

The Trajectory of U.S./North Korean Nuclear War: Insights from Kim Jong Un's Rhetoric

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Hours after the Washington Post broke the story that North Korea may have miniaturized a nuclear warhead, enabling its ICBM to deliver a nuclear blow to U.S. soil, President Trump announced that if North Korea continues to provoke, "They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen." About two hours after that, North Korea responded that they were "carefully examining" plans for a missile strike on the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam. This was met by a boast from President Trump that the U.S. nuclear arsenal was more powerful than ever before. Senator John McCain, commenting on President Trump's messages said, "That kind of rhetoric, I'm not sure it helps," and described the situation as, "very, very, very serious." Is this escalation of words catapulting the world to nuclear war?

Ongoing research highlights subtleties in Kim Jong Un's use of language that indicate a distinct possibility that he could easily be provoked to a nuclear confrontation. However, this depends on an accurate assessment of the North Korean leader's state of mind.

Indicators and warnings (I&W) in public speeches indicate national leaders' intentions to test nuclear devices and missiles, and these I&W have been corroborated for Indian and Pakistani leaders as well as Kim Jong Un. Key indicators include expressions of pride, strength and overcoming. Understanding how these I&W are contextualized in a leader's worldview is key to understanding what they might mean.

North Korea's founder, Kim Il Sung, created a state religion, Juche, which frames North Koreans' worldview and involves Korean nationalism, absolute obedience to and sacrifice for a strongman ruler, worship of the Kim family and an unending Manichean struggle against evil imperialists (West and Japan especially). Kim Jong Un relies extensively on Juche to frame all of his political messaging.

Kim Jong Un's use of Juche religious themes nearly perfectly tracks his escalating nuclear weapons capability. In other world leaders, religious language has signaled openness to peace negotiations. The correlation of Kim Jong Un's use of religious language and his testing seems contradictory, and potentially gives hope that he

may be open to peace negotiations. However, worldview can radically change the meaning of these indicators.

Research on terrorist attempts to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction provides insight into how Kim Jong Un views this escalating situation. The key triggers that cause terrorists to pursue WMD are perceived need for extreme tactics, a mindset that favors simplistic solutions, and adherence to a religious ideology that stresses control, anger and identity politics. These characteristics appear to apply to Kim Jong Un entirely. Therefore, rhetoric and actions that reinforce his worldview are likely to cause him to escalate his own rhetoric and aggressive action. The consequences directly imperil the lives of 25 million South Koreans only 35 miles from the border, over a hundred million Japanese, and perhaps Americans in Guam or the lower 48.

The Threat

From a national security perspective, threat is a function of Capability and Intent (Threat = F(C,I)) (Astorino-Courtois & Kuznar, 2011). Today's public announcements by the U.S. intelligence community asserts that North Korea has all but achieved the capability of delivering a nuclear warhead on an intercontinental ballistic missile to the lower 48 states.¹ North Korea may not be there yet, but the capability argument of the threat function appears to be practically filled.

Possessing capability is not enough to constitute a threat, however. One's adversary must also have the intent to use the capability, and for intelligence analysts, this is the most difficult part of the equation to verify. How does an analyst get in the head of an adversary to know what that adversary wishes to do?

NSI has developed a methodology to assess intent and provide indicators and warnings (I&W) of political actors. This methodology has been applied to Kim Jong Un's (KJU) public speeches since 2013. Initial studies provided tentative indicators of KJU's aggressive actions in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs (Kuznar, 2013). Consistent with earlier studies of Pakistani and Indian political leaders (Kuznar, Yager, Clair, & Stephenson, 2012), these initial studies found a negative correlation between the use of metaphysical themes (sacred language, appeals to religion) and aggressive action. A follow-up study corroborated these results (Kuznar, 2017a). However, those findings were confounded by inclusion of coding from a state newspaper, and did not entirely represent KJU's specific rhetoric. Correcting for this error, an extremely strong correlation between KJU's use of metaphysical themes and nuclear/missile provocations emerged.

