



## **SMA INDOPACOM Panel Discussion**

### **Strategic Outcomes on the Korean Peninsula Effort – Results and Primary Findings**

**Booklet**

**Tuesday, 20 November 2018**

**1400-1530 ET**

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Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) provides planning support to Commands with complex operational imperatives requiring multi-agency, multi-disciplinary solutions that are NOT within core Service/Agency competency. Solutions and participants are sought across USG and beyond. SMA is accepted and synchronized by Joint Staff/J-39 DDGO and executed by ASD (EC&P).

# Agenda

## Panel Description:

This panel discussion will summarize the results and primary findings derived from SMA's Strategic Outcomes on the Korean Peninsula Effort.

## Speakers and Talking Points:

### Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois (NSI, Inc.)

#### *The DPRK Nuclear Issue and Western Pacific Regional Dynamics I-R-C*

- Given the current distribution of actor interests, capabilities and resolve (I-R-C), North Korean denuclearization is highly unlikely without significant change in regional interests and conditions. Under current conditions:
  - Neither economic incentives nor threats change the DPRK view of denuclearization –an outcome it can veto.
  - China is both incentivized and has the ability to undermine FFVD.
- A US-brokered FFVD of North Korea would require change in core US, Chinese, Russian and DPRK threat perceptions and worldviews.
- The current US approach to regional leadership appears out-of-touch with regional interests and concerns.
- The success of US efforts to balance China in regional security matters facilitates the growth of Chinese regional influence at the expense of the US.
- How the US approaches the DPRK nuclear issue may be equally or more important for its long-term regional interests and influence than whether an agreement on denuclearization is achieved.

### Dr. Larry Kuznar (NSI, Inc.)

#### *"Comparative Analysis of Kim Family Discourse"*

This study was conducted to address three guiding questions:

1. How does DPRK define its key national interests/regional objectives in Northeast Asia and the Western Pacific? What are seen to be the major threats to each interest?
2. Does analysis of Kim Jong-un's discourse provide a cognitive assessment?
3. What are the most effective ways of communicating with Kim Jong-un?

#### Summary and Implications for Strategic Communications with Kim Jong-un

Kim Jong-un is far less geopolitically aware than Kim Il-sung and, similar to Kim Jong-il, is fairly rigid and unchanging in his political discourse. He exhibits more of an interest in economic development and in overall DPRK capability (including military) than his predecessor. The U.S. as leader of a Western, capitalist alliance is considered the ultimate threat to all DPRK national interests. Kim Jong-un appears to be relying less on Juche philosophy (see Changes in Political Ideology below) although he continues to use very abstract religious language such as sacredness and eternity. Based on these patterns and comparisons to his predecessors the following inferences seem reasonable answers to the guiding questions.

- The DPRK's capability (economic and military) are central concerns upon which he is most likely to focus.
- His lack of geopolitical awareness and mostly rigid discourse indicates a simple worldview and inflexible thinking style.
- Kim Jong-un may be shifting toward a more secular and pragmatic worldview, although Juche philosophy remains an important frame for his thinking, and therefore, Juche philosophy should be well understood when communicating with him.
- However, stressing more abstract transcendent themes over older communist and Juche rhetoric will probably be increasingly effective with Kim Jong-un.

#### Specific Insights Concerning Each of DPRK's Three Historic Leaders

##### ***Kim Jong-un***

Kim Jong-un's worldview as expressed in his political discourse is largely consistent with core concepts central to DPRK

politics throughout its history. These core concepts include a dedication to communist ideals and adherence to Juche philosophy, which includes unquestioning obedience to the Kim leaders, the need for strict discipline and rules, unending revolutionary struggle, and dedication to creating a self-sufficient DPRK. However, he exhibits the following departures from his grandfather and/or father.

- Kim Jong-un lacks broader awareness of global politics, being myopically focused on the Korean peninsula and the U.S., in contrast to Kim Il-sung (but similar to Kim Jong-il).
- Kim Jong-il placed great emphasis on religious-like concepts and Juche philosophy, as Kim Jong-un continues to do so as well, although less than his father.
- While Juche philosophy is still central to how Kim Jong-un frames nearly every issue, he statistically is moving away from this frame.
- Upon taking power, Kim Jong-un retained his father's ideological agenda, but added new themes related to economic development and other strength and capability themes he associates with economic or military power.
- Kim Jong-un has changed his political discourse very little in the past six years.

