

**Potential Succession Scenarios in North Korean Leadership:  
A predictive Study on Possible United States, South Korean and  
Chinese Responses to New Leadership in North Korea**

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*“We just have to deal with the reality that (North Korea) is a serious danger and a threat to the world, and particularly in East Asia”*

*-Joe Biden*

**Introduction**

The Korean peninsula has been in a constant state of conflict for over 100 years beginning with the designation of Korea as a Japanese protectorate in 1905 (Korea.net, 2008). This occupation set the stage for a variety of actors to influence the modern history of this nation-state. After the defeat of Japan in World War II, both the United States and Soviet Russia established competing governments divided by the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel which would both play an important role in shaping East Asia in the coming years.

The leadership selection by the Soviets focused on choosing a leader that was dynamic, savvy and most important popular. This man was Kim Il Sung and this selection would change the history of the world. After the defeat of North Korea during the Korean War (1950-1953) Kim Il Sung solidified his hold on power in North Korea

paving the way for his regime to continue indefinitely. In 1972 Kim Jong Il was pronounced as successor to Kim Il Sung; this allowed the younger Kim to begin influencing and shaping North Korea to his liking.

In 1994 Kim Il Sung died and Kim Jong Il took full reign of the country. Prior to this Kim Jong Il had been effectively running north Korea's day to day operations following his 1982 proclamation of *Juche* (Self reliance on the north Korean state) as the official state ideology (Juche 87, 1998). This ideology has heavily influenced all of Kim's decisions regarding North Korea from importing foodstuffs to picking the next leader of his country. However, *Juche* has also played a major role in the destabilization of Korea and in Kim's paranoia; because of north Korea's closed borders and across the board enforcement of worship of the Kim family as deities the idea of Kim Jong Il not being the leader of north Korea could cause massive shockwaves throughout the country that could lead to a wholesale destabilization of north Korea.

A question to ask is, "What leadership changes in north Korea could destabilize the Korean peninsula?" In the only case-study of north Korean leadership succession the change of power went over smoothly to the outside world, however, Kim Il Sung appointed a successor almost 20 years prior to his death and well before he was perceived as physically weak by many in the international community. Kim Jong Il has not allowed himself the same flexibility and has currently not specifically named any one person as the heir apparent.

With only two national leaders in the history of North Korea it would appear that limited resources exist to correctly predict who the third leader of North Korea will be.

This can be countered by intensively studying North Korean political actions but not in the normal method of studying a countries political system. With North Korea it is imperative to scrutinize the actions not taken as opposed to the actions they do take. This can provide very important clues to the ever-changing political elite. In turn this analysis will provide inputs for key indicators of stability within the borders of the Hermit Kingdom. To provide a simple answer to the question stated, almost any changes in the key leadership could destabilize the Korean peninsula.

The goal cannot be “to stop the destabilization” of the Korean peninsula. It has become near impossible to stop North Korea from taking certain actions that could cause both governments to fail but the goal can be to determine what course of action Kim Jong IL will take. There are a number of questions that could be created in an attempt to answer this question, however, the most likely indicator of instability sweeping across the two Koreas would be a change in leadership in north Korea; so, the specific question that needs to be asked is, “Who will Kim Jong II choose to succeed him?”

In order to successfully prepare for a destabilization contingency on the Korean peninsula as much information as possible must be gathered, analyzed and presented on Kim Jong II, his beliefs, his countries beliefs and how his followers will react to certain decisions made by him or his strategic leadership. Due to the strong cult of personality that exists in north Korea any decision made by Kim Jong II will be followed to the letter by the citizens of north Korea, this is important because of the possibility of Kim Jong II not naming a successor. If Kim Jong II does not name the next leader

before his death the chances of north Korea falling into chaos is exponentially high, which increases the possibility of South Korea succumbing to political pressures related to the fall of its only neighbor connected by land.

If this issue is not looked at the world faces the possibility of dealing with a failed state that has no checks on weapons of mass destruction, a horde of millions of starving people swarming over the border of the largest communist country in the world and even the possibility of a bloody, drawn out pseudo-civil war. Luckily there is quite a bit of information available on this subject and it should be reviewed thoroughly in order to grasp the importance of determining the courses of action that Kim Jong Il will take.

### **Literature Review**

One of the most important aspects of North Korean succession to look at is the future prospects for success of the country. Young Whan Kihl presents a variety of essays on North Korea in his co-edited book, North Korea: The Politics of Regime Survival (2006), that explain what has caused North Korea to become a failed state. While this book was written before North Korea's first nuclear test it is still valid in addressing the way North Korea's neighbors would handle the Hermit Kingdom in the event of a major melt down. Mr. Kihl points out that Kim Jong Il's power rests with his iron fisted control of the Korean People's Army and his implementation of the *Songun* (military-first) policy. He states that this is important because of the national pride, self-righteousness and distrust toward outsiders that is inherent in the North Korean political and social spheres and how this plays into the idea that the leader of North Korea is the glorified "brain of the body politic" (Kihl, 2006, 9). Mr. Kihl does point out that some

specialists on North Korea have stated that, “without a better government in Pyongyang the U.S. would face a more serious threat in the future...” (Kihl, 2006, 29). According to Mr. Kihl the Kim regime is in trouble of collapsing due to the many failed reforms and exorbitant military spending that has taken place. Combined with the increased support of *Juche*, Kim Jong Il has set the stage for a monumental problem when his time for succession comes. However, in a counter essay inside Mr. Kihl’s book, Mr. Eberhost points out that many times states have been predicted to fail by those not familiar with the inner workings of the country, and he points out that north Korea is the most secretive state in the world; upon which he offers up the story of the Ottoman empire during WWI which was deemed too weak to survive by critics but managed to do just that, “The notion that a state might be on the verge of collapse without interested outsiders’ fully understanding that this was in fact the case is not merely an abstract theoretical possibility” (Kihl, 2006, 272). Mr. Kihl argues that this offers a stark reminder that while we know quite a bit about North Korea, we don’t know everything.

Another article discussing North Korean succession alternatives suggests that the sons of Kim Jong Il might not be best suited to become the next leader of his country because of their western education and interaction with the rest of the world. Bruce Cummings writes in his article, “North Korea’s Political Future”, that it would be unprecedented for one of his two western educated sons to become the next leader of North Korea because their education would permit them to make drastic changes to North Korea’s political machine. However, Mr. Cummings does believe that north Korea is much more open then it was just ten years ago and that markets are functioning all over north Korea (Cummings, 2007, 5). He also writes that South Korea,

based on their history of reconciliation with North Korea, would be able to have a minor influence on who Kim Jong Il selects (Cummings, 2007, 6). He also argues that because of the negative influence the United States has inside of North Korea that they wouldn't be able to influence the succession process in a positive fashion. Mr. Cummings also believes that even though North Korea receives a significant amount of support from China that it would be very unlikely for that support to allow the Chinese the ability to influence the selection of the next North Korean leader.

One author who presents a differing view on the Kim regimes ability to survive through a succession scenario is Mr. Rowan who writes in his article, "Kim Jong Il Must Go", that north 's collapse has been anticipated for close to fifteen years (Rowen,2003, 8). He argues that if the situation in North Korea become too poor that it is possible a third party individual could usurp power from Kim Jong Il and take control of the country. He believes that change will come about not from the Army or from the Korean Workers Party but from an individual who is well versed in economics, much like what happened in South Korea in the 1980's. He does admit that this view is one that is not widely held and that the political trappings in North Korea heavily favor Kim Jong Il (Rowen, 2003, 8). He also points out that North Korea isn't so much feared in South Korea as it is pitied, he states this is important because it changes how South Korea engages North Korea. However, he states that many South Koreans are fearful of the collapse of North Korea because of the influx of refugees it would force onto the South which makes South Korea inherently interested in the succession process in North Korea.

