

Narratives Before & After the 2018 North Korea- United States Summit: An Analysis of Chinese and Russian News Media Coverage of Events on the Korean Peninsula

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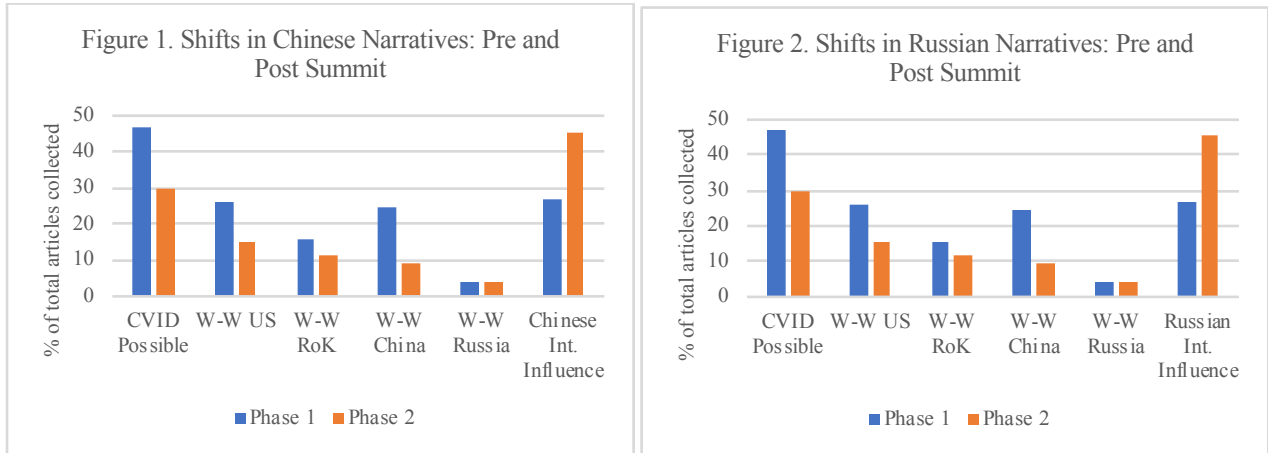
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SELECTED FINDINGS

- U.S. lost its narrative initiative following the Trump-Kim summit, making future achievement of US goals on the Korean Peninsula less likely.
- Post-summit, Russian and Chinese narratives describe the dispute as largely resolved, making substantive DPRK CVID less likely.
- The Trump-Kim summit legitimized and normalized the Kim Jung Un regime.
- U.S. concessions made during Trump-Kim summit narratively constrain future U.S. policy and credibility.
- Future CVID demands by the U.S. will be difficult to resonate within the framework of the narratives established in the news media of these nations following the Trump-Kim summit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our analysis of Chinese and Russian news presentations on the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the DPRK indicates that neither the Chinese nor Russians have any real expectation that the DPRK will agree to future denuclearization terms, or procedures, in the short-term. A pivotal moment used to express these sentiments across media narratives is that of the Trump-Kim summit. Prior to the summit we predicted Chinese and Russian cooperation on DPRK denuclearization would occur if disputants followed their jointly proposed dialogue-based, dual-track peace process. Post-summit, quantitative and qualitative narrative assessment of Chinese and Russian media cast the DPRK’s cooperative advances and subsequent U.S. concessions as marking the successful result of their dual-track process; this narrative suggests that major progress on DPRK’s denuclearization has already been achieved and thus resolving the major concerns by all parties, inhibiting future U.S. demands. Figures 1 and 2 show post summit descriptions of CVID possibilities and win-win scenarios with key stakeholders significantly dropping following the Trump-Kim summit; with discussions post summit detailing current political and economic partnerships in progress between the DPRK and its regional neighbors. Narrative portrayals of the “successful” resolution of the dispute legitimized the Chinese and Russian dual-track process as shown by the post-summit spike in descriptions of Chinese and Russian international influence. Media in both nations present the security and stability of the Korean Peninsula, and region, as important, but only as a product of ending provocative DPRK and U.S. actions, not complete denuclearization.



With that referenced perspective in mind, the narratives from both Chinese and Russian news media use the cooperative outcomes of the Trump-Kim summit as evidence that their recommended approach toward peace is effective and, in the process, legitimized the rule of Kim Jong-un as within that of a normative state. Media in both nations present the notion that long-term stability and peace in the region, and the international order, requires a new type of global leadership that is more collective and dialogic in nature. The U.S. is shown as declining in its international influence; cast as a self-interested actor in the region willing to take escalatory risks to maintain its dominance. Kim Jong-un is presented by media of both nations in ways that demonstrate his negotiation ability, rationality, and attempts to advance the DPRK toward normative relations with the international community. Such presentations make it easy for media in these nations to vilify future actions taken by the U.S. attempting to create timelines for

denuclearization with substantive deadlines. Finally, media in both nations mention investment potentials and economic cooperation with the DPRK, and newly formed regional agreements in cooperation with the DPRK.

Overall, our assessment is that the results of the Trump-Kim summit allowed Chinese and Russian news media to make strong narrative cases to their audiences supporting the strength of their own positions and influence in the Korean Peninsula, region, and international system, and place doubt upon U.S. intentions and methods. Prior to the summit the range of possible U.S. actions toward the DPRK in both media systems was more broadly considered; following the summit both Chinese and Russian media were quick to constrain possible U.S. actions by clearly broadcasting U.S. concessions within narrative discussions of long-term disarmament and a normalizing of relations with the Kim Jong-Un regime, thus allowing any future demands or actions of the U.S. concerning fixed deadlines, or accelerated timelines, toward CVID by the DPRK to be cast by these media systems as U.S. aggression or disingenuousness toward the peace process.

Primary Take-Aways:

- **Insights:** Demonstrates willingness of both China and Russia to present themselves as leading international powers with a new global vision for power distribution. Shows both nations as willing to work together toward regional stability and security, as well as having shared economic interests. Russian media is much more expressive in its intentional stated alignment with that of China. Both present regional stability and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a concern, with the primary goal of halting DPRK's missile testing and public nuclear testing. Chinese and Russian media both suggest that if the U.S. wishes to exert influence in the region it must do so fairly and in coordination and concert with all of the actors involved. The DPRK's public halting of its nuclear development in conjunction with US concessions made during the Trump-Kim summit resulted in the US losing its narrative initiative and legitimized the DPRK making future achievement of US goals less likely.
- **Implications:** Future CVID demands by the U.S. will be difficult to resonate within the framework of the narratives established in the news media of these nations following the Trump-Kim summit. More importantly, the conveying that U.S. influence and trustworthiness are in decline creates possibilities of justifying and legitimizing new alliances and a recasting of image for existing political actors to their populations. US actions following the summit reduces US influence and bolsters Chinese prestige.
- **Findings at a Glance:** Kim Jong-un legitimized, CVID long-term process, stability of Korean Peninsula important to both nations, Russia & China cooperative with one another, shifting of regional influence/U.S. decline. Future U.S. actions easily repackaged into narratives of aggression and dishonesty following summit.

Secondary Take-Aways:

- **Specific Chinese Media Insights:** Highlights Chinese regional influence by providing tangible evidence, through the summit, that its approach to dialogue and cooperation leads to a reduction in tensions. This is shown in sharp contrast to U.S. concerns of wanting significant and tangible denuclearization of North Korea. The U.S. commitments made at the Trump-Kim summit are presented in such a way that any resumption of economic or military pressure tactics by the U.S. would appear as contradictory to its previous actions

and commitments made during the summit from the Chinese perspective. Chinese media clearly presents China as commanding strong, and reasoned, regional influence, with the DPRK now acting in good faith.