### ***Kim Jong-il***

Kim Jong-il was much more ideologically oriented and less globally aware than his father, and exhibited an absolutely rigid adherence to his Juche philosophical frame. He exhibited no ability to adjust his political perspective or interests despite economic crisis and widespread famine in the 1990s.

### ***Kim Il-sung***

Kim Il-sung exhibited a broad awareness of global politics, and an ability to adapt his political discourse to historical changes. His pragmatism was most evident during the Korean war when he largely abandoned ideological interests in favor of pragmatic concerns of prosecuting a war and surviving as a nation. Despite originating Juche philosophy, Kim Il-sung exhibits far less ideological speech than his son and grandson.

### **Dr. Robert Hinck (Monmouth College)**

*“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”*

My portion of the panel will discuss narrative shifts related to the DPRK and Korean Peninsula before and after the 2018 North Korea- United States Summit in Russian and Chinese media. The discussion will center around key pivot points in media coverage that project a weakening of U.S. position and influence related to nuclear outcomes on the Korean Peninsula, legitimize the Kim Jung-Un regime, and constrain U.S. policy and credibility in the region.

The overall assessment is that the results of the 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.

### **Dr. Stephen Blank (American Foreign Policy Council)**

*“On the Outside Looking In: Russia and the Korean Peace Process”*

The unprecedented DPRK-U.S. and inter-Korean summits that took place this Spring have upended previous calculations among all the members of the Six-Party process and forced them to jockey for a new role in the unfolding negotiating process taking place on the Peninsula.<sup>i</sup> Russia is one of these parties, and far from a disinterested one. The Kremlin is clearly concerned that the emerging peace process could exclude it, robbing it of a say in what may become a new political settlement between the Koreans.<sup>ii</sup>

Moscow's Korean policy revolves around three key points. The first, in keeping with the Kremlin's self-conception as an indispensable global player, is assuring Russian participation in any political process on the Peninsula. The second, stemming from the now-extensive strategic ties between Moscow and Beijing, is reinforcing its alliance with China and further developing ties to both Koreas. The final prong of Russia's approach, and one that has been used to significant effect up until now, involves blaming Washington for the political impasse that has long prevailed there.<sup>iii</sup>

The new summit process kickstarted by the Trump-Kim meeting in Singapore has therefore spurred Moscow into action. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov have offered to mediate between Washington and Pyongyang, even while fully supporting the latter.<sup>iv</sup> This has revealed the inherent duplicity of Russia's policies, and also its transparent lack of leverage upon the peace process now unfolding in Asia.

### RUSSIA'S ERODING POSITION

Despite over a decade of strenuous efforts, Moscow has little to offer to North Korea, or anyone else, to engender peace and denuclearization in Korea. Nor does North Korea highly rate Russia's potential influence or ability to contribute meaningfully to that outcome, since there has been little progress on Moscow's cherished infrastructure projects with North Korea (among them a Trans-Siberian-Trans-Korean railway and a parallel gas pipeline).<sup>v</sup> While the sanctions regime on North Korea may in fact be eroding, Russia has been relatively unable to exploit the situation<sup>vi</sup> – and now, given the revival of negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang, Moscow may find itself in a worse position still.

This state of affairs is unacceptable to the Kremlin. The Korean peninsula is particularly important to Russia because these large-scale economic projects possess large potential political payoffs. Moscow, simply put, is playing for very high political and economic stakes in Korea. But its failure to capitalize on the investments it has made there to date means that if a genuine "peace process" does indeed develop, Moscow runs the risk of being marginalized. Meanwhile, the U.S. is entering the Asian energy market in a big way, and is bound to compete with Russia for market share – reducing Russia's dominance still further.<sup>vii</sup>

### TITLE

Against this backdrop, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's late May visit to Pyongyang showcased just how much Russia is now attempting to avert its marginalization. During his trip, Lavrov predictably invited Kim Jong Un to Moscow, offered Russia as a mediator between Pyongyang and Washington, echoed Kim's approach that any denuclearization be phased over time, and insisted that sanctions should be rolled back prior to denuclearization. He also reiterated Moscow's desire for the long-standing railroad and gas pipeline projects.<sup>viii</sup> In this way, the Kremlin has sought to remain relevant in the new political reality now prevailing on the Korean Peninsula.