Jei Gook Jeon speculates in his article, "North Korean leadership: Kim Jong

Il's balancing act in the ruling circle" that once Kim Jong Il dies north Korea's government will "slip into a centrifugal spiral, followed by internecine power struggles and the collapse of the regime" (Jeon, 2000, 761). He argues that because Kim Jong Il has managed to divide and conquer the different areas of the North Korean political elite, he has managed to pit them against each other rather than against him. Mr. Jeon also states that because Kim Jong Il has controlled the military, and not let the military control him, that he has managed to cement his power as leader of North Korea. He notes that this is a different approach than many dictatorships take since in many cases the military is the organization that makes the decisions and forces them upon the actual leader of the country. In North Korea it is the other way around, Kim Jong Il makes all of the decisions and the military carries out his orders. However, he also states that because Kim Jong Il has kept all of the power for himself he runs the risk of his successor being overthrown a combination of separate groups inside the North Korean power elite. He concludes that Kim Jong Il's power rests on an "uneasy truce among political forces that could easily be broken down" (Jeon, 2000, 778) and without the cohesiveness of Kim Jong Il, his regime could very well fail after his death. Mr. Jeon points out that prior to Kim Il Sung's death; Kim Jong Il was given plenty of time to solidify himself among the ruling class in Pyongyang. He was appointed to many different positions inside of the government and was able to build up a close-knit group of supporters that would give him power over other groups inside the North Korean government and he currently hasn't appointed a successor that could receive the same type of benefit.

A report by Kang Dan Oh, “ Leadership Changes in North Korean Politics: The Succession to Kim Il Sung” backs up Mr. Jeons assessment that Kim Jong IIs failure to allow his successor the proper time to cultivate dynamic relationships inside the north Koran political sphere will make a continuation of his hereditary regime very difficult. Mr. Oh states that, “hereditary succession in a socialist system has proven an immensely difficult task, even for a monolithic regime like North Korea” (Oh, 1988, 5). While this report focuses on the leadership change between Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il it makes some very valid points regarding hereditary succession inside a socialist government (which is one of the scenarios that North Korea could follow). In order for a hereditary succession to take place the Mr. Oh outlines specific activities that must happen, such as the building of a personality cult around the selected successor, Kim Jong Il must stand behind his selection and the successor must be able to face down the struggle that will ensue after Kim Jong IIs death. Another point that Mr. Ohs report makes is that Kim Jong Il was forced to come up with his own ideas in order to distinguish himself from his father, this means that a likely successor will have to follow the same path. Since Kim Jong Il followed Juche and introduced Songun, his successor will either have to completely follow both of those ideas or distance themselves from one or both. Another point that the RAND article brings into consideration is that during Kim Jong IIs succession North Korea was economically viable (until the arduous march period) and militarily powerful. Currently North Korea is neither of those and it faces drastic problems inside its population. The next leader will need to be ready to handle those problems diligently or face a backlash from either the North Korean people or from the North Korean power elite. Finally, the most important

point in the entire paper is, “Political succession is often not easy to accomplish...Succession outcomes are hard to predict and difficult to arrange” (Oh, 1988, 67).

The five authors listed above offer a variety of theories regarding succession possibilities in North Korea. All of the authors listed in this literature review believe that a dynastic succession will take place; there are varying levels of confidence on which successor will be chosen and how much bloodshed will occur during and after the change in leadership. This brief overview of literature and the generally accepted beliefs behind North Korea's succession helps set the stage for a predictive analysis of the likely behavior of interested and influential actors in North Korea's status during and after the succession of Kim Jong IL. The next stage of the predictive analysis is to determine which actors could influence Kim Jong Il's decision and how they will react to a succession in North Korea. It will also be important to look at how each actor perceives the threat posed by a change in leadership in North Korea.

### **Actors & Perceptions**

Many states in the world have a general interest in North Korea because of its history of weapons sales and belligerent activity. However, only a handful of countries share a vital interest in the actual day-to-day goings on inside of the country because of their proximity to North Korea and the danger it poses to their well being. Including North Korea itself, the most likely actors to play a major role in North Korea's leadership succession are North Korea, China, South Korea and the United States. Each state has their own reasons and concerns and has their own interpretations and viewpoints of the

issue. In order to accurately predict responses to a North Korean leadership change, it is essential to analyze the most influential actors involved in this potential scenario and the actor's individual perspectives on North Korea's potential leadership succession.

## **North Korea**

North Korea is the focal point of this analysis and their perspective (for the remainder of the analysis the North Korean perspective will be synonymous with Kim Jong Il's perspective) consists of maintaining the power of the current regime without having to give up any concessions to the other actors in this analysis. As with any regime there are four issues that will influence the leadership succession in North Korea, the country's economics, its military, its political elite and its civilian population. There is always a possibility that Kim Jong Il will pass before a successor is chosen or he simply will not pick a successor. Therefore it is imperative to explore the factors that North Korea will attempt to address in terms of a new leader taking over North Korea.

## **Economy**

The North Korean economy is one of the poorest in the world, in fact it is ranked 95<sup>th</sup> in the world by the CIA world fact book. This will prove to be a very important aspect of the succession process in North Korea. There is a distinct possibility that the North Korean economy could collapse after the death of Kim Jong Il because of the fact that he has not allowed sufficient time for his successor to build up the needed support within the country. When Kim Jong Il came to power in 1994 North Korea suffered many economic setbacks ranging from loss of support from the former Soviet Union and

the normalization of relations between China and South Korea (USDOA, 1992) to massive flooding which destroyed a massive amount of food stuffs. Since Kim Jong Il had sufficient time to establish his economic policies a larger disaster was averted. Since any potential successor has not had time to establish needed economic policies it could provide room for dissent within the North Korean political elite. This could translate to dissent inside the military and then to the North Korean public.

Another important aspect of this topic is the possibility that Kim Jong Il's inner circle will want to implement economic change in North Korea. According to Mr. Stares, 1,131 of the 1,400 generals in the North Korean military have been appointed by Kim Jong Il and they have been given numerous privileges including alcohol, housing and education (Stares, 27, 2009). This is important because the new leader would have support from the highest ranking echelon in North Korea as long as the system of patronage is kept intact. This could also spell disaster during the succession process, however, if an individual or group of leaders decides to commandeer the economic systems of certain parts of the country until they are given special privileges by the new North Korean leadership. Needless to say the economic situation in North Korea will play a pivotal role leading up and during any succession of Kim Jong Il.

### **Military Reaction**

Ever since Kim Jong Il took the reins of power the North Korean military has been the center piece of his government. He implemented the idea of *Songun* in 1995 and also introduced the idea of a "4-fold military line consist[ing] of (1) arming the entire nation, (2) training all KPA soldiers to assume higher responsibilities than their rank and

position would dictate, (3) turning the entire country into a fortress, and (4) modernizing the KPA” (Koh, 2005, 2). Since Kim Jong Il controls the military with an iron fist it will be very important for the next leader of North Korea to have direct ties to all levels of leadership within the Korea People’s Army (KPA). It is, again, important to reference the fact that Kim Jong Il was able to establish himself within the Korean military at an early age. In October of 1980 Kim Jong Il was elected by the congress as a member of the central military commission of the party (FLPH, 1998, 80). Kim Jong Il has yet to appoint any successor to any meaningful post within the North Korean government which means that the Korean People’s Army could rebel against a leader they do not approve of.

### **Political Elite**

The North Korean political machine consists of individuals who have been handpicked by Kim Jong Il or his inner circle. The government is much more similar in nature to a monarchy rather than a socialist system. This allows for many different types of pitfalls during a succession scenario with the most likely being a coupe launched from inside a power faction that does not hold much standing with the new government. The political elite with the most support from the army would likely be able to influence Kim Jong Il’s successor by striking a peaceful deal with them. As Mr. Stares points out, “much would hinge on the leadership skills of the individuals involved, their personal networks and their organizational capacities...” (Stares, 2009, 28). However, it is also possible for the political elite to stage a violent coup that would result in much bloodshed and could possibly bring about the collapse of the country. The

North Korean political drama will most certainly play a very large role in who is picked as the next leader of North Korea.

