SEC 6381: Security Issues in North Korea

Course Description/Overview

North Korea has been a thorn in the side of the USA and all democratic states with an interest in the region since the end of the Cold War. This course analyzes several aspects of the challenges Pyongyang presents to the free world, to include the founding of the “Kim Family Regime” and the regime succession process, North Korea’s military capabilities, military proliferation, the unusual and often unpredictable (according to some analysts) in North Korea, how North Korea uses violent provocations as a tool of policy, and human rights. It also examines the role of diplomacy and North Korea’s negotiating strategy – assessing chances of whether or not Pyongyang can join the fold of responsible nation-states. The course will examine things that have happened in North Korea or have happened because of North Korea, from the founding in 1948, right up to events that have occurred in recent months, capturing assessments and positions that have been “ripped from the headlines.”

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

- Comprehend the vision and structure of the North Korean leadership and government.
- Analyze North Korea’s military capabilities, how it proliferates to state and non-state actors, violent provocations, human rights concerns, and how the government and party manipulate and control all of these.
- Analyze and articulate the events and changing paradigms that have occurred since diplomatic efforts began in with the DPRK following the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

Grading Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
<th>Due Date and Requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Thread participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Weekly. Initial posts are due by Midnight CST Friday, of each week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Due Sunday at the end of week 2 before 11:59 P.M. Central Time. 6 - 8 pages essay.</td>
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Late assignments will be graded accordingly

Angelo State University employs a letter grade system. Grades in this course are determined on a percentage scale:

- A = 90 – 100%
- B = 80 – 89%
- C = 70 – 79%
- F = 69% and below.

Course Organization:

Founding of the Kim Family Regime and the Regime Succession Process:

The DPRK has existed officially since 1948. But while many think they understand how the government evolved, it is much more nuanced than even many historians have articulated. Most experts agree that the Soviet Union essentially propped up the DPRK government in the beginning and it became essentially a satellite of the USSR, much like a Warsaw Pact nation or Cuba. But how did these factors evolve after 1948? How has North Korea survived? And perhaps just as importantly, what is the succession process for power in what some now consider a “Confucian Communist Nation? We will examine all of this through the readings and through discussions as we move through week 1.

North Korea’s military capabilities:

In recent years the credibility of the North Korean threat and how much damage it can cause has come to light. There is no little debate about whether or not North Korea’s military can cause damage to the region and even to the United States through ICBM’s and its nuclear weapons program. In this lesson we will examine and analyze the North Korean military threat in a holistic manner. Thus, we will examine its readiness, capabilities, and weapons systems, and how all of this is a threat to America’s allies and to the interests and territory of the United States. While some have downplayed the North Korean threat, once its capabilities have been analyzed the results of violent conflict become obvious.

North Korea’s Military Proliferation:

North Korea has shown that it has military capabilities that can threaten the region and even the United States homeland. But there is another threat that North Korea presents to the United States and its allies – often in volatile regions of the world - proliferation. In this lesson we will examine and analyze how North Korea proliferates to other rogue states and non-state actors. This lesson will provide information that often has not been discussed in public circles and open policy debates. Nevertheless, the threat that North Korea presents through its military proliferation is not only real, it is a threat that is both compelling and dangerous. In addition, it raises badly needed funds for the regime.
North Korea’s Government and Policymaking:

North Korea has a communist form of government born out of the Soviet expansion following World War II. But there is now much more to the government, the party and the security apparatus that dominates the country. North Korea’s government and infrastructure operates like no other system in the world. Thus, in this lesson we will examine the government and policymaking infrastructure within the DPRK. Understanding this unique form of government and rule is vital to understanding the North Korean threat and the challenges North Korea poses to the region.

North Korea’s Provocations: Key Tools of Policy:

Since the end of the Korean Conflict in 1953, the ROK-US alliance has been highly successful in deterring North Korea from all-out war. But they have not been as successful in deterring low-level, violent provocations that have occurred many times over the years – mostly along the DMZ or in the area of the “Northern Limit Line,” the “Maritime DMZ” if you will, off of the west coast of the Korean Peninsula. In this lesson we will examine some recent case studies of North Korean violent provocations. As I have stated in the past, “Most of the incidents that have occurred have four things in common; 1) they are intentionally initiated during moments in history when they will have the likelihood of garnishing the most attention on the regional and perhaps even the world stage, and 2) they always appear to be incidents that are small, easily contained, and quickly “resolved,” 3) They involved always changing tactics and techniques, and 4) North Korea denies responsibility for the event.”

Human Rights in North Korea:

During the Cold War numerous communist states were guilty of human rights violations. For the most part, much of this ended in the early 1990s as the Cold War ceased. But North Korea (which was a key violator of human rights during the Cold War) did not cease this well-organized activity directed at its own people. In fact, North Korea maintains systemic, government enforced human rights violating policies to subdue and spy on its own people that were instituted during the Cold War and remain today. In this lesson we will examine and analyze key ways that the government of North Korea continues to violate the human rights of its people.

North Korea’s Negotiating Strategy – is Diplomacy a Viable option for Dealing with the DPRK?:

Since the end of the Cold War, North Korea has been perhaps the most troubling policy challenge for the United States when it comes to diplomacy. North Korea has often used provocative behavior, outrageous rhetoric, and back-door diplomacy to gain the advantage of nations who have an interest in the region. In this lesson we will examine a history of North Korea’s negotiating strategy since the end of the Cold War. We will also look at how various methodologies have been implemented in attempts to get North Korea to cease its rogue state behavior, or for allied nations to contain it. Thus far these strategies have never proven to work the way Washington and its allies have hoped. The jury is still out on whether or not current diplomatic strategies will work – but they are currently ongoing as we shall see.

Assessment

This week is set aside for the student to complete a 12-15 page essay assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to measure student mastery of the course objectives.

Course Bibliography and Required Readings:


25, 2019, Read the entire article.

- Blakemore, Erin, “Bill Clinton Once Struck a Nuclear Deal With North Korea,” History.com, April 17, 2018, Read all.
- “DMZ being transformed into a symbol of peace,” Arirang News, June 29, 2019.
• Keiko, MORITA, “Northern Limit Line: Demarcation Issues in the Yellow Sea,” NIDS Security Reports, No.5 (March 2004), Read all.
• "Life inside North Korea: the power of Juche explained,” The Guardian (YouTube Video), June 14, 2018.
• Sakai, Takashi “North Korea's Political System,” Japan Digital Library (March 2016).

Communication

Office Hours/Contacting the Instructor

See the Instructor Information section for contact information.

University Policies

Academic Integrity
Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code and the ASU Student Handbook.

Accommodations for Disability
ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by emailing studentservices@angelo.edu, or by contacting:

Office of Student Affairs
University Center, Suite 112
325-942-2047 Office
325-942-2211 FAX

Student absence for religious holidays
A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.