

THE EMERGENCE OF JUCHE IDEOLOGY IN NORTH KOREA: FROM SELF-RELIANCE PRINCIPLE TO A THREAT FOR REGIONAL AND GLOBAL STABILITY

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Abstract

Juche ideology is an instrument that the Kim dynasty has very effectively used to legitimize its absolute power and aggressive stance over the decades. The ideology plays two important roles in ensuring that the regime is holding the country. Juche, generally translated as self-reliance, is the fundamental state ideology of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which affected its political, economic, and military course of history since the mid-20th century. This paper used an historical account of the emergence of Juche in history, starting with the original concept developed by Kim Il Sung, in his 1955 speech On “Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism” and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work, where it was used as a critique of ideological reliance on the outside world and as a demand to Koreans the adaptation of Marxism-Leninism in the reconstruction and the Sino-Soviet wars that followed the Korean War. In later decades, Juche under Kim Il-sung developed into a logical theory which highlighted three aspects: political independence, economic self-sufficiency, military self-defense, which was based on the Marxist-Leninist foundations, the influences of Maoism and the long history of Korea as the land of resistance against the foreign domination. In the 1970s with the rule of Kim Jong Il, it had been pronounced a separate ideology independent of orthodox Marxism-Leninism, with a stronger focus on the personality cult of the Kim dynasty, and future expectations of human control over fate and unquestioning obedience to the leadership. The study assumes a qualitative approach to research design to investigate how the Juche ideology of North Korea emerged historically, developed ideologically, and influenced the country theologically in terms of security.

Key Words: Juche Ideology, DPRK, Rigid Communism, Kim Dynasty, Korean Peninsula

INTRODUCTION

The Korean peninsula, a compact landmass of approximately 85,000 square miles, roughly the combined size of New York and Pennsylvania has been inhabited for at least 20,000 years, with some archaeological sites suggesting human presence began even earlier. The forerunners of the Korean state had developed by the fourth century B.C. in the shape of the tribal kingdom known as Choson along the Chinese border in North Korea (Oberdorfer, 2001). During the next centuries three different kingdoms had emerged in the north, south east and southwest of the peninsula, however, in A.D. 668, the Silla kingdom, with the final Chinese military support, conquered the other two and established the territory of the peninsula almost completely. Since then, almost thirteen centuries, up to the middle of the twentieth century, Korea was one country, with one central government. It had created a most unusual language, had devised its own ingenious phonetic system of writing, and had been inventing the movable metal type of the world, a century before Johannes Gutenberg could be credited with having made it to become famous in Europe. This period of unity created a rich, unified civilization with a very strong tradition, although at the same time, the dangerous location of the peninsula, being between the giant of the world China, Japan, and Russia, subdued it to constant outside influence. Korea has been invaded by foreign powers 900 times over two millennia of recorded history, five major occupations by foreign powers —first by China, then Mongols, then Japan, and finally by the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II. China had the strongest and most acceptable influence over them; the kings of Korea would bring gifts to the Chinese emperor, adopt the Confucian culture and administration and in exchange they would be

recognized and given some protection. The first target of the newly united Japan in its sixteen-century expansion was Korea, which was to be defeated by the brilliant Korean admiral Yi Sun-sin and his revolutionary ironclad turtle ships which caused unimaginable losses to the Japanese fleet, furthermore, they were repelled at the very beginning of the entire expansion. This was followed by another Manchu invasion that further traumatized the nation forcing the imperial rulers to pursue an extreme isolationist policy. Over the centuries later, Korea was to be called the Hermit Kingdom with hardly any foreigners besides a few Chinese diplomats and a small Japanese trading post at the southern port of Pusan. Such a secluded life, based upon a strict Confucian social hierarchy that governed the relationships between ruler and ruled, father and son, husband and wife, maintained the independence and the cultural integrity of Korea until the middle of the nineteenth century, the era of imperialism came and violently interrupted the isolation of the Kingdom (Armstrong C. K., 2009).