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/north-korea-now-making-missile-ready-nuclear-weapons-us-analysts-say/2017/08/08/e14b882a-7b6b-11e7-9d08-b79f191668ed_story.html?utm_term=.f64bbae8684c

This presents two possibilities, considering our previous work and the established literature on mass killing terrorism, and both hinge on an accurate assessment of KJU's intent and worldview. This paper explores the possibilities.

A brief exposition of North Korean political philosophy describes how KJU frames, and presumably views, political issues. This cultural profile is followed by a brief description of NSI's discourse analysis methodology. The key I&W of KJU's aggressive intent viz. nuclear and missile technology are presented, and finally the potential implications of these findings are discussed.

North Korean Political Culture

Two concepts are essential for understanding the political culture and ideology of North Korea, Juche and Songun. Furthermore, both of these core concepts have been consciously and heavily propagandized by the state to a populace with few of any other sources of information and therefore lacking any alternative ideological models.

Juche was introduced to North Koreans in a famous speech entitled, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work" by North Korea's founder, Kim Il Sung in 1955 (Oh & Hassig, 2000, p. 17). It is a key concept discussed in all major and minor speeches and writings. However, some of Kim Il Sung's major emendations occurred in 1967, and 1972 when it was written into the North Korean constitution. Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong Il published major works on Juche philosophy throughout the 1970's, and major works in 1982 and more recently in 1996 (David-West, 2011, p. 105; Oh & Hassig, 2000).

What, exactly, Juche is, has been debated by Western scholars for years. Its most literal translation is "main foundation (Cumings, 1983, p. 289; Oh & Hassig, 2000, p. 17)," although it is often translated as "self-reliance (Armstrong, 2005, p. 383; Cumings, 1983, p. 288; David-West, 2011, p. 99; Oh & Hassig, 2000, p. 17)," and clearly has a broad, abstract meaning (Cumings, 1983, p. 289). Juche may be better understood by reviewing Kim Jong Il's "Ten Principles for the Establishment of a Monolithic Ideological System," issued in 1974 [Emphasis added].

1. We must *give our all* in the struggle to unify the entire society with the revolutionary ideology of the Great Leader Kim Il-sung.
2. We must *honor the Great Leader* comrade Kim Il-sung with all our loyalty.
3. We must make *absolute the authority of the Great Leader* comrade Kim Il-sung.
4. We must make the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung's revolutionary *ideology our faith* and make his instructions our creed.
5. We must adhere strictly to the principle of *unconditional obedience* in carrying out the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung's instructions.

6. We must *strengthen the entire party's ideology* and willpower and revolutionary unity, centering on the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung.
7. We must learn from the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung and *adopt the communist look*, revolutionary work methods and people-oriented work style.
8. We must value the political life we were given by the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung, and *loyally repay* his great political trust and thoughtfulness with heightened political awareness and skill.
9. We must establish *strong organizational regulations* so that the entire party, nation and military move as one under the one and only leadership of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung.
10. We must *pass down the great achievement* of the revolution by the Great Leader comrade Kim Il-sung from generation to generation, inheriting and completing it to the end. [emphases added]

Kim Il Sung is elevated to a cult figure in this treatise and these principles stand as a prescription for proper behavior toward him (and by extension his successor), which includes directing toward him and the North Korean state: all out effort, honor, establishing his absolute authority, faith-based belief, unconditional obedience, strengthening his ideology, learning, loyalty and establishing strong rules.

Scholars have noted how Juche evolved from a set of ideological guidelines in the 1950s to practically a religion focused on the Kim family (Armstrong, 2005; Cumings, 1983; David-West, 2011; Oh & Hassig, 2000). One aspect of Juche's religious quality is a Manichean world-view that frames North Korea as a victimized nation upholding the only just way of life for Korean people, and beleaguered by Western imperial enemies and their East Asian lackeys (especially Japan, Korea's historic enemy, and South Korea). This black-and-white worldview is so pervasive, it interferes with defectors' ability to integrate into South Korean society (Lee, 2013).