- **Specific Russian Media Insights:** Highlights the relationship and alignment between the Russian Federation and the PRC, noting Russia as in support of a multi-lateral international system and in agreement with positions taken by the PRC toward the DRPK. Presenting of Russian strategic alignment with the PRC, noting a decline in U.S. influence, and attempting to place future U.S. actions in the region within similar narrative constraints as Chinese media. Actual concern for political or economic relations with the DPRK is of seemingly less concern than presenting those aforementioned narrative elements.

INTRODUCTION

The underlying assumption of narrative analysis is that human beings make sense of the world around them through the construction of stories. These stories inform individuals of their roles in society and the purpose and meaning of their actions. More importantly, these stories provide a foundational perspective from which to place the seemingly chaotic and random occurrences of everyday life into an understandable and predictable pattern.

How such stories are constructed within any given society differs, but all believable stories involve the use of narrative elements serve as anchors for the audience. These narrative anchors present coherent meaning of events to the audience and do so in a way consistent with the pre-existing understandings of related events held by the audience. Narrative within stories are therefore like equations in mathematics, packing a depth of information within a much smaller presentation of information. Identifying these narrative elements and unpacking them helps us to understand the overarching story of a given society and how individuals see themselves within that story.

Narrative can be employed strategically by political actors by persuading and contesting other actors' narratives to bolster domestic support for policies, constrain actors' behavior and actions by viewing them as illegitimate or contradictory to previous promises made, and affect coalitional and alliance narratives by signaling common interests or by driving wedge issues between alliance partnerships.

Effective narrative persuasion, then, draws upon and contributes to the target audience's local mythologies and societal values. The projection of narratives occurs not only by statements made by state officials but also through media. Well-crafted narratives leverage media as a tool for state influence by constructing narratives that spread and stick across media sources and platforms, are deemed credible by being coherent and possessing fidelity with audience's understanding of their socio-political contexts, and are supported by the sources cited within news stories. Ultimately, effective narratives provide clear and compelling messages that define the issues at hand and how a nation's policies resolve some crisis or problem.

Our research draws upon one such mechanism for identifying societal narratives and analyzing them: news media. The pervasiveness of media technologies, the increased reliance on news media to inform citizens on global events, and the competitive nature of information selection on media platforms hones news media into an extremely effective story telling device within a society; this effectiveness is inherently dependent upon the ability to use narrative elements that resonate with a given audience. In more state-controlled media systems, analyzing and understanding these narrative elements help particularly in revealing a broader understanding of national identities, the prevailing logic of the international system, and what issues are of importance from the perspective of the state itself. News media is used as a vehicle of story construction with the population as the state attempts to reinforce and make coherent its positions on given events.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The project was guided by the below listed research questions, taking specifically into consideration during analysis the topics and questions presented to the SMA group concerning activities on the Korean Peninsula.

- What narratives emerged in coverage related to the Korean Peninsula in Russian and Chinese news media?
- Are structural or messaging variables different between narratives presented by Russian and Chinese news media? What insights do these differences provide the warfighter?
- What expectations of future behavior by international actors can potential shifts in narrative by news media provide the warfighter?

METHOD/RESEARCH DESIGN

By standards in scope for narrative analysis research design, this project is considerable in data size. The project was broken into two-phases spanning back over one full year in news media articles. Phase one of the project detailed narratives in news media coverage related to the Korean Peninsula from May of 2017 to the close of April 2018 and was presented as an interim report. Phase two of the project analyzed new media narratives, specifically paying attention to shifts, from May 2018 to August 2018.

For both phases of the project, the multi-media monitoring system (M3S) was used to harvest media data across a variety of Russian and Chinese news media sources. For both phases of the project, our team focused on harvesting data from state-sponsored, regime leaning and high viewership media sources. For phase one, eight search terms were decided on related to the DPRK regime and its possession and development of nuclear weapons after initial qualitative pilots of various terms across eight Russian and Chinese news media sources. The process was repeated for phase two with an additional eight terms.

A total sample of 551 articles (CI = 95%, MoE = 5%) were analyzed for phase one, and a total sample of 499 articles (CI = 95%, MoE = 5%) were analyzed for phase two. Both analyses used a quantitative coding sheet developed and reliably assessed ($K = .86$) by the researchers to address the questions posed to the SMA group and a qualitative strategic narrative analysis was also conducted as well as a cited source tracing within the narratives presented in the articles. Full details of the analytical coding scheme, as well as description of news outlets and search terms used are provided in the appendix of this document.

FINDINGS

This section begins by detailing shifts in narrative elements between phase one and phase two in Chinese and Russian news media, followed by analysis of the specific findings from phase one, followed by an analysis of the findings of phase two. A qualitative assessment of the key issue, national, and international narratives are given for the media of each nation for both phase one and phase two. Greater detail is given to phase two narratives and the noticed narrative shifts, while phase one narratives from the interim report are provided in a chart for reference. Statistical analyses of the phase two narrative sourcing findings are also detailed.

Statistical Shifts in Narrative Elements: Pre-Summit, Post-Summit Comparisons

Shifts in coverage prior to the Kim-Trump summit (May of 2017 to the close of April 2018) to that of coverage immediately prior to and following the Kim-Trump summit (May 2018 to August 2018) between Russian and Chinese news media concerning win-win scenarios, CVID, non-proliferation, and national interests related to the DPRK are detailed below.

CVID and Non-Proliferation

Chinese Media	Pre-Summit	Post-Summit	Pre-Summit	Post-Summit
	Negative Mention	Negative Mention	Positive Mention	Positive Mention
CVID	2.8%	13.7%	47.1%	29.8%
Regional Incentives	2.7%	10.5%	28%	45.3%
Econ. Incentives	.3%	4.6%	26.2%	9.5%
Cultural Incentives	0%	1%	4.3%	5.5%
Conflict Deterrence	0%	.4%	32%	41.1%
Non-Proliferation	.9%	1.8%	34.1%	35.4%
Russian Media				
CVID	26.3%	5%	28.1%	11.1%
Regional Incentives	2.3%	5%	26.9%	6.5%
Econ. Incentives	6.4%	0%	10.5%	25%
Cultural Incentives	0%	0%	6.4%	0%
Conflict Deterrence	0%	0%	41.5%	6.5%
Non-Proliferation	7.6%	1.1%	26.3%	49.4%

Chinese news media positive mentions of CVID drops considerably from pre to post-summit coverage, as does mention of economic incentives toward denuclearization, suggesting CVID was more of a concern in phase one with these issues largely resolved in phase two following the Trump-Kim summit. Regional incentives for denuclearization increases following the summit, indicative of an increase in conversations and now possible opportunities concerning more regionally dependent alliance not dependent upon non-regional actors, such as the U.S., in Chinese media.

In Russian news media, positive and negative mentions of CVID decrease considerably following the summit. Positive mentions of regional incentives toward denuclearization decreases following the summit, as does mentions of conflict deterrence. However, positive mentions of economic incentives toward denuclearization and non-proliferation increases. Russian conversations following the summit that involved CVID largely spoke of economic investments that might further conversations leading to eventual denuclearization, in other words, the economic packaging

was described as another step along the current long-term path of denuclearizing. Further, the discussions on non-proliferation following the summit were descriptions of the agreements made by KJU to abide by normative possession of nuclear weapons. Thus, the conversations concerning the KJU regime not proliferating nuclear technology presuppose the regime would have nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future.

Win-Win Scenarios and National Interests

Chinese Media	Pre-Summit	Post-Summit
	Mentioned	Mentioned
Win-Win US	26.2%	15.4%
Win-Win ROK	15.5%	11.6%
Win-Win China	24.4%	9.1%
Win-Win Russia	4.0%	3.9%
National Security Interest	25.6%	25.6%
Economic Interest	18.6%	7.7%
International Influence	27.1%	45.4%
Russian Media		
Win-Win US	25.7%	10.3%
Win-Win ROK	13.5%	6.1%
Win-Win China	2.9%	3.5%
Win-Win Russia	7%	8.8%
National Security Interest	8.2%	0%
Economic Interest	5.3%	12.6%
International Influence	17%	42.9%

Chinese news media mentions of win-win scenarios for nations in negotiations with the DPRK decreased in every category following the summit. Post-summit win-win scenarios changed in form from possible win-win scenarios pre-summit to actualization and evidence of win-win scenarios post-summit. Russian media mentions of win-win scenarios between the DPRK and both the U.S. and ROK decreased following the summit, while mentions of the DPRK in win-win scenarios with both Russia and China remained roughly the same. These shifts support post-summit narratives projected by both Russian and Chinese news media that the conversations concerning further, major negotiated outcomes involving the DPRK had largely been resolved.