North Korea is not a static subject of history books but a living, rapidly evolving crisis. The story can change in an instant, as demonstrated when the nation tested an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)—believed capable of striking any part of mainland America—for the third time in four months (Ivanovski, 2020). This modern-day fact highlights the timeliness of the history that has plagued the United States and its neighbors throughout the last 70 years.

The country officially identifies as the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) and is a totalitarian police state which has imposed isolation, secrecy and brutality on itself. It is approximately the size of the state of Mississippi and is in a very strategic geopolitical area, being surrounded by China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea, and it is also a region that is inherently connected with the global economy. The regime has been scarred by a history of foreign invasion, occupation and division and it has accelerated its nuclear weapons program and also has far surpassed the expectations of the Western intelligence and turned the country into a global menace rather than a mere Problems.

The Kim dynasty is able to hold onto power by being in full control of information. The state-controlled media lays down all messages such that the world comes to the realization that propaganda is not a derogatory action but a governmental activity. This becomes most vivid in the so-called mass games in which as many as 150,000 citizens in a stadium are holding colored books, which serve as single pixels in the enormous mosaics of propaganda projecting the image of order, power, and obedience (Human Rights Council, 2014). To the ordinary citizen, life is highly monitored; they are not allowed to travel to other countries and even within the country, they are not allowed to move freely without authorization. The internet is available to only a few elite in the capital, Pyongyang. This is a well-controlled face that conceals a population that hardly sees the outside world, and of whom the world hardly sees. The roots of this modern crisis, though, run far back in the traumas of the 20 th century, starting with the wounds of occupation that initially planted the seeds of division.

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of Juche ideology in North Korea, initially framed as a principle of self-reliance and national independence, has evolved into a rigid state doctrine that justifies isolation, nuclear proliferation, and aggressive posturing. This transformation poses a serious and growing threat to regional stability in Northeast Asia as well as global security.

Research Question

- How has Juche ideology in North Korea evolved from a principle of self-reliance into a major threat to regional and global stability?

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the historical evolution of Juche ideology from its origins as a principle of self-reliance to its current form as North Korea's guiding state doctrine.
- To analyze how Juche ideology has contributed to North Korea's isolationist policies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In terms of resources, this research relies on a comprehensive review of scholarly publications, policy papers, press releases, and to a limited extent individual accounts of specific events and issues to support the arguments. Together, these sources constitute the primary and secondary materials used for qualitative analysis. Thematic analysis served as a powerful methodological tool to systematically examine the complex dynamics shaping Inter-Korean relations and the influence of major powers (e.g., U.S and China). By analyzing qualitative data such as diplomatic statements, policy documents, summit transcripts, media reports, and scholarly commentaries, researchers identified recurring themes that reveal underlying patterns in bilateral engagements and external interventions. For instance, coding and categorizing data from North and South Korean leadership speeches could uncover themes like "conditional cooperation," "security threats," or "reunification rhetoric," highlighting how domestic priorities intersect with external pressures. Similarly, examining major powers' official discourses (e.g., U.S. National Security Strategies, Chinese Foreign Ministry releases) might reveal themes such as "strategic containment," "economic leverage," or "proxy conflict avoidance," elucidating their strategic stakes in the peninsula.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The article by Haesook Chae and Steven Kim in *The Washington Quarterly* (2008) also uses cluster analysis on a survey of the whole country to criticize the simplistic dichotomy of South Korean conservatives as a group pro-U.S and anti-North Korea and progressives as a group anti-U.S and pro-North Korea. Results indicate that conservatives are more comfortable with the alliance but demand military autonomy, whereas progressives are pragmatic in terms of engagement through the Sunshine Policy with reciprocity, skeptical of the nuclear threats of Pyongyang, and appreciate the U.S. relations. The two camps demonstrate centrist overlap on national security issues, the issue of human rights, doubts of China and Japan and calls on multilateral Northeast Asian structures, indicating a moderate, pragmatic populace, either than polarization (Chae & Kim, 2010). The research focused on the Korean pre- and early Kim Jong Un-era dynamics such as nuclear policies, pre-unification vision, and ideological bifurcation within South Korea, and the initial U.S.-China roles in relations such as Sunshine Policy and Six-Party Talks, much of which does not consider the post-2013 changes.