Discourse Analysis

NSI's discourse analysis method draws on relatively theory-free, inductive approaches such as grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003), as well as more theoretically informed methods such as critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 2004, 2006), which presumes that discourse contains political agendas and posits the themes that support those agendas. These approaches, while capable of detecting subtle cultural and political nuances, are very qualitative and difficult to replicate or automate. NSI's approach combines the interpretive power of these approaches with more structured methodologies such as content analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

In this section, the theoretical basis for the approach, corpus development, the coding process, and final analysis are described.

Theoretical Basis

The key theoretical basis upon which NSI's research rests is that communicators explicitly choose how to present information and implicitly rely on cultural norms of language use and narratives. Discourse analysis focuses on the linguistic (and presentational) *choices*, explicit and implicit, made by the author. These choices reveal information about how the author understands the world, and how the author would like his/her audience to understand the world (Abrahms, Beauchamp, & Mroszczyk, 2017; Fairclough, 2001; Gumperz, 2003; Halverson, Goodall Jr., & Corman, 2011; Kakava, 2003; Kuznar, 2017b; Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989; Rahimi & Sahragard, 2006; Toman, Kuznar, Baker, & Hartman, 2010; van Dijk, 2005a, 2006; Wodak & Reisgel, 2003).

Corpus Development

Assessing KJU's priorities and intentions could be done with various corpora, including private communications, diaries or social media. Following the history of leadership discourse analysis (Suedfeld & Bluck, 1988; Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Carmenza, 1977; Suedfeld, Wallace, & Thachuk, 1993; van Dijk, 2005b), this project focused on KJU's public speeches and communiqués. Speeches were collected from the DPRK website² and a website that tracks KJU's public statements.³ These speeches are translated into English, which provides what the North Korean government wishes the world to see in the language of their target audience. All public speeches delivered since KJU took office in 2012 were analyzed.

Coding Process

The essential units of meaning that are coded in NSI's discourse analysis methodology are broadly classed as themes, emotive themes and rhetorical devices (Kuznar, 2017b). **Themes** are any referent that can be nominalized, which includes concrete entities such as persons, places, things, events, organizations, polities, as well as more abstract concepts such as emotions and ideologies (free market, socialism, jihad). **Emotive themes** are a sub-class of themes that not only convey the meaning of the thing nominalized (denotative definition), but also convey a connotative meaning that includes sentiment (strength of feeling) and valence (positive or negative affect). Emotive themes include victimization, shame, pride, and strength. Finally, discourse analysis considers not only what is said, but how it is said. **Rhetorical devices** are ways of using language that amplify or dampen the emotive impact of a theme. Common rhetorical devices include repetition, use of poetry, quotes, examples, numbers, and hyperbole.

Previous research has identified a number of themes that regularly surface in political discourse, including, strength, victimization, justice, honor and overcoming.

² http://www.korea-dpr.com/e_library.html

³ <https://www.ncnk.org/resources/publications?category=34>

Other themes are contextually and culturally specific such as *shamla* (Afghan turban, a symbol of manhood), anti-Western sentiment, pan-Slavism, or hatred of Shia Muslims. NSI's discourse analysis methodology uses a basic codebook of themes that are commonly associated with positive and negative sentiments regarding political agendas, opponents and allies. The common codebook provides a theoretically informed and previously validated starting point for further codebook development. Because each political context is to some degree unique, NSI's methodology also includes extensive inductive coding of themes unique to these contexts. In this way, a theoretically informed codebook is inductively expanded and therefore tailored to each unique context.

The research methodology used in the previous studies employed hand coding by readers. This approach takes advantage of the unparalleled ability of the human mind to interpret language, both at the surface, or denotative level, as well as deeper connotative meanings that involve appreciation of cultural and historical context and relationships to other texts. However, this interpretive process can be subjective and achieving stable, reliable interpretations of text, and therefore coding, is very difficult (Guest et al., 2012). Other drawbacks include the labor cost involved in hand coding, which in turn limits the amount of discourse that can be coded, as well as inaccuracies that arise due to coder fatigue.