At the same time, however, Russia is working to preserve the *status quo*. Thus, Lavrov and numerous Russian analysts have reiterated the argument that peace can only come through a rejuvenated Six-Party process – one in which Moscow plays an equal part to other countries in Northeast Asia. They have also advocated the need for a step-by-step process that fosters an overall restructuring of Asian security, even though Russia was not a belligerent in the Korean War and lacks legal standing to sign a paper formally ending that war.<sup>ix</sup>

Russia's overtures have met with a lukewarm reception in Pyongyang. Kim Jong Un was happy to complain to Lavrov about U.S. "hegemonism."<sup>x</sup> But he stopped short of making concrete promises to cooperate with Moscow, committing only to exchanging views with the Kremlin.<sup>xi</sup> That reflects a dawning realization among North Korean officials; once dependent on Russia and China to serve as their country's interlocutors with the world, the DPRK now needs neither China nor Russia to communicate with Washington.

### WORKING FOR INERTIA

If Russia's position on the Korean Peninsula is eroding, it is also deeply affected by Moscow's evolving relationship with Beijing. Russia has proven unable to compete effectively with China for influence over North Korea, even though it consistently aspires to upgrade its standing in Pyongyang's eyes. This failure, in turn, has allowed the DPRK to play the two countries off against one another, even as it can count on support from both in the event of a collapse of negotiations with the West.

Where does all this leave Russia? Rhetorically, the Russian government has long opposed North Korean proliferation, even as it has pressured the U.S. to make concessions to resolve the crisis with the DPRK.<sup>xii</sup> Substantively, however, Moscow remains unwilling to do anything about North Korea's nuclear program, lest it endanger its precarious position vis-à-vis Pyongyang.<sup>xiii</sup> As relations with the United States have deteriorated in recent years, that position has become even more ingrained.

The fundamental purpose of Russia's Korean policy is to preserve peace in Korea and Asia more generally, as Moscow sees peace is indispensable to any development of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Peace is also a necessary precondition for Russia to play the role that it covets in East Asia. For only if Russia can play the role of peacekeeper can it actively help create and sustain the multipolar world that its officials and analysts believe should exist. Accordingly, Moscow's Korean policies are not just part of its overall Asian program, but are also an essential component of the multipolar world order that the Kremlin covets.

Therefore in regard to Korea Moscow has all along championed the Six-Party Process where it had a formal role. But since the Korean denuclearization issue has become fundamentally a matter of bipolar U.S.-DPRK negotiations Russia has had no choice but to accept the fact of its diminished role, praise the U.S. for negotiating but demanding that it make concessions like formally ending the state of war in Korea, ending sanctions, and negotiating peace in advance of complete

verifiable North Korean denuclearization.<sup>xiv</sup> In the meantime it claims that the parties are following the so called double freeze policy that it and China advocated, i.e. suspending Korean nuclear tests and U.S.-ROK exercises and that a multilateral forum like the Six-Party Process is essential to guarantee any bilateral agreements between Washington and North Korea. Russia also insists that security guarantees must precede complete verifiable and irreversible denuclearization (CVID-the U.S. position).<sup>xv</sup> It also is more or less openly violating Un sanctions and has been doing so for months<sup>xvi</sup>. Therefore Moscow's current emphasis on persuading everyone to accept Russia's long-standing ideas about tripartite economic collaboration, a Trans-Siberian, Trans-Korean railway and gas line and major electricity projects.<sup>xvii</sup> This is the only way Russia can maintain an enduring role as a guarantor of peace and security and as a power in Asia. But since there has been little or no progress on these issues for years and it is unclear about who will actually pay to build these projects it seems clear that Russia will continue to play "second fiddle" on the Korean peninsula.<sup>xviii</sup>

