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My next question relates to China. A lot of people are saying that China seems to be the biggest winner of the current trajectory if it is sustained. Firstly, do you believe this? Secondly, everybody involved in the process talks about red lines. Are there any red lines for China as we move on?

WANG Jisi, President of the Institute of the International and Strategic Studies at Peking University

China is very happy in terms of security, with the recent thaw in tensions between the US and North Korea and the improvement in North-South relations. However, many in Chinese policy circles question whether Kim Jong-un is very sincere in his commitment to denuclearisation. Therefore, if North Korea does not quickly dismantle its nuclear facilities, there may be more dangers of a military conflict that will impair China's security interest. After all, China's top concern is stability, and North Korea's political survival is very important to China.

Meanwhile, there are suspicions in China toward both the US and North Korea, and most Chinese in policy circles say that the US, rather than North Korea, is the major source of instability. They note that the US is targeting North Korea only superficially, and the real long-term target is China. Look at THAAD, for instance; the Americans say that it is directed against North Korea, but most military specialists in China are saying that THAAD is intended against China, and there are even suspicions that North Korea could reach a tacit understanding or some kind of agreement that they could keep some of their nuclear devices if they were not threatening the US.

Therefore, the worry in the long run is that the nuclear weapons kept by North Korea could be turned against China, because it is closer to China, and along with the improvement of US-North Korea and North-South relations, China might lose some leverage. That is a worry, because most Chinese see the US as a major security threat. When Kim Jong-un and Trump talk about China, will Kim Jong-un then say good things about China, or will Trump say good things about China? The Chinese are very suspicious that a deal between them could be made at the expense of China's security interests.

However, the Americans are very suspicious as well, because they do not know what Kim Jong-un and Xi Jinping talked about in their three rounds of conversations in China. Xi Jinping may go to North Korea for a state visit in the next few months, so we do not know exactly what is happening, but one thing that is very peculiar between China and North Korea is their long-term ideological affinity. That ideological affinity has existed ever since the two communist parties took power in the late 1940s. Lately, China sent a very high-ranking official by the name of Li Zhanshu to North Korea to join the celebrations of the 70th anniversary since the establishment of the DPRK.

The Chinese highly value this party-to-party relationship rather than the state-to-state relationship, so I do not know whether, when the two communist parties get together, they will talk more about denuclearisation of North Korea or about their common ground in resisting the US scheme to undermine the communist parties in the two countries. This political and ideological bond is something we have to keep in mind. The worst scenario in the Chinese mindset is that the US might prefer to keep the nuclear threat alive so that they can justify and perpetuate the US military presence in Northeast Asia and maintain the US security alliances with Japan and South Korea.

This kind of mistrust is not a plus in US-China relations. When the US-China relationship is worsening, as we see it today, some in Beijing are further convinced that Washington is definitely trying to take advantage of Washington's newly-established ties with Pyongyang at the expense of China. Finally, the official position toward the North Korean nuclear issue in China will remