Universitas Katolik Parahyangan

Faculty of Social and Political Science

Department of International Relations

Accredited "Unggul"

SK BAN-PT NO: 2579/SK/BAN-PT/AK-ISK/S/IV/2022

The Failure of the US-ROK Extended Deterrence against the DPRK

Undergraduate Thesis

By

Aureishia Huang

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Bandung

2024

Parahyangan Catholic University

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Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
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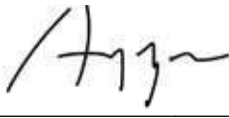Dr. I Nyoman Sudira, Drs., M.Si.   : _____

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Judul	: **The Failure of the US-ROK Extended Deterrence against the DPRK**

Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa skripsi ini merupakan hasil karya tulis ilmiah sendiri dan bukanlah merupakan karya yang pernah diajukan untuk memperoleh gelar akademik oleh pihak lain. Adapun karya atau pendapat lain yang dikutip, ditulis sesuai dengan kaidah penulisan ilmiah yang berlaku.

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Aureishia Huang

ABSTRAK

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Judul   : Kegagalan Extended Deterrence AS-Korea Selatan terhadap Korea Utara

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*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperlihatkan alasan di belakang kegagalan aliansi AS-Korea Selatan dalam melakukan deterrence terhadap Korea Utara. Selama bertahun-tahun, aliansi AS-Korea Selatan telah melakukan berbagai strategi deterrence tetapi tidak berpengaruh untuk mencegah perkembangan nuklir dan misil balistik Korea Utara. Maka dari itu, penelitian ini didasarkan pada pertanyaan penelitian **"Mengapa extended deterrence AS-Korea Selatan terhadap Korea Utara dianggap sebagai sebuah kegagalan?"** Menggunakan konsep kapabilitas dan kredibilitas dari strategi deterrence, penulis mendapatkan bahwa aliansi AS-Korea Selatan memiliki kapabilitas ekonomi dan militer yang sangat besar, namun komitmen dari kedua pihak menjadi tantangan bagi kredibilitas strategi deterrence dari aliansi tersebut yang berpotensi untuk meningkatkan ketegangan dengan Korea Utara.*

Kata Kunci: AS-Korea Selatan, Korea Utara, Extended Deterrence, Nuklir, Konsep Kapabilitas dan Kredibilitas Deterrence

ABSTRACT

Nama   : Aureishia Huang

NPM   : 6092001254

Judul   : The Failure of the US-ROK Extended Deterrence against the DPRK

This thesis intends to argue the reasons behind the failure of the US-ROK alliance in deterring the DPRK. For years, the US-ROK alliance has implemented numerous deterrence strategies, yet it has had little to no effect on DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile development program. Therefore, this thesis is based on the research question "**Why are the US-ROK extended deterrence strategies against the DPRK deemed to be a failure?**" Utilizing the concept of capability and credibility in deterrence strategy, the author discovers that the US-ROK alliance has a massive economic and military capability, however, commitment from both parties became a concerning challenge for the deterrence credibility of the alliance which potentially escalated tensions with the DPRK.

Keywords: US-ROK alliance, DPRK, Extended Deterrence, Nuclear, Capability and Credibility Deterrence Concept

PREFACE

Arising issues on the possession of nuclear weapons have led the author to research deeper on the issue and produce the thesis titled "The Failure of the US-ROK Extended Deterrence against the DPRK." This thesis explains the capability and credibility of the US-ROK alliance in deterring DPRK's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development from 2016-2022. Through the analysis of threat capability and credibility, this thesis emphasizes the importance of acquiring both capability and credibility in implementing extended deterrence strategies, especially when facing another nuclear power which means nuclear deterrence might not be as valid. The author serves this undergraduate thesis as a requirement for obtaining a bachelor's degree in International Relations, at the Faculty of Social and Political Science, Parahyangan Catholic University. Acknowledging the limitation of this thesis, the author appreciates any input and is hoping that it will serve the purpose of the thesis. Lastly, the author would like to express her gratitude to every involved party in formulating this thesis.