### **Civilian Populous**

North Korea has a population of close to 24 million people and is the 47<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world (UN, 2008, 16); it is also one of the worst fed countries in the world. According to an article in the BBC in 2008, “The World Food Programme warned that six million people were in urgent need of food aid...” (BBC, 2008). The death of Kim Jong Il would give millions of North Koreans an avenue of escape from their home country. It is possible that a large exodus of North Koreans could occur when Kim Jong Il dies. This could influence the political elite to remove the strict prohibition upon many different types of food aids from the rest of the world. The civilian populous will also play a large role in determining whose side the Korean People’s Army is on. If the army is over saturated by trying to stop the flow of refugees into China and South Korea it will be unable to offer support to those in power (or attempting to claim power). So without actually having a voice, the North Korean people could speak loudly with their feet and stomachs.

### **China**

China has been North Korea’s chief supporter and has been instrumental in keeping the North Korean economy from collapsing. Currently China is responsible for 90 percent of North Korea’s energy imports (Bajoria, 2008, 2). There are a variety of reasons for this but the biggest is the fact that north Korea serves as a, “guard post for

China, keeping at bay the tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in South Korea” (Dingli, 2006, 20). China also does not want millions of untrained North Korean refugees to enter their country.

## **Economy**

As stated, North Korea is very important to China. Supporting North Korea is a monumental task and the costs to China are quite high. This means that any successor to Kim Jong Il will need to be cognizant of the fact that China will need to be appeased. Without the support of China the North Korean economy would collapse but a new leader in North Korea could open new possibilities to China. China is well aware of the fact that an unstable North Korea is a black eye on the national stage which means that China will offer concessions to a new North Korean leader in order to get them to back off of the nuclear rhetoric and join the community of nations. This will also mean that China will do everything in its power to stop north Korea from signing any type of treaty with the United States, according to Daniel Sneider, an associate director for research at Stanford’s Asia-Pacific Research Center, “For the Chinese, stability and the avoidance of war are the top priorities” (Bajoria, 2008, 3).

## **Military Reaction**

According to the 1967 Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, China is required to come to the defense of north Korea against any unprovoked aggression from a third party (En-Lai, 1967). While this treaty still holds true today, China’s military focus has changed from unilateral defense of North Korea to

detering a possible secession of Taiwan. China has also shifted its military policy to more of a containment role from an offensive role. The Chinese military would be used to deter North Korean refugees from fleeing into China rather than combating possible South Korean and U.S. forces inside of North Korea. In short, military action by China would not be initiated until absolutely needed, they would use other means (i.e. economic) to accomplish their goals of a Chinese friendly North Korean regime.

## **South Korea**

South Korea is watching the possible succession of Kim Jong Il very closely. Relations between North Korea and South Korea have been historically hostile and during the death of Kim Il Sung tensions on the peninsula were very high. The current leader of South Korea, Lee Myung-Bak, had been a longtime opponent of the failed “Sunshine Policy” that the previous South Korean administration implemented and he shifted his government to a more aggressive policy that linked economic assistance to the suspension of North Korea’s nuclear program (atimes.com, 2008). However, that policy has caused tensions to rise between the two countries and recently ebbed even higher with another North Korean nuclear test.

## **Economy**

South Korea has been an important trade partner with north Korea trading around \$1.82 Billion US last year alone (Koh, 2009, 1). Along with several trade deals, South Korea provides a substantial amount of aid to North Korea in order to help keep the North Korean government afloat. Depending on who succeeds Kim Jong Il the

economic relationship between both countries could either greatly increase or come to a standstill. North Korea could choose to change its government to a modified free market system which would allow more companies from South Korea to move north and open plants or they could keep the current economic system which is slowly destroying the country. From a South Korean economic perspective the succession of Kim Jong Il will slow trade in the short term but it could greatly increase trade in the long term.

### **Military Reaction**

South Korea has a sizeable amount of their military forces stationed along the DMZ even though the South Korean army only consists of 522,000 individuals as opposed to the 1 million member North Korean army. Since it is outnumbered approximately 2-1 the South Korean army relies on a strong defensive posture combined with US support and modern equipment. During a succession scenario the South Korean military would be used mainly to deter any rogue North Korean military action and to stop a large number of North Korean refugees from flowing across the border. The South Korean military will not initiate hostilities with North Korea but will respond with force to any type of incursion or provocation by North Korea.

### **United States**

The main concern of the United States during a succession scenario will be ensuring no long range missiles are fired at the United States or her allies and that all of North Korea's WMDs remain secured. Any interaction from the United States will come in the form of military support to South Korea or Japan and possibly economic support

to a new regime that is willing to drop its nuclear program and reduce hostilities towards the U.S. Another goal of the United States will be to get the new North Korean regime back to the 6 party talks and to rejoin the 1953 Korean War armistice.

## **Economy**

The United States has a long history of implementing economic sanctions against North Korea. Many of those sanctions have been unenforced while the United States has still provided economic assistance to North Korea (mainly at the behest of South Korea). The major economic focus for the United States during a succession would be to show the new leader of North Korea the benefits of working with the United States, such as increased food aid and a decreased US threat from South Korea. The US could also offer energy support to North Korea returning to the 6 party talks. Any deals that the US makes with North Korea would have to be approved by South Korea because of a possible negative reaction from Seoul. The US would also have to take into account the new leader of North Korea. If they are a hardliner less support would be offered, but if they were willing to open up North Korea to the western world more support would be given.

## **Research Design**

There are a variety of analytical models that can be used when preparing a predictive study. For this particular analysis the author has chosen to use the LAMP method (the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction) over more used methods such as the Analytical Hierarchy Process and the Delphi Technique because the LAMP

method seems to be better suited for international relations studies, predictions and processes. The LAMP method is also better suited because it uses a number of characteristics and processes from different predictive methods; however, LAMP's primary difference from other predictive methods is the recognition of "free will" on potential events (Lockwood & Lockwood, 1993). When dealing with political relationships each actor has their own voice which, at any given time, can make a decision of "free will" that will change the perception and behavior of all those actors influenced by the original decision.

With this in mind, the key to an effective predictive study with the LAMP method is to understand the actors and their individual perceptions of events in order to correctly analyze and assess the different decisions made by each actor. According to the LAMP authors, "...we can only know the probability of a given alternate future relative to all other possible alternate futures" (Lockwood & Lockwood, 1993, 26). The purpose of LAMP is for the express intention of determining possible future scenarios by taking into account the perceptions of all actors in the separate scenarios and not just one specific actor's perceptions which prohibits focusing on one set of alternate choices and free will decisions.

LAMP is a 12 step program that focuses on relative probability and not particularly on quantitative measures. Each step requires a review of the event that the analyst is attempting to predict and the most likely alternate future and perceptions of each actor involved in the scenario.

Here are the steps of the LAMP method as presented by the LAMP method

creators:

1. Determine the issue for which you are trying to predict the most likely future.
2. Specify the national “actors” involved.
3. Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question.
4. Specify all *possible* courses of action for each actor.
5. Determine the major scenarios within which you will compare the alternate futures.
6. Calculate the total number of permutations of possible “alternate futures” for each scenario.
7. Perform a “pair wise comparison” of all alternate futures to determine their relative probability.
8. Rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received.
9. Assuming that each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms of its consequences for the issue in question.
10. State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future.
11. Determine the “focal events” that must occur in our present in order to bring about a given alternate future.
12. Develop indicators for the focal events (Lockwood & Lockwood, 1993, 27-28)

Using the LAMP method is particularly useful when attempting to determine the actions different actors will take. In this particular scenario it is very useful because there is much more qualitative data to analyze than there is quantitative. Looking at the potential reactions of South Korea, China and the United States to a leadership change in North Korea requires an in-depth look at historical, personal and “free will” type of decisions. Using a quantitative, cost/benefit, analysis would not fulfill the needs of this study in a timely and useful manner. With the recent behavior of North Korea it is imperative to look at the potential responses of all the actors involved in this scenario because of the possibility of a change in leadership in North Korea.