In the article by Wojciech Stankiewicz (2012), the author attempts to examine the declining hope of Korean reunification since 1990s by putting it in historical segmentation post-WWII, deep socio-economic disparities, the threat posed by nuclear weapons introduced by North Korea, the axis of evil label proposed by the Bush administration after 9/11 increasing the mistrust of the United States, and regional powers favoring stability over instability. It discusses three possibilities: peaceful integration through mutual recognition, treaties, and gradual coexistence, an abrupt absorption in the wake of collapse of North Korea, which presupposes international intervention in the face of refugee and integration crises, and war, which is catastrophic and unlikely, through deterrence, but possible through miscalculation. It is concluded that the death of Kim Jong Il will not cause the aggression of Pyongyang, the temporary unification will not have the support of South Koreans, and the status quo will be maintained (Stankiewicz, 2012). The published literature dissects Kim Jong Un pre- and early years' Korean dynamics, such as the nuclear diplomacy, unification scenarios, ideological divisions, and the initial U.S. and China roles in their engagements such as the Sunshine Policy and 6-Party Talks, mostly devoid of post 2013 activities.

The article by Dae-Won Koh (2004), implements the framework of inter-systemic conflict proposed by Fred Halliday into the division of the Korean Peninsula as a conflict of incompatible socio-political systems that is marked by the competition on the military, economic, ideological, and international levels. It discusses socioeconomic failures of North Korea since end of 1980s, to the argument that although stagnant, the leadership of Pyongyang is not stopped to make system-supporting changes instead of radical reforms, as in partial economic reforms in 2002 and special zones to insulate and survive. Although the South Korean policy of engagement has increased interactions, the disengaging tendencies of North Korea such as restrictions on socio-ideological interactions, maintenance of military crises, and the accentuation of normalization of the U.S. will not see the fundamental redirection thus a long-term conflict that would have repercussions on the patient, deterrence-enhanced Southern policies (Koh, 2004). The 2004 paper examines the inter-systemic contradictions within the pre-Kim Jong Un inter-Korean relations and initial policy changes made by the North Korea, without paying much attention to the dynamics between the U.S and China in the bilateral relations after 2011.

The article by Goo Lee, 2006, focuses on the policies of the principal powers US, China, Soviet Union/Russia and Japan towards North and South Korea in the early 1990s, in comparison between the solidarity of political relations with the strategic alliances during the post-Cold war changes. It studies based on realist balancing and bandwagoning theories how these powers sought national interests in both security and economics and tended to adopt combined policies that made inter-Korean detente complicated. The US was concerned with the process of denuclearization with the US engaged in direct negotiations with the North, which caused tension in their relationship with the South; China was torn between economic and political relationships with the South and North respectively, and Russia was concerned with mediation achieved through multilateral negotiations but was unwelcome because of North Korean distrust; Japan wanted the North to be normalized, and thus South Koreans feared about it. All these interactions which were motivated by power balancing eventually slowed down real cooperation between the Koreas as they created hostility and insecurity (Lee, 2006). The article by Goo Lee (2006) is specifically on the engagement policies of great powers (such as U.S. and China) to the two Koreas during the early 1990s, specifically the theme of political solidarity rather than strategic alliances and their obstacle to inter-Korean relations.

Forging a Dynasty: The Reign of Kim Il Sung and the Ideology of Juche (1953-1994)

Against the background of ashes of the Korean War, Kim Il Sung created one of the most unique and totalitarian states in the world. By a mixture of ruthless mass purges, building an influential cult of personality, and the creation of an appealing nationalist ideology, he established his unquestioned control and that of his relatives over generations.

Juche came to be the driving ideological force of the regime. Juche is often translated as self-reliance, but it is also known as Kim Il-Sung-ism which is a slightly North Korean interpretation of communism (Dixon, 2011). With a long and painful experience of invasion and exploitation by the major powers, a history of insults, such as knowing how to speak the native language, the very concept of Juche reverberated deeply and exaltingly. This rebellious attitude which was summed up by one analyst as being a message of Up yours outside world formed the basis of the cult of personality which deep rooted in the 1960s and 70s.

