea, the Western economic sanctions severed the already bad economic situation of the country. According to the international resolutions, the international community, except China and Russia, were banned from dealing with North Korea or providing the necessary technologies for producing nuclear weapons. To counter the North Korean threats, the United States maintained its military presence in Southeast Asia; 47 thousand American soldiers in Japan; and 27 thousand soldiers in South Korea. It also displayed a ballistic missile shield and held annual military training with Tokyo and Seoul to counter any missile strikes and blockade China, the major ally of North Korea⁽²⁴⁾.

The belief that the United States position in the world was to be the good force acting against the antagonistic, “Axis of evil” of Iran and North Korea because of their

nuclear ambitions became widespread. Nevertheless, the American passing over of the Israeli nuclear capabilities made the two countries recognize the importance of joint work to counter the growing American influence in East Asia, Central Asian Republics, and the Middle East.

Iran and North Korea felt that they share the same destiny in countering the international pressure led by the U.S. and its allies, especially Israel, and rejecting the United States hegemony of the world. Since the revolution of 1979, Iran sees Washington as an imperialist force seeks domination of the Middle East and its natural resources in cooperation with its regional allies. In addition to that, there is a long history of rivalry between Iran and the U.S. such as the crisis of the American hostages in Iran that lasted for 444 days and the Western sanctions imposed on Iran because of its nuclear ambitions. On the other hand, North Korea is the only true communist country in values and rejection of the Western capitalist imperialism of the world. The historical rivalry between capitalism and communism is well known through differences in economic, political, and social issues. Communism aims to fight the Western Imperialism and eliminate capitalism everywhere; meanwhile, capitalist countries were dedicated to limit the spread of communism by all means. Hence, The American-North Korean hostility stems from ideological differences and the North Korean view of the United States as an imperialist nation aims to dominate the world.⁽²⁵⁾

4. The Strategy of “Counter Alliance” against the Washington-Seoul-Tokyo alliance

The American alliance with Tokyo and Seoul resulted in the creation of a counter-alliance between North Korea, China, Russia, and Iran. The four countries share strong economic and political ties. On the political level, they stand firmly against the Western resolutions and support each other such as the Hexagonal Table negotiations concerning the North Korean nuclear program in 2003 that ended with the North Korean withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty because of the support of Russia and china that played the same role during Iran’s nuclear deal negotiations. The most prominent issue that upsets the West is the nuclear and military cooperation between these countries that resulted in economic sanctions imposed on them; Iran and North Korea face the same economic sanctions because of their nuclear programs; Russia faces Western sanctions because of its position toward Ukraine and support of the separatist groups in eastern former Soviet Union countries; and China is facing the same destiny because of its regional and international presence through the soft expansion policy.⁽²⁶⁾

The United States is dominating the oil-rich West Bank of the Arab Gulf to secure oil importation from the region. China, Russia, and North Korea sought to achieve balance in East Bank to bring the American ambitions in the region down and deter the American attempts to impose oil sanctions on other countries. On the other hand, In the case of any American-Chinese military confrontation over Taiwan, the U.S. will be incapable of closing down the Chinese supplies of oil because of the alliance in the East Bank of the Arab Gulf.

In 2001 China adopted the strategic view of creating the “Shanghai Organization for cooperation” that paved the way for an Iranian-Russian-Chinese Axis to confront the growing American Imperialism. North Korea and Iran couldn’t face the United States and its allies, South Korea and Japan; politically and economically. As a result, they aimed to dedicate the military dimension to serve the other two dimensions they are missing and confront the American sanctions across the table of negotiations and through the support of their allies, Russia and China. ⁽²⁷⁾

Third: Dangers of Growing Iran-Korea Military Cooperation

1- The Strategy of Regional and International Nuclear Extortion

First Danger	Second Danger	Third Danger	Fourth Danger	Fifth Danger
Nuclear Extortion	Breakdown regional balance	Disastrous nuclear incidents because of the absence of nuclear security.	A hydrogen bomb armed Iran by Korean Expertise	Threat to the International peace and security and break the rules of World Order.

