

CHAPTER IV

THE ANALYSIS OF THE NORTH KOREA'S MOTIVES AND IMPACT IN CONDUCTING POLITICAL MANEUVER STRATEGY

In 2018, after the high tension caused by the series of missile and nuclear tests, Kim Jong Un conduct a political maneuver by suddenly discontinuing all of the tests that followed by the act of opening an option to held talks and negotiations. Chapter IV covers the motives and reason underlying the decision of Kim Jong Un political maneuver in preserving the nuclear program. In this chapter, the writer will do the analysis using the National Interest theory and Rational Choice theory.

A. The Starting Point of Kim Jong Un's political Maneuver

In understanding the significant political strategy change conducted by the North Korean supreme leader it is crucial to understand the factors that already contribute in creating such situation. Tension on the Korean Peninsula had reached the highest point when North Korea's supreme leader, Kim Jong Un, did a controversial move by conducting a series of progressive missile and nuclear test during 2017. The series of missile and nuclear test give the warn signal to the world that North Korea able to cause a serious threat. Kim Jong Un known as a leader who have a big and serious ambition towards the development of North Korea's nuclear program. In fact, he is the North Korean supreme leader which has done the highest number in conducting series of missile and nuclear test compared to the all previous North Korean leader. This act of ambition is really threatening the stability of the global security (Chandran, 2017)

Based on the data that collected, Kim Jong Un has conducted 23 missile tests in total. The writer has created a table to provide information towards the detail of missile tests together with the explanation of its missile types and character(Thronton, 2017). The following table is written as below:

Table 4.3 North Korea Missile Launches in 2017

Source : (Thronton, 2017)

North Korea missile launches in 2017		
February 12	KN-15Pukguksong2	The type of missile
March 6	Hwasong-7/ Extended-range Scud Missile (4 missile fired)	Hwasong-7/ ER Scud-Short-range ballistic missile or medium-range ballistic missile Solid-fueled
March 22	Unclear	
April 5	Hwasong-12	Hwasong-12 Intermediate-range ballistic missile Liquid-fueled
April 29	*Unclear	
May 14	Hwasong-12	Hwasong-14 Intercontinental ballistic missile Liquid-fueled
May 21	KN-15 / Pukguksong-2	
May 29	KN-18	Hwasong-15 Intercontinental ballistic missile
June 8	4 surface to ship cruise missiles	
July 4	Hwasong-14	KN-15/ Pukguksong-2 Medium-range ballistic missile
July 28	Hwasong-14	
August 26	2 Scud Missile	KN-18 Medium-range ballistic missile
August 29	Hwasong-12	
September 15	Hwasong-12	

November 29	Hwasong-15	Solid-fueled
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As the world see the tests as the most dangerous act of provocation, Kim Jong Un considered as one of the way of how he conduct his strategy to strengthening his position in the global world. A great number of missiles test was being done significantly and the quality of the missile is also keep increasing. The series of missile tests is not the only thing that shows the hard intention of North Korean supreme leader in showing his powerfulness to the world. Kim Jong Un also conduct the sixth nuclear test that indicate the most successful test so far, until it triggered an artificial earthquake that detected by the scientist.. The test was noted as the North Korea's sixth nuclear test. However, the international scientist and experts argue that North Korea is still yet to discover how to put nuclear warhead in the missile, but the progress of missile itself that already able to reach the US mainland is extremely dangerous and threatening the stability of global world (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018)

If it seen from the pattern, it indicated that there's no possible way for North Korea to stop at this point because its nuclear program development keeps increasing. However, Kim Jong Un shocked the global world by his political maneuver shown in his 2018 new year speech. In his statement Kim Jong Un c(Frank, 2018). The Kim Jong Un's 2018 New Year speech indicate that North Korean once again success in dragging the global world attention. Unlike the previous year, the statement that being delivered is less dangerous and threatening. The North Korean supreme leader that used to known as a stubborn and strict person was able to show his other side of personality. Kim Jong Un become soft and cooling down. He proposing to fix his relationship with South Korea and wished that he could start immediately the peace talks and delivering his wish to send the delegation of North Korea to the Winter Olympic (Orjoux, 2018). The winter Olympic become the new starting point of a long and complex journey of North Korea nuclear program.