Automated coding offers relief from the drawbacks of hand coding, enabling the rapid coding of large amounts of discourse. However, it loses at least some of the interpretive power of the human mind. In addition, highly interpretive uses of language such as sarcasm and metaphor are practically impossible to code automatically. In order to strike a balance between hand and auto coding, the codebooks from earlier hand coded studies of KJU's discourse were examined for potential keywords that tipped the coders off that a segment of text represented a particular theme or rhetorical device. These keywords formed a thesaurus that could then be used to auto code a corpus using standard qualitative data analysis software. In some cases, keywords were sufficient to capture 100% of the coded segments (conflict, extremism, independence), some captured a portion (heroism, overcoming, sacrifice, hyperbole) and in other cases, no segments could be captured with keywords (sarcasm, metaphor). Overall, the auto coding developed from earlier codebooks captured approximately 60% of the hand coded material, and captured more of some codes such as the use of numbers.

Analysis

The study utilized a codebook with 60 codes covering cultural themes, political themes, events, individuals, politics and rhetorical devices. The auto coding process associated 7287 segments of text with the themes and rhetorical devices in the codebook. In order to identify I&W, it is necessary to provide a timeline for the varying use of themes and rhetorical devices. Raw frequencies alone can be misleading since long speeches can contain many more coded segments than short speeches. Therefore, the key metric used to measure the use of themes and rhetorical devices is density, which is simply the frequency of a code divided by the

number of words in a document. Since each document has a date, density provides a normalized measure of language use that can be tracked over time. The underlying theoretical assumption is that density measures the importance of a topic to the communicator.

The mean density of themes in the corpus was used to measure KJU's overall priorities. A combination of Pearson's correlations of themes over time, and comparison of means before and after the election were used as a first-order approximation to the presence or absence of themes as I&W. Statistically significant correlations and T-tests (at the .05 level or more) signaled where basic patterns existed. Each theme so identified was then examined more closely in order to establish exactly when it peaked in density before or after the election, providing a measure of the lag between an indicator and an event, and non-linear curves were fit to these patterns in order to measure the strength of association with R^2 values.

I&W of Kim Jong Un's Nuclear Provocations

In order to identify I&W, average densities of themes were correlated on a quarterly and semi-annual basis. In order to identify any overall trajectories in KJU's rhetoric and behavior, correlations were examined between his overall use of themes over time with his escalation in nuclear and missile testing.

Correlation with events

Examining the correlation between nuclear and missile testing events and theme use by a quarterly and semi-annual basis, and lagging these correlations by one and two periods, enables identification of I&W 0-3, 3-6, 0-6, 6-12, and 12-18 months in advance of a testing event.⁴ Statistically significant indicators are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Discursive I&W of Nuclear and Missile Testing in KJU's Public Speeches. Correlations ranged in statistical significance from alpha of .02 to .05.

Time Frame	Rhetorical Devices	Cultural Themes	Political Themes	Enemies
Quarter (< 3 months) n = 15		Overcoming, Strength	Economics, Reunification	South Korea, Enemies
QuarterLag2 (6 - 9 months) n = 14	Example, Title (-)	Heroism, Loyalty, Pride	Revolution	
Semester (<6 months) n = 11			Reunification	South Korea
SemesterLag2 (12 - 18 Months) n = 9	Example, Title (-)	Heroism, Loyalty, Pride,	Revolution	

These results are consistent with earlier studies of KJU's I&W, and with studies of Indian and Pakistani leader discourse in advance of nuclear and missile tests.

KJU's use of rhetorical devices such as examples and official titles decreases in advance of nuclear and missile testing. He appears less interested in using examples to justify and explain his position, and his decreased use of titles for foreign leaders may indicate decreasing respect for foreign leaders, all of whom KJU views with suspicion.

⁴ However, KJU's Speech to the 7th Congress of 6/20/16 had unusually high densities for metaphysical themes and themes regarding the masses, making it a clear outlier. In an effort to regress the data to the mean, this outlier was eliminated and new analyses were conducted.