Bandung, December 2023

Author

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMD	Ballistic Missiles Defense
CFC	Combined Forces Command
CVID	Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Denuclearization
DMZ	Demilitarization Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EDSCG	Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group
GAO	Government Accountability Office (United States)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
KADIZ	Korea Air Defence Identification Zone
KAMD	Korea Air and Missile Defense
KIDD	Korea-US Integrated Defense Dialogue
KMPR	Korea Massive Punishment and Retaliation
KOMID	Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation
KPA	Korean People's Army
MID	Munitions Industry Department
MRL	Multiple Rocket Launchers
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OPLAN	Operation Plan
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKFC	Republic of Korea Funded Construction
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SANS	Second Academy of Natural Science
SCM	Security Consultative Meeting
SEC	Second Economic Committee
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
TEL	Transporter Erector Launcher
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
UK	United Kingdom
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAF	United States Air Force

USFK	United States Forces Korea
USMC	United States Marine Corps
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Translated Articles of DPRK's Nuclearization Law

Law On Consolidating the Position of Nuclear Weapons State for Self Defense or known as 'April 1st Nuclearization Law'
Article 1. The nuclear weapons of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are just means for defense, as it was compelled to have access to them to cope with the ever-escalating hostile policy and nuclear threat of the U.S.
Article 2. They serve the purpose of deterring and repelling the aggression and attack of the enemy against the DPRK and for dealing deadly retaliatory blows at the strongholds of aggression until the world is denuclearized.
Article 3. The DPRK shall take practical steps to bolster nuclear deterrence and nuclear retaliatory strike power both in quality and quantity to cope with the gravity of the escalating danger of hostile forces' aggression and attack.
Article 4. The nuclear weapons of the DPRK can be used only by a final order of the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA) to repel invasion or attack from any hostile nuclear weapons state and to make retaliatory strikes.
Article 5. The DPRK shall neither use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states nor threaten them with those weapons unless they join a hostile nuclear weapons state in its invasion of and attack on the DPRK.
Article 6. The DPRK shall strictly observe the rules on safekeeping and management of nuclear weapons and ensure the stability of nuclear tests.
Article 7. The DPRK shall establish a mechanism and order for the safekeeping and management of nuclear weapons and their technology so that no weapon-grade nuclear substance may leak out unlawfully.
Article 8. The DPRK shall cooperate in international efforts for nuclear non-proliferation and safe management of nuclear substances on the principle of mutual respect and equality, depending on the improvement of relations with hostile nuclear weapons states.
Article 9. The DPRK shall strive hard to defuse the danger of a nuclear war and finally build a world without nuclear weapons and fully support international efforts for nuclear disarmament against a nuclear arms race.
Article 10. The related institutions shall take thorough and practical steps to implement this ordinance.

Appendix 2: List of the US-ROK Alliance Joint Military Exercises from

2016-2022

Date	Exercise Name	Involved Parties	Place	Asset
March 7, 2016	Foal Eagle/Key Resolve	17,000 US troops and more than 300,000 ROK military personnel	Korean Peninsula	OPLAN 5015, CFC and USFK commands (ground, air, naval, and special operations)
March 1, 2017	Foal Eagle	28,000 US troops in ROK and 3,600 US service members deployed from mainland	South Korea	
August 21, 2017	Ulchi Freedom Guardian	17,500 US troops (14,500 permanently based on the Peninsula and 3,000 from the US mainland) 50,000 ROK troops	South Korea	Wartime scenarios on the Peninsula and CWMD operations
December 4, 2017	Vigilant Ace 18	12,000 military personnel and 230 aircraft	Osan Air Base, South Korea	US F-22 Raptors, F-35 Lightning Ils, F-16 Fighting Falcons, F-15 Eagles, f-18 Hornets, EA-18G Growlers, ROK F-15K Slam Eagles and F-4 Phantom Ils
December 11,2017	Trilateral Ballistic Missile Defense	US, Japan, and ROK	Hawaii, United States	Coordinated fighter aircraft, bomber operations, Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyers (with SM-3 interceptors)

April 1, 2018	Foal Eagle/Key Resolve	Foal Eagle: 11,500 US troops, 300,000 ROK troops Key Resolve: 12,200 US troops and 10,000 ROK troops	Korean Peninsula	Nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, nuclear-powered submarines, and US strategic bombers (B-1, B-2, and B-52)
March 4, 2019	Dong Maeng (modification of Foal Eagle/Key Resolve)	28,500 US troops	Camp Humphreys, South Korea	Wartime operational control from Washington
June 6, 2022	Combined Live-Fire Exercise		Camp Humphreys, South Korea	1 US Army missile and 7 ROK Army missiles
August 8,2022	Missile Defense Exercise	US, Japan, and ROK	Hawaii, United States	Missile warning, ballistic missile search and tracking exercise
August 22, 2022	Ulchi Freedom Shield	10,000 US troops and 200,000 ROK troops	South Korea	Joint frontline training, simulations removing WMD, joint aircraft carrier strike drills, amphibious landing training
October 31, 2022	Vigilant Storm	240 aircraft and thousands of service members from ROK air force, US air force, US Marine corps, US Navy, and US Army	Osan and Kunsan Air Bases, and Camp Humphreys	4th generation jets, KC-30A air refueler, ROKAF F-35A, USMC F-35B
December 20, 2022	Combined Air Force Exercises		KADIZ	US Strategic bombers (B-52H), ROK F35 and F-15K fighter jets

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Protracted tension in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula has been triggered by the infamous 1950 Korean War. Henceforth, ROK (the Republic of Korea, commonly known as South Korea) and DPRK (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, commonly known as North Korea) have been playing with distinct deterrence policies to prevent asymmetrical power.[1] With the signing of the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty in October 1953, the ROK marked a military alliance with the US (United States) as its deterrence policy against the DPRK. The signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining a peaceful world while strengthening efforts for the preservation of peace and security.[2] As the ROK is highly dependent on US capabilities to develop military capabilities, this military alliance comprises nine areas of cooperation, such as counterterrorism, maritime security, space, pandemics, post-conflict stabilization, and reconstruction, peacekeeping, overseas development assistance, nonproliferation, and climate

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[1] Chaesung Chun, "The North Korean Nuclear Threat and South Korea's Deterrence Strategy," on *North Korea and Nuclear Weapons*, eds, Sung Chull Kim dan Michael D. Cohen, (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 251, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ps318b
[2] "Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea; October 1, 1953," Avalon Project - Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea; October 1, 1953, accessed May 5, 2023, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/kor001.asp

change.[3] To develop its defensive mechanism, the ROK has been developing BMD in the Peninsula with the range of short and medium DPRK missiles through technological transfer from the US.[4]

As the DPRK has developed ICBMs, namely the Hwasong-15, the US has been increasingly insecure and concerned with the DPRK's capabilities to strike the US.[5] Fearing potential attacks from the DPRK, the US and ROK established several objectives for the DPRK through the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty, including deterring attack from the DPRK if deterrence fails; preparing joint readiness for war, and the collapse of the DPRK regime while responding to DPRK's provocations; encouraging the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.[6] This shows deterring DPRK as the potential aggressor is the main reason for the US-ROK alliance. However, as the US and ROK have been conducting joint military exercises, the DPRK criticized it and accused both countries of escalating tensions to the edge of war on the Korean Peninsula.[7]

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[3] "Excerpt: The US–South Korea Alliance," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations), accessed May 5, 2023,
https://www.cfr.org/excerpt-us-south-korea-alliance#chapter-title-0-3
[4] "Fact Sheets & Briefs," U.S. and Allied Ballistic Missile Defenses in the Asia-Pacific Region | Arms Control Association, accessed May 5, 2023,
https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/us-allied-ballistic-missile-defenses-asia-pacific-region
[5] "U.S.-ROK Alliance Projecting U.S Power and Preserving - Brookings," accessed May 5, 2023,
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/fp_20160713_korea_alliance1.pdf
[6] Sang Kim, "The ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty at 60 Years: Relevant Now and in the Future," Korea Economic Institute of America, November 20, 2020,
https://keia.org/the-peninsula/the-rok-u-s-mutual-defense-treaty-at-60-years-relevant-now-and-in-the-future/
[7] Hyonhee Shin, "North Korea Says U.S.-South Korea Drills Push Tension to 'Brink of Nuclear War'," The Japan Times, April 6, 2023,
https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/04/06/asia-pacific/north-korea-says-drills-push-tension/

Despite being the third party in the issue of the Korean Peninsula, the US is exercising its power for its national interest with the ROK to denuclearize the DPRK at all costs. Since 2003, through the Six Party Talks – involving China, the US, ROK, DPRK, Japan, and Russia – the US has initiated to facilitate multilateral mediation regarding the DPRK's nuclear development and the possibility of arms trade with hostile states or terrorist groups. However, the Six-Party Talks have failed due to different priorities within the states involved. The Bush administration also avoided bilateral negotiations with the DPRK to prevent the US's decision from being perceived as a multilateral decision.[8]

Other than the Six Party Talks, the US and ROK have involved a new variable in the alliance, namely Japan. On August 18, 2023, leaders from the countries mentioned above converged in a Trilateral Leaders Meeting at Camp David, United States.[9] One of the most prominent objectives of the meeting was to denuclearize the DPRK as DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs are opposing the UNSC resolutions. The trilateral alliance also recognized the DPRK's illicit cyber activities that are financing the development of the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and ballistic missiles program. Thus, involved parties are cooperating on a new trilateral

[8] Jayshree Bajoria and Beina Xu, "The Six Party Talks on North Korea's Nuclear Program," Council on Foreign Relations, September 30, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/six-party-talks-north-koreas-nuclear-program#chapter-title-0-4

[9] U.S. Mission Japan, "Trilateral Leaders' Summit of the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea," U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Japan, August 19, 2023, https://jp.usembassy.gov/trilateral-leaders-summit-us-japan-south-korea/

working group that aims to combat cyber threats and block cyber-enabled sanctions evasion coming from the DPRK.[10] This shows the US and ROK's engagement with multiple actors by building alliances and dialogues.

1.2.   Research Problem Identification

1.2.1.   Problem Identification

With the failing US-ROK's deterrence strategies, the DPRK showed its retaliation by continuously developing its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Despite the death of the notable supreme leader Kim Jong-il, his successor, Kim Jong-un, did not let the DPRK back down from its initial power. The number of missiles launched by the DPRK has significantly increased throughout the years and reached its peak in 2022.[11] According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the number of DPRK's missile tests during Kim Jong-un's administration, amounting to 160 tests with 31 missile tests in 2022, is larger than the Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il periods combined.[12] This later raised the effectiveness of the US-ROK's

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[10] United States of America, The White House, The Spirit of Camp David: Joint Statement of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States (Washington: The White House, 2023), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/the-spirit-of-camp-david-joint-statement-of-japan-the-republic-of-korea-and-the-united-states/
[11] "North Korea: What Missiles Does It Have?" BBC News (BBC, March 20, 2023), https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41174689
[12] "North Korea's Military Capabilities," *Council on Foreign Relations, June 28, 2022,* https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/north-korea-nuclear-weapons-missile-tests-military-capabilities

military alliance as the defender in the extended deterrence strategy against the DPRK as the potential aggressor.

Recent developments in the DPRK's military capabilities sparked tension and questions on the extended deterrence of the US-ROK alliance. In 2022, the DPRK broke a record for missile launches with the majority of cruise and ballistic missiles.[13] Other than that, Kim Jong-un boldly stated that DPRK's nuclear combat forces followed by the missiles are fully prepared for war and to fire potential targets in ROK. This later surfaced concerns for nuclear tests knowing that the DPRK's report is hard to believe due to the exaggeration of its military capability.[14] Furthermore, the DPRK's nuclear development and its impact on the region has been further validated by the Russia and Ukraine war that nuclear weapons are critical for security.[15]

With the growing military capabilities, the DPRK seeks asymmetrical balance against the ROK and will unlikely resort to negotiations or diplomacy until it reaches its weapon development goals. According to Kim Jong-un's remarks at the Eighth Party

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[13] Carlotta Dotto, Brad Lendon, and Jessie Yeung, "North Korea's record year of missile testing is putting the world on edge," CNN, December 26, 2022, https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/26/asia/north-korea-missile-testing-year-end-intl-hnk/index.html

[14] Brad Lendon and Yoonjung Seo, "Kim Jong Un Talks up North Korea's Nuclear Threat after Latest Missile Tests," CNN (Cable News Network, October 14, 2022), https://edition.cnn.com/2022/10/13/asia/north-korea-cruise-missile-nuclear-threat-intl-hnk/index.html

[15] "North Korea Policy & Extended Deterrence," North Korea Policy & Extended Deterrence, January 19, 2023, https://features.csis.org/north-korea-extended-deterrence/

Congress of the Workers Party of Korea, the DPRK is focusing on polishing and perfecting its capability in multi-warhead rockets while advancing its preemptive and retaliatory nuclear strike to any target in the range of 15,000 kilometers. Since 2016, the DPRK has conducted 3 nuclear tests with hundreds of various missile tests from short-range to long-range or even hypersonic missiles.[16] According to US officials, in 2022, the DPRK reached its peak in conducting ballistic missiles amounting to 63 missile tests.[17]

1.2.2. Scope of Research

In analyzing the case study, this thesis emphasizes the failure of the extended deterrence strategy by the US and ROK against the nuclear power DPRK. As the DPRK's nuclear and missile development has progressed recently, the case study is focusing on Kim Jong-un's regime, specifically from 2016 until 2022. The 6-year span in Kim Jong-un's regime would be the most suitable time frame as DPRK's military capabilities are gradually escalating and reaching their peak during this period with 138 missile tests and 3 nuclear tests. On the other hand, the thesis highlights more of the

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[16] Japan, Ministry of Defense, *Recent Missile & Nuclear Development of North Korea* (Japan: Ministry of Defense, 2023), https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/sec_env/pdf/dprk_d-act.pdf

[17] United States of America, Congressional Research Service, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs* (Congressional Research Service, 2023), https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/IF10472.pdf

US-ROK military alliance rather than the trilateral alliance with Japan knowing that the trilateral alliance was a response to DPRK's recent military development. Moreover, this thesis utilizes an alliance level of analysis to observe further the dynamic between the US, ROK, and the DPRK.

1.2.3. Research Question

Based on the research background and problem identification, the US-ROK alliance has implemented deterrence strategies but failed to deter the rising threat of DPRK. Despite efforts of deterrence, the DPRK remains striving for its nuclear and ballistic missile development program as its sole guarantee of survival. Therefore, this thesis is directed to answer the following research question, **Why are the US-ROK extended deterrence strategies against the DPRK deemed to be a failure?**

1.3. Research Purposes and Utilities

1.3.1. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to argue the reasons behind the failure of the US-ROK alliance in deterring the DPRK. Since discussions among scholars are limited to nonnuclear power as the aggressor, this research seeks to shed light on the DPRK as a nuclear

power aggressor and its influence on the changes of the threat credibility calculus. This paper is reassessing the relevance of nuclear power in the credibility of an alliance that was formed by the US and ROK as their deterrence policy. In the case study of the US and DPRK, this research shows how the US-ROK policies are not credible against the DPRK, resulting in the weaponization of DMZ and crisis escalation to the edge of war.

1.3.2. Research Utilities

While researching for the case study, the author seeks to open a gateway for further research and development in extended deterrence theory, especially in assessing the structure of the alliance and its effect on the threat credibility. Reaffirming the threat credibility perspective to the extended deterrence theory, the author expects this research will help to redefine the threat credibility concept, especially when facing other nuclear powers. This research also allows the author to elevate her capabilities in collecting and regulating data, understanding theories and concepts, and increasing her awareness of international issues that can be understood through multiple perspectives.

1.4. **Literature Review**

Extended deterrence has been a long-standing discussion among scholars, especially in defining the determinant for its success and failure. In discussing the case study between the United States and North Korea, the ideas of extended deterrence are segmented into two main arguments that are seen to be the cause of its deterrence failure. Both ideas show very different perspectives in perceiving the failure of deterrence, yet correlate significantly to the case study. The first argument stated that the US-ROK alliance was the trigger for DPRK's weapons development rather than deterring or delaying its actions. Concurrently, the second argument believed that the DPRK believes that the US-ROK alliance will not do concrete actions that might undermine the DPRK's nuclear weapons development.

By showing the DPRK's motivation in developing weapons, Park Kyung-ae supported the first argument through analysis of the US's attempt to denuclearize DPRK which led to the North Korean Nuclear Crisis in 1994. In this attempt, the US enforced threat with military coercion causing crisis escalation which was opposed by neighboring countries, including the ROK. Considering the US is over-exerting its power in the region, the DPRK claimed that a hard stance or threats are not necessitated knowing that it would lead to war. The ROK also stated that another war would be devastating for both the DPRK and the ROK. However, after several failed attempts, the

US imposed another policy strategy in denuclearizing the DPRK which is engaging with the DPRK.[18]

After the crisis, the DPRK established nuclear facilities to revive its frozen nuclear program. The US and ROK fully condemned the DPRK's actions due to the potential threat to East Asia, urging the DPRK to cease all technological development. In response to the US and ROK, the DPRK claimed that the missile development was for self-defense and urged the US to compensate the DPRK for holding its missile exports. According to power politics, the DPRK perceived the US and ROK alliance as a grave danger to its security and survival. Thus, the DPRK overcame its insecurity by developing necessary weapons, including nuclear weapons. Knowing the economic value of missiles and nuclear weapons, the DPRK added more reasons to not give the weapons up, especially when it can demand economic compensation from international society.[19]

In 2017, the US resorted to its 'maximum pressure' policy, aiming to coerce DPRK's military development, and proceeded with the process of denuclearization. Spencer D. Bakich stated that the US demanded that the DPRK undertake CVID which led to the 2017 US-DPRK nuclear crisis. This nuclear crisis was caused by conflicting interests, misperception of DPRK's military development, and ways to dismantle DPRK's nuclear capabilities.

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[18] Kyung-Ae Park, "North Korea's Defensive Power and U.S.-North Korea Relations," *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 4 (2000): 535, https://doi.org/10.2307/2672443

[19] Ibid., 542-544.

Bakich indicated four ranked objectives of the DPRK, which are (1) to demonstrate a reliable nuclear deterrent capacity, (2) to secure the regime against internal threats, (3) to improve the lives of the people in the DPRK, and (4) to elevate DPRK's international stance while retaining its nuclear deterrent possession. Whereas, the US's motivation was only to deter any potential attack from the DPRK on the US and its allies in the short run and implement denuclearization in the regime.[20]

Over the years, the DPRK has always been insecure about the US's possibility of striking the DPRK which has responded with constant and progressive military development. Any attack from the US would incentivize DPRK's retaliation against Korean and American forces in the South and/or launch nuclear missiles on the US and its allies in the region. Bakich stated that the maximum pressure strategy means the Trump administration was determined to prevent DPRK's nuclear retaliation at any cost. Moreover, Trump's speech at the United Nations added fuel to the fire, wherein he reiterated the US' coercive pressure and willingness to go to war with the DPRK. The US believes that a war on the Korean Peninsula poses little threat to the US while ignoring the possibility of fatalities that might be caused by the outbreak of war. Thus, in response to the argument, the DPRK is

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[20] Spencer D. Bakich, "Signalling Capacity and Crisis Diplomacy: Explaining the Failure of 'Maximum Pressure' in the 2017 U.S.-North Korea Nuclear Crisis," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 45, no. 5 (April 27, 2020): 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1755960

continuously demonstrating its capability to develop nuclear and ballistic missiles to ensure the survivability of the regime.[21]

In support of the second argument, Chaesung Chun supported the argument that the DPRK is certain that the US and ROK will not resort to coercion first. Thus, the DPRK will only resort to an invasion or attack when the US and ROK deliberately undermine its security. In developing its nuclear weapons, the DPRK has several reasons, including asserting dominance in the Korean Peninsula. While aiming for nuclear deterrence, the DPRK stood on a belief that the US and ROK would not resort to coercion first for any reason due to its stake in undermining global security. The DPRK also believed that the US is not going to conduct strikes unless the DPRK is gradually developing its nuclear weapons for offensive purposes.[22]

Chun stated that the DPRK is developing its nuclear weapons to deter any nuclear first strike from the US or solely for defensive purposes. Nuclear weapons also have value in balancing with the US to get the most profitable outcome from the US and ROK. At the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea in April 2013, the DPRK indicated that nuclear weapons of the DPRK can only be used by a final order of the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army to repel an attack from a nuclear weapons state. Furthermore,

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[21] Spencer D. Bakich, "Signalling Capacity and Crisis Diplomacy: Explaining the Failure of 'Maximum Pressure' in the 2017 U.S.-North Korea Nuclear Crisis," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 45, no. 5 (April 27, 2020): 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1755960

[22] Chaesung Chun, "The North Korean Nuclear Threat and South Korea's Deterrence Strategy," in *North Korea and Nuclear Weapons*, eds, Sung Chull Kim dan Michael D. Cohen, (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 270, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ps318b

Chun also stated that the DPRK refrained from using nuclear weapons on non-nuclear states unless they were involved with hostile nuclear weapons states in invading or attacking the DPRK.[23]

Other than that, Jeffrey Mankoof and Anastasia Barannikova supported the fact that the DPRK is acquiring nuclear weapons for defensive rather than offensive purposes. According to DPRK's representatives, the DPRK is not seeking recognition as a nuclear-weapon state from other nuclear powers, wanting to be acknowledged as a nuclear power in the East. The DPRK started the nuclear program as a response to its vulnerability surrounded by unreliable bordering allies. In this perspective, nuclear weapons are DPRK's way to prevent any foreign military intervention in the country and urge a regime change as nuclear weapons might be considered the most prominent weapons in technological development history.[24]

Other than that, Mankoof and Barannikova also stated in the journal that the DPRK offers many strategic values in possessing nuclear weapons for many countries, namely the US, Russia, and China. Although the US constantly reaffirms itself as the only superpower country, the DPRK sees that the US has not tried any alternative approaches besides dealing with pressures regarding denuclearizing its nuclear weapon system. Thus, making the DPRK

[23] Chaesung Chun, "The North Korean Nuclear Threat and South Korea's Deterrence Strategy," in *North Korea and Nuclear Weapons*, eds, Sung Chull Kim dan Michael D. Cohen, (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 328-367, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ps318b
[24] Jeffrey Mankoff and Anastasia Barannikova, "Nuclear Weapons and North Korea's Strategic Goals," JSTOR, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22587.9

stand on the belief that the US is not trying that hard to denuclearize the DPRK. Overseeing the development of nuclear weapons from the DPRK, the US did not see the underlying value that the US might benefit from the DPRK possessing nuclear weapons. By not falling under Chinese control, the DPRK will serve as an independent state that might contain China in the upcoming crisis, and also would not fall under the ideology of China and Russia.[25]

This thesis believes that DPRK's military developments are responses to the US-ROK alliance and continuously developing to form its security. However, to ensure its security, the DPRK will not give up on its military development as the DPRK recognizes its values and the US-ROK alliance has not contributed much in deterring the DPRK. Therefore, this thesis believes the hypothesis that the DPRK would develop its military capability, despite the pressure that the alliance is imposing. Only if the threat from the alliance is credible, the DPRK would believe in the capability and credibility of the alliance.

1.5.   Conceptual Framework

Deterrence is a policy seeking to convince an adversary by threat of military retaliation that the cost of the use of military forces will outweigh the benefit. In simple terms, deterrence is the use of threats to dissuade an

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[25] Jeffrey Mankoff and Anastasia Barannikova, "Nuclear Weapons and North Korea's Strategic Goals," JSTOR, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22587.9

adversary from initiating undesirable actions. According to Lawrence Freedman and Srinath Raghavan, the main challenge in imposing deterrence is to ensure that the adversary is receiving the threat. For deterrence to be successful, the defender has to persuade the adversary to act as what the defender wants but according to the adversary's rationality. However, the deterrence strategy might still fail due to the misperception of signals that was sent by the defender, or the adversary believing that the defender would not implement the threats. Therefore, deterrence strategy needs two factors to be effective, which are direct forms of communication to prevent misinterpretation and the defender's threat must be credible that is indirectly related to the defender's capabilities.[26]

A bit different from deterrence theory, extended deterrence is a confrontation of a defender threatening the use of force against a potential aggressor to prevent the aggressor from exercising any military force against an ally or a protége. As the capability and credibility serves as the determinant of deterrence success, this thesis utilizes the concept of capability and credibility in deterrence theory to further elaborate and analyze the US in deterring DPRK. The concept of capability and credibility in extended deterrence theory involves a defender, aggressor, and protége(s). Huth produced a hypothesis where he argued that the possession of nuclear

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[26] Lawrence Freedman and Srinath Raghavan, "Coercion," in *Security Studies an Introduction*, ed. Paul D. Williams (Canada: Routledge, 2008), 216–27.

weapons will not have a significant impact on extended deterrence outcomes when the potential aggressor is a nonnuclear power. A credible deterrent is highly dependent on the defender's military capability in inflicting military costs on the attacker in a conflict situation and the motivation to use those capabilities.[27]

According to Johnson, Leeds, and Wu, deterrence threats are more likely to be credible when the potential challenger is willing to spend a certain amount of expenses. This shows that the credibility and capability of states in an alliance amplifies each other in reaching a deterrence success.[28] The probability of a dispute or crisis escalation is very low if faced by an alliance with a high level of credibility and capability. On the other side, Fearon stated that challengers, who initiated disputes despite recognizing that the target has competent allies, are convinced that the alliance is not credible. Thus, a credible and capable threat can be identified as the determinant for the success of extended deterrence policy.[29] In the case study of the US-ROK alliance, the US and ROK need to have both credibility and the capability of the alliance to successfully deter the military development of DPRK.

Several determinants contribute to the credibility of a threat in deterrence theory, which will be utilized as analytical tools in the upcoming

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[27] Paul K. Huth, "Extended Deterrence and the Outbreak of War," *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 2 (June 1988): 424, https://doi.org/10.2307/1957394.

[28] Jesse C. Johnson, Brett Ashley Leeds, and Ahra Wu, "Capability, Credibility, and Extended General Deterrence," *International Interactions* 41, no. 2 (February 23, 2015): 329, https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2015.982115.

[29] Ibid., 312.

chapters. First, **the range of shared interests** that can be constructed through concrete actions, such as military disposition, foreign policies, etc. As James D. Morrow stated, "Alliances thus gain credibility as the allies indicate a broad range of shared interests through their foreign policies."[30] Hence, a potential challenger is less likely to raise a dispute against states and/or alliances that have a similar foreign policy position. Concerning the case study, this specific point can be determined by the similarity of national interests within the US-ROK alliance. Second, **a strong accumulated capability** in an alliance would hinder any potential challenger from attacking. This is due to the potential cost of a dispute which would have a higher stake than not escalating to a conflict, especially when a strong alliance would have a high possibility of intervention by the major allies. It can be seen through the joint military capabilities that should be more than the challenger's capabilities, especially economic and military.[31]

Third, an alliance that has **a higher peacetime military coordination** will have a higher chance of successfully deterring a potential challenger. The capability of coordinating effectively to execute a game plan is a crucial factor in hindering any attacks from a potential challenger. This can be analyzed through the amount of joint military exercises between the US and ROK. Therefore, an alliance with stronger peacetime military coordination may

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[30] James D. Morrow, *Alliances: Why Write Them Down?*, 1st ed., vol. 3, 2000, 63–83.
[31] Jesse C. Johnson, Brett Ashley Leeds, and Ahra Wu, "Capability, Credibility, and Extended General Deterrence," in *International Interactions* 41 (2015): 316.

appear to be more credible to potential challengers. Lastly, **willingness to face threats and pay a higher cost** would attract more capable or credible allies. The aforementioned willingness would make the alliance more credible, as the challenger believes the alliance will sacrifice and escalate to a dispute at any cost. It can be shown by the amount of funding from the national capital that has been allocated to the military, research program, or any development related to the issue.[32]

1.6. Research Methods and Data Collection Techniques

In researching the data, this thesis applies several data collection techniques, such as web crawling, digital research, and recycling official statistics data. From the mentioned data collection techniques, the author has created data safe in the form of figures and tables to assist the research comprehension. Other than that, the author also included appendixes to show the relevance of data to the case study. This thesis uses mostly primary and secondary resources, such as journal articles, books, official publications, and news outlet articles.

To analyze the data collection, this thesis applies narrative analysis and deductive logic to further analyze the case study. With both research methods, the author believes that it would elaborate the topic more comprehensively,

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[32] Jesse C. Johnson, Brett Ashley Leeds, and Ahra Wu, "Capability, Credibility, and Extended General Deterrence," in *International Interactions* 41 (2015): 318.

emphasizing more on the description of states' underlying interests and the role of an alliance. As this thesis applies deductive logic, the author has constructed a general hypothesis that will be used for the relevant analysis of the study case.[33] The hypothesis is the US-ROK alliance might failed to deter the DPRK due to the wavering credibility of the alliance. Thus, the hypothesis serves as the course of research in analyzing the US-ROK alliance deterrence strategy against the DPRK.

According to Alan Bryman, narrative analysis is an approach to analyzing qualitative data that involves people and events. Hereinafter, narrative analysis also applies to data that have been created through multiple research in the form of documents.[34] By applying narrative analysis, the author can discover various perspectives on the issue, especially the US-ROK and DPRK perspectives. Other than that, narrative analysis also provides the author with information on the update of the status quo in real-time to improve the relevance of this thesis.[35] Therefore, the author believes that the aforementioned research methods and data collection techniques are the most appropriate method for analyzing the case study.

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[33] QuestionPro Collaborators, "Inductive vs Deductive Research: Difference of Approaches," QuestionPro, April 6, 2023, https://www.questionpro.com/blog/inductive-vs-deductive-research/#:~:text=Deductive%20research%20is%20a%20type.

[34] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 584.

[35] Anton Wibisono, "Memahami Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, March 6, 2019, https://www.djkn.kemenkeu.go.id/artikel/baca/12773/Memahami-Metode-Penelitian-Kualitatif.html#:~:text=Metode%20kualitatif%20merupakan%20metode%20yang,suatu%20fenomena%20yang%20lebih%20komprehensif

1.7. Thesis Organization

This thesis is segmented into four chapters. **Chapter I** introduces the background of the topic, identifies the problems, and elaborates on the details of the theoretical framework that will be applied further to the topic. In this chapter, the writer elaborates on the previous debate on this topic which led to the stance this thesis is taking, including the research methods and data collection techniques along with their purposes. Subsequently, **Chapter II** explains the US-ROK alliance that is supposedly deterring DPRK's military development, both nuclear and ballistic missiles. In this chapter, the elaboration consists of two sub-chapters, which are separated into two titles "Long-Standing Alliance: The US-ROK Deterrence Strategies" and "Development of DPRK's Nuclear Proliferation: Failure of the US-ROK Deterrence".

Progressing to the topic, **Chapter III** further analyzes the US-ROK alliance with tools from the conceptual framework. In this chapter, the author elaborates on data and analysis that are separated into four sub-chapters, (1) Range of Shared Interests within the US-ROK Alliance, (2) Accumulated Capability of the US and ROK, (3) Peacetime Military Coordination within the US-ROK Alliance, and (4) Willingness of the US-ROK Alliance to Encounter Threats. To sum up, **Chapter IV** concludes the key findings in the

aforementioned chapters while answering the research question. The author also states her opinion on the issue and flatten the weakness of the thesis.