In Chinese news media, mentions of the DPRK in reference to national security concerns largely remains the same prior to and after the summit. Mentions of economic interest in the DPRK decrease. Perhaps most notably, mentions of international influence associated with coverage of the DPRK increases to almost 50% of all mentions within the coverage. This supports the post-summit narratives in Chinese news that attempt to present the summit as evidence of Chinese international diplomatic prowess and leadership. Similarly, Russian news media of the DPRK in reference to national security concerns decreases to zero following the summit. Mentions of economic interests in the DPRK increases following the summit, notably in mentions of Russian investment in railway construction involving both the DPRK and the ROK. As in Chinese news media, Russian media mentions of international influence associated with coverage of the DPRK increases dramatically following the summit to over 40%. This also supports the post-summit narratives in Russian news that attempt to present the summit as proof of Russia as taking part in the reshaping of the global order. Russian media, within these post-summit narratives makes clear its alignment with China.

Detailed Phase One Findings

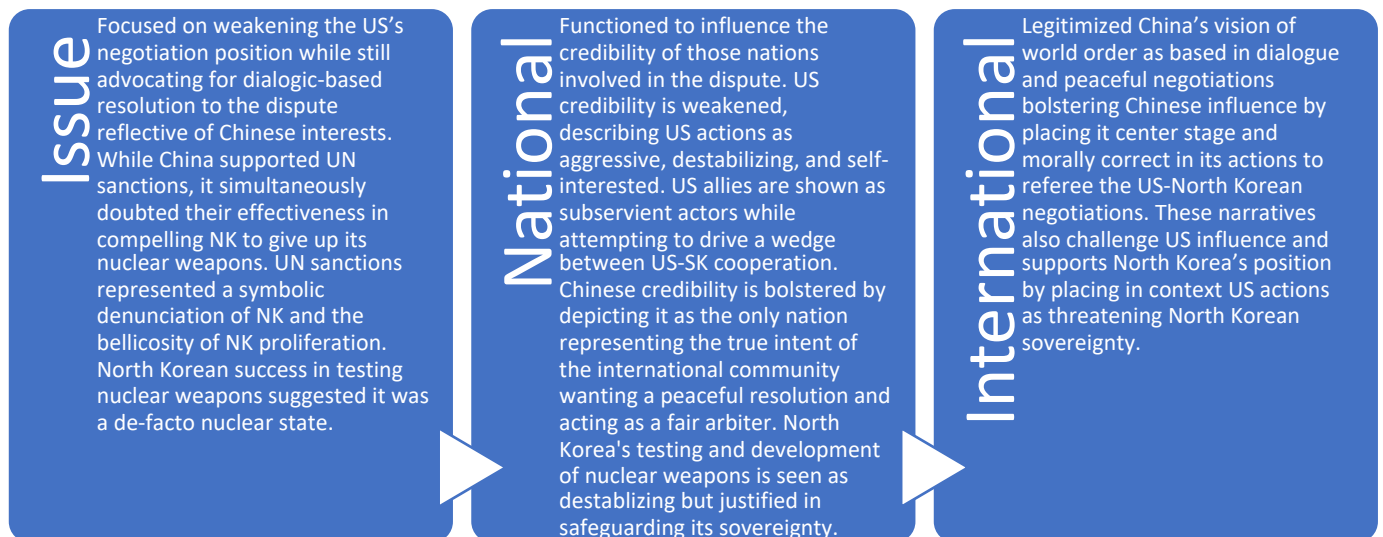
Narratives Prior to Trump-Kim Summit

Chinese Media

Prior to the Trump-Kim summit, Chinese issue, national, and international media narratives primarily defined the key issues up for negotiation and the strategies and mechanisms for resolving the dispute. Key issues included admonishing North Korean missile testing and claims of Chinese interests desiring a halt in North Korea's nuclear proliferation due to its destabilizing effects in the region, but stop short in expressing a significant change of the status quo; while the Chinese ostensibly support complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea, the meaning of denuclearization and more importantly the timeline for it to occur comes to mean something different from US interpretations of the issue: denuclearization is viewed more as an ongoing process only achievable through dialogue among the disputants and will begin with North Korea's halting of its nuclear development and securement of North Korean security. North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons is sympathetically viewed as justified in part due to US threats to North Korean sovereignty.

Consequently, descriptions of win-win scenarios within Chinese media provide a low bar for achievement and are rather ambiguous regarding the details to which denuclearization will occur, suggesting limited support of actual complete and verifiable denuclearization outside of North Korea's halting of further nuclear development with the process being one that would unfold over a long period of time. US actions including military exercises and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems depict the US as self-centered and contributing to destabilization of the region with the efficacy of economic sanctions held in doubt. China, on the other hand, is viewed as a fair arbiter capable of addressing both US and North Korean interests and in support of international norms.

- Key Chinese Narrative Points Prior to Summit: By Level



Russian Media

Russian news media prior to the Kim-Trump summit primarily used issue, national, and international media narratives to present the Russian position toward peace on the Korean Peninsula as aligned with those of the Chinese. Central to the presentation prior to the summit from Russian news sources was the synergy, and correctness, of the Chinese, and Russian, proposed dual-track, dual-suspension program involving U.S. military de-escalation in the region (specifically toward the DPRK) in return for concessions in armament developments and testing from the DPRK. Russian media made efforts to point out the dangers of Kim Jong-un's international posturing and nuclear weapons development, yet did so in a light sympathetic to a regime under siege by a far more powerful and militaristic United States. Russian media were cautiously optimistic of the Kim-Trump summit, largely because the summit represented a legitimization of the Chinese and Russian preferred approach toward the Korean Peninsula involving long-term dialogue, U.S. withdraw of key military assets from the region viewed as causing instability (troop forces and missile defense shields), and allowing for regional actors such as China and Russia to be the ultimate brokers of long-term peace.

Stability, as presented in Russian news media prior to the summit, was more important than immediate denuclearization; the idea of complete and verifiable denuclearization is never stated in concrete timelines, but rather shown as an eventuality that results from the process of long term dialogue and trust. The DPRK under Kim Jong-un is shown as a sometimes-reckless risk taker whose best bet for peaceful co-existence with the rest of the international order is cooperation with, and guidance from, both Russia and China. The pre-summit narratives coalesce around Russian and Chinese mutual interest, outlining of a reasonable approach toward peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and guidance of the DPRK.

- Key Russian Narrative Points Prior to Summit: By Level



Detailed Phase Two Findings

Statistical Analysis

The phase two findings were statistically processed through an expanded code book from phase one, with the intention of providing further quantitative data to help in contextualization of the qualitative narrative analysis. For phase two of the project, 328 articles were analyzed in Chinese news media, and 171 articles were analyzed in Russian news media. The presentation of these findings is broken down into the following subsets: statistical presentations of win-win scenarios, presentations of CVID and related incentives,

Presentation of Win-Win Scenarios

Win-Win scenarios present in Russian and Chinese news media looked for stated outcomes of mutual benefit between the DPRK and the following actors: the U.S., ROK, China, and Russia.