Kim Il Sung was made a god through this cult. He was depicted as the only political leader and kind supreme ruler of the country. It was not a governmental office that offered the inhabitants of each state the advantages every new apartment block, but a personal favor of the generous ruler. State media covered every big project as one that received his personal on-site advice.

Such might be kept up through a revisionist history and unremitting propaganda. The story about the Korean War was entirely rewritten. North Korean school children are told of an American aggression and an ensuing colossal defeat in which Kim Il Sung defeated the American and South Korean armies in the story. This story solidified the United States as one people with a common enemy, an aggressor that was always out to squash them. The people have been brainwashed over a period of close to seventy years to believe that it is only the Kim family who has safeguarded them against this menace. In 1994, Kim Il Sung passed away after almost half a century of rule and this occasion marked the first in the history of succession of power as the surviving son, Kim Jong Il assumed power (Lim, 2012).

The Heir and the Arsenal: Kim Jong Il's Rule and the Nuclear Escalation (1994-2011)

Kim Jong Il inherited his police-state of his father characterized by autocracy and the ideology of his father when he took power. His reign, though, would evoke a new and even more blatant direction, the acquisition of nuclear weapons as the final guarantee of the survival of the regime.

Kim Jong Il still applied the Juche ideology as the instrument of control, but the personal life of the dictator was in total contrast to the principle of self-reliance of this ideology. He was even fond of a good Beaujolais and even imported Italian cooks to show the people of North Korea how to make pizza. This paradox signaled the transformation of Juche as a nationalist slogan to a tool of maintaining the party on track. His primary focus, however, was on building a powerful military—the fourth largest in the world—and advancing the nuclear weapons program his father had begun. The strategic thinking was clear: with conventional forces unable to match the United States, a nuclear weapon was their "ace in the hole" to achieve a balance of power. This aggressive posture did not preclude diplomacy. At the end of the Clinton administration, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Pyongyang, and the two nations were on the verge of an agreement to freeze the North's missile program. Associated Press photographer David Guttenfelder was there to document the surreal meeting. I was in this room with Madeleine Albright. This one resembling surrealism nearly like Wizard of Oz looking room. Then the doors flew open and he entered... the chief of North Korea, Kim Jong Il. It was as though someone has walked out of his or her television into your living room (CNN, 2000). The possible deal eventually collapsed and the military strength of the regime would be maintained through a ruthless internal regime of terror and repression.

Life Under the Regime: Control, Fear, and the Human Cost

The key domestic element of the strength of the Kim dynasty is its extensive police state. The regime is preserving stability because of a regime that is based on total oppression and terrorism by making lessons learned during the Stalinist regime and the Japanese occupation come together through amalgamation.

The most important instrument of such control is the mechanism of political prison camps, or gulags. Whole extended families, children, parents, cousins, can be put in permanent jail terms to serve life sentences on the alleged political offences and misdemeanors of one of the members who might have grumbled about rations of food. A single such facility was referred to as Camp 22 which was a 31 by 25-mile family camp which was reputed to have up to 50,000 inhabitant's majority of whom were family members of a supposed criminal. Many who entered never left (National Geographic, 2025). One of the former guards, Ahn Myong Chol, escaping Camp 22, gives a chilling account of the business of dehumanizing to run these camps. When we were trained to be guards, we were brought up not to consider the prisoners as human beings. The moment you enter a North Korean prison camp, you're no longer a human being. I remember seeing kids fighting over a corn kernel they found inside cow dung. A cow had eaten corn and the children fought over it and eventually washed it in the water and ate it. North Korea can't exist without prison camps. It will collapse without them. The most important thing North Korea needs is a means to frighten its people.