This is a form of nuclear strategy in which an aggressor uses the threat of use of nuclear weapons to force the international community to perform some actions or make some concessions. North Korea pioneered in this strategy through conducting nuclear experiments and then negotiating the breakdown of these weapons in exchange for food, oil, and crude materials; when the West, including the U.S., Japan, and South Korea fulfill their commitments, the Korean president backs off and proceeds on conducting new nuclear experiments, and offering new deals to the West. North Korea used this strategy many times in the nineties of last century during negotiations of the hexagonal table and signing the framework of the 1994 deal, and repeated in 2006, 2009, and 2013; even though, the U.S. disregards the Korean strategy to continue maintaining a military and political presence in East Asia. ⁽²⁸⁾

Iran had before it the example of North Korea's successful nuclear extortion. It is a theocratic state ruled by a big camp of clergy headed by the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei. The Leader sees the nuclear deal as a submission that must be terminated as soon as possible. In fact, Iran cannot be isolated from the world like Korea, but the West is not working effectively to stop Iran's blackmailing nuclear program.

President Rouhani is trying to convince the West of lifting sanctions, which might be a carbon copy of North Korea's case. This is evident in Iran's constant attempts to develop its ballistic missiles and nuclear program although signing the nuclear deal in 2015, which is once again disregarded by the United States such as;

On 7/17/2016 two unknown diplomats revealed a document to the American Associated press (a) that allows Iran to resume its nuclear program immediately after President Obama leaves office. The Associated press reported that this document is a confidential appendix to the nuclear deal between Iran and the six major countries. Based on that document, Tehran can exchange its five thousand old centrifuges with 3500 states of the art ones after 11-15 years of the nuclear deal, reducing the time for Iran to produce nuclear weapons from one year to six months. ⁽²⁹⁾

The American Senator, Tom Cotton stated by the end of March 2015 that Iran can break the nuclear deal in the next ten years (b) and gain nuclear weapons, but at the same time, it can stick to the deal and then gain nuclear weapons after ten years same as North Korea that needed 12 years to produce nuclear weapons in 2006 after signing a deal in 1994. ⁽³⁰⁾

2- Break regional balance

Foreign policy literature explains regional balance as the case when all political, economic, and military powers are equal in a country or a group of countries that share common factors. The balance of power enables countries to respond to any dangers that might emerge and swiftly move to regain stability and balance when needed. However, when any country seeks military superiority over its neighbors and threatens their stability, it represents a distortion of the regional balance. ⁽³¹⁾ Based on that assumption, the possession of nuclear weapons by Iran and North Korea will break the regional strategic balance in East Asia and in the Middle East with one difference; Korea is trying to defend itself; meanwhile, Iran is a sectarian expansionist regional country on the American-European-Israeli model through its claimed Shiite Crescent that extends from Iraq ruled by Haider Al-Abadi, the Iranian puppet; through Syria ruled by an Alawi regime, Iran's proxy; to Lebanon that is

controlled by the Shiite Hezbollah under the command of Iran; up to the Arab Gulf.

The growing Iranian threat to the regional security has gone too far and became a reality. Iran has officially taken over Iraq through the Iraqi prime minister's declaration of combining the Public Mobilization Forces with the Iraqi army, which means that they took control of the army and its capabilities for Iran's benefit and rising threats against the Iraqi Sunnis. In addition to that, Iran supports its proxies inside some Arab countries in Lebanon and Yemen through foiling the Yemeni peace talks in Kuwait and the declarations of its loyalists Houthis-Saleh the creation of a command council to run the country, which coincides with Al-Abadi's decree to combine the Public Mobilization forces with the Iraqi army. In fact, Iran sees its ability to disturb its neighbors as a point of strength and presents its self as a super regional power that enables it to negotiate with the U.S. standing on a solid ground, which in reality threatens the Arab region's security.