The themes of overcoming odds and one's own strength are universally associated with aggressive action; NSI has found this in the case of non-state (Taliban, ISIS) and state (Assad, India, Pakistan, Putin, Russian politicians, Iranian leadership) actors (Kuznar, 2017b; Kuznar & Moon, 2014; Kuznar, Popp, & Peterson, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Kuznar & Yager, 2012, 2016; Kuznar et al., 2012). KJU's use of these themes is entirely consistent with other political leaders.

KJU's increasing mention of pride before nuclear and missile testing is remarkably similar to increases in this theme exhibited by both Indian and Pakistani leaders before nuclear and missile testing, but not other forms of aggression (Kuznar et al., 2012). Developing nuclear capability appears to evoke the notion of pride in these leaders.

Heroism and loyalty are two themes that are uniquely associated with KJU's rhetoric before testing.

The political themes of economics, revolution and reunification of the Korean peninsula also increase in advance of testing events. The exact significance of the economic and reunification themes is unclear. The revolution theme is important in North Korean political thought, since they consider themselves to be in a perpetually revolutionary state against imperialist powers, as stated in point 10 of the Principles of Juche (see above).

Finally, there is no enemy that KJU mentions more often than South Korea, and mentions of this nemesis predictably increases in advance of nuclear and missile testing. KJU clearly views South Korea as an existential threat.

Diachronic Trends

The I&W identified above can be used in ongoing monitoring of KJU's rhetoric to anticipate when testing events may occur in the future. Another way of anticipating KJU's behavior is to examine the trajectory of trends in testing events and language use over the past four years of his rule.

KJU's trend in testing events is definitely increasing Figure 1. In fact, a quadratic equation provides the best fit to the data, demonstrating that KJU's testing is not only increasing, it is actually accelerating.

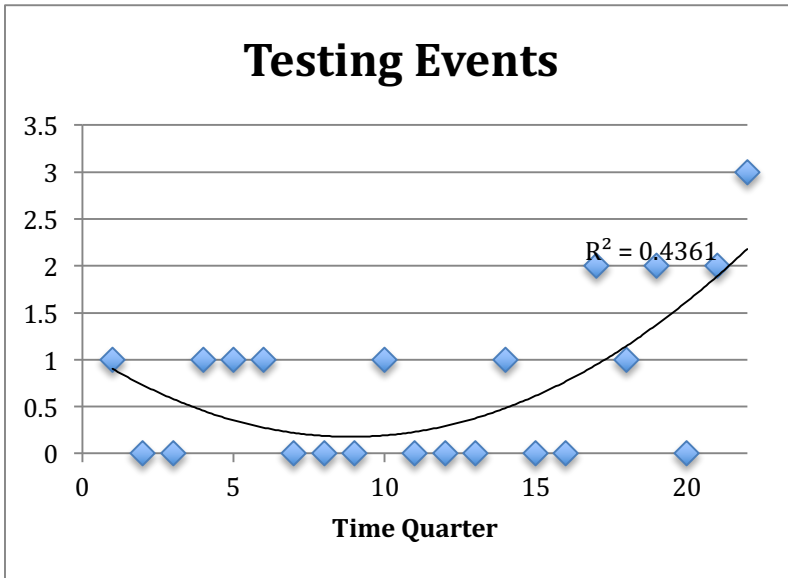


Figure 1. North Korean Nuclear and Missile Testing Events 2013 - May 2017

Many themes demonstrate a diachronic change through time (Table 2). In contrast to the I&W, KJU’s use of example generally increases through time, although consistent with I&W, he uses titles less. Most of the correlated themes are cultural in nature and evoke emotion for North Koreans. Notably, the I&W identified above also increase with time, including loyalty, metaphysics, overcoming, pride, revolution and strength. The only political theme that increases through time is education. And, as with I&W, South Korea is increasingly mentioned through time.

Table 2. Correlation of KJU Theme Use with Time, by Quarter. Correlations statistically significant at <.05 level.