Regardless of how much information is analyzed there is always some concern when using a predictive study in an analytical framework. It is necessary to

keep in mind the fact that while LAMP attempts to address free will, it is nearly impossible to account for every individual behavior of each actor attached to these scenarios especially when their behaviors and reactions are intertwined and dependant on each other. It is also important to recognize that personal perception and the individual biases of the analysts will be incorporated into any type of qualitative study. This perception is only as effective as the analysts understanding of said perceptions. As not only an American, but an American military member who has spent a year in South Korea focusing solely on north Korea, it is possible that this author's understanding of the perceptions of China, South Korea and north Korea will be influenced either consciously or unconsciously based on personal experience and education. However, the author has made every effort to alleviate this paper of any biases that are overtly presented through intensive research into the historical interactions between all of the states involved. The author can only offer the assurance that there was a conscious effort to avoid any type of bias and/or error.

#### ***4. Specify courses of action for each actor***

The three actors that have the most direct influence on North Korean succession are the United States, South Korea and China. The fourth step in the LAMP process is to determine all possible courses of action available to each actor in this scenario. There are an infinite number of possible courses of actions and permutations of behaviors the most likely have been generalized down until a small number of actions are available to all actors involved. This is imperative in order to present a concise study that will effectively reach the needed decision makers.

Looking at the post-Korean war history of interaction between the national actors in this situation there are only three applicable courses of action available. These COA's are derived from previous actions taken by all three actors during moments of high tension on the Korean peninsula. This approach focuses not only on the military aspect but also on the economic and diplomatic aspects as well.

- Maintain Status quo (MS) – The national actors maintain the status quo with the new leader of North Korea.
- Engage in Warfare (EW) – The national actors declare war on North Korea.
- Engage in Peaceful dialogue (EP) - The national actors involved with North Korea engage north in peaceful dialogue while changing the majority of their current policies.

##### ***5. Determine the major scenarios***

For this portion of the LAMP study, a set amount of scenarios are determined that North Korea could follow. North Korea is the focal point for this study and the catalyst for the behavior of the other three states, meaning that if North Korea does not follow one of these listed scenarios that any interaction between the other three actors amongst each other will be based on other issues and will not be relevant to this study. The major scenarios are as follows:

**Scenario 1 (Kim Jong Il names a family member as his successor):** Kim Jong Il proceeds to name one of his three sons, his brother in law, his mistress or

another family member related by blood or marriage as successor and they take a militant, moderate or liberal approach to relations with the national actors.

**Scenario 2 (Kim Jong Il names a non-family member as his successor):**

Kim Jong Il names one of his closest advisors/followers or military leader as his hand-picked successor. In this scenario the new leader will be much more of a hard-line individual or a combination of a moderate and a hard-liner. The individual from this group will also be very intelligent and will have a great understanding of the dire shape the North Korean economy is in. They will also have a firm grasp and working relationship with leaders from the other countries specified in this study. This could greatly influence their actions as they are already well aware of how the actors will perceive them.

**Scenario 3 (Kim Jong Il dies before naming a successor):** Kim Jong Il does not name a successor before his death which could destabilize the entire country or force a ruling coalition to manage the country as a group of elite power holders. This scenario is by far the most dangerous as many different groups will claim leadership of North Korea. There will likely be wide scale anarchy and a collapse of the North Korean government leaving the people to fend for themselves. This scenario also highlights the fears of North Korean refugees fleeing into South Korea and China. There would likely be a large amount of internal bloodshed as purges and internecine conflict takes place.

Each scenario posed by North Korea would produce very different futures and possibly different responses from the three other actors. In order to use this effectively

it is now necessary to calculate all of the possible alternate futures that the actors could follow based upon the presented scenarios.

#### **6. Calculate the number of alternate futures.**

According to the LAMP method, the basic equation for determining the amount of “alternate futures” possible to each actor in the study can be determined by the LAMP base equation  $X^Y = Z$ , where X is the number of COAs for each major power, Y is the number of major powers, and Z is equal to the number of alternate futures. In this study there are three courses of actions available to each actor and there are three actors outside of North Korea. Therefore, using this equation, a total of 27 alternate futures is identified. This total number of futures is calculated as:  $X = 3$  and  $Y = 3$ ;  $3^3 = 27$ . Because each scenario provides the same number of alternate futures (27), the next step in the LAMP method is to create a table of alternate futures. This will then be used to perform a “pair wise comparison” of the alternate futures for each given scenario. Keep in mind that each acronym represents a different course of action, such as:

Maintain the Status Quo (MS)

Engage in Warfare (EW)

Engage in Peaceful Dialog (EP)

**7. Do a pair-wise comparison of alternate futures.**

<u>Future #</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>ROK</u>	<u>PRC</u>
1	MS	EW	EW
2	MS	EW	MS
3	EW	EW	EW
4	EP	EW	EW
5	EP	EW	MS
6	EW	EW	MS
7	MS	MS	MS
8	MS	EW	EP
9	MS	MS	EW
10	EP	EW	EP
11	EP	MS	MS
12	MS	MS	EP
13	EP	MS	EW
14	EP	MS	EP
15	EW	MS	EW
16	EP	EP	MS
17	EW	MS	MS
18	EW	EW	EP
19	EP	EP	EW
20	MS	EP	MS
21	MS	EP	EW
22	EP	EP	EP
23	MS	EP	EP
24	EW	MS	EP
25	EW	EP	EW
26	EW	EP	MS

With three separate scenarios, each with 27 alternate futures, there is a total of 81 alternate futures compared in this analysis.

**8. Rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received.**

A synopsis of Step 8’s mathematical equations from the LAMP process is required to understand that voting process. The total number of votes is derived from  $n$  which is the number of alternate futures to be analyzed and  $X$  which equals the total

number of pair wise comparisons. “The formula for the number of pair wise comparisons is expressed as  $X = (n-1) + (n-2) \dots + (n-n)$ ” or expressed completely:  $X = n(n-1)/2$  (Lockwood and Lockwood, 1994, p. 60). For this analysis  $n$  equals 27, therefore  $X$  equals 351 pair wise comparisons for each scenario. Each scenario will have its own table and its own voting process, these votes will than indicate which alternate futures seem more likely than the rest and will allow an analysis of the most likely futures

### Scenario 1 (KJI names a family member as successor)

Scenario 1: KJI names a family member as successor				
Possible Future #	US	ROK	PRC	Vote
7	MS	MS	MS	28
12	MS	MS	EP	27
23	MS	EP	EP	24
16	EP	EP	MS	21
20	MS	EP	MS	21
22	EP	EP	EP	21
11	EP	MS	MS	20
6	EW	EW	MS	18
14	EP	MS	EP	18
18	EW	EW	EP	17
3	EW	EW	EW	16
2	MS	EW	MS	14
8	MS	EW	EP	13
9	MS	MS	EW	13
1	MS	EW	EW	12
13	EP	MS	EW	12
4	EP	EW	EW	9
5	EP	EW	MS	8
15	EW	MS	EW	8
21	MS	EP	EW	7
10	EP	EW	EP	6
17	EW	MS	MS	5
19	EP	EW	EP	5
24	EW	MS	EP	5
25	EW	EP	EW	2
26	EW	EP	MS	1
27	EW	EP	EP	0

**Scenario 2 (KJI names a non-family member as a successor)**

Scenario 2: KJI names a non-family member as successor.				
Possible Future #	US	ROK	PRC	Votes
7	MS	MS	MS	27
12	MS	MS	EP	27
16	EP	EP	MS	25
11	EP	MS	MS	23
23	MS	EP	EP	21
20	MS	EP	MS	21
18	EW	EW	EP	19
22	EP	EP	EP	18
6	EW	EW	MS	18
14	EP	MS	EP	16
3	EW	EW	EW	16
2	MS	EW	MS	14
8	MS	EW	EP	13
9	MS	MS	EW	13
1	MS	EW	EW	12
13	EP	MS	EW	12
4	EP	EW	EW	9
5	EP	EW	MS	8
15	EW	MS	EW	8
21	MS	EP	EW	7
10	EP	EW	EP	6
17	EW	MS	MS	5
19	EP	EP	EW	5
24	EW	MS	EP	5
25	EW	EP	EW	2
26	EW	EP	MS	1
27	EW	EP	EP	0

