



## NORTH KOREAN DEFENCE POLICY BY KIM JONG-UN: A BRIEF APPROACH

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About North Korea, its politics, governance, society and other particularities, much has been written over and over again, helping to build a mysticism around one of the world's most isolated yet popular nations. But this position of popularity is not exclusively the result of its refusal to be open and the resulting curiosity of the international community about the unknown, but has a clear explanation: its security and defence policy.

Since its establishment as an independent state in 1945 by its first leader Kim Il-Sung (김일성), during the inter-Korean conflict, the People's Republic of Korea has been a state born out of the conflict and confronted by the great military power of the time, the United States, making this fact highly relevant to its military and defence policy, as well as its ideology.

Although the Juche ideology maintains and structures the precepts on which Korea's defence is justified and prioritised, which I will mention later, the development of these policies did not become so relevant to the international scene until the arrival of the third and last supreme leader, Kim Jong-Un. His predecessors had a more domestic outlook, with an almost exclusive external presence in the surrounding countries and allied socialist-communist nations.

Despite its conception of itself as a communist nation, North Korea flies the flag of its own ideology, Juche, a political theory that criticises the relevance of the proletarian mass as the centre, raising the person or social individual and community, and its basic characteristics or attributes such as independence, creativity and conscience, which create and sustain society. On the basis of this ideology, his defence thinking is structured, the most important line of which is centred on arming the people to make their defences impregnable, making possible the implementation of Juche, encouraging the participation of the whole people on the basis of a "solid political and ideological unity of the entire population and a self-supporting national economy".

In other words, on the basis of this constant threat, present since its birth, the PRC concretised and developed its security and defence policy on the basis of its own self-preservation and defence of its independence against external threats. Not only military, but also cultural, commercial, economic and any other kind of threats that might interfere with its customs and practices.

On this basis, we can begin to develop what is relevant in Jong-Un's era at the country's command and why there is a radical change in his defence policy.

First and foremost, it is important to understand the context in which the new security policy is taking shape. North Korea has been a nuclear weapons state for several decades, and its weapons programme has been a source of significant tension in the region. In recent years, there have been attempts to improve relations between North Korea and the rest of the world, including talks between Kim Jong-un and leaders such as Donald Trump and Moon Jae-in. However, these efforts have met with mixed results, and tensions remain high.

In this context, Kim Jong-un is believed to be seeking to strengthen his grip on power and ensure the regime's long-term stability. One aspect of this is his focus on the military and security forces, which he has been strengthening and modernising in recent years. This includes the development of new weapons systems, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched missiles, which are intended to deter any potential threat to the regime.

Another aspect of the new security policy is the growing emphasis on cyber security. North Korea has been accused of a number of high-profile cyber-attacks in recent years, and the regime is believed to be investing heavily in its capabilities in this area. This is seen as a way of ensuring that it can continue to operate even in the face of international sanctions, which may limit its access to other forms of technology.

The new leader's more belligerent outlook has marked a turning point in the country's foreign policy, exposing it as a potential and highly relevant threat to its Western neighbours and allies such as South Korea and Japan, as well as to the West as a whole, marking the drift of its external image and thus its international relevance. The current view of North Korea is that of a country with few resources, but excessively armed, whose objective seems to be not only deterrence, but also preparation for future events that require sufficient military force.

All of this presents us with an uncertain outlook for the future, bearing in mind that the inter-Korean conflict is still raging, with a mere armistice in 1953, which does not end but rather relaxes tensions and the military conflict, and that one of the goals of its policy - rather that of both the South and the North, but more so in the North today - is to achieve unification under the rule of Juche.

Turning to the PRC's current military policy, the reality of the region's constant threat from the country's missile testing frenetic is of considerable relevance.

The wave of new threats has increased dramatically in the past year, with almost 70 missiles in total, more than twice the total number fired during his grandfather's and father's terms at the helm of the North Korean nation. This is yet another sign of the new warmongering drift of his foreign policy, supported by China and Russia.

North Korea's increased threats have been a source of concern for the international community, especially its neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region. Most of the missiles fired by North Korea have been tested at sea, and some of them have flown over Japan, which has generated great concern in the country.

Experts believe that North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programme is advancing rapidly, which could pose a threat not only to the region, but also to the entire world. Tension on the Korean peninsula has increased in recent years due to aggressive rhetoric from North Korea, which has repeatedly threatened to attack the United States and its allies.

The international community has tried to contain the North Korean threat through economic and diplomatic sanctions, but these measures seem to have had little effect on Kim Jong-un's regime. On the contrary, it continues with its deterrence project, which peaks on 18 February 2023 with the launch of the Hwasong-15, one of its Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, over Japan's EEZ. This new activity coincides with joint military exercises between South Korea, Japan and the United States. The dictator's sister, Kim Yo-jong, has threatened to turn the Pacific into a "shooting range" and warned that her country will execute a "corresponding response" to its rivals' aerial exercises.

This show of force is not to be interpreted as a mere provocation or other threat strategy, but as a genuine display of the country's capabilities, warning of its ability to carry out tactical nuclear weapons operations. It warns of the foreseeable culmination of the national nuclear programme and the position of strength with which it intends to show itself, taking into account the change of paradigm that can be observed in the order of power, with the increasingly relevant presence of China as a superpower, not only regionally but also internationally.

In conclusion, Kim Jong-un's new security policy is a complex issue, structured by various factors, such as the country's history, its nuclear weapons programme and its political and economic situation. While it is difficult to know with certainty what his plans and policies are, it is clear that he seeks to strengthen the regime and ensure its long-term stability. It remains to be seen whether this will lead to greater stability or increased tensions in the region. It is therefore important that the international community remains engaged with North Korea and seeks to find a peaceful and sustainable solution to the problem. This will require a nuanced and carefully considered approach, taking into account the various factors and interests at stake, and striving to find a path that benefits all parties involved.

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