Despite the immense risk, tens of thousands have attempted to escape. The most common route is across the nearly 900-mile border with China, often with the help of paid smugglers and missionaries like Pastor Chun Ki won. Defectors face the constant threat of being arrested by Chinese police and repatriated. In contrast, crossing the DMZ is nearly impossible. Former North Korean soldier Joo Sung Il is one of the very few to have successfully made it across, navigating high-powered electric fences and one of the world's largest minefields. The personal cost of his freedom remains a burden too heavy to speak of; when asked what happened to his family as a result of his defection, he would only say, "I'd rather not talk about it." This is the harsh truth of average citizens under the administration of a leader who will soon be replaced by his even more brutal son.

The Third Heir: Kim Jong Un and the Pursuit of Ultimate Survival (2011-Present)

The time of Kim Jong Un that started in 2011 has been characterized as a period of rapid modernization in brutality and military equipment. His only aim is to see his regime survive ultimately by consolidating his hold at the domestic front and attaining an unquestionable nuclear deterrent at the foreign front.

Kim Jong Un was ruthlessly efficient to get himself to a position of security. He killed members of his own family including his half-brother, and anti-aircraft guns were used in open executions where he had military officials killed to make a classical dictator statement (BBC, 2015). His promise of economic prosperity to his people was a strategy first, where he claimed that they will no longer need to tighten their belts. But when effort to achieve these economic

objectives failed, he made a turn around. The given transition makes it apparent that the regime has the very calculus before its eyes; once confronted with a decision, the safety of the dynasty will always take precedence over the welfare of the people, and the economic promises of the regime are frail in nature.

His justification of the nuclear program that was accelerated is called the Qaddafi model. The Pyongyang leadership was observing what was happening to Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi who in 2003 accepted to abandon his fledgling nuclear program. He was overthrown and killed by his people in the year 2011 with the backing of the West in the Arab Spring. This was the lesson to North Korea: Qaddafi was killed because he disarmed himself. On their part, a viable nuclear deterrent capable of hitting the United States is a protection in an entirely rational regime change (Choquette, 2018).

The aftermaths have been extreme. The 1994 nuclear freeze was called off and the arsenal of the country is increasing exponentially to an estimated 20 or more nuclear weapons accompanied with a missile that can reach the United States. The regime has also devised advanced and underestimated cyber warfare skills to finance this aspiration and avoid being crushed by international sanctions. An extraterritorial force of 6,000 operatives has been used to carry out operations such as an \$80 million Bangladesh Central Bank heist and the disablement of the 2014 hack of Sony Pictures Entertainment. One of the estimates indicates that these cyber activities generate up to 1 billion dollars annually of hard currency, which is a lifeline to the isolated state (Chainalysis Team, 2025).

A Precarious Standoff and an Uncertain Future

The present crisis on the Korean peninsula represents the climax of a 70-year history of occupation, partition, fratricidal war, and deep isolation with the governmental system of a single family. It is a long and painful chronicle which has caused an unstable geopolitical confrontation with no simple solution.

The confrontation puts the United States policy of economic sanctions and complete isolation against the very strong belief that it is the isolation that has contributed to the survival of the North Koreans. The Kim government has demonstrated a mastery of managing such pressures, through the changing illicit networks and advanced cybercrime to keep itself alive and its weapons programs alive. The opinions of experts are sharply divided as the world struggles with how to proceed and a chain of interconnected dilemmas has been discovered (Rasnake, 2025).

The Diplomatic Dilemma: There is a general consensus that a diplomatic way is the only way to go. The United States however tends to make the denuclearization a precondition to serious negotiations, something that North Korea, whose weapons are a final survival measure, will never concede upon. **The Military Impasse:** One of the options that is deemed to be unworkable is a military option. The North Korea would retaliate against an attack on Seoul, the biggest metropolis with a population of 25 million, in a very devastating manner and this would cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. **The Sanctions Paradox:** The U.S government is guided by the fact that it has the power to reduce the regime to its heels through complete isolation in terms of the economy. At the same time, the Kim regime believes that this isolation is exactly what ensures its further survival, uninfluenced by the outside factor.

North Korea is quite a thorny puzzle, a corrupt brutal family business has a seat in the United Nations. Whichever ways the west might view him, Kim Jong Un has proven to be not an irresponsible but a cruel player. He has a plan and he is following that plan and comes up with a nuclear program and the missiles to implement it so that his regime will have a secure future and the world will be left to deal with a threatening and unaddressed legacy (Revere, 2018).

