

THE KIM JONG UN POLITICAL MANEUVER IN PRESERVING NUCLEAR PROGRAM (2018)

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Abstract

The North Korea known as a country that have a strong ambition towards nuclear development. Kim Jong Un as the supreme leader have prove to the world the capability of North Korea's nuclear program. However, in 2018 Kim Jong Un conduct a political manueverin preserving his nuclear program. This paper aims to answer the qestion about why the Kim Jong Un conduct a political manuever in preserving nuclear program. The method used is descriptive qualitative method by utilizing secondary data. While the technique of collecting data through library research. The theory used in this study is national interest and rational choice. The study found out that the reason why Kim Jong Un conduct political manuever is because he already reach the point where he get the world acknowledgment of his ability in developing nuclear program that strengthening his position in the negotiation table and also he need to change his move from using the confrontational strategy into cooperative strategy in order to achieve a better outcome that could save his country from the economy sanction as well as to preserve North Korea's nuclear program

Keyword (s) : Political Maneuver, Nuclear Program, North Korea, Kim Jong Un, Strategy

Background

The North Korea is known as a country which always surprised the global world with its political maneuver and strategies. The actions that was being done as a result of North Korea's policies can explain how dynamic and fluctuate the country is. Different approaches were being used to deal with different issues such as in the context of internal country's aspect that related with humanitarian issues which drag the global world attention, a long yet unresolved conflict with its fellow neighborhood South Korea that always have its ups and down through times and its complex and dynamic situation related with its nuclear program development that affect the stability of global world (Watch, 2017). All of those things mentioned before make North Korea be seen by the world as a country that has the political instability and as a country that has the ability to create a threat. The way North Korea deals with other countries related certain issues are various and fluctuate through times depends on what kind of motive behind it. Every maneuver is certainly needed in order to adapt with the situation as well as to secure North Korea's interests and goals.

North Korea is known as a country that led by the supreme leader which has the highest power and position in that country. As a socialist country which its one highly centralized part stated, The Supreme leader has the full right in determining the country's direction that was being done through its policies. Through times, the faith of North Korea relies on the supreme leader. It depends on how the supreme leader would act with the issues that faced by the country. This situation explain why North Korea always experiencing such a dynamic and fluctuate situation. The dynamic situations occurred in several things such as in the economy sector which is never stable, in terms of human rights where the freedom of expression including the freedom of press and also in its controversial nuclear development. It has reach the point where the Nuclear Program affect the North Korea relations with other countries and how they positioning themselves in the global world.

The way North Korea maintain its nuclear program is so various through times. It depends on the period of time and on the specific current geopolitical situations. Every decisions including the ratification of treaty until the withdrawal from the treaty has shown the changing North Korea behavior in conducting its decision (Thronton, 2017).

The changing of North Korea behavior can be analyzed through two different aspects. From the internal aspect as previously mentioned, it is because the North Korea supreme leader which has the authority and capability to make a legitimate decision that should be followed by the country. On the other hand, from the external aspect, the dynamic global situation that could not be predict and always changing make North Korea also need to think it's move by conducting such a political maneuver to tackle all of the things that North Korea consider as a threat for its national interest. The pressure by the global world countries and the sanctions that given by the UN make North Korea should find a new way and method in order to be able to keep maintaining its national interest. The political maneuver and different approaches were being used by North Korea as the solution to deal with this pressure. One of the action that ever conducted by North Korea was by the destroying of its water cooling tower at the Yongbyon nuclear facility. It is a tactic that being used by North Korea that they can be cooperative. However, Just after countries in the world thought that North Korea finally giving up its nuclear program, in 2009 North Korea conduct its second nuclear program. This phenomenon shows that the behavior of North Korea is unpredictable and dynamic.

The dynamic situations and fluctuate tensions keep happening ever since. North Korea kept conducting its political maneuver to secure its political interest. The significance change occurred in 2017 where in this period of time North Korea had entering the new level in their relation with the global world, especially with US under Trump administration. North Korea during this time keeps conducting its missile test. It was happened several times over the years. Although it was believed that North Korea statement in declaring that they have the ability to actually produce and create nuclear weapon is not proven but still the missile test is something that threatening the global world security. While keep claiming about the ability to create a nuclear weapon, North Korea have successfully developing its missile weapon that could eventually carry the nuclear warhead.

This missile is categorized as Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and it is believed to have a range capable of hitting the entire continental United States, according to estimates from the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018). North Korea did 3 tests in ICBM as the way of its country show to the world that this country can't be underestimated as well as to strengthening the North Korea bargaining power.