However, the writer found during the research that it is not without reason that Kim Jong Un conduct such action. In the middle of the progressive process of his development of nuclear program, Kim suddenly changed his strategy from an act of threatening to an act of accepting (Beth, 2017) All of the controversial actions that was shown by North Korea can't be separated by the fact that the country faith is actually relies in the hand of its supreme leader. Therefore, the ambition of North Korea represent the ambition of the supreme leader itself and Kim Jong Un, who happens to be the current supreme leader, have play a major role in determining which way and steps that should North Korea takes in securing its interest in the global world. It is something that the writer found genuinely unique because the faith of North Korea is determined by Kim Jong Un's actions and behavior. This explained why the significant political maneuver could be done by North Korea, because the political maneuver itself represented the Kim Jong Un behavior. From the year of 2017 that full of missile and nuclear test become a year full of peace that shown by the Kim Jong Un willingness to open for talks and negotiation.

Figure 4.4 Kim Jong Un in showing his ambition towards the nuclear power (left) and his willingness to open for peace and talk dialogue (right)



*(Source: The National Committee on North Korea
<https://www.ncnk.org>)*

The United Nations Security Council sanctions became one of the factors that contribute in explaining why Kim Jong Un conduct his political maneuver.

The sanctions works in such way not be defined in its charter but in the way that they are aimed in Limiting access to a good or service which is being used in a situation of international concern, modifying a country's behavior, and penalizing a country. The sanction is designed to accomplish six major goals as follows:

1. To cap North Korea's oil imports
2. To ban textile exports
3. To put an end additional overseas labor contracts
4. To suppress smuggling efforts
5. To stop joint ventures with other nations
6. To give sanction designated to North Korean government entities

Based on the writer research, this sanction will result in a 30% decrease in total oil imports by cutting off over 55% of refined petroleum products going to North Korea. Oil is the core sector and played a major role in North Korea's effort to build and fund a nuclear weapon. By the sanction that given from United Nations Security Council it would most likely give significant effect to the development of North Korea's nuclear program. This sanction will also ban the export of all textiles, that become a sector that contribute \$760 million through it sales in 2016. Moreover the new measures will prevent overseas workers from earning wages that finance the North Korean regime -- over \$500 million each year -- in addition to cutting off foreign investments, technology transfers and other economic cooperation between countries. The North Korea is faced by the challenge that could effected its economy sector and caused an economy breakdown (Cohen, 2017)

Beside the sanctions, North Korea also suffered from the pressure by the countries across the world. There are several countries that took a strong respond in countering the North Korea's nuclear program.

Those countries include the instruction from Peru's foreign ministry that ordered North Korea's ambassador to leave the country followed by the act of Mexico government in ejecting Pyongyang's representatives. Moreover the United States that become the one who proposed and initiated the draft sanction, is also got supported by North Korea's allies, which are China and Russia in terms of supporting the sanction (Thronton, 2017)

All of the pressure that received by the North Korea both in the form of sanctions or broken relation with another country left Kim Jong Un with no other choice but to conduct a new strategy. This is the starting point where Kim Jong Un started to conduct a political maneuver marked by the statement that he delivered in his new year speech as previously explained. The writer analyze that this annual speech always marked the Kim Jong Un's strategic move for the next one year. In 2017, Kim Jong Un give his speech with full of tension situation and shocking news that he would start to focus on the development of Intercontinental ballistic missile. This is being done after Kim Jong Un successfully conduct nuclear test, indicate the possible threat that he could create to the International Community. The world was shocked and various respond was made. The 2018 new year speech works in such way as after the series of escalate tension in the form of nuclear and missile test, all of sudden the North Korean supreme leader start to cooling down and lowering the tension. This marked the starting point of Kim Jong Un political maneuver, a next level strategic move that he never conduct before and also a prove of his neo-analytical and cognitive personality (Matherly, 2015)