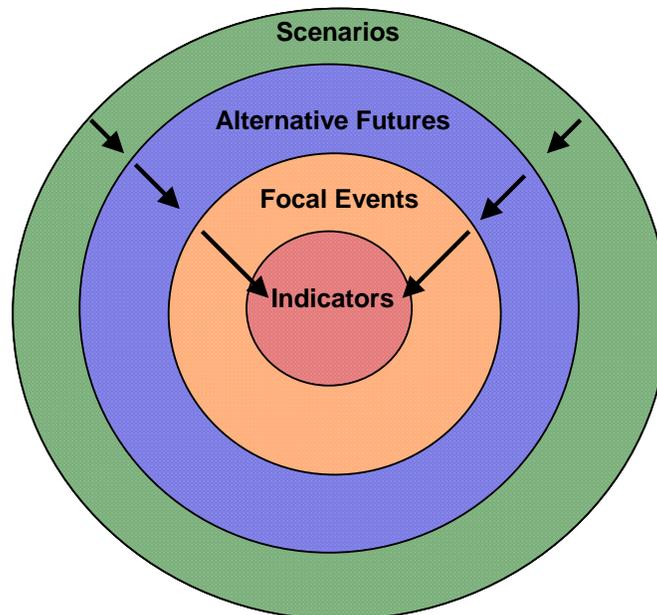
### Scenario 3 (KJI Dies before naming a successor)

Scenario 3: KJI dies before naming a successor.				
Possible Future #	US	ROK	PRC	Votes
3	EW	EW	EW	29
7	MS	MS	MS	24
22	EP	EP	EP	24
23	MS	EP	EP	24
11	EP	MS	MS	20
16	EP	EP	MS	20
18	EW	EW	EP	20
20	MS	EP	MS	20
6	EW	EW	MS	19
12	MS	MS	EP	19
14	EP	MS	EP	17
9	MS	MS	EW	15
13	EP	MS	EW	14
21	MS	EP	EW	14
1	MS	EW	EW	12
8	MS	EW	EP	9
15	EW	MS	EW	9
2	MS	EW	MS	7
19	EP	EP	EW	7
25	EW	EP	EW	7
4	EP	EW	EW	6
17	EW	MS	MS	6
24	EW	MS	EP	5
10	EP	EW	EP	2
26	EW	EP	MS	2
5	EP	EW	MS	1
27	EW	EP	EP	1

## 9. Analyze consequences of alternate futures.

The most likely scenarios to occur are scenarios 1 and 2. Both of these scenarios follow a more logical path of progression. A graphic depiction of how the scenarios are linked within the LAMP process is depicted in figure 3 below. Beginning with scenario 1, Kim Jong Il's main concern is retaining power within North Korea and securing his legacy. In order to do this effectively his family must maintain positive control over the North Korean government. Kim Jong Il has taken positive steps within the last few years to solidify his son's powerbase throughout the country.

What this will mean for the national actors is a likely stable transition from Kim Jong Il to one of his family members. It can be interpreted that the current posturing by the Kim regime regarding nuclear weapons and the 6 party talks is a way to give his successor some leverage with the western world for much needed humanitarian aid and/or respect for the next leader.



## Figure 1. Linkages within the LAMP Method

However, since Kim Jong Il neither has yet to name a successor, nor has he groomed any of his sons to replace him it is possible that a non-family member could be chosen as the next leader of North Korea. This scenario is less likely than scenario 1 because it risks the changing of a Kim regime for another family's regime, one of the key areas that Kim Jong Il does not want to concede. If this scenario occurs the new leadership in North Korea would most likely consist of a group of individuals who are entrenched in the North Korean government such as Kim Yong Nam. This scenario is less likely than scenario 1 because Kim Jong Il does not allow one individual in his government to gain too much influence or power and he masterfully pits senior leaders against one another and keeps them as enemies.

Scenario 3 is the least likely of the 3 scenarios because of the controlled society that the North Koreans live in. The idea of no leadership is completely foreign to them and more than likely they would still consider Kim Jong Il as their leader. Also, many in the North Korean leadership know that their power and influence is directly created by the fact that they are members of the government so it is unlikely that they will allow the government to fail even if it means they must take a lesser position than the one they currently occupy. Along with this it is unlikely that China would allow North Korea to slip into anarchy (which is what would occur) and they would prop up the countries government with a selected leader.

Within each scenario, the three most likely alternate futures will be reviewed. After each alternate future is reviewed, steps 10 and 11 will identify key focal events and indicators within the most likely alternate futures.

### **Scenario 1 (Kim Jong Il names a family member as successor)**

Scenario 1 reflects the most likely overall of the three scenarios. According to the pair wise comparison of this scenario, alternate futures 7, 12 and 23 have the highest probability of occurrence. Scenario 1 is a long-term focused scenario that will lay out the path of North Korea for the next 20-30 years. As the family successor begins to get settled in as the new leader he will develop a cult like following from the North Korean populous. He will also be forced to deal with a multitude of problems ranging from extremely hostile relations with two of North Korea's closest neighbors, lack of basic food stuffs and a military that is basically falling apart at the seams. This will most likely force the new leader to either maintain the status quo with North Korea's neighbors while renewing the 6 party talks, or taking the first steps in ending the Korean War armistice and normalizing relations with the United States and the Republic of Korea.

***Alternate Future 7 (US/ROK/PRC all maintain status quo with north Korea-28 votes)*** predicts that all of the national actors will maintain the status quo with the new North Korean leadership. This is scenario 1's most likely COA. This is based on historic actions seen after the death of Kim Il Sung and the succession of Kim Jong Il.

This alternate future most closely resembles the current relations between the national actors and North Korea. So long as a moderate relative is selected by Kim Jong Il all of the countries involved will continue forward with the 6 party talks and will continue the current food aid programs already in place. This also holds true as long as a dramatic shift in Lee Myong Bak's administration doesn't occur, such as a major slide to the right (such as agreeing to become a full member of the proliferation security initiative). Also as long as a new aggression doesn't take place, such as a number of naval conflicts along the NLL, all sides should maintain the status quo. The likelihood of armed conflict in this alternate future is low, particularly if a family member with a strong cult of personality inside the North Korean military and political machine is chosen.

***Alternate Future 12(US/ROK maintain the status quo while China and North Korea engage in closer relations- 27 Votes)*** is similar to alternate future (AF) 7 except that only the United States and South Korea maintain the status quo while China strengthens their ties with North Korea. This is also a very likely scenario but would require Kim Jong Il to choose a family member who has had dealings with China and who has significant support within both the North Korean military, political machine, Kim Jong Il's inner circle and inside the Chinese Politburo. This would also most likely cause the US and South Korea to approach the situation with a little more caution as relations between north Korea and China have chilled in recent years. A major shift in Chinese and North Korean relations could signal an increase of support from China to North Korea including advanced military hardware, monetary support and foodstuffs. Another major area where the Chinese could give the new North Korean leader support would be on the nuclear front through openly providing them the materials needed to

upgrade the Yongbyong nuclear facility. The likelihood of armed conflict in this alternate future is low but slightly higher than the likelihood in alternate future #7. This could also slightly increase long-term tension on the peninsula and between the United States and China.

***Alternate Future 23 (PRC/ROK engage in peaceful relations and the US maintains the status quo- 24 Votes)*** resembles AF 12 except that north and South Korea both move to normalize relations between the two countries. This would require a successor who is a moderate, bordering on liberal, leader and who is willing to forgo the current North Korean policy of a unified Korean peninsula. This would also require North Korea to be willing to discuss discontinuing their nuclear program and overtly accepting South Korea aid. If Kim Jong Il appoints either his second or third sons as the next leader this scenario could play out. Both north and South Korea would have to come to a number of agreements including family visits between nations, how to treat the Kaesong Industrial Complex, how to ensure that NLL conflicts between the two nations don't turn violent and, most importantly, what type of borders they would have. It would be more of a culture shock for North Korea and would be very difficult for its leadership to explain to the masses. It could also lead to a coup attempt in North Korea. This process would take a number of years to actually implement, however the ground work would be laid by the new leader.