The significant North Korea's political maneuver occurred in the beginning of 2018, where this country once again did a surprising move that drag global world's attention. After the several missile tests that showed North Korea's aggressiveness, suddenly that country become soft and cooling down. It was all started when the supreme leader of North Korea bravely and surprisingly gave his New Year speech about its political maneuver. Firstly began with the explanation and clarification that the reason behind the development of nuclear program is only for the sake of self-defense and serves to deter the US from its military intervention to North Korea (Ruedige, 2018). Then followed by how the North Korea and South Korea should fix their relationship and he said during the speech declaring his wish "for peaceful resolution with our southern border". The leader of North Korea 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)

A dramatic change was occurred as a result of North Korea's political maneuver. From a country that known as a country who always use the hard tension and tough way in dealing with things and from the supreme leader of Kim Jong Un characteristic that always filled with anger and tension suddenly began to cool down and the tension become lower. There was no trace of such humility. North Korea under Kim Jong Un administration presents himself as a strong and self-confident leader who is in full control of everything. It is a dramatic change for what had happened in the previous year when all the approaches that was being used by North Korea is through its nuclear weapon missile test. This action is being done not without reason. It is considered as one of the North Korea strategies in preserving its Nuclear Program by conducting such a political maneuver, from using the aggressive way into using the soft way. It was effectively proven by this strategy could bring North Korea to the diplomacy table with South Korea and generate *Panmunjom Declaration* (Monhagan, 2018).

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 missile test to the agreement of no more development of its nuclear program, 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. A small country like North Korea could drag global world attention by its nuclear development program and then finally used it to "force" them to the negotiation table. Based on this situation it could be seen that North Korea really used a different approach in conducting its foreign policy. From using a hard diplomacy by conducting missile test until soften its way to open for talks and negotiation. Seeing from this aspect, so far it is proven that North Korea played it well. However the remaining questions about the reason why North Korea conduct such a political maneuver need to be analyze in this undergraduate thesis.

In understanding as well as analyzing the fluctuation and political maneuver of the way North Korea's preserve their Nuclear Program, the writer need to conduct a deep analyses and observation. It is a fact that North Korea has always conducted such a maneuver through times to secure their national interest. It was being done to tackle the sanctions from UN, to increase their economy sector, to avoid the pressure from the global world and all other challenges and obstacles. (Thronton, 2017). The changing of behavior that is shown in how they conduct their policies to faced the global challenge is something that the writer eager to analyze more deeply in order to find out what is the truly reason behind the North Korea political maneuver in 2017-2018.

Therefore, based on the case that already explained, the reason behind the writer decided to seek and conduct research about the analysis of North Korea's political maneuver in preserving its nuclear program is to find what is the reason behind that maneuver so that it can lead to what kind of outcomes that can be considered as an output from that maneuver.

In a more comprehensive way this is all about how North Korea's conduct its strategy by the political maneuver in dealing with the new method in preserving its nuclear program. The writer does admit that this topic is complicated and hard because the level of complexity is pretty high. However the spirit and good will to analyze and conduct a deeper research in this topic is considered bigger than the obstacles that are being faced. In order to fulfill the required data and information, the writer already arranged systematically about what should be written in this undergraduate thesis and which method should be used in collecting all of the data and information.

Theoretical Framework

In order to conduct a further research towards The Analysis of North Korea's Political Maneuver in Preserving Nuclear, the writer, after several considerations would like to use The Concept of National Interest as the basic firm in the theoretical framework. The idea of the choosing this concept is to make the writer easier to do analysis and deeper research towards the topic. This concept is considered the most appropriate concept in helping to conduct analysis because there are so many relevant aspects.

1. National Interest

The concept of National Interest is considered very crucial in the International Relations aspect. It is one of the key concepts and played a dominant role in analyzing and observing the International Relations issue. Basically, every state in the world has its own national interest. All of the states in the world are always engaged in the process of securing their goals of national interest. Specifically, in formulating the foreign policy states use their national interest as their basic firm in determining what action should be took and what kind of policy should be made.

It is become universal agreement that every state in this world could have the right to secure its national interest. That's why a state always tries to justify its actions in the basis of its national interest because it is something that could not be separated and it is related each other.

Based on the writer's research, National Interest also become the major and dominant factor in conditioning and governing the state behavior. In order to make it more comprehensively understand, the writer will explain this theoretical framework based on the definition by Hans J. Morgenthau. The meaning of national interest is survival—the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nation-states (Scheuerman, 2009).

In defining the national interest it includes a residual meaning which is immanent in the idea itself but over and above this minimum requisite its content can run the whole gamut of meanings which are logically compatible with it. Moreover, there are two factors that should be understood in examining the concept of National Interest. First, it is rationally demanded and therefore of necessity. The second is changeable and decided by situations. (Kiyono, 1969).