B. Political maneuver as Kim Jong Un's new strategy

The Kim Jong Un's political maneuver is being done by conducting political move through policies and actions in a very different way unlike before. An act of maneuver means a skillful plan, action, or movement that is used to give someone an advantage. This definition aligned with the action that being done by Kim Jong Un. By lowering his tension and ambition towards his progressive nuclear program and dramatically move to willingness in having peace talks and negotiations unlike he's never done before have proving that Kim Jong Un really conduct a significant political maneuver. This political maneuver can be done because Kim Jong Un was in the best position after the successful year in terms of nuclear and missile tests development in 2017 (Welna, 2018)

The writer analyze that Kim Jong Un have already reached the point where he have no other option but to conduct a political maneuver. Despite the sanctions that could create a serious threat in economy sector, Kim Jong Un have a strong enough position and bargaining power in negotiation table. This is proven by the fact that the world already saw the capability of North Korea military power by the series of missile and nuclear tests (Chanlett, 2017). The last missile test indicate that North Korea have successfully developed an inter-continental ballistic missile that able to reach the United States mainland. Along with that, the result of North Korea sixth nuclear test that claimed as the hydrogen bomb and caused artificial earth-quake also showed that Kim Jong Un is really taking serious in keep increasing his nuclear power. All of these facts have strengthening Kim Jong Un's position in the way that he already drag the world attention to really focus on how they should respond the Kim Jong Un's action.

In addition with the given sanction from United Nations Security Council that could caused a further decline in North Korea's economy sector, this is the perfect time for Kim Jong Un to re-arrange his strategy in securing his country interest in both saving the economy from the breakdown and keep preserving his progressive nuclear program at the same time.

The Kim Jong Un political maneuver also can be seen in how he conduct his move and action unlike he never done before. The North Korean supreme leader is known as a strong and firm person in defending his stance. Moreover if it related with the United States, a country that often threaten North Korea. However, Kim Jong Un surprisingly create an offer to meet president Trump for talks. A US president that in the previous year has become Kim Jong Un strongest opponent because of the controversial statements and actions that was being made. This progress followed by the Kim Jong Un's meeting with the meeting with Mike Pompeo in Pyongyang.

In The Worker's Party Third Plenum, Kim Jong Un again conduct his political maneuver by declared an end to nuclear and long-range missile tests(Kelly, 2018). This represented a highly unusual set of unilateral concessions by a North Korean leader. After the huge success in previous year with a high number of missile test and progressive sixth nuclear test, all of sudden Kim Jong Un decided to stop his ambition in the development of nuclear program. This signaled that Kim Jong Un is ready to entering the new stage of his leadership, which is in the negotiation talks and diplomatic forum. The Political Maneuver also shown in the way that Kim Jong un that known as a person who protect his country from the eye of the world press and not applying the idea of the freedom of journalism in his country suddenly invited foreign journalists to observe the destruction of test tunnels at its nuclear test site at Punggye-ri (Hecker, 2019)

The progress followed by the second meeting with appointed Secretary of State Pompeo, and released three Americans who had been previously imprisoned in the North. The release of three Americans also indicated the effect of Kim Jong Un political maneuver, because Kim also known as a leader that not put attention in humanitarian issues (Watch, World Report : North Korea Events 2017, 2017)

In terms of North Korea-South Korea relation, Kim Jong Un also conduct a significant political maneuver. It was firstly marked by the decision in sending North Korea delegation in Winter Olympic along with the Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong to lead the delegation and deliver his personal message to South Korean president. Hence, for the first time ever, Kim Jong Un held a meeting with Moon Jae In. Despite the situation of both counties that still technically at war because there was no peace agreement signed, the leaders of this two country could finally held a meeting. The both country keep continuing the progress by holding the same meeting until it reach the 3 time meeting in total so far. The Kim Jong Un political maneuver by attending these meeting made progress by fleshing out several proposals for inter-Korean cooperation, including cross-border exchanges, disarmament of the Joint Security Area, and numerous areas of economic cooperation, including special economic zones and the establishment of rail and road connections across the DMZ. Implementation of these measures requires specific waivers from UNSC sanctions, which have only slowly and incrementally been forthcoming.

In addition, the significant progress also happen at the summit the two militaries signed a separate comprehensive military agreement covering a wide range of confidence-building and tension-reduction measures along the DMZ. (Hecker, 2019)

Kim Jong Un keep making a significant progress by holding a meeting with China's president Xi Jin Ping. For the first time ever also, Kim Jong Un despite any threat that he could achieve, conduct his visit to other country. The meeting mainly discussed the possible further relation between North Korea and China as well as to ensure that both interest is still secure despite the meeting of North Korea and United States. Kim Jong Un also invited President Xi to visit the North to attend the DPRK's 70th Anniversary of its founding. As a result of Kim Jong Un's political maneuver, China also loosening some of its trade restrictions.

C. The Impact of Kim Jong Un Political Maneuver

Along with the Kim Jong Un's political maneuver there are several impact that is being received by his country. In terms of sanction, the Russian and Chinese enforcement of sanctions may have relaxed to a degree and North Korea continued to implement sanctions evasion measures, including ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum. This lifted sanction could at least create an economy recovery from the breakdown after the sanction given. Moreover, there is no additional UN sanctions were levied on North Korea. The North Korean economy appeared to be stable. Overall, North Korea's diplomatic actions in 2018 reduced the strategic pressure on its economy(Times, 2018)

The situation has improved for the North Korea's economy Kim Jong Un also declared the dual-track byungjin policy to be a success and in doing so shifted the strategic line to focus on improving North Korea's economy (Rajaram, 2013). The market reforms that were implemented many years prior continued to create efficiencies, causing North Korea making major progress in constructions projects, investment projects in the energy sector, and in the significant growth of semi-private business groups.

The fixing relation with China also contributes in North Korea's economic betterment. China has become more willing to again serve as the key source of North Korean imports and as the major destination for its exports. Moreover, long-term investment projects in the energy sector, namely new or remodeled power stations are being finished. This could improve the electric energy supply for private households and the business sector. One visible sign is intensified road traffic in particular north of the capital Pyongyang, exemplified though a growing number of newly built gas and rest stations and an increasing number of minibuses and smaller trucks. Structurally, the trend of large, horizontally integrated business groups has continued (Hecker, 2019)

The impact of Kim Jong Un changing behavior is continuously making a good progress in fixing North Korea relation with other countries. It already reached the point where North Korea and South Korea could actually meet in the diplomatic meeting and generate Panmunjom Declaration (Monhagan, 2018). This is the huge step in fixing the North-South relations that technically still at war. This is considered as one of the most significant breakthrough in the North Korea-South Korea relation. The declaration contained both countries commitment to end the 60-year conflict, resolve the differences in the peaceful ways, and avoid even the risks of provocation. Moreover in this declaration, North Korea really conduct a dramatic maneuver from the previous series of nuclear test to the agreement of no more nuclear tests, missile launches, reconnaissance operations, or even in the low level which is escorted forays into disputed waters by North Korean crab fishermen (Watanabe, 2018)

All of North Korea political maneuver leads to the highest point when it could finally conduct a meeting with United States, the world's most powerful country in the world, at Singapore Summit in June 12th 2018.

During this summit, a joint statement was created with the title of “Joint Statement of President Donald J. Trump of the United States of America and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea at the Singapore Summit”(House, 2018). The point of joint statement is written as follow:

1. The United States and the DPRK commit to establish new U.S.–DPRK relations in accordance with the desire of the peoples of the two countries for peace and prosperity.
2. The United States and the DPRK will join their efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.
3. Reaffirming the April 27, 2018 Panmunjom Declaration, the DPRK commits to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.
4. The United States and the DPRK commit to recovering POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those already identified.

Figure 4.5 Kim Jong Un and Donald Trum Met in US- North Korea in Singapore Summit



(Source : *The Washington Post*,
https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/world/national-security/north-korea-summit/?utm_term=.faa6bbdac349)

As a result of this historical summit, there is several significant changes in the North Korea- United States relation. As a good intention after the summit, Kim Jong Un has decided to skip one of the most symbolic and politically charged events of its calendar: the annual "anti-US imperialism" rally marking the start of the Korean War. This is one of the significant progress that created after the summit, a judging from how North Korea never conduct such action before (Ho, 2018)

The highlight statement of Trump that said he would provide security guarantee to North Korea is also shown in the decision to stopping the war games, a joint military exercise that often offended North Korea because it is considered as an act of provocation. The US also said that it most likely will bring their troops home. Moreover, the North Korea and United States keep indicating the fixing relation between each other. Kim Jong Un, who known as a leader who keep abandoned the humanitarian issue is releasing three US citizen (Haas, 2018). Beside the nuclear issue, the humanitarian issue also contributed in the complex relation between North Korea and United States, by the releasing of three citizen it indicate a good progress between two countries.

D. Kim Jong Un Rational Choice

In understanding the Kim Jong Un decision to conduct political maneuver in preserving its nuclear program, the writer will use the implementation of Rational Choice. According to Graham T. Allison, states are rational actors that formulate their decisions based on their set goals or nation's interests through rational calculations. States would pursue an option or alternative that would benefit them the most and have less cost. It means that state as the actor will naturally choose the most possible option which has a lot benefit and less cost (Allison, 1971).

The way North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un in making his move towards the choice in choosing the strategic move to preserving its nuclear program also depends on which alternative move will give the best benefit for him. In terms of economy sector it could be describe in such way as the state would always strive to adopt a course of action, which brings economic prosperity. It means that in choosing the strategic move, Kim Jong Un should consider several aspects including the economy sector, which become the primary and major focus for a country to survive. The development of nuclear program caused sanctions given from United Nation that impact North Korea economy sector. Therefore the economy sector also contributed in North Korea's decision-making process

In doing the analyses towards the way of Kim Jong Un choose the strategic move to preserve the nuclear program, reflecting from the rational choice decision making model, Kim Jong Un had two possible alternatives. This possible alternative is by using Confrontational Strategy or by using Cooperative Strategy. The confrontational strategy means the way Kim Jong Un conduct his strategy by doing the series of missile and nuclear tests. This strategy considered as an act of provocation to another country and has the high level of risk because it is against the other countries interest and security. On the other hand, the cooperative strategy means the way Kim Jong Un conduct his strategy by opening for peace talks and negotiation. This strategy is less harmful because it is being done by using the soft diplomacy way.

These alternative options are then calculated in terms of costs and benefits it may bring to North Korea. By using this theory, options with less cost and higher benefits that are in line with the state's national interest would be chosen.

The writer already elaborated the points in each section in the following table below:

Table 4.4 Implementation of Rational Choice Theory

Alternative Options	Costs	Benefits
Confrontational Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suffered from economy breakdown caused by the sanction from United Nation - Increasing the possibility of war between North Korea opponents - Created a possible overthrow of power from within because of political instability - The discontinuing of Nuclear Program that caused by lack of materials and resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening North Korea position in military power - National branding of North Korea showing the progress of nuclear development
Cooperative Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A possibility of military intervention from United States judging from the use of repeated pattern in Iraq and Libya when those countries giving up its nuclear power - A potential risk in giving up North Korea nuclear power without an equal compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recover from economy breakdown due to the lifting of sanctions - Create a better situation by doing reconciliation with South Korea - Get a privilege to entering the world stage to meet with world leaders, getting legitimacy over his power - Lowering the tension, giving a chance for North Korea to recover from political instability - The Success of using “Time delaying tactic” strategy of Kim Jong Un in preserving its nuclear program

In understanding the case of Kim Jong Un political maneuver in preserving its nuclear program, there are two possible way which are confrontational strategy and cooperative strategy. Both has its own cost and benefit. However after doing the analyses using the theory of rational choice it was founded that the cooperative strategy has more benefit and less cost compared to the confrontational strategy. It is suitable with the theory that explained options with less cost and higher benefits that are in line with the state's national interest is most likely be chosen. Moreover, the confrontational strategy is considered as the North Korea's past solution and in order to survive with the present challenges Kim Jong Un as the supreme leader should re-arrange the best strategy to keep securing his state's interest.