Growing threats to the security of the Gulf States: First of all, Iran can do this through enhancing the distortion of the balance of power and expansion in the Arab countries. The geopolitical (b) realities show that Iran cannot expand east because of the nuclear powers of China, Pakistan, and India, nor north because of the Russian superpower, which forces it to expand west in the Arab region. Secondly, Iran can target oil fields in the Gulf region and change the course of regional and international developments because of the proximity of these fields and refineries from Iran by surface to surface missiles that can hit all targeted areas, which is unlikely to happen because of regional and international considerations.⁽³²⁾

3- Potential nuclear accidents due to lack of a “nuclear safety” mechanism

The Iranian-North Korean nuclear cooperation may be willing to take extreme risks in the possession of nuclear weapons, whether in East Asia or the Middle East, due to the lack of any nuclear safety mechanisms to prevent potentially catastrophic nuclear accidents and other dangers, which pose an extra dimension of hazard, as follows:

A- Political Risks: Related to tensions and political pressure, led by anxiety about prospects of nuclear proliferation by nuclear powers, creating a permanent state of regional tensions and mutual suspicions.

B- Military Risks: Related to the nuclear facilities' status as primary targets, with increased prospects of their coming under serious attack in the event of wars and confrontations. There are also heightened risks of these powers weaponising

radioactive nuclear waste for use against adversaries leading to the creation of radiological and radiation-based weapons, which are latent threats in nuclear regions, including the Middle East.⁽³³⁾

C- Environmental Risks: Related to problems with or accidents at nuclear facilities which could potentially have severe consequences for a widespread surrounding area, such as radiation leaks, or unsafe transportation of fissile materials. The effects of such incidents would not be a limited to the nuclear power itself but would extend over a considerable distance to neighboring countries.

D- Other Risks: Related to the potential for the theft or smuggling of nuclear materials in unusual circumstances, such as during periods of political instability within states, as during the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, which saw widespread problems with controlling nuclear materials and equipment. This leads to further potential dangers such as the sale of such materials on the black market and their acquisition by terrorist groups.

In regards to all the above, the Arab Gulf states are the worst affected and placed at the greatest risk of the growth in Iran's nuclear capabilities, since the Bushehr reactor, considered the most important Iranian nuclear facility, is located on the western coast of the Arabian Gulf. The reactor relies mainly on imported equipment from North Korea, which has no "nuclear safety" production guarantees in place. With the Western ban on nuclear equipment, Iran may seek to accomplish its nuclear armament by less secure equipment, exposing the Gulf States to the danger of radiation leaks.⁽³⁴⁾

4- Iran offered capability to acquire hydrogen bomb by North Korean expertise:

Within the next year or two, it's highly possible that North Korea will manage to successfully mount a hydrogen bomb on a ballistic missile, following the success of its tests of an H-bomb at the end of June 2016 in the presence of Iranian experts. Given the strategic military partnership between Iran and North Korea, this would invariably lead to the transfer of this technology to Iran within a short period. There is, understandably, grave concern over the possible deployment of these weapons, which each have many times the power of a conventional nuclear bomb, with the explosive power of around twenty million tons of (TNT). Only five other countries in the world have succeeded in making the hydrogen bomb to date: these are the United States, Russia, Britain, China, and France.⁽³⁵⁾

The probability of North Korea attaining hydrogen bomb technology and passing

this to Tehran, which now has the financial ability to invest in this technology following the nuclear deal and the ending of sanctions, would have a number of repercussions, including disrupting the regional and international balance in favor of Iran, allowing it to dominate the region and to enter the 'nuclear nations club'

5- The threat to international peace and security and The departure from the current global system's rules:

Iran and North Korea are both aggressive states which would invariably use their nuclear technology against other members of the international community, with this implicit threat forcing others to acquire the same weapons of massive destruction. Moreover, Iran would use its capabilities against other states in the same region where it is already engaging in acts of sabotage by using armed forces of soldiers, irregulars, and mercenaries, threatening international peace and security, and departing from the rules of the current global system which are based on developing friendly relations among nations and cooperation in solving international crises by peaceful means.