Rhetorical Devices	Cultural Themes	Political Themes	Enemies
Example, Title (-)	Ability, Devotion, Dignity, Honor (-), Loyalty, Metaphysics, Faith, Juche, Religious Themes, Overcoming, Patriotism, Pride, Revolution, Self-reliance, Strength, Trust	Education	South Korea

Some composite measures provide a more general picture of KJU’s language use through time. The overall density of codes increases strongly through time ($r =$

0.431, $p = 0.009$); more meaning is encoded in KJU's discourse through time. Consistent with the many cultural themes that demonstrate increase, the density of all cultural codes increases through time ($r = 0.480$, $p = 0.003$). The density of all rhetorical devices and emotion-invoking codes measures the overall emotionality of KJU's discourse. The density of all emotional themes also increases strongly through time ($r = 0.468$, $p = 0.004$). In summary, KJU's discourse has increased in its encoded meaning and emotionality through time.

One curious pattern is that there is no statistically significant correlation between events or time between KJU or his father, Kim Jong Il, but there is extremely strong correlation between time ($r = 0.428$, $p = 0.009$), events, and many themes for KJU's grandfather and founder of North Korea and its Juche philosophy, Kim Il Sung. Kim Il Sung is often mentioned in conjunction with metaphysical themes and Juche philosophy reinforcing the deity-like characterization of North Korea's founder.

Two themes correlated with time, Juche and pride, may be particularly significant. Since KJU's nuclear and missile testing is accelerating, a similar acceleration should be evident in these themes. This hypothesis is tested by examining the correlation between the squares of events and the density of these themes, to capture the curvilinear acceleration if it exists; these correlations should be strong and positive. Furthermore, if they serve as I&W, they should have strong correlations with lagged events. As mentioned before, previous research on Indian and Pakistani leaders demonstrated that mentions of pride increased in advance of nuclear and missile testing events, and that pattern is repeated in KJU's discourse. The correlation of metaphysical concepts is potentially significant in terms of how a leader frames a threat, as will be explained below.

Table 3. Correlation between Squared Events and Key Themes in KJU's Discourse.

Theme	Correlation with Events	Correlation with Event Lagged 2
Pride	0.433	0.640
Juche	0.498	0.583

As expected, the correlation between pride, Juche and events is strong, and increases when lagged by period 2 (6 to 9 months in advance of events) (Table 3). Figure 2 demonstrates the escalating nature of both testing events and the use of Juche references.

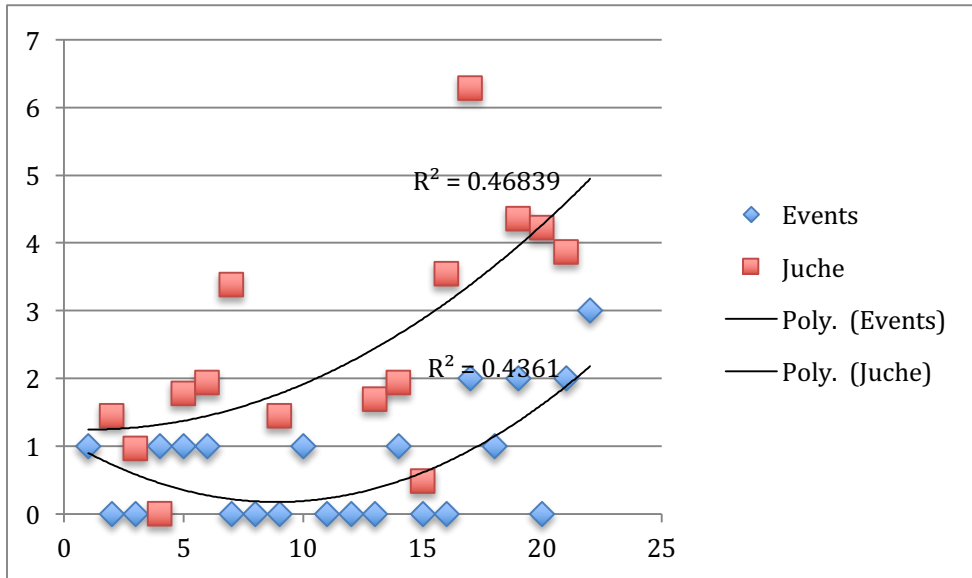


Figure 2. Accelerating Nuclear and Missile Testing Events and References to Juche Philosophy in KJU's Discourse 2013 - May 2017