The confrontational strategy was effective when the North Korea still able to manage the pressures from external, the political instability from within and the decline of economy sector. It was the old method used by the Kim Jong Un and previous supreme leader as tool for bargaining power. It has already explained in the previous chapter that the end of Six-Party talks marked the beginning of the end in using the confrontational strategy. Because this strategy was being used in such way when North Korea firstly conduct some act of provocation by keep developing its nuclear program while also demonstrating missile and nuclear test.

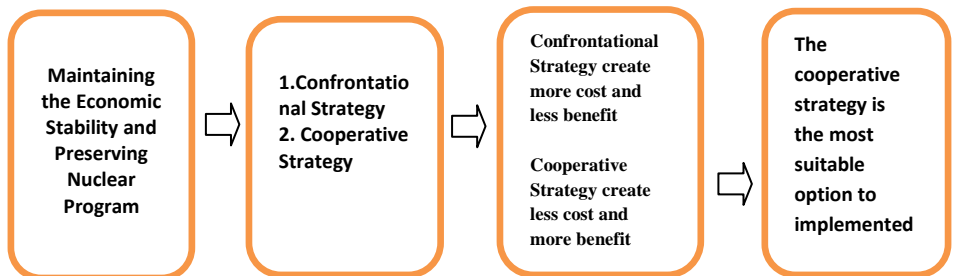
The North Korea create an act of provocation that attract the global world attention, making the International Community held a talks and meeting to discuss the peaceful and best way, Through this forum of talks and meeting, North Korea execute their power to bargain, stating that its country willing to commit in denuclearization while in the other hand set the strategy to recovering their nuclear program or it known as Kim Jong Un "Time-Delaying Tactics". This tactic work in such way that North Korea seems to be cooperative by the willingness to give its nuclear power.

While the fact is North Korea preparing all the things that he needs to create the best timing in conducting and developing its nuclear program again. This is the strategy and repeated pattern that always being used by North Korea back then.

Based on the second model of Graham T. Allison that the writer used as theoretical framework, decision making are begin with defining the goals of the state first, then it is influenced and shown by the state behavior. After that the state would listing all the possible options in achieving the objective(Allison, 1971)

Then, the state evaluated all the remaining options and finally the state chose the best and most efficient option to achieve the goals. The writer provided a table for comprehensive detail as written below:

Table 4.4 The Process in achieving suitable option



The cooperative strategy is the most suitable option for Kim Jong Un as the North Korean leader to save his country from economy decline and securing his interest to keep in the chair of leadership as well as maintain his nuclear program. The cooperative strategy works by reducing all of North Korean ambition towards nuclear program, showing a good intention to another countries that will initiate a meeting or talk forum, and to be more cooperative towards the steps provided by International Community.

In 2018, the North Korea has already changed its method and approaches from confrontational become cooperative. It can be seen from the very first time Kim delivered his statement in annual speech/ stating that he would stop doing the missile and nuclear test, followed by the act of reconciliation with South Korea after winter Olympic then signing of Panmunjom Declaration. Then the history was being made in Singapore during the first US-North Korea summit. All of the series of good and progressive event keep happening and creating a benefit for North Korea. The fact that in the Singapore summit there was no significant outcome in terms of dismantlement of North Korea nuclear program, indicate that North Korea once again success in preserving its nuclear program.

It has perfectly done in such way when North Korea getting all the privilege by the lifting of sanctions, the fixing of relation, the legitimacy that earned during the dragging world' attention and at the same time until the present time still could manage to preserving its nuclear program without any significant progress in nuclear dismantlement. When the world could not get the security guarantee from the North Korea's nuclear weapon, Kim Jong Un could still maintaining its nuclear program and at the same time could reach an outstanding and significant outcome that is being shown in the numerous successful peace talks and declarations that was being made during this period of time.