### **Scenario 2 (Kim Jong Il names a non-family member as successor)**

Scenario 2 reflects the next most likely scenario of the three scenarios. According to the pair wise comparison of this scenario, alternate futures 7, 12 and 16

have the highest probability of occurrence. While alternate futures 7 and 12 received the same amount of votes, 7 has a higher probability of occurrence due to previous succession activities. In this scenario Kim Jong Il is forced to choose a non-family member to lead the government most likely due to the inabilities of his sons to gain the proper political clout. This scenario can be used as either a short term or long term option. In the short term a single “strongman” type of leader could take control of the government until one of the sons (most likely the oldest son due to the influential Confucianism teachings in the Orient) is prepared to lead. In the long term, a group of individuals could seize power until one of the sons (most likely the middle or youngest son) is prepared to take control of the government. The later scenario is less likely due to Kim Jong Il’s policy of not allowing groups to form in his government.

***Alternate future 7 (US/ROK/PRC all maintain the status quo with north Korea- 27 Votes)*** is the same as in scenario 1 except that the inner workings in North Korea change dramatically. In this future a North Korean politician who has multiple years of experience and political clout will be chosen as successor (such as Kim Jong-nam). There would also be no major policy changes for the first 12-18 months under the new leader and more than likely North Korea would continue on with its nuclear program and harsh rhetoric of South Korea. The only major difference that could be seen would be the scaling down of military hostilities along the NLL and a possible change of military leadership throughout the North Korean armed forces. Whichever non-family member is chosen would have a strong cult of personality among the North Korean senior military leadership and political machine. The same political machinations would continue almost unchanged for the short term inside of north Korea,

however, there would be massive amounts of leadership change within the country and this will drastically influence the direction north Korea takes in relations with the United States, South Korea and China.

***Alternate Future 12 (US/ROK maintains status quo while China engages in peaceful dialogue- 27 Votes)*** is again similar to scenario 1, AF 12 but this would mean that the new north Korean leader was aligning closely with China and was interested in continuing the previous regimes policies toward the US and South Korea. This future would require that a leader with strong Chinese ties be selected. This future would also see stronger ties between China and North Korea emerges with the death of Kim Jong Il and the removal of the Kim family from leadership in North Korea. This could also pave the way for a re-opening of the Sinuiju special economic zone with a very heavy Chinese influence and with a governor hand-picked by the Chinese politburo. Stronger relations between China and North Korea would alienate some members of the North Korean Supreme People's Assembly so the new leader would most likely purge quite a bit of senior leadership throughout the country which could cause some issues between North Korea and the US/ROK. However, this leader wouldn't be interested in beginning hostilities with the US and ROK, he would be more interested in shoring up his power inside north Korea which would mean importing more food stuffs and generating more income for his home province, his followers and himself. Finally, this future would re-open North Korea to being a puppet state controlled by China basically carrying out Chinese policies in exchange for military, economic and agricultural support.

***Alternate Future 16 (US/ROK engage in peaceful dialogue while China maintains the status quo- 25 Votes)*** would see the most drastic change in north

Korean policy with north Korea agreeing to meet the demands of the United States and South Korea in order to normalize relations between the three countries. . In this future Kim Jong Il would select a leader who isn't a hardliner. This individual would be very interested in receiving much more economic and humanitarian support from the US and ROK but he would face stiff opposition from many in the North Korean government. This leader would need to have powerful political supports and quite a bit of power in order to survive. This future would also have a large draw down in hostilities between all powers on the Korean peninsula and would have North Korea halting their nuclear ambitions and stop selling military hardware to countries opposed to the United States. There would also be a large drawdown of tension from both North Korea and South Korea in this future but tension would increase between China and the other three countries in this scenario. This alternate future can be used for both short term and long term analysis as immediate changes would be made but the more important changes (military direction, changes in the economy/government) would take many years to implement.

### **Scenario 3 (Kim Jong Il dies before naming a successor)**

Scenario 3 represents the least likely course of action but it is the most dangerous. According to the pair wise comparison of this scenario, alternate futures 3, 7, and 22 have the highest probability of occurrence due to the amount of unknown variables that will play a major role in this scenario. While alternate futures 7, 22 and 23 all received the same amount of votes it is more likely that alternate futures 7 and 22 will occur in their predicted order over alternate future 23 because the United States would

not maintain the status quo if South Korea engaged in peaceful dialogue. Also, the US would not allow China to reach a peaceful agreement with North Korea because of the possible proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Scenario 3 is truly the worst case scenario and diverges into the “what if” of alternate futures. Scenario 3 assumes that Kim Jong Il has made no plans whatsoever for his replacement and that his highest ranking political/military leaders have also made no plans for after his death. This leads any alternate future analysis down the “rabbit hole” because of the massive amount of factors that must be taken into account including rogue military leaders, unsecured weapons of mass destruction and a starving populous that could possibly flee North Korea and become refugees in China and South Korea. Because of the uncertainty of the events it is probable to assess that any of the top three alternate futures could occur (which explains why they are so divergent in their paths).

***Alternate Future 3 (US/ROK/PRC all engage North Korea in military action-29 votes)*** is the most likely future because of the uncertainty that will surround Kim Jong Il’s death. In this future the North Korean government splinters with all sides gathering as many military resources as possible while conducting military actions against the other factions. There would also be scattered attacks across the DMZ and NLL from North Korean forces acting independently and in the spirit of *Juche* and *Songun*. This would force the United States and South Korea to invade in order to stop any threats from rogue North Korean military units, which would in turn mobilize China to invade in order to keep a buffer zone and possibly attempt to confiscate North Korea’s nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. This alternate future would be the

most destructive out of any future in all of the predicted scenarios because of South Korea, the United States and China basically racing to capture as many weapons of mass destruction as possible.

**Alternate Future 7 (US/ROK/PRC all maintain the status quo with north Korea- 24 votes)** is similar to the other scenarios, however, all three national actors will fortify their borders to dissuade any north Korean refugees from attempting to flee their home country. In this alternate future a set group of individuals in North Korea immediately take over leadership roles and clamp down on any independent military actions. All the national actors involved would step back and observe the actions taking place in North Korea while determining what the next best step would be, down the road. This future would see tensions along the NLL and DMZ rise slightly but quickly plateau as the leadership vacuum is filled by North Korean leaders who have substantial backing among the military leaders and have large cults of personalities throughout the North Korean populous.

**Alternate Future 22 (US/ROK/PRC all engage in peaceful activity with north Korea- 24 votes)** is similar to the previous scenarios; however, all of the state actors come to a peaceful resolution with North Korea. In this future a North Korean strongman takes over and quells and dissidents within the previous administrations government and establishes new relations with the rest of the world. North Korea agrees to give up its nuclear ambitions and WMD programs in order to receive economic and energy aid and to be allowed to stay in power. All US/South Korean prisoners are returned to their countries and North Korea normalizes relations with the rest of the world.

**10. State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future.**

The transposition of one alternate future to another happens when actions of one particular actor changes the perceptions of one or more of the other actors involved in the scenarios. This change provides the opportunity for one alternate future to transpose into another alternate future, potentially changing the probabilities of all the alternate futures as the scenario progresses. Focusing on the three alternate futures within each scenario that were voted as most probably through the pair wise comparisons, we will cover the possibilities of transposition.

