

**EMBARGO UNTIL 09:00 SEPT. 26 (KOR)**

**9.26 일 오전 9시 이후 보도 가능합니다**

## **North Korea's Foreign Policy: in Search of Survival**

**by Alexander Zhebin**

### **Abstract**

North Korea's foreign policy, contrary to widespread perception in the West, of being "unpredictable", "irrational" and "provocative", in fact demonstrated a surprisingly high level of consistency, pragmatism and ability to compromise. Amidst all upheavals of international politics the country have to face with after the dissolution of her major ally – the USSR, Pyongyang has managed to realize two successful hereditary power transfers and ensured political and social stability. While crossing all "red lines" in development of her nuclear and missile programs, North Korea has succeeded at keeping at bay all attempts to achieve a "soft landing" of the regime and preserved her independence. The North Korean leaders have demonstrated a rare art of diplomatic maneuvering by bringing four major world military and economic powers – the U.S.A., China, Russia and Japan to the same negotiation table with the DPRK. In particular, during the last two decades North Korea was rather consistent in her efforts to reach some accommodation, or better relations with the U.S.A. Pyongyang perceives the U.S. policy as a major threat to the regime's existence. That's why emphasis on economic gains which will get the DPRK in case she complies with its obligations to give up her nuclear ambitions seems ungrounded. Moreover, such approach leads us away from the problem's core. Pyongyang's negative reaction to ROK and U.S.A.'s several economic incentives, including Lee Myung-bak's so-called "De-Nuke, Open, 3,000" proposal and "Leap Day Deal" testified that for the DPRK economic gains are not a decisive factor. While paying due attention to economic aspects of the nuclear settlement, it is necessary to keep in mind that the nuclear problem was caused, first of all, by security crisis on the Korean peninsula. For the DPRK after the U.S.A.-led invasions in Yugoslavia and in Iraq, and especially after the events in Libya security is top priority. Pyongyang is trying to normalize relations with the U.S.A. because through achieving the goal it hopes to get guarantees of the survival, or, at least, to create such conditions, under which it will be much more difficult for the U.S.A. to use force against the DPRK. North Korea's missile launches and nuclear tests are nothing more than a clear signal of Pyongyang's frustration with Washington's stubborn refusal to work seriously for achieving a mutually acceptable compromise and the U.S. incessant resorting to pressure, sanctions and demonizing the DPRK's leadership. Pyongyang's behavior after the satellite launch and the third nuclear test shows that in the foreseeable future, all of us have to deal with the de facto nuclear North Korea. The realities of modern international relations are unlikely to encourage the North Korean leaders to give up their nuclear missile deterrent. At the same time North Korea is well aware that without reaching some compromise with the United States on matters of mutual concern it will be not possible to feel more safe and get access to international markets of capital and technology necessary to modernize the country's economy.

Key words: DPRK, foreign policy, nuclear problem, security

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