Understanding Juche: North Korea's Core Ideology of Self-Reliance

The Idea at the Heart of North Korea

In order to comprehend North Korea, one has to comprehend Juche, the powerful ideology of self-sufficiency that drives one of the most misinterpreted countries, in the globe. To understand the history of North Korea, the regime of this country, and its activities in the international arena, it is necessary to make sense of Juche. Simply put, Juche is the official state ideology in North Korea, which is principally premised on the idea of self-reliance. In order to fully understand its strength and power we have to go deeper into its main pillars and the bitter history under which it had been born.

What Exactly is "Juche"?

The very core of Juche is a strong and specifically Korean concept that has been polished throughout decades to benefit the state. The strength of Juche lies in the way in which it is a combination of three ideas: a political doctrine, a cult of personality and unique national identity (Trifoi, 2017).

The Three Pillars of Juche

Political Self-Reliance: This is what Juche means first of all. It is the ideology that North Korea can and should take up its issues without relying on external forces. Its ideology advances the notion that the country can self-produce everything. We don't need you." It is the declaration of absolute national independence and sovereignty in opposition to the hostile world.

Kim Il-Sung-ism: It is intertwined with their founder, Kim Il Sung, so Juche and Kim Il-Sung-ism are used interchangeably. It was the ideological base of the personality cult of god-like nature established around him plus his descendants and made the existence of the nation identical to the existence of the Kim dynasty.

A Unique form of Communism: Although North Korea was established with the support of Soviets, Juche is termed as the North Korean variant of communism. It stands out by lending excessive focus on national identity and independence, as opposed to international proletariat revolution as was observed in other communist nations.

This ideology can possibly be overcharged in terms of its emotional strength to the Korean populace, who have a lengthy history of oppression by other larger powers. It exploits a latent national power and pride. We are not going to put up with it anymore. Up yours outside world... For Koreans. The root of the thrill is so deep and the awe that, that someone would have the audacity to face up and be like that. To explain why such intensive ideology of self-reliance appealed so strongly it is important to look at the historical context, within which it was developed (Gittings, 2008).

**The Historical Roots of Self-Reliance
 Forged in Fire: Why Juche Resonated**

Juche did not come out of nothing. It was a clear-cut and strong answer to a lengthy history of national victimization by foreign nations. Such history developed the fertile basis of an ideology of complete self-reliance to root.

Korean history of invasion is the history of invasion and any form of abuse by the great powers. The most notable contemporary case was the violent occupation by the Japanese in the early 20th century that aimed to destroy the Korean culture and identity. Koreans do not have an abstract historical fact of this experience, but a living memory and pain. Filmmaker Dai Sil Kim-Gibson remembers how she was punished as a seven-year-old child because she was speaking her native language. A Japanese instructor made her stand hours with her hands up in the air as an obedient soldier merely because she said, I am a Korean and thus spoke Korean. It is indeed an strong emotive force of Juche and even a desire not to be a victim of such alien rule in the future. The Korean War The Korean War (1950-1953) brought about a hostility that was deeply rooted against the United States. Carpet bombing campaigns by Americans had devastated the north and killed approximately 20 percent of its inhabitants (Keck, 2017). Moreover, the open deliberation of the use of the atomic weapons by the U.S. government established a permanent image of America as an existential threat. The regime works hard to develop this memory, by educating North Korean children a revisionist past, in which the Americans were the worst atrocities imaginable and the only aggressors in the war. This is a story that gives the state a common enemy and this is a great unifying principle of the people.

Rise of Kim Il Sung The rise of Kim Il Sung in the post-war period, in 1950s and 60s, was a masterpiece of Kim Il Sung that exploited this historical trauma to cement his authority. He advanced an ideology of seclusion and independence as the sole method of ensuring the existence of the nation. By the 1970s Juche was an official basis to the total cult of personality that characterized his reign and those of his successors. Based on this trauma and rebellion history, Juche began as a national pride principle and became a necessary instrument of state domination.