What Can It Mean? Some Hypotheses

I&W that indicate 6 to 9 months in advance that North Korea will engage in nuclear and missile testing events have been provided, and they increase through time, accelerating with KJU's accelerating development of his nuclear capability. Based on previous research, and research on non-state actor pursuit of WMD, the significance of these findings for anticipating the course of events is based on how KJU is framing his interactions with the U.S. and the larger world community.

In an earlier study of Indian and Pakistani leadership discourse, metaphysical themes were associated with openness to negotiation and conflict resolution (Kuznar et al., 2012). Previous research on KJU indicated that at least metaphysics was unrelated to nuclear and missile testing, and may have been negatively related (Kuznar, 2013). However, this full analysis of all of KJU's public discourse in the past 4 years demonstrates a very strong correlation with KJU's accelerating testing program. If KJU's use of language parallels that of other world leaders with respect to nuclear programs and peace negotiations, then his accelerated use of metaphysical concepts could indicate an increased willingness to consider negotiation and a peaceful resolution to the current crisis. However, research on non-state actors and WMD may indicate the opposite.

State actors have historically tended to pursue nuclear capability as a rational strategy for deterrence; the investment in pursuing nuclear capability and cost in condemnation is worth the deterrent effect of possessing a nuclear capability. There

are no statistical data upon which one could test hypotheses of use since only one nation ever used a nuclear weapon.

However, researchers who examine non-state actor pursuit of WMD have built a profile, based on many cases, of the kind of actors that would pursue and use WMD. Religious ideology is one factor, and in particular, a religious ideology that creates definite in- and outgroups, and that casts issues in a Manichean, black-and-white worldview (Post, 2005; Sinai, 2005). Statistical research indicates that religious ideology is likewise related to the intention to commit and execution of mass casualty attacks (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008). Dechesne (2009, p. 63) sums up the profile in the following manner.

“the motivation to engage in WMD terrorism is the result of the confluence of (1) an actual or perceived necessity for tactical extremeness; (2) strategic considerations concerning the minimization and maximization of personal and oppositional interests; (3) an ideology that stresses themes of control and dominance, of anger and revenge, and of essence and identity; and (4) a mindset that limits consideration of options to only the clearest and least ambiguous.”

Therefore, the key question is not whether or not KJU intends on continuing to develop and possibly use his nuclear capability, the key question is how he perceives the U.S. (and others) as a threat and how he considers his options for dealing with the threat.

Juche philosophy meets the criterion of an ideology that stresses themes of control and dominance, anger and revenge, and identity.

The increased international sanctions should impact his interests. However, if the impact of these sanctions and other measures make him feel that he has no choice but to respond in the extreme, then they could actually.

Previous research into KJU's cognitive complexity indicates that he possesses very low integrative complexity (IC). IC is based on a rigorous methodology for assessing an individual's ability to understand differences in perspective and ultimately transcend them based on how that individual uses language. (Baker-Brown et al., 2004; Suedfeld & Bluck, 1988; Suedfeld & Jhangiani, 2009; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1977). IC is measured on a 7 point scale ranging from 1 (recognizing only one's own perspective) to 7 (appreciating how two different perspectives are part of a larger whole). The previous study of KJU's IC demonstrated an extremely low level of IC (1.2) that varied very little through time. Considering these results, KJU most likely considers only clear and unambiguous options.

In conclusion, there are strong indicators that KJU intends on continuing to develop his nuclear weapons program. Furthermore, the diachronic trends could indicate either an openness to negotiation or a determination to drive toward conflict, based

on KJU's threat perception and consideration of his options. Data on his cognitive complexity and findings from studies of terrorist pursuit and use of WMD indicate that the case may very well be the later; KJU can probably be easily driven to further escalation and perhaps use of his nuclear capability.

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