**Scenario 1 (Kim Jong Il names a family member as successor)**

The first three alternate futures ranked most likely to occur should Kim Jong Il name a family member as successor are alternate futures 7, 12, 23. The similarities between these three futures (mainly that each actor could maintain the status quo or engage in peaceful actions), provides the potential for transposition between these three alternate futures. The key to determining whether transposition might exist is the relationship between the United States and China, South Korea and the United States and the relationship between South Korea and China. In alternate futures 12 and 23 China engages North Korea in peaceful dialogue whiles the US and South Korea continues relations the way they were in the past. Because of warming of relations between the Chinese and South Koreans, it is possible that China could convince South Korea to change from the status quo to a peaceful dialogue creating a transposition of futures 12 and 23. Similarly, in future 23 South Korea engages in peaceful dialogue but

political and military pressure from the United States could influence South Korea and make them return to maintaining the status quo which would create a transposition of futures 23 and 12. Also, the United States could influence China from engaging in peaceful activities with North Korea, if alternate future 12 and influence them to returning to maintaining the status quo as seen in alternate future 7.

Finally, we could see South Korea influence the United States from changing their status from the maintaining the status quo in future 23 to engaging in peaceful activities as seen in alternate future number 16. This could be done through extreme political interaction on the part of South Korea. However, the future that has the highest probability of transposition is from future 23 into future 12. This transposition has the highest probability of change because Chinese influence over South Korea is growing and South Korea relies on China as a large trading partner.

### **Scenario 2 (Kim Jong Il names a non-family member as successor)**

This scenario also provides some opportunities for transposition between the alternate futures 7, 12 and 16. The alternate futures in this scenario are more closely tied to reality because of the fact that the US wouldn't engage in a peaceful dialogue with North Korea without the approval and cooperation of South Korea. This has been documented and stated many times and would make logical sense. With that said, the most likely futures to transpose would be futures 12 and 16. In future 12 both South Korea and the US are influenced by China engaging in peaceful activity, the actions of China could make the US and South Korea change their views on the situation and force them to engage in peaceful activities. These actions could then influence China

and they change from a peaceful dialogue to maintaining the status quo. It would make sense for China to back away from North Korea if they showed interest in overtures from South Korea and the United States. However, transposition could occur between futures 16 and 12 as well. It would make sense that the US and South Korea would back away from North Korea if they moved closer to China which would force the US and South Korea to back off from their peaceful dialogue and return to maintaining the status quo.

### **Scenario 3 (Kim Jong Il dies before naming a successor)**

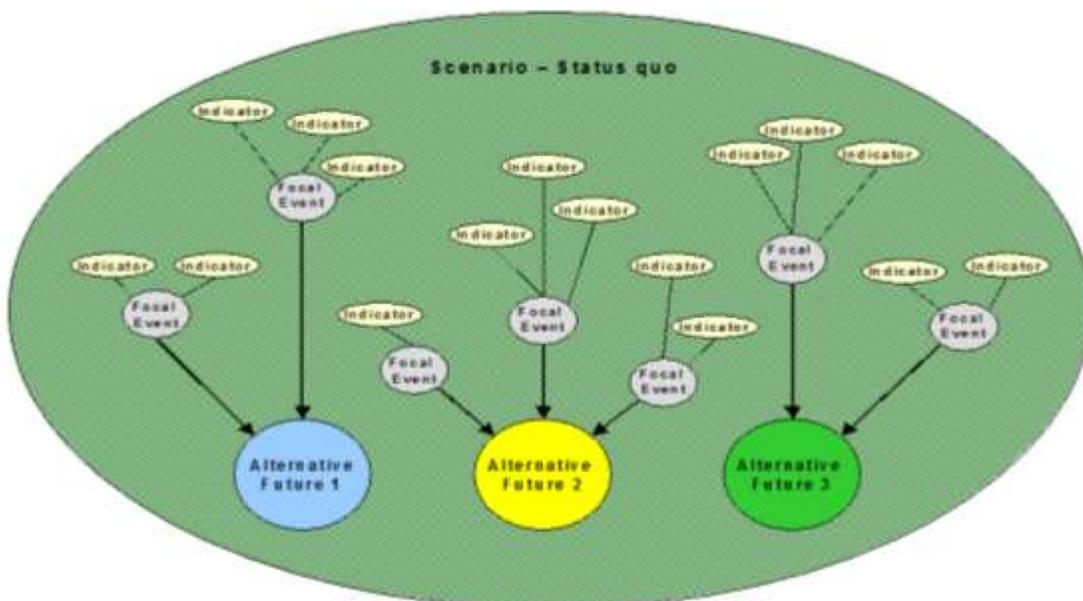
This scenario easily provides the most options for transposition between the three actors. Alternate futures 3, 7 and 22 all result in one particular path being followed by each actor, be it war, status quo or peace. In fact, all of these futures could be transposed with each other because each actor will likely follow suit with the other actors. Alternate future 3 is the most likely but it could be transposed with alternate future 22 for a variety of reasons. If North Korea has a stable change from Kim Jong Il to another individual there would be no need for war. If this occurred none of the other actors would invade because their actions would influence each other. The same can be said for alternate future 22 and alternate future 7. All of the actors could attempt to engage the new North Korean leadership in peaceful dialogue but if they notice the other actors following the same path they could back off and return to the status quo.

The potential consequences from the most probable alternate futures along with the potential for transposition leads this paper into the final two steps of the LAMP process—determining focal events for the most probable alternate futures and

determining the key indicators that will set each focal point off. The determination of focal events and their key indicators will allow for the possibility to determine the likely responses of the United States, South Korea and China leading up to and during the possible succession of Kim Jong Il.

### 11/12. Determine the Focal Events and Key Indicators

The final stage of this analysis is to determine the focal events and their indicators in order to determine not just the most likely future but to also provide a checklist to strategic leadership on what to watch for when dealing with this issue. This list can be used by any organization that is dealing with North Korea and can present them with a “clock” to predict when certain events will happen. If a focal event is witnessed, the key indicators can be used to establish a timeline for when the next focal event will occur and also to determine how far away the actual crisis is from reality. Scenario 1 will be the first area that is analyzed, beginning with future 7, 12 and 23.



## Figure 2. LAMP Analytical Map

### **Alternate Future 7 (*US/ROK/PRC all maintain the status quo with North Korea*)**

FOCAL EVENT- The 6 party talks resume with North Korea agreeing to discuss stopping nuclear ambitions

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea ceases the re-opening of Yongbyong nuclear plant for an indefinite amount of time prior to the re-starting of the 6 Party Talks

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea agrees to discuss disclosing their full nuclear records

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea rejoins the 1953 armistice

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea asks for peace talks with South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korean state run media announces to North Koreans that North and South Korea have agreed to a peace treaty

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea privately asks to meet with South Korean officials and sue for peace

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea re-opens Kaesong Industrial Complex and allows South Korean workers back into the country

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea asks for covert meetings with South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea allows foreign aid to enter North Korea again

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea releases the US journalists currently in its custody

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea announces through its state-run media that it is reviewing the case at the highest levels

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea contacts the Chinese government and asks them to accept the US prisoners

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea asks the US/ South Korea to begin talks asking for compensation for the journalists

***Alternate Future 12(US/ROK maintain the status quo while China and North Korea engage in closer relations)***

FOCAL EVENT- China withdraws from the 6 party talks and recognizes North Korean right to nuclear power

KEY INDICATOR- There is a marked decrease in relations between South Korea and China

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea tests a second nuclear device

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea announces that it has weaponized more plutonium

FOCAL EVENT- Chinese military equipment deploys in north Korea with Chinese military trainers

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea stages multiple exercises with Chinese assistance along the DMZ

KEY INDICATOR- China participates in a joint exercise with north Korea against a possible invasion from South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- Advanced Chinese weapon systems are observed in the North Korean military order of battle

FOCAL EVENT- China and north Korea re-affirm the 1967 treaty of Sino-north Korean friendship

KEY INDICATOR- There is a marked decrease in relations between South Korea and China

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea increases naval posture along the NLL showing a greater degree of hostility towards South Korean vessels

KEY INDICATOR- China announces they will unilaterally support North Korea's right to pre-emptive strikes if they feel threatened