North Korea and Iran have not hesitated to import the necessary materials to construct nuclear reactors such as Uranium and Plutonium, or to build sophisticated missile weapons systems. The two countries have not stopped threatening the use of armed force in East Asia and the Middle East.

North Korea has conducted three nuclear tests, the first in 2006, the second in 2009, and the third in 2013, as well as conducting its first hydrogen bomb test on June 1, 2016, a serious development for international security. This gives a clear example of the falsity of both states' promises to abide by international conventions, with both openly declaring their hostility and threatening the security of regional and international systems. Both are intent on breaching all global rules and destroying the regional balance, with the resulting complications increased by the brutally totalitarian and dictatorial nature of the two states.⁽³⁶⁾

The Iranian Republic of Iran has threatened repeatedly to use armed force to close the Strait of Hormuz, an international shipping route for transporting Gulf oil to the West and the United States, as well as to other nations. Iran is also inflicting devastating damage on neighboring countries, particularly Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon, through sectarianism, war, and acts of espionage. Moreover, Iran also sends military and non-military forces to incite sectarian strife. Meanwhile, the Iranian regime works tirelessly on building nuclear reactors, which pose a direct

threat to international security and peace, despite the signing of the nuclear deal in June 2015.

Fourth: The future of the nuclear deal with the new American president

Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was one of the architects of the nuclear deal implemented in June 2015 between Iran and the West (the P5 +1 group), is one of the deal's strongest supporters and considers the deal to be a major step towards preventing Iran from enriching uranium, and thus to obtaining a nuclear weapon. Nevertheless, Clinton announced that a primary principle of the P5+1 group's policies toward the nuclear deal is to monitor Iran's compliance with the deal's terms, and, in the case of Tehran's violation of any of these terms, to re-impose sanctions against it. In this case, she has said, all the options would be on the table to deal with Iran, including military options. In contrast, the Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump rejects the nuclear deal with Iran, which he views as a threat to the US and Israeli security. Trump has vowed that if elected he will renegotiate the deal since his primary objective is the destruction of Iran's nuclear ambitions "by any means". Trump has also demanded increased economic sanctions on Tehran. Concerning the Iranian nuclear file, Clinton has sought to reassure allies in the Gulf region, that the United States will not abandon them, and will remain committed to the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and protect them from Iranian threats, stressing that the Gulf region is an important partner for Washington in terms of security, trade, and defense.

Again in contrast and continuing his confrontational stance, Trump has announced that he would stop importing oil from Saudi Arabia if the latter did not participate in fighting against ISIS or compensate the United States for its efforts in fighting against the terrorist group. The Republican candidate has also called on Gulf countries to bear the cost of establishing safe zones in Syria.

The future of the nuclear deal is clearly a priority in one way or another for both candidates, with Hillary Clinton currently leading the presidential race by a small margin, according to the fluctuating opinion polls. The foreign policy announced by Clinton is largely a continuation of Obama's, reducing direct US intervention in regional issues and conflicts and preferring to rely on the United States' allies. Clinton makes the use of diplomatic rather than military tools a governing principle in this context to achieve a balance between protecting US security interests in the region without direct military intervention and maintaining the image of the United States as a

state sponsor of democracy and human rights, which is accepted among American youth.

Fifth: The results of the study

1- Since Iran largely replicates the North Korean model in form if not in doctrine, the two do not differ in any appreciable way given a large number of common features and the nature of their relations, mutual nuclear ambitions and shared antipathy towards the US, which also expresses hostility towards their nuclear programs.