Chinese News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation	Russian News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation
DPRK-US	.26	.441	DPRK-US	.26	.438
DPRK-China	.24*	.430	DPRK-China	.03*	.169
DPRK-ROK	.16	.363	DPRK-ROK	.13	.342
DPRK-Russia	.04	.195	DPRK-Russia	.07	.256

Both Chinese and Russian news media present win-win scenarios for the United States and the DPRK more frequently than any other category, largely, as will be discussed in the qualitative sections, in support of the Chinese and Russian dual-track proposal. The only statistical significance in presentation took place between Russian and Chinese news media presentations of win-win scenarios between the DPRK and China ($t=6.28$; $p=.00$); Chinese news media was significantly more likely to present win-win scenarios between itself and the DPRK than Russian news media, reflective of its close historical, political, and cultural ties to the nation. Both Russian and Chinese news media displayed very few win-win scenarios between the DRPK and Russia, reflective, potentially, of the lack of Russian national interest in DPRK associated outcomes.

Presentations of CVID and Related Incentives

Outright mentions of CVID and mentions of CVID related to regional political incentives, economic incentives, and cultural incentives were analyzed for positive, negative, neutral valence; mentions of deterrence of armed conflict on the Korean Peninsula and discussions of non-proliferation were also analyzed. The most relevant findings are presented in the table below.

Chinese News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation	Russian News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation
CVID	.44*	.55	CVID	.02*	.73
Regional Incentive	.25	.495	Regional Incentive	.25	.483
Economic Incentives	.26*	.446	Economic Incentives	.04*	.411
Deterrence of Conflict	.32	.467	Deterrence of Conflict	.42	.494
Non-Proliferation	.33*	.491	Non-Proliferation	.19*	.553

The most noteworthy and statistically relevant findings from CVID related categories are in the presentation of CVID, which is statistically different between Russian and Chinese news media ($t=7.26$; $p=.00$), as well as presentations of economic incentives ($t=5.33$; $p=.00$) and Non-proliferation ($t=3.00$; $p=.01$). In each of those categories, Chinese news media presented a more positive overall valence scores than did Russian news media. This is potentially due to Russian presentations of the U.S. being considerably negative and thus placing the likelihood of successful

outcomes involving the U.S. in any type of negotiation (even supposed cooperative ones) concerning these categories as more negative. Both nations present positive presentations of regional incentives toward peace and stability; Chinese news media in general is positive of all CVID related incentives, largely in part by highlighting steps the DPRK had taken in support of CVID. Both Chinese and Russian news media are positive in presentations of deterring conflict, such presentation leads to the assumption that the situation on the Korean Peninsula is seemingly stable and unlikely to devolve into conflict and reflective of their desire for a peaceful resolution of the issue, rather than one occurring through U.S. pressure on the DPRK.

National Interests

The relationship between the DPRK and the national security interests, economic interests, and international influence interests of both Russia and China were assess across news media. Mentions of interests versus absence of mention were assessed for each category.

Chinese News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation	Russian News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation
National Security	.26*	.437	National Security	.08*	.275
Economic Interest	.19*	.39	Economic Interest	.05*	.224
Int'l Influence	.27*	.445	Int'l Influence	.13*	.342

Statistical significance at a 95% CI was present in all three categories in the independent t-test conducted between Russian and Chinese news media. Most striking in the data is the lack of national security and economic incentives presented in relation to the DPRK in Russian news media, compared to that of Chinese media sources. As the later qualitative sections will detail, Russia used coverage of the DPRK, particularly following the Kim-Trump summit, as a way of bolstering claims of its own importance in the international global order. While Chinese media also did the same type of international influence bolster, Chinese news media demonstrably shows equal concern for the security situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Statistically Evaluated Narrative Elements

The elements used in narrative construction are a critical, and often overlooked part of narrative analyses. The goal of the following analytics is to give insight into the reliance of Russian and Chinese news media on other international news media sources, as well as commentary from international political leaders, agencies, and public intellectuals in narrative construction. These sources subsequently demonstrate who drives the conversation and attempts to legitimize the narratives present by citing U.S. and alliance media and officials. Presence of direct citation from such sources is detailed in the tables below.

Media Sourcing

Chinese News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation	Russian News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation
US media sources	.14	.345	US media sources	.20	.40
DPRK media sources	.09	.280	DPRK media sources	.09	.284
ROK media sources	.19*	.395	ROK media sources	.07*	.256
Russian media sources	.18	.485	Chinese media sources	.17	.376
Europe media sources	.21	.406	Europe media sources	.09	.284

Leader/Agency Sourcing

Chinese News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation	Russian News Media	Mean	Std. Deviation
US leader/agency	.57	.496	US leader/agency	.56	.498
DPRK leader/agency	.55	.498	DPRK leader/agency	.46	.50
ROK leader/agency	.21	.409	ROK leader/agency	.23	.421
Russian leader/agency	.18	.485	Russian leader/agency	.18	.381
Europe leader/agency	.21*	.408	Europe leader/agency	.08*	.266
Public Intellectuals	.14	.348	Public Intellectuals	.12	.329

Statistical differences in the narrative construction elements only occurred in two instances between Russian and Chinese news media: citing of media source from the ROK ($t=3.65$; $p=.00$) and citing of European political leaders/agencies ($t=3.89$; $p=.00$). Of greater importance is the citing of U.S. leaders/agencies and DPRK leaders/agencies in coverage from both Chinese and Russian media, suggesting equal presentation of voice between the two parties, as well as featured prominence of the voice of U.S. officials in the narratives coming from both Russian and Chinese news.

Narratives Post-Summit: Evaluation of US Influence & Likely Future Outcomes

Chinese Media

Following the Trump-Kim summit Chinese issue, national, and international narratives shifted from defining the basic values and terms of a resolution of the dispute to declaring the summit a success. These narrative shifts provide two key insights regarding the possibility for CVID and win-win scenarios for those involved. First, North Korea’s pledge to halt further nuclear development, its demolition of one of its nuclear test sites, and its reorientation of state resources from nuclear development to economic development depicts North Korea as sincerely acting in good faith to resolve the issue. This narrative reduces support for US interests in pushing North Korea to take further steps to quickly denuclearize. Second, with North Korea’s halting of further nuclear testing and development, other nations (Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan) are now able to achieve their win-win scenarios of closer economic cooperation with North Korea thereby reducing US economic influence on North Korea.

Lastly, the implications of these developments and Chinese declarations of the summit being a success functions to bolster Chinese influence by providing tangible evidence that its model of dispute resolution worked: dialogue and reduction of tensions lead to cooperation; aggressive U.S. actions only heighten tensions and serve U.S. influence. This model stands in contrast to U.S. concerns of wanting significant and tangible denuclearization of North Korea with U.S. commitments made at the Trump-Kim summit constraining future U.S. actions in that its pledge to safeguard North Korean sovereignty makes any resumption of economic or military pressure tactics by the U.S. to appear as contradictory to its previous actions thereby reducing its influence potential.

Russian Media

Following the Trump-Kim summit Russian issue, national, and international narratives shifted from utilizing the situation on the Korean Peninsula to present itself, along with China, as rational and cooperative actors offering a new type of global leadership and pathway toward long-term stability (contrasted to much of the actions taken by the U.S.) toward that of legitimization of the

current DPRK regime within the international order and the practicality of recognizing their possession of nuclear weapons as remaining unchanged for the foreseeable future. Virtually all of the coverage revolved around the international meetings, agreements, discussions, and summits had by Kim Jong-un and officials from the DPRK with other international actors. While this may seem a rather obvious notation, it is a context that can be easily overlooked.