***Alternate Future 23 (PRC/ROK engage in peaceful relations and the US maintains the status quo)***

FOCAL EVENT- South Korea and China sign a trade pact with North Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea agrees to receive support from South Korea in the form of economic and agricultural aid

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea and China publicly improve relations and take steps to reduce trade barriers between the two countries

FOCAL EVENT- South Korea removes NLL (Northern Limit Line) restrictions against North Korean

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea reduces its military posture along the demilitarized zone and begins meeting with South Korean counterparts to discuss removing the DMZ completely

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea increases hostile rhetoric against United States stating that the US is making moves against peace in the region

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea and South Korea agree to a variety of joint fishing ventures and agree to demilitarize the West Sea area between the two countries

FOCAL EVENT- North Korean and South Korean leaders agree to meet in South Korea to discuss issues dividing the two countries

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea increases hostile rhetoric against United States stating that the US is making moves against peace in the region

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea offers to increase family reunions between North and South Korean families

FOCAL EVENT- South Korea requests that a meeting with strategic US leadership to discuss the future of US forces in South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea insists that their military take the lead on the defense of South Korea immediately

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea increases monetary demand for basing US troops in country

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea restricts number of US military personnel allowed in country

***Alternate Future 16 (US/ROK engage in peaceful dialogue while China maintains the status quo)***

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea publicly accepts economic and agricultural aid from the United States

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea ceases hostile rhetoric against United States and begins a campaign of turning the US into a friend

KEY INDICATOR- China publicly expresses displeasure in South Korean/US support of North Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea allows US/ South Korean forces to deliver food aid inside of North Korea

KEY INDICATOR- China increases commercial pressure against South Korea and the United States as a form of punishment for normalizing relations with North Korea

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea pledges to give up its nuclear ambitions and rejoin the 6 Party Talks

KEY INDICATOR- China privately reduces economic/military support to North Korea and takes step to distance themselves from the DPRK

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea accepts light water reactors that are produced in South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea agrees to allow IAEA inspectors back into country

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea re-dismantles Yong Byong nuclear reactor

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea reduces its military posture along the demilitarized zone

KEY INDICATOR- North Korean troops reduce amount of training exercises and focus more on humanitarian missions inside North Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea re-positions troops farther from the DMZ

FOCAL EVENT- Joint US, South Korean and North Korean conference planned in Seoul

KEY INDICATOR- Chinese troop numbers increase along the North Korean border in anticipation of North Korea allowing US troops into the country

KEY INDICATOR- China privately reduces economic/military support to North Korea and takes step to distance themselves from the DPRK

KEY INDICATOR- China publicly expresses displeasure in South Korean/US support of North Korea

***Alternate Future 3 (US/ROK/PRC all engage North Korea in military action)***

FOCAL EVENT- The North Korean government collapses

KEY INDICATOR- North Korean military forces push south past the DMZ

KEY INDICATOR- Multiple groups inside North Korea reach out to the United States, South Korea and China

KEY INDICATOR- The number of North Korean defectors increases by a significant number into South Korea and China

FOCAL EVENT- The South Korean government decides that military intervention is the only way to stop North Korea's nuclear ambitions

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea asks for a larger number of US troops to be forward deployed into South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea re-positions a large number of troops and equipment at forward operating areas

KEY INDICATOR- South Korea asks the US to support military intervention in North Korea

FOCAL EVENT- The Chinese government determine that the only way to deter the US from controlling North Korea is through invading North Korea

KEY INDICATOR- China moves more military forces into the China/North Korean border area

KEY INDICATOR- China shuts down political communication channels with the United States and South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- China increases its naval presence in the Korean Bay area and orders Chinese flagged civilian vessels to vacate the area.

KEY INDICATOR- China invades North Korea

FOCAL EVENT- The US publicly announces they will support and defend their alliance with South Korea.

KEY INDICATOR- The US moves a large amount of military personal and equipment into South Korea and Japan

KEY INDICATOR- The US privately communicates with China and tells them to not make any inflammatory moves

KEY INDICATOR- High Level US military and civilian commanders make public comments supporting the South Korean military and government

**Alternate Future 22 (US/ROK/PRC all engage in peaceful activity with North Korea)**

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea gives up its nuclear ambitions and releases all of its nuclear documents

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea offers to normalize relations with all actors and asks for a new round of the 6 Party Talks to re-open negotiations

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea privately offers to release its nuclear documents in exchange for humanitarian aid

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea privately indicates that its willing to accept light water reactors from South korea

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea publicly suspends its ballistic missile program and ceases testing missiles

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea admits to selling ballistic missiles and provides information to the United States

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea begins to disassemble its missile launching platforms and inventory

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea ceases missile testing over the East and West sea

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea re-joins 1953 Korean War armistice and begins negotiation for peace treaty

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea asks for peace talks with South Korea

KEY INDICATOR- North Korean state run media announces to North Koreans that North and South Korea have agreed to a peace treaty

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea privately asks to meet with South Korean officials and sue for peace

FOCAL EVENT- North Korea declares that it will hold open and fair elections to select a new leader of their country

KEY INDICATOR- The leader of North Korea steps down from his leadership position and promises to uphold the electoral results

KEY INDICATOR- North Korea privately asks for support from South Korea and the United States to implement a free voting system

KEY INDICATOR- Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il are stripped of their honorific titles and known only as former heads of the North Korean state

KEY INDICATOR- A new constitution is implemented with term limits and a reorganization of the North Korean government and Workers Party

## **Conclusion**

The de-stabilization of the Korean peninsula favors no actor in this conflict. The next leader of North Korea will have an incredible amount of influence on whether or not the conflict will engulf the region once again. To look at the original question of this study, “what leadership changes in north Korea could destabilize the Korean Peninsula?” the answer is almost any leadership change in North Korea could destabilize the entire peninsula. The reality of the matter is that there is only one man who can answer that question.

Kim Jong Il is a man who suffers from severe alcoholism, diabetes, malnutrition, paranoia, recent brain surgery, old age and who is extremely unstable. He is also the man responsible for making the most important policy decision northwest Asia has seen in the last 50 years. The three scenarios outlined in this study establish the baseline choices that Kim Jong Il has been presented with, be it selecting a family member (some recent reports state he has selected Kim Jong Un as his successor), a close ally or simply naming nobody at all. All three choices, if left to Kim, run the gamut of possible risks or rewards for all of the actors involved.

North Korea itself is in a precarious situation. Its economy is weak, its people are dieing and it relies on the rest of the world to supply it with enough foodstuffs and energy to keep the country alive. These issues could play a pivotal role in influencing who the next leader of North Korea is, especially if Kim Jong Il ignores the problem to the point that he doesn't name an individual to replace him. These problems will also play a large role in the actions that the other actors in this scenario will take.

In order to successfully avert disaster, leaders in China, South Korea and the United States must be fully aware of the possible outcomes that a change in North Korean leadership brings. This includes not only assessing one possible future but all possible futures. The more analysis done on studying the key indicators of regime change in North Korea the better the chances allied leadership has of correctly predicting the outcome. This will allow strategic leadership the best

opportunity to prepare for the most likely threat from North Korea during a succession scenario.

In the ends, North Korea will most likely follow one of these three scenarios. Kim Jong Il will be forced to make some type of choice as far as his succession is concerned if he wants to keep his family in power and his legacy intact. Since the inception of North Korea only one family has ruled the country and continuing a dynastic succession inside of a socialist state grows increasingly harder by the day. With the problems facing North Korea many of the political elite are beginning to understand that the Kim regime has been able to keep them in power and living in a life of luxury but it has managed to rot away the underpinnings of the entire country. With North Korea being the lynchpin of stability in northwest Asia it is important to understand that many of the leaders in North Korea understand that any kind of turmoil inside the North Korean government would warrant intervention from outside sources, most importantly the United States, China and South Korea. Each outcome has its own required counter-actions and the only way to successfully apply said measures is through the careful and controlled use of predictive analysis.

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