Juche as an Ideology: From National Pride to State Power

Juche is an instrument that the Kim dynasty has very effectively used to legitimize its absolute power and aggressive stance over the decades. The ideology plays two important roles in ensuring that the regime is holding the country.

Justifying the Kims' Power: Juche is employed to show Kim leaders as the only saviors of the Korean population. The state controlled media makes sure that whatever you receive in North Korea is presented to the population as a gift of the generous leader. This supports the notion that the Kim family is the only group that can protect the country against a hostile external world that tries to annihilate it (Suh, 2013).

Justifying Aggressive Actions: The ideology gives a guideline of North Korea relating to the world. As an illustration, under the pressure of the international community, the Juche man, the self reliant man who is no longer subjected to outside pressure, cannot be observed to give way. It is not just obstinate pride, but a survival measure. In the eyes of Pyongyang, the example of Libya and Muammar al-Qaddafi, who relinquished his nuclear weapon and was subsequently dragged out of a ditch and shot by his own citizens, is that nuclear weapons keep a leader safe. Rebellion, which is supported by the military force, is regarded as the only assurance of survival of the regime (Suh, 2013).

Ideology vs. Reality

During the course of time, especially during the rule of Kim Jong Il, there came a sharp contrast between rhetoric of Juche pure self-reliance and the deeds of the leadership.

Table “ Juche Ideology VS Reality

The 'Juche' Ideal	The Leadership's Reality
A nation that is completely self-reliant and rejects foreign influence.	A leader (Kim Jong Il) who "loves a good Beaujolais" and had foreign chefs flown in to teach North Koreans how to make pizza.

Source: (KBS WORLD Radio, 2020).

This clear breakage shows that Juche which was originally a philosophy of national survival has over decades been sharpened into a weapon that, according to one source, continues to serve as an instrument to ensure the people remain under control. Now that we know its history and usage, it is possible to draw the most crucial conclusions regarding the role of Juche as exhibited in North Korea.

Why Understanding Juche is Crucial

The end result is that Juche is the Swiss knife of the North Korean regime. It is the formal reason why the country is poor, the ideological reason why the Kim family has a divine right to govern, and the emotional reason why it is not

going to surrender in the international arena. To every student of international affairs, this concept is the initial step in getting to know about this complicated and isolated country (Dixon, 2011).

These are the three most important lessons about Juche.:

1. It is a Response to History Juche is a direct response to a painful and lengthy foreign invasion, colonial occupation and a disastrous war. The ideology has strong emotional appeal to the North Korean people because of this historical context in which they have a legitimate need to feel strong and proud as a nation.
2. It is the Principles of the Kim Dynasty The cult of personality of the Kim family is based on the ideology. It places them as not as political figures, but as kind and essential saviors- the only saviors of the Korean people in the world that has set out to smash them.
3. It Explains North Korea Behavior gives the legitimacy behind the acts of the regime. It justifies its isolation which it has imposed on itself, its rebellious quest of nuclear arms, and its rejection of the international pressure. Such a self-reliance principle can be understood to grasp the motivating factors of North Korea and its will to survive by all means. The very core of Juche is a strong and specifically Korean concept that has been polished throughout decades to benefit the state. The strength of Juche lies in the way in which it is a combination of three ideas: a political doctrine, a cult of personality and unique national identity.

CONCLUSION

Ideology adopted by North Korea as “Juche Communism” which is full of human rights violations and creates a miserable condition for human lives. No doubt North Korea military focus made them as a nuclear part but they are unable to provide the proper living standard for their citizens. Juche came to be the driving ideological force of the regime. Juche is often translated as self-reliance, but it is also known as Kim Il-Sung-ism which is a slightly North Korean interpretation of communism. The emergence of Juche ideology in North Korea has transformed a simple principle of self-reliance into a powerful tool of isolation, militarization, and nuclear defiance. What began as an assertion of independence has become a rigid doctrine that sustains regime survival at the cost of regional peace and global security. Unless North Korea moderates its extreme interpretation of Juche, it will continue to pose a serious and persistent threat to stability in Northeast Asia and beyond.

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