This context is important because it set a narrative trajectory presenting Kim Jong-un as a viable international actor on the global stage that continually reinforced itself. More than any other singular take-away from the analysis of Russian news media concerning Kim Jong-un and the DPRK following the Trump-Kim summit is that the very essence of the coverage itself established a context that legitimized Kim Jong-un's leadership and rule. This legitimacy is extremely relevant to the role of the U.S. in the region because the U.S. is a direct participant in the conferring of that legitimacy through the summit, which was predicated on the cooperative, and peaceful, actions taken by the DPRK. Furthermore, the confirmation of legitimacy by the U.S. through the summit is shown as demonstrative evidence that the approach outlined by Russia and China in dealing with the DPRK is a viable one. The presentation of the actions of the U.S. justify more formal Russian and Chinese recognition of Kim Jong-un, as well as serve to further bolster Russian and Chinese leadership in the region.

Key Shifts in Issue Narratives Post-Summit

Chinese Media

Whereas Chinese issue narratives prior to the Trump-Kim summit chastised DPRK proliferation, DPRK actions post-summit were entirely positive, even suggesting that DPRK was acting in better faith than the U.S. thereby weakening the U.S.'s future bargaining position and legitimizing the DPRK. As such, the DPRK's commitment to denuclearization, as seen by demolition one of its nuclear test sites, Kim Jong-un's declaration to shift towards domestic economic development, and cooperation with South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia to begin development of economic partnerships were all prominently reported on as the key issue developments following the summit. Furthermore, whereas China's suggestion of a dialogue-based resolution model was limited to advocating its potential success, following the summit this model was legitimated as proven to work. Chinese media issue narratives placed greater credit on China's role in the dispute.

Russian Media

Following the summit, the successes of the summit were detailed in coverage of positive actions taken by the DPRK toward fulfilling its promises of cooperation, dialogue, and weapons reductions. Further, upcoming meetings between other international actors and the DPRK regime, international praise for the role of Russia in aiding in the peace process, and the positive direction forward for the DPRK in trade, tourism, and the normalization of relations with other regional actors became a constant source of coverage and narrative focus. The success, and outcomes, of the summit were shown as the logical conclusion of following the only viable path toward stability available; specifically, the two-track proposal put forth by Russia and China. There was notable focus on potential economic cooperation and investments by Russia in the DPRK and increased partnerships between the DPRK and ROK.

These issue narratives also draw out the ability of Kim Jong-un at state-craft on an international stage, as well as highlighting Kim Jong-un's willingness to cooperate with willing actors. The

presentation of Kim Jong-un is in direct contrast to that of President Trump and the previous actions of the U.S. in Libya and Iran. Trump is shown as in continual, and often direct, conflict with other U.S. officials, making the U.S. seem as an extraordinarily volatile and potentially untrustworthy partner. Denuclearization is mentioned only in relation to a long-term process requiring further outlining, commitments, dialogue and cooperation between all interested parties. The coverage sets an understanding that the summit is only the first step on a much longer path toward denuclearization, and that accepting a de-facto nuclear powered DPRK as a normalized state is the only practical path for continued peace and stability for the time being.

Shifts in National Level Narratives Post-Summit

Chinese Media

In support of the shift in issue narratives post-summit, national narratives in Chinese media bolstered DPRK credibility, augmented Chinese influence and prestige, and constrain U.S. future action. While the U.S. was viewed as positively reducing tensions by suspending military exercises and meeting with Kim Jong-un, any comments or posturing by the U.S. to suspend its meeting with Kim Jong-un were viewed as in contrast to the positive momentum being created. Thus, U.S. credibility is tied to its cooperative actions with DPRK meaning that any reversal of such cooperative actions would starkly place U.S. credibility at risk. North Korea was clearly viewed positively by actively trying to build new partnerships with its neighbors. U.S. allies, such as Japan and South Korea, were no longer negatively portrayed as contributing to destabilizing the region but instead provided further evidence of China's model of a dual-track resolution whereby the DPRK's actions led to economic integration.

Russian Media

Russian media coverage following the summit featured very few national level narratives. Rather than a shift in national narratives, those national level narratives that were present in the post-summit data continued Russian positioning of itself as a rational, unbiased actor aligned with China; the key distinction being evidenced success of this alignment through the outcomes of the summit and the claim of achieved stability on the Korean Peninsula. One clear feature from the national level narratives is that Russia wishes to have continued participation in the road-map process of denuclearization and to strengthen its direct ties with the DPRK regime. While no redlines are directly addressed by Russian media concerning Russian actions related to any future destabilization of the Korean Peninsula, media coverage does indicate Russia as disapproving of the U.S. attempting to use leverage or force to alter or accelerate any timelines concerning denuclearization of the DPRK. This concern is justified by the claimed success of the Chinese and Russian road-map plan of cooperative dialogue, evidenced in effectiveness by the outcomes of the Kim-Trump summit.

Shifts in International Level Narratives Post-Summit

Chinese Media

International narratives within Chinese media post-summit reflected renewed confidence in China's influence and role in the international world order. While U.S. influence is reduced in that Chinese media showcased China itself as effectively coaching the successful resolution of the dispute, to some extent U.S. interests can be seen as reaffirmed in that Chinese international narratives stress the value and importance in the current order's liberal-economic model. However, and more disconcerting, were two international level narratives that suggested U.S. influence was over-extended thereby implicating that U.S. power is limited and the U.S. cannot effectively

influence actions in the Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, Chinese and Russian declarations of joint interest provide further evidence that U.S. influence is on the decline. These two narratives in conjunction with the first, which espoused China's growing power, converge in displacing the U.S. as the preeminent power in the region to suggesting that China is now firmly in control.

Russian Media

International narratives within Russian media post-summit present a changing of the guard related to international conflict resolution and global leadership. Much of the credit given to the successful outcomes of the summit are presented as the will of China and Russia in building a peace-oriented platform allowing for Kim Jong-un to demonstrate international goodwill under their guidance. Though Trump is given praise and partial credit for meeting with Kim Jong-un and cooperating in the peace process, the U.S. as a whole is presented as begrudgingly acquiescing to the unified international calls for dialogue led by Russia and China. U.S. regional allies such as ROK and Japan are shown as moving away from U.S. direction toward direct interactions and cooperative understandings with the DPRK, and Russia is shown as taking a more active regional role through economic considerations and investments on the Korean Peninsula. Ultimately, the international narratives serve to highlight the decreasing influence of the U.S. as a capable, unbiased, leader of the international community toward peace (in fact, many of its actions are shown as having to be countered by the international community in order to ensure stability of the region), and accentuate the notion that Chinese and Russian leadership are aimed at building peaceful, mutually-serving international coalitions through dialogue.

CONCLUSION

Overall Chinese & Russian Media Narratives

Prior to the Trump-Kim summit, the DPRK's nuclear testing was clearly depicted as violating international norms presenting the U.S. with an opportunity for significantly reducing DPRK proliferation. During this time, Chinese interests were constrained in demanding its upholding of UN sanctions while undermining U.S. actions as aggressive and destabilizing. Thus, Chinese win-win scenarios remained ambiguous and unclear, providing the U.S. with an opportunity to define the key issues. Similarly, Russian positions concerning the DPRK prior to the summit expressed concern for the potential range of U.S. actions, alliances, and leverages on the Korean Peninsula. Russian media presented the U.S. as an economic and military bully and aggressor, and made calls for cooperative dialogue along with China.

However, leading up to and immediately following the Trump-Kim summit, the U.S. lost the narrative initiative and played into Chinese and Russian narratives of dialogue as being the only appropriate resolution model. U.S. failure to detail a plan for complete and verifiable denuclearization and portrayal of North Korea in black or white terms—either friend or foe—supported Chinese narratives that post-summit the crises had been resolved, despite a lack of clear DPRK commitments regarding denuclearization. U.S. actions resonated with Chinese narratives in that when the U.S. met with the DPRK and engaged in dialogue, which led to U.S. commitments to safeguard the DPRK's security while the DPRK halted its nuclear program and began working with regional neighbors to develop economic and political partnerships, the DPRK's actions were legitimated. Worse, U.S. commitments, namely its pledge to engage in dialogue and safeguard

DPRK security, constrains U.S. future actions whereby the U.S. cannot take the first step in restarting policies pressuring the DPRK to act without being seen as renegeing on prior commitments or viewed as the aggressor. Russian news media also seized upon these same narrative elements to set constraining expectations of U.S. action to its audiences. Russian media took further steps in demonstrating Russian alignment to positions taken by the PRC; making clear efforts to project Russia as an interested, and important regional actor, and to legitimize Kim Jong-un's regime.