Based on that basic firm, the concept of national interest is very suitable and relevant to analyze this undergraduate thesis. In understanding and analyzing the North Korea political maneuver strategy it is surely also involved the North Korea's national interest. Nuclear Program is considered as the "legitimate tool" or "bargaining power" for North Korea. A small country located in the East Asia that categorized as under-develop country which has low economy rate could have significant role in affecting the stability of global world especially in the terms of security and peace because the ability of North Korea in developing its nuclear program. The writer do believe, speaking based on the research, North Korea would not be in this position, a position where a small country really drag the global world attention, if not because its nuclear weapon.

The argument of North Korea political maneuver in preserving its nuclear program is aligned with the concept of national interest is proven by the two factors that already mentioned above which is the writer quote "is rationally demanded and therefore of necessity" (Kiyono, 1969). It is become a rational demand and also a necessity for North Korea to preserve its nuclear program because it is something that could become a tool to bargain in the global world.

North Korea is a country that learn from the history that a country which used to have a strong bargaining power, once they eliminated it, the country also will terminated. It can be seen from the track record in Ukrania and Afghanistan when they finally hand over they nuclear program they were easily destroyed. Preserving nuclear program become a necessity

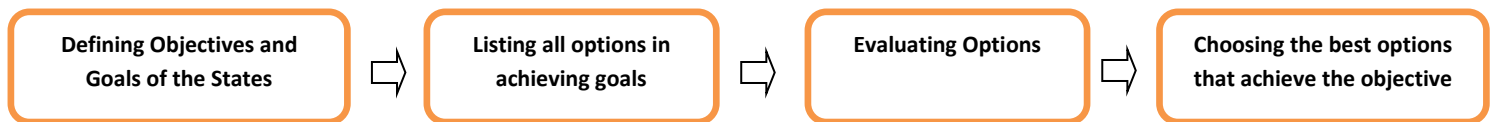
because it is also a result of national interest in determining the North Korea behavior and action to the global world. It is showing that North Korea could not be underestimated and eventually it will be used as a tool to negotiate. The second factor which is “changeable and decided by situations” is also matched with the issue that being discussed which is currently, North Korea facing the new policy called Complete, Verifiable and Irreversible Dismantlement (CVID) Policy. The concept of national interest became a basic firm in explaining the reason why North Korea used a different way and approaches in preserving its nuclear weapon. As explained before that North Korea in 2017 used a hard way in preserving its nuclear program. It was being done through missile launches and several weapon demonstrations. The goal is to show to the world that a country that used to be known as its will to develop nuclear weapon now already become a country that could actually not only create, but also demonstrate a nuclear weapon. The result is extremely significant. The world leaders held a meeting to discuss the North Korea’s action in the Security Council and as an outcome the sanction is being made.

In 2018, the dramatic and significant change occurred when North Korea became more soft and cooling down. It is proven by the willingness of North Korea in sending their delegation to the Winter Olympic (Kelly, 2018). The North Korea’s behavior based on the understanding of national interest concept could finally lead this country into the whole new level in preserving its nuclear program. It is proven by the series of accomplishment in North Korea gaining the global world’s recognition in to legitimate North Korea. After decades the North Korea and South Korea leaders met in their border and create the declaration of Panmunjeom, the US-North Korea Summit in Singapore and other significant result is a prove that North Korea is actually make a progress in preserving its nuclear program through their political maneuver based on the basic firm of understanding of national interest concept.

2. Rational Choice

Rational choice is one of the major approaches to the postwar study of international relations. It has helped define contemporary theoretical debates about international politics and has advanced understanding of such topics as the implications of anarchy and the possibility of cooperation. International Relation’s actors such as States, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations or multinational corporations, are intangible concepts that can only act through human beings. In understanding how leaders, stakeholders, and decision-makers make their decisions and actions it is needed some kind of appropriate

approach. Rational choice theory emerged as one of the attempt to explain how and why actors conduct such a certain behavior (Snidal, 2012). Based on the research, the rational choice is a kind of foreign policy framework analysis that was first introduced in 1971 by Graham T. Allison. The core idea of this theory lies in its attempt to explain the foreign policies adopted by states by having a setting of objectives and rational calculations of the policies that being made. In this theory, Allison applied two key assumptions on how states formulate decisions in in international relations. First, the state is said as a single actor that has set of goals and capacities in pursuing these objectives. Second, this single actor pursues the objectives in a rational manner (Allison, 1971). In order to make it easier to understand the writer provide a scheme that explain the rational decision-making model by Graham T. Allison



In understanding this model according to Graham T. Allison, the steps in rational choice in rational decision making are begin with defining the goals of the state, it is influenced and shown by the state behavior. After that the state would listing all the possible options in achieving the objective. Then, the state evaluated all the remaining options and finally the state chose the best and most efficient option to achieve the goals.

In adopting a decision, the decision makers under this model would evaluate the options through listing available alternatives and considering the costs and benefits from those alternatives.