2- Iran believes that by implementing a nuclear program, it will be able to change the regional distribution and balance of power in the Middle East in its own favor, enabling it to change the prevailing status quo. It is likely that the regional structure of the Middle East will change from one of a nuclear unipolar system, by which Israel is the only nuclear power, to one of nuclear bipolarity, with both Israel and Iran being nuclear powers, leading to a state of nuclear cold war in the future.

3- The United States does not want to fully remove the nuclear programs of the two countries since doing so would be contrary to its regional interests and presence in both regions. The US plays a critical role in regional security, which it has maintained by signing the framework agreement with North Korea in 1994, and the 'legacy deal' with Iran in 2015. The two agreements were signed very deliberately, despite the warnings of many observers and analysts.

By signing the agreements, on the one hand, the United States makes itself indispensable essential in defending its regional allies in East Asia (South Korea and Japan) and the Middle East (the Gulf States) from the surrounding threats (which it has guaranteed) and assisting them in achieving security and stability. On the other hand, Washington is leaving the scene of the two countries without letting Iran rise to "Regional Hegemony" to continue their nuclear programs secretly, as revealed in recently leaked documents concerning the Iranian nuclear program and the Pyongyang's hydrogen bomb test in June 2016. The solution to the Iranian and North Korean nuclear problems means achieving security in the two regions, meaning that there is no need for Washington to evacuate its military bases in the two regions and to further reduce its role, which is contrary to its interests in the two regions.

4- While Western nations, including the United States, claim to be working to prevent other nations' development of nuclear weapons programs, their deep involvement in protecting the leadership of the Iranian and North Korean regimes in order to maintain their own status as supposed regional defenders of other states will ultimately be uncovered. The eventual and inevitable outbreak of chaos resulting from the Iranian and North Korean

regimes' attaining nuclear weapons could cause genuine and intense harm to regional and international security since neither regime can be trusted or relied upon. This is all the more obvious given the Iranian regime's current continued savage aggression against neighboring Arab nations, while the Western states protect Iran's theocratic regime even as it calls for their death and downfall. Arab Gulf states will ultimately face a similar fate to that of North Korea, becoming a hostage of US protectionism.

In light of the clear and obvious American position against the Arab and Gulf states and its failures in East Asia and the Middle East to constrain North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs, Iran will continue its disruptive expansionist policy towards regional states such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and other Arab nations.

Finally, history repeatedly demonstrates that totalitarian regimes inevitably undermine states and societies with no support to maintain them but that of brute force and authority; these characteristics increase until they become the totalitarian regime's sole identity and source of continuity. Moreover because such authoritarianism deliberately eliminates any form of social engagement other than coercion, it is fully reliant on top-down totalitarian

First Result	Second Result	Third Result	Fourth Result	Fifth Result
Reborn for another North-Korea	Tending to nuclear-regional bi-polar system	American policy prefer not to demolish the dual nuclear programs completely for country's interests and resources.	West countries, ironically, will be included in protecting the Jurist Leadership and Kim Oni indirectly.	Iran will continue its expansion and sabotage policy toward neighboring countries and threatening the GCC.

order imposed by the leadership in the person of the president or Supreme Leader, with the resulting inertia impeding any progress and creating massive and ineffectual security and administrative organs to protect the leader which eventually collapse under their own weight.

When totalitarian systems ultimately arrive at this inevitable conclusion, they begin their final disintegration, which takes the form of needing to borrow leadership techniques and strategies from outside the ruling system in order to ensure survival. The advent of these policies to treat the crises inflicted by totalitarian rule introduce new techniques and mechanisms which ensure modernization and development, allowing societies to change,

evolve and move forward. These changes, in turn, ensure the rise of a new, modernizing, technocratic mentality isolated from the previous solely ideological worldview propagated by the regime and with no reverence for the regime's authority and character, which is interested solely in advancing society. In the words of Chinese revolutionary and political leader Deng Xiaoping, the founder of modern-day China's economic model, "It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice." With the introduction of such a system, a totalitarian regime will ultimately fall since this system makes it impossible for it to continue indefinitely.

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