In summary, whereas China was implicated prior to the summit in working with the U.S. to curb DPRK nuclear proliferation, post-summit the Chinese are unrestrained in supporting the DPRK's economic development with regional neighbors barring unabashed resumption of provocative nuclear or missile testing. As a result, U.S. influence in the region has diminished while Chinese influence and prestige has risen. Russian positions pre-summit concerning the DPRK largely revolved around calls for cooperation, consternation toward the U.S. and the presentation of the U.S. as a dangerous actor on the international stage. Russian media was able to capitalize on the same post-summit narrative shift as Chinese media, but did so in a manner more demonstrative of its alignment with the PRC toward a new type of multi-lateral international order. In essence, Russian news media used the evident decline of U.S. position in the region following the summit to bolster the perception of its relationship to the Chinese in an evolving international order.

Implications for Future US Policy

U.S. messaging needs to clearly comment upon and contend Chinese and Russian narrative positioning. U.S. policy either needs to articulate how its actions transcend these narrative values and leads to peaceful resolution of the dispute, or attempt to redefine Chinese and Russian narratives regarding terms such as "mutual interest" or "dialogue." By detailing what behavior or actions may or may not constitute cooperative or un-dialogic actions by DPRK actors, aka a rhetoric of contingent behavior, the U.S. can maintain the narrative initiative thereby augmenting its credibility and influence, or at least implicating Chinese, Russian, and DPRK behavior in ways more productive to U.S. interests.

U.S. attempts to portray the DPRK in "black or white" terms reduce U.S. maneuverability, and credibility. Overly praising Kim Jong-un provides clear signals as to how the DPRK is working towards cooperative goals, which makes bolstering the DPRK's credibility an easier task. The outright demonizing of Kim Jong-un allows for the creation of sympathy for its actions, and/or allows for easy portrayals of the U.S. as aggressive, biased and self-interested. The U.S. needs clearer and consistent standards linking narratives of appropriate international behavior and conflict resolution to be manifest across media channels to garner a strong negotiation position and support from regional actors. Contradictory statements and actions make it easy for Chinese and Russian media systems to present the U.S. positions and actions toward the DPRK as confused and dishonest.

Any U.S. public posturing via military or economic threats and/or troop deployments following the summit, lacking a structured U.S. led roadmap for peace, seemingly send unclear messages when repackaged in international media presentations. U.S. actions can thus easily feed into Chinese and Russian narratives further undermining U.S. credibility and perceived regional influence.

Appendix

News Media Details Phase One

Attempted Terms (Source Language)	News Media Sources (Source Language)	Total Articles Analyzed	Confidence Interval, (Margin of Error)
DPRK, nuclear weapons, resolution (Chinese)	Remin Ribao (Chinese)	501 of 3080	95%, (5%)
DPRK, economy, nuclear weapons (Chinese)	Xinhua (Chinese)		
DPRK denuclearization (Chinese)	Cankao Xiaoxi (Chinese)		
DPRK war (Chinese)	Global Times (Chinese)		
DPRK Resolution (Russian)	Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian)		
DPRK Economy (Russian)	Kommersant (Russian)		
DPRK Denuclearization (Russian)	Izvestia (Russian)		
DPRK War (Russian)	NEWSru (Russian)		

News Media Details Phase One

Attempted Terms (Source Language)	News Media Sources (Source Language)	Total Articles Analyzed	Confidence Interval, (Margin of Error)
DPRK Stability (Two) (Chinese)	Remin Ribao (Chinese)	499 of 2000	95%, (5%)
DPRK Nuclear (Chinese)	Xinhua (Chinese)		
DPRK denuclearization (Chinese)	Cankao Xiaoxi (Chinese)		
Korean Peninsula (Chinese)	Global Times (Chinese)		
"North Korea" nuclear (Russian)	Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian)		
"Korean Peninsula" (Russian)	Kommersant (Russian)		
"North Korea" "United States" (Russian)	Izvestia (Russian)		
Korean security (Russian)	NEWSru (Russian)		

Detailed Quantitative Coding Scheme

Category	Description of Code	Inter-Rater Reliability (Cohen's Kappa)
Win-Win Scenario NK & US	Is a scenario present where the United States and North Korea are both satisfied with one another and the outcomes taking place on the Korean Peninsula. (0= not present, 1 present)	.80
Win-Win Scenario NK & ROK	Is a scenario present where the China and North Korea are both satisfied with one another and the outcomes taking place on the Korean Peninsula. (0= not present, 1 present)	.88
Win-Win Scenario NK & China	Is a scenario present where the ROK and North Korea are both satisfied with one another and the outcomes taking place on the Korean Peninsula. (0= not present, 1 present)	.85

Win-Win Scenario NK & Russia	Is a scenario present where the ROK and North Korea are both satisfied with one another and the outcomes taking place on the Korean Peninsula. (0= not present, 1 present)	.86
Conditions for Complete and Verifiable denuclearization possible	Ask whether there are any mentions of conditions, short of full on military conflict that would lead to NK giving up its nuclear weapons. This category needs to be coded with three categories (-1= War or armed conflict is listed as the ONLY option for NK to give up its nuclear weapons or that NK will never give up its weapons; 0= no mention related to denuclearization, 1= non-war option mentioned). If one is coded, fill out the sub category.	.79
Resolution of Tensions	Regional/Domestic Political Compromise, incentives, negotiations. (1 positive mention, 0 non-present, -1 negative mention)	.65
Resolution of Tensions	Economic incentive, sanction impacts, other economic factors (1 positive mention, 0 non-present, -1 negative mention)	.74
Resolution of Tensions	Social-Cultural incentives or disincentives (1 positive mention, 0 non-present, -1 negative mention)	1.0
Resolution of Tensions	Other	1.0
Deterrence of Armed Conflict	Is there any mention of actions being taken to deter NK from using its armed forces, or the deployment of its army (1 present, 0 non-present)	.87
Instability of NK Economy	Are there any mentions of potential destabilizers to the NK economy (1 present, 0 non-present)	.91
Stability of NK Economy	Are there any mentions of actions being taken, that have been taken, to stabilize the NK economy (1 present, 0 non-present)	.93
Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons- Simplified	Asks whether the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons is discussed or development/testing of new capabilities related to nuclear weapons is in news media and under what contexts. (1 successful, 0 non-present, -1 unsuccessful).	.82
Russian National Security Interests/Threats/Redlines	These will be coded as subcategories; descriptive will be important (1 present, 0 non-present)	.71
Russian Economic Interests/Threats/Redlines	These will be coded as subcategories; descriptive will be important (1 present, 0 non-present)	.90
Russian International Influence (Prestige) Interests/Threats/Redlines	These will be coded as subcategories; descriptive will be important (1 present, 0 non-present)	.75
Chinese National Security Interests/Threats/Redlines	These will be coded as subcategories; descriptive will be important (1 present, 0 non-present)	.94
Chinese Economic Interests/Threats/Redlines	These will be coded as subcategories; descriptive will be important (1 present, 0 non-present)	.90
Chinese International Influence (Prestige) Interests/Threats/Redlines	These will be coded as subcategories; descriptive will be important (1 present, 0 non-present)	.93
Media sources cited within article	Mainstream media sources' role in disseminating certain narratives thereby ensuring dissemination, and narrative momentum. Coded as (1=presence, 0=absent). Set for multiple categories.	.91
Statements from political leaders cited within article segments code above	Statements from political leaders' role in disseminating certain narratives thereby ensuring dissemination, and narrative momentum; determining key influencers in discussion. Coded as (1=presence, 0=absent). Set for multiple categories.	.88
		Overall Reliability: .86

Issue narratives prior to Trump-Kim Summit- Chinese
<p><i>Limited effect of economic sanctions</i> On one hand, while Chinese media clearly and repeatedly signaled Chinese support for UN sanctions passed by the UNSC, these sanctions came to represent more of the international community's symbolic censure of North Korea rather than providing explanations as to how these sanctions were to tangibly affect North Korean policy. On the other hand, US arguments for further economic pressure via increased sanctions was explained as an ineffective strategy to force North Korea to the negotiating table. Economic sanctions were argued to increase tensions, had limited impact, and negative externalities to China, Russia, South Korea's economy.</p>
<p><i>Dialogue, not war</i> Chinese media consistently and frequently reported that aggressive policies, whether economic or militaristic, and most notably US pressure tactics, serve only to raise tensions and make resolution of the issue less likely. Instead, dialogue was portrayed as the means by which international diplomacy could work with efforts to engage in balanced dialogue respective of each disputants' interests serving the potential to resolve tensions. The key to successful negotiations was following the dual-track, double suspension policy advocated by Chinese and Russian leaders.</p>
<p><i>Aggressive US policies</i> Attention was placed on naming specific US policies that contributed to a worsening of relations within the region. Two such policies garnered the most media attention: US military exercises with regional allies, including South Korea and Japan, and US deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems. Both policies were argued to destabilize the region and make conflict, even war, more likely to occur.</p>
<p><i>North Korea as a nuclear power</i> Chinese media strongly denounced North Korea's progress in developing and testing its nuclear weapons capabilities, but, as events developed, Chinese media accepted North Korea's messaging that the nation was now a nuclear power. As such, the US and the world would have to accept North Korea's new status.</p>

National level narratives prior to Trump-Kim summit- Chinese
<p><i>The US as an obstacle to peace: Self-interest and attempts at further regional influence</i> US actions and interests are constructed in a negative light, claiming them to be a pretense for acquiring greater regional power. Attention is placed on US policies as building an alliance with Japan and South Korea through deployment of US anti-ballistic missile technology and military cooperation through joint military exercises. These actions are not seen as tied to influencing North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons, indeed they are argued to do the opposite by leading North Korea to further develop its nuclear deterrent to safeguard its sovereignty. US interests, then, stand in opposition to dialogue and peaceful resolution of the issue.</p>
<p><i>Japan</i> Chinese media depicted Japan as in close alliance with the US, though doing so with its own initiatives in mind. The military alliance between the ROK, US, and Japan, as well as Japan's adoption of more stringent economic sanctions on DPRK are shown as falling in line with US policy and requests, with Japanese actions. Japan and ROK not natural allies.</p>
<p><i>South Korea</i> South Korea is shown as under heavy influence from the US, even when it is not in its best interest. The ROK leadership is shown as attempting to closer relations with the DPRK and willing to engage in dialogue, though that willingness for communication is often interrupted by the US. The reliance on the US for security and joint exercises with the US shown as detrimental toward genuinely finding reconciliation and peace with the DPRK. Chinese media is also quick to point out that the ROK should seek friendly terms with China and on numerous occasions presents what can be described as wedge issues between US and ROK relations. ROK leadership is showing as attempting to demonstrate loyalty to both the US and China.</p>
<p><i>North Korea: Sympathy and condemnation</i> Chinese media largely described North Korean interests in a sympathetic light while admonishing its actions related to nuclear proliferation. Consistent with Chinese narratives arguing against aggressive and destabilizing actions enacted by all nations, North Korea's nuclear testing is shown as acting counter to legitimate UN concerns, which China claims to uphold. However, North Korea is not viewed as an enemy or rogue nation, but</p>

<p>one with legitimate security concerns regarding its sovereignty in the face of US threats. North Korea’s actions are thus viewed, in part, as legitimate and as sharing in the common concerns all nations have when defending their nation from hostile actors.</p>
<p><i>China: Fair arbiter and supportive of UN</i> Chinese media depicts its own national identity and interests as seeking a balanced resolution to tensions. Chinese media frequently and consistently report on its leaders’ declarations of China’s upholding of the UN sanctions and rarely criticizes or questions them, except in the case when these sanctions are seen as merely US efforts to starve North Korea to the negotiation table. In this narrative construction of China, Chinese see their leaders as calm, level-headed, and working to listen and find compromise among all disputant.</p>
<p><i>Russia</i> Russia is primarily shown as playing the role of an international peacekeeper by enforcing UN sanctions, but also calling for diplomatic resolution to tensions, particularly through Russian-Chinese dual freeze road map. The Russian media often warns the UN Security council against further economic sanctions, which could potentially cripple the DPRK economy. Moreover, Russia claims it is in a unique position to negotiate with the DPRK due to geographic location and its “limited” economic interests. Lastly, Russia strongly condemned the DPRK’s nuclear weapons testing, but claims that further sanctions could create humanitarian crises and claims the sanctions are ineffective at bringing the DPRK to the negotiating table.</p>

<p>International narratives prior to Kim-Trump Summit- Chinese</p>
<p><i>International order as dialogue based: China’s central role in upholding the international order</i> Chinese media narrate to great lengths that the enduring values of the global order are those of dialogue and cooperation. As such, North Korea’s nuclear proliferation efforts are seen as clearly in violation of these principles, destabilizing the region and viewed as antagonistic. However, equally worrisome are US policies viewed as aggressive and militaristic. In this sense, both nations are in the wrong, with China seeing its role as ensuring neither party escalates tensions. Thus, while China upholds and enacts UN sanctions on North Korea, it also publicly questions and challenges US pressure tactics.</p>
<p><i>Anarchy and the need to safeguard sovereignty</i> Chinese media legitimize North Korea’s nuclear proliferation by placing the blame on the US as causing North Korea to pursue a nuclear deterrent. US actions are clearly described as posing a legitimate threat to North Korea’s sovereignty. US actions in the region more broadly showcase the importance of a multi-polar dialogue based order in that US unipolarity, both through military power and economic influence, are viewed as destabilizing the Asia-Pacific, dangerously self-interested, and short sighted. This further reduces US credibility, bolsters China’s image of itself as the leader of global norms, and legitimizes North Korea nuclear proliferation.</p>

<p>Shifts in issue narratives following the Trump-Kim summit: Chinese and Russian</p>
<p><i>Success of dialogue</i> The Trump-Kim summit was constructed narratively as a historic opportunity with both sides demonstrating that dialogic diplomacy yields reduced tensions laying the groundwork for assumed future progress. While the coverage noted how differences remained between the US and North Korea, and these differences were described as substantial, considerable hope was placed on further cooperation.</p>
<p><i>Compounding cooperation</i> With Chinese and Russian media narrative construction of the Trump-Kim summit’s success came references back to North-South relations and the Panmunjom Declaration as well as considerable positive coverage to North Korea’s discussions with Chinese, Russian, and Japanese leaders. These meetings provided further narrative evidence that dialogue had succeeded in reducing tensions and came to symbolize a new turn in the dispute.</p>
<p><i>North Korean transparency and commitment to denuclearization</i> Chinese & Russian media reported extensively on North Korea’s demolition of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site and invitation to international reporters to witness its destruction. This action, in conjunction to North Korea’s claimed halt to further nuclear testing was explained as signaling North Korea’s commitment to transparency and willingness to take sincere action in denuclearizing.</p>
<p><i>North Korea’s turn to economic and social development</i> After the Kim-Trump summit, Kim Jong-un’s meeting with Xi Jinping was hailed as a turning point for North Korean policy. According to Chinese media reports, no longer was North Korea following a policy of</p>

nuclearization, but instead was turning to building socialist ties and cooperative elements with China in order to develop North Korea's economy and social well-being.