Table. Rational Actor Table: Cost and Benefit

Options	Cost	Benefit
Alternative A	Yes	Yes
Alternative B	Yes	Yes

In this undergraduate thesis, this model will be used in explaining and examining the decision making process behind the North Korea’s political maneuvers. The model is matched and compatible to explain the reason why North Korea under Kim Jong Un administration conduct such a political maneuver in preserving its nuclear program in the range of time between 2017-2018. By using the rational choice theory, it can be understand

that all political maneuvers that applies in the form of policies was all approved by the stakeholders, especially Kim Jong Un as the supreme leader. All of the policies that being made have been through long process of consideration and determined on the advantages and disadvantages that the policy would bring to the North Korea. The chosen alternative, which in this context is the political maneuver, must be the best alternative that can achieve its perceived goals and national interest. In applying the Graham T. Allison's rational choice model, the political maneuver that was being done by North Korea will be explain specifically and particularly about the way North Korea turns its method and approaches by using the soft diplomacy through peace talks and negotiations rather than the previous method which is using hard diplomacy through missile test that was all is being done in one purpose which is to keep maintaining its nuclear program at all cost.

The researcher has identified and analyzed the alternatives that are being used by North Korea in conducting its political maneuver and also discovered the considerations behind it so that can be applied in the rational choice model by Graham T. Allison. As previously explained that rational choice theory, in a simple way explanation, is the theory that argues human behavior can be explained in terms of rational choices of individuals. Therefore the North Korea's political maneuver is an act and a result of the rational choices made by the people. The researcher has identified that North Korea actually has two alternatives in preserving its nuclear program which is using the hard way and using the soft way. All of alternatives has its own cost and benefits. The hard way which is shown by the missile test and the act of provocation to other country is surely has its own impact. So does the soft way which is being done by peace talks.

The North Korea's decision to conduct political maneuver from using the hard approach into using the soft approach has its own impacts and results. The North Korea gained its legitimacy and approval when they show to the world their capability in conducting their missile test that able to carry nuclear warhead. Although there are no scientific or absolute prove that North Korea could actually create a weapon based on nuclear, the significance progress towards the capability of missile and the various number of test make North Korea become a country that could not be underestimated. However, the result of this action is sanctions and embargos by the UN. This caused a significant hit in the North Korea's economy sector. In the other hand, by using the soft approach, North Korea could actually bring all of the parties in the negotiation table. It is proven by the peace talks and agreements that already created. By using the Rational Choice theory, the researcher would be able to conduct a deep analysis and observation towards the reason behind North Korea's

political maneuver along with its cost and benefits as well as the implication. Therefore this theory is considered as the most suitable and matched in helping the researcher in working on this undergraduate thesis.

Conclusion

Finally, after doing all of the research and observation that was being done through deep analysis and understanding by using the relevant theories it was founded that there is a strong motive behind the Kim Jong Un's decision in conducting political maneuver to preserve nuclear program. There are so many variables and aspect that contribute in the decision-making process that could bring Kim Jong Un to the point where he should conduct political maneuver. The writer, after conduct a deep analysis by using the theoretical framework have come to the conclusion.

The reason why Kim Jong Un conduct a political maneuver in preserving nuclear is because Kim Jong Un need to use different approach in order to achieving different and better outcome by changing the strategy from the previous way using the confrontational strategy shown by the series of missile and nuclear test into cooperative strategy by opening peace talks and negotiations. Kim Jong Un have already reach the most important aspect he need, which is "the world acknowledgement" on the capability of Kim Jong Un nuclear program. This situation strengthening Kim Jong Un's position and bargaining power in the negotiation table. The timing is perfect for Kim Jong Un's to conduct political maneuver by changing his move from confrontational into cooperative because the world has witnessed the serious threat that could North Korea brings, so in order to stop any possible new and escalate threat, the Kim Jong Un's opponent consider the peace talk and negotiation as a way of solution. Kim Jong Un would not adopt this solution and implementing this cooperative political maneuver strategy if he not have a good preparation and plan towards it.

Moreover, the supporting reason is also because the sanction that given by United Nation Security Council that aimed in causing an economy breakdown in North Korea. Kim Jong Un as the supreme leader that has responsibility in making sure the country's survival have to consider any possible option that could works in two different aspect that become his major interest whcih is economy recover and the preservation of nuclear proram. The political manuever strategy by using the cooperative strategy have proven as the best way to deal with this situation.

The fact that Kim Jong Un keep achieving a numerous of good result after conducting his political manuever have shown that this move is very effective and suitable for North Korea. Despite the Singapore. North Korea couldl get all the privilege shown 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 able to preserving its nuclear program without any significant progress in nuclear dismantlement. By conducting political manuever, Kim Jong Un have lead his country to a better and progressive direction.

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