

**Advanced Institute, Winter 2018  
THE NORTH KOREAN CRISIS  
Instructor: Christopher J. Griffin  
Washington, D.C.**

The North Korean nuclear crisis represents a decades-long failure of policy across multiple administrations of both major parties. It may also be a harbinger of the challenges America will face in a more proliferated world and the choices that may determine the extent of future proliferation. While the urgency of the Korean crisis is obvious, most students do not study this challenge in the proper context of its implications for other nuclear aspirants or the lessons learned from decades of nuclear competition during the Cold War.

The purpose of this seminar will be to remedy this lack of understanding by examining and debating a set of policy questions that extend beyond the immediate standoff with Pyongyang. These discussions will set the basis for conducting a crisis simulation that will provide participants with insights that they may apply in the future to both the North Korean crisis and others around the world.

Participants in this seminar will emerge with a more detailed understanding of the background and current contours of the North Korean nuclear crisis. More importantly, they will understand how the challenges we have faced in responding to North Korea offer important lessons that apply to American efforts to combat Iran's nuclear ambitions as well as Russia and China's revisionist agendas.

***Friday, February 16, 2018***

**4 pm to 6 pm**

**Session 1: North Korea's Nuclear Breakout**

The first session will focus on three turning points in the effort to halt North Korea's nuclear program – the 1994 standoff, the culmination of the Six-Party Talks in 2005-2006, and the transition between the Obama and Trump administrations. These discussions will familiarize participants with the history of North Korea's nuclear program and debate prior administrations' efforts.

*Readings:*

1. Narushige Michishita, *North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1996-2008* (London: Routledge, 2010). Chapters 1, 6, 7, 9.
2. Susan Rice, "It's Not Too Late on North Korea," *The New York Times*, August 10, 2017.
3. Daniel Blumenthal, "It's Time to Reckon with What It Would Really Take to Deter North Korea," *Foreign Policy*, September 9, 2017.
4. Thomas Donnelly, "A Brutal but Reasonable Response to North Korea," American Enterprise Institute, November 15, 2017.

*Recommended Reading (available online):*

1. Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). Chapters 11–13.
2. Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington: Brookings, 2007). Chapters 10–11 and 13.

Questions:

1. Given the information available at the time, was the 1994 Agreed Framework a reasonable resolution to the first North Korean nuclear crisis? Why did it ultimately fail?
2. Why did the Six-Party Talks fail? To what degree did the United States share common interests with other participants in the negotiations? Did the United States, South Korea, and Japan share similar assessments of the North Korean threat during the talks?
3. Under what circumstances, if any, should the Trump administration consider taking military action against North Korea's nuclear weapons program? Is an effort to deter North Korea from using its nuclear weapons likely to be successful over the long run? Do you believe that North Korea's nuclear disarmament may be achieved through negotiations?

**6 pm to 8 pm**

**Welcome Dinner**

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**Saturday, February 17, 2018**

**8:30 am to 9 am**

**Group Breakfast**

**9 am to Noon**

**Session 2: Provocation, Terrorism, & Nuclear Weapons**

Simply calling North Korean military actions “provocations” and “terrorism” fails to fully capture the scope of regime objectives. In reality, Pyongyang has combined military and diplomatic initiatives in efforts to change the behavior of its neighbors, establish legitimacy during leadership succession, and establish tactical advantages over South Korea and the United States. Participants will discuss whether these efforts and U.S. responses have been successful.

Readings:

1. Narushige Michishita, *North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1996–2008* (London: Routledge, 2010). Chapters 3 and 5 (excerpted).
2. Bruce Bechtol, *The Last Days of Kim Jong-Il: The North Korean Threat in a Changing Era* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2013). Chapter 3.
3. B.R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves – And Why It Matters* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2010). Chapters 2 (excerpted) and 5.

4. Andrei Lankov, "Kim Jong Un is a Survivor, Not a Madman," *Foreign Policy*, April 26, 2017.
5. Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Method in North Korea's Madness," *Commentary*, January 16, 2018.

Questions:

1. Why has North Korea sacrificed so much in order to acquire nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them? Is the regime's major goal mere survival, to effect discrete policy outcomes in such areas as the dispute over the Northern Limit Line, or to reunify the peninsula under its own terms?
2. What are the requirements of these varying goals, and to what degree are they mutually compatible or incompatible? With what confidence can analysts conclude North Korea's intent?
3. Have North Korea's "military-diplomatic campaigns," to use Michishita's phrase, been an effective means of furthering its interests?
4. How effectively has the United States and its allies responded to North Korea's military-diplomatic campaigns? As you consider previous instances, such as the Pueblo Incident or the DMZ Axe Murder Incident, would North Korean possession of nuclear weapons have affected American response to these crises?
5. What role has North Korea's provocations played in North Korea's dynastic politics? Has Kim Jong-un's use of military force differed significantly from that of his father or grandfather?

**12:30 pm to 1:30 pm**

**Lunch and Discussion:**

**Guest Speaker: Evan Montgomery, CSBA**  
**"North Korea in the Second Nuclear Age"**

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**1:30 pm to 4 pm**

**Session 3: New Challenges for Extended Deterrence**

The defense of allies from external aggression has been a core objective of American foreign policy for over 70 years. Participants will discuss how North Korea seeks to challenge the credibility of these commitments and American efforts to strengthen them. This will set up a debate on whether the U.S. should seek more dramatic changes – such as a "NATO for Asia" or the proliferation of nuclear weapons to such allies as Japan and South Korea – in response to new challenges.

Readings:

1. T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2008), Chapters 5, 7–8, and 25.

2. Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror," RAND, November 1958 (excerpted).
3. Paul Bracken, *The Second Nuclear Age: Strategy, Danger, and the New Power Politics* (New York: Times Books, 2012), Chapters 8–10.
4. Evan B. Montgomery, *Extended Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age* (Washington: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2016).
5. Bruce Bechtol, *The Last Days of Kim Jong-Il: The North Korean Threat in a Changing Era* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2013). Chapter 4.

Questions:

1. What considerations do you believe will shape North Korea's emerging nuclear capability? Do you foresee an answer to the question of "how much is enough" from North Korea's perspective?
2. How will North Korea's acquisition of the ability to directly threaten the American homeland affect the credibility of our extended deterrence commitments to allies in the region?
3. What measures should the U.S. take to enhance the credibility of its security commitments? Is there a role for a NATO-like arrangement among our allies in the region?
4. Should the U.S. tolerate the proliferation of nuclear weapons to South Korea and/or Japan? Would such a development be compatible with the long-term survival of these alliances?

**6 pm to 8 pm**

**Dinner and Discussion**  
**Guest Speaker: Daniel Blumenthal, AEI**  
**"The Challenge of China"**

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**Sunday, February 18, 2018**

**8:30 am to 9 am**

**Group Breakfast**

**9 am to 12:30**

**Session 4: Crisis Simulation**

**12:30 pm to 3 pm**

**Lunch and Closing Conversation**

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