Shifts in national narratives after the Kim-Trump summit:

North Korea: Rogue no more and welcoming into regional partnerships

Following the Trump-Kim summit, Chinese media narratives of North Korea shift to completely positive ones. First, North Korea's halting of nuclear testing and demolition of its nuclear test site is exuberantly praised as proving the North Korea's commitment and transparency in acting towards denuclearization. Second, coverage frequently reports the positive developments of North Korean integration with South Korea, Japan, and China, both economically and socially. Furthermore, following Xi Jinping and Kim Jong-un's third meeting, Chinese media reaffirms the close ideological ties and historical relationship the two nations possess.

US: Seeing the light and corrective optimism

Chinese media pick up two key themes following the Trump-Kim summit: first, Chinese media clearly and repeatedly report that President Trump pledged to safeguard North Korean security; and second, President Trump's commitment to suspend military exercises with Japan and South Korea. Following these two themes, Chinese media demonstrate support for continued dialogue and discussion between the US and North Korea, while continuing to hold the US accountable to reducing any resumption of pressure tactics. Specifically, Chinese media criticized Trump's initial canceling of the summit juxtaposing US actions with North Korea's continued commitment to hold talks. US demands for North Korea to first denuclearize before negotiations was viewed as overly demanding.

China: Proof is in the pudding

Chinese media descriptions of itself crystalized the positive: China was viewed as playing an essential role in bringing the US and North Korea together. Chinese belief in dialogue was reaffirmed and explained as playing a key role in support of the successful Trump-Kim summit.

South Korea

Narratives within Chinese media mentioning South Korea emphasized South Korea's desire for enacting political, economic, and social ties between it and North Korea. South Korean leaders were viewed as excited and eager to launch a variety of new initiatives with North Korea. The only impediments were residual sanctions from the US and UN limiting such partnerships from taking place.

Japan

Chinese media narratives no longer stressed Japanese militaristic actions, but rather highlighted its desire to reconnect and build relations with North Korea through economic partnerships and willingness to help oversee North Korea's efforts at denuclearization.

Russia

Russia's interests vis-à-vis North Korea were explained as in support of Chinese policy, signaling China-Russia cooperation and joint outlook on the issue. These efforts were explained, in part, through the SCO meeting and a joint statement by Russian and Chinese leaders detailing their areas of commonality. Russian interests in North Korea were, like in the case of South Korea and Japan, explained as rebuilding economic partnerships with North Korea.

Shifts international narratives post-summit

Success and reintegration

Chinese media provides support and faith in the current international order in that following the Kim-Trump summit international narratives shift to highlight all the nations now rebuilding economic and political ties with North Korea. Thus, with North Korea's announcement that it will no longer pursue further efforts to proliferate, North Korea is welcomed back into the international community. North Korean partnerships with China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea are praised and thereby support the idea that global trade ties can reduce tensions and provide cooperative win-win, mutual benefits. China's belief in dialogue and peaceful resolution of issues are further affirmed by these announcement of new partnerships proving China's vision of world order as successful.

Limits of US power: over extension and the credibility problem

Chinese media reported that US power was over extended in that its ability to simultaneously negotiate Iran's nuclear program at the same time of North Korea's would prohibitive distract US attention and resources. Doubts were placed on the ability of the US to engage in diplomacy on two fronts.

Chinese and Russian cooperation

Following the Trump-Kim summit and the SCO meeting, Chinese and Russian joint statements highlight further coordination between the two nations and a willingness of the SCO to begin developing greater policy capabilities to influence both Iranian nuclear negotiations and North Korean. This stressed Chinese global influence, support of other major powers, and provided a potential alternative multilateral organization that would begin to challenge US influence.

Post-summit Narratives- Russian

An Untrustworthy Partner:

The most prominent narrative within the coverage featured a difficult to read, and difficult to trust, United States in repeated rounds of bargaining, posturing, and positioning with a more careful and calculated KJU. Key elements of this narrative were the presentations of President Trump and his administration officials making aggressive, hard to interpret, and often contradictory claims to and about KJU and the DPRK, while KJU and his officials are shown as continually making good on promises, cooperating with other international actors, making appeals to the US for continued dialogue and sometimes correcting claims made by the US concerning the scope of agreed cooperation. The US is shown as having sincere historical biases against the DPRK, as well as a recent history in both Libya and Iran of making agreements concerning nuclear weapons that are later unapologetically altered in dramatic fashion. Russian news media notes that should KJU give up his nuclear weapons to the United States, not only would his country never possess such weapons again, following denuclearization a simple stroke of the pen from the US could negate any agreements. The untrustworthiness of the US in international agreements, and its military might in contrast to the DPRK, is highlighted intentionally in order to present audiences with the perspective of KJU that is often sympathetic and appreciative of his political skill in dealing with the US.

Legitimacy of KJU

These narratives focus on highlighting the statesmanship of KJU, demonstrating his cooperation, pragmatism and want to bring the DPRK into the international community. Russian media announces various diplomatic missions, talks, and potential agreements between the DPRK and various nations, including Russia. Russian allies such as Assad are shown making diplomatic overtures toward KJU. Further, the erratic nature of the U.S. is shown directly contrast to the methodical and stable approach of KJU. The perspective of the DPRK in its negotiating positions are often referenced.

Russian-Chinese Alignment

Russia's relational alignment to that of the PRC is a frequently occurring narrative in the data. Russian agreements with Chinese policy related to the DPRK, the need for U.S. military reductions on the Korean Peninsula, and calls for a multi-lateral international framework for creating cooperative dialogue and building international peace are regular occurrences. Russian posturing toward the PRC includes economic mentions of the SCO and Russian media mirrors Chinese media claims that they are part of a rising new world order; with the U.S. in decline.

Success and reintegration

These narratives claim the Trump-Kim summit as a success for Russian, and Chinese, calls for dialogue and diplomacy. Interestingly, though the summit featured the U.S. meeting with the DPRK, the U.S. is presenting as dangerously wavering away from cooperation, and untrustworthy even in cooperation. This projection allows for Russian media to claim that its leadership, along with the of the PRC, provided the vision, guidance, and stability that allowed for the summit to take place. Furthermore, the agreements of the U.S. to cooperate with the DPRK in dialogue is presented as binding the U.S. to eventual reduction in regional presence; given DPRK continued goodwill and integration into the global order.

No CVID, No Proliferation

These narratives present a framework of understanding that the DPRK will responsibly possess nuclear weapons, agreeing to abide by non-proliferation mandates and other such restrictions, for the foreseeable future; until such a time as allows for the DPRK to no longer feel threatened by U.S. aggression and the complete denuclearization and reduction of armed forces on the Korean Peninsula. In essence, the DPRK will not denuclearize anytime in the near future. Russian news media also presents an offer to hold DPRK nuclear weapons on their behalf, should such a need ever arise.

New Alliances

These narratives highlight wedge issues between the U.S. and the ROK, as well as point out the flawed, U.S. allied alliances in the region. The narratives point out the growing regional stability under the leadership of

Russia and China, make particular mentions of investment potential and cooperative efforts available for Russia to take in the region (notably with a rail line running through both DPRK and ROK). These narratives also highlight cooperative made by actors such as the ROK and Japan toward the DPRK, China, and Russia independent from any U.S. led initiative. In short, these narratives attempt to show the region as prospering with opportunity as U.S. regional influence declines.

The New Peace Template

These narratives contrast the claimed U.S. Cold War mentality of leverage, threats of violence, aggressive rhetoric, and erratic unilateral behavior to that of the approaches taken by Russia and China. The argument presented is that the global order is to integrated and mutually dependent to allow an aggressive actor to force its will on less powerful others; instead, states should work together toward creating effective arenas for peaceful cooperation and mutual benefice within the global system. The success of the Trump-Kim summit is presented as proof the Russian and Chinese peace template is successful.