## Mr. Anthony Rinna (Sino-NK)

### *"A Chinese Perspective on North Korean Activities"*

- Sino-North Korean relations over the past seven years
  - Kim Jong-il's last-minute scramble to solidify ties with Beijing before his death.
  - Setbacks to ties under Kim Jong Un (execution of Jang Song-thaek, etc.)
  - Speculation that Russia could step in to displace China as Pyongyang's prime partner.
  - Three Kim-Xi summits in a six month period - shows fundamental strength of ties
- China's core interests under Xi Jinping
  - Maintain stability on three levels: international, regional and internal.
  - North Korea represents an intersection of all three of these levels
    - International
    - Regional
    - Internal
  - International level: China wishes to maintain strategic stability with the United States, and its allies. Regional level: China wants to stem the possibility of conflict on its periphery. Internally: China fears threats to China's territorial wholeness.
  - The DPRK factors into all three of these in various ways: the US's heavy military involvement in Korea; the threat of conflict; and territorial upheaval in China's border regions in the event of conflict.
  - China also continues to provide security for the DPRK not only to prevent stability, but to maintain influence on the Korean Peninsula (even while remaining a partner of the DPRK, Beijing has pursued a policy of "equidistance" between Pyongyang and Seoul, so as to leverage influence over the whole peninsula).
  - All of this plays into two core tenets of Chinese foreign policy: the pursuit of the "Chinese dream" and; China's goal of portraying itself as a responsible global power.
- China's reactions to DPRK provocations
  - Initially (i.e. 1994) Beijing saw the North Korean nuclear crisis as being primarily between North Korea and the US. Nevertheless, Beijing later waded into the crisis more directly, (2003-2009 Six Party Talks, 2017 roadmap).
  - 2017 roadmap: short-term goals: no tests/no exercises; long term goals: denuclearization/peace treaty.
  - Chinese discourse over North Korea has become hardened over the years ("North Korea problem", rather than "North Korea *nuclear* problem").
    - Analyses of Chinese media and policy discourse have hinted that Beijing sees both Pyongyang and Washington as equally to blame for the crisis
  - China views the DPRK's provocations as threatening from two vantage points: stoking regional conflict and providing the US a pretext for a strong military presence in the region. Nevertheless, lately China does also fear that North Korea may be looking to include nuclear weapons in its strategic planning.
  - Beijing does not share Washington's sense of urgency over North Korean denuclearization ("necessary, but not urgent"). For Beijing, disarmament/denuclearization are not end-all-be-all goals, but rather parts of a wider aim to foster and maintain stability in Northeast Asia.
  - There has been some (quite limited) discussion over China possibly extending a nuclear umbrella over the DPRK, as well as helping develop satellite technology. This, however is to ensure that Beijing can keep an eye on the DPRK's activities and stem any misunderstandings.
- China and sanctions enforcement
  - China has consistently voted in favor of sanctions against the DPRK, likely so as to maintain "responsible country" image.

# Speaker Biographies

## Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois

*Executive Vice President (NSI, Inc.)*

Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois is Executive Vice President at NSI, Inc. She has also served as co-chair of a National Academy of Sciences study on Strategic Deterrence Military Capabilities in the 21st Century, and as a primary author on a study of the Defense and Protection of US Space Assets. Dr. Astorino-Courtois has served as technical lead on a variety of rapid turn-around, Joint Staff-directed Strategic Multi-layer Assessment (SMA) projects in support of US forces and Combatant Commands. These include assessments of key drivers of political, economic and social instability and areas of resilience in South Asia; development of an analytic approach used to identify PACOM requirements for humanitarian support in a Megacity (case study: Dhaka, Bangladesh); development of a methodology for conducting provincial assessments for the ISAF Joint Command; production of a "rich contextual understanding" (RCU) to supplement intelligence reporting for the ISAF J2 and Commander; projects for USSTRATCOM on deterrence assessment methods; and, work for USSOCOM on operationalizing its "gray zone" concept.



Previously, Dr. Astorino-Courtois was a Senior Analyst at SAIC (2004-2007) where she served as a STRATCOM liaison to U.S. and international academic and business communities. Prior to that Dr. Astorino-Courtois was a tenured Associate Professor of International Relations at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX (1994-2003) where her research focused on the cognitive aspects of political decision making and how to "market" peaceful conflict resolution to adversarial actors. She has received a number of academic grants and awards and has published articles in multiple peer-reviewed journals. She has also taught at Creighton University and as a visiting instructor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Dr. Astorino-Courtois earned her Ph.D. in International Relations and MA in and Research Methods from New York University. Her BA is in political science from Boston College. Finally, Dr. Astorino-Courtois also has the distinction of having been awarded both a US Navy Meritorious Service Award and a US Army Commander's Award.

## Dr. Stephen Blank

*Senior Fellow for Russia (American Foreign Policy Council)*

Dr. Blank is an internationally known expert on Russia and the former Soviet Union, who comes to AFPC from the US Army War College where he spent the last 24 years, 1989-2013 as a Professor of National Security Studies at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, PA. Dr. Blank's expertise covers the entire Russian and post-Soviet region and has also written extensively on defense strategy, arms control, information warfare, energy issues, US foreign and defense policy, European, and Asian security. He is currently writing a book on Russian policy in East Asia and is the author of over 900 publications, books, monographs, scholarly and popular articles and has appeared frequently on television and radio and at professional conferences in the US, Europe, and Asia. Prior to joining the Army, Dr. Blank taught at the University of California, Riverside, University of Texas, San Antonio, and was a Professor of National Security Studies at the US Air War College's Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education. He holds a B.A. in Russian History from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Russian History from the University of Chicago.





**Dr. Robert Hinck**

*Professor of Organizational Communication (Monmouth College)*

**Robert Hinck** (Ph.D., Texas A&M University) is an assistant professor of Organizational Communication at Monmouth College. His program of research centers on organizational rhetoric, particularly regarding international and diplomatic rhetoric, public diplomacy, conflict and negotiation, as well as global media. His research projects address concerns regarding the formation and sustainment of political cooperation among distinct political communities, and the rhetorical means by which they structure and manage internal and external stakeholders.



**Dr. Lawrence Kuznar**

*Chief Cultural Sciences Officer (NSI, Inc.)*

Dr. Lawrence A. Kuznar (Chief Cultural Sciences Officer NSI, Inc., and Professor of Anthropology, Purdue University- Fort Wayne) Dr. Kuznar conducts anthropological research relevant to various areas of national security. His current research focuses on discourse analysis to gain insight into the worldview and decision calculus of leaders and populations. This research identifies leading indicators and warnings of political action such as conflict or negotiation. His methodology has been applied to North Korea, Islamic State (ISIS/Da'esh), Eastern European State and non-State Actors, Iran, and polities in the Middle East and Asia. Dr. Kuznar has developed computational models of genocide in Darfur and tribal factionalism in New Guinea, mathematical models of inequality and conflict, and integrated socio-cultural databases for predicting illicit nuclear trade and bioterrorism. Dr. Kuznar's recent research has been funded by academic sources, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Strategic Multilayer Analysis, Air Force Research Lab (AFRL), the Human Social Cultural Behavior (HSCB) modeling program of the Department of Defense, and by the US Army Corps of Engineers. He has also served on the HSCB Technical Progress Evaluation panel and a National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) net assessment panel.



**Mr. Anthony Rinna**

*Senior Editor (Sino-NK)*

Anthony V. Rinna is a Senior Editor at Sino-NK, where he focuses on North Korea-Russia relations as well as Sino-Russian cooperation over the Korean security crisis. His most recent research, which was published in *Asia Policy*, comparatively analyzes Chinese and Russian reactions to THAAD's deployment in South Korea. He is currently working on a book chapter comparing China and Russia's relations with the DPRK. His views on international affairs in Northeast Asia have been featured in the BBC, CNBC, Foreign Policy and the Washington Post. A US citizen, Rinna is conversant in Korean, Russian and Spanish, and has lived in South Korea since 2014.



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## Citations for Dr. Blank's Contributions

- <sup>i</sup> Clint Work, "US-North Korea-South Korea: Three's Company or a Crowd?" *The Diplomat*, June 7, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/us-north-korea-south-korea-threes-company-or-a-crowd/>; David Nakamura, "Rival Powers Scramble For Influence Ahead of Trump-Kim Summit In Singapore," *Washington Post*, June 7, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/rival-powers-scramble-for-influence-ahead-of-trump-kim-singapore-summit/2018/06/06/Oba22b76-68d6-11e8-bea7-c8eb28bc52b1\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.edf43d1f30d0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/rival-powers-scramble-for-influence-ahead-of-trump-kim-singapore-summit/2018/06/06/Oba22b76-68d6-11e8-bea7-c8eb28bc52b1_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.edf43d1f30d0); Lee Jeong-Ho and Sarah Zheng, "China, Russia and Japan Seek Seats At the Table With Kim Jong-un, Moon Jae-in and Donald Trump," *South China Morning Post*, April 26, 2018, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2143328/china-russia-and-japan-seek-seats-table-kim-jong-un>.
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- <sup>v</sup> Stephen Blank, "Making Sense of Russo-North Korea Relations," in Gilbert Rozman and Sergei Radchenko, eds., *International Relations and Asia's Northern Tier, Sino-Russian Relations North Korea, and Mongolia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 283-299.
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- <sup>vii</sup> Yasuo Takeuchi and Ryosuke Hanafusa, "US Shale Gushes Into Asia," *Nikkei*, May 22, 2018, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/US-shale-based-LNG-gushes-into-Asia>.
- <sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>ix</sup> Lee-Jeong-Ho and Sarah Zheng; "Lavrov Expects Visit to Pyongyang To Help Understand North Korea's Position," *Itar-TASS*, May 30, 2018, <http://tass.com/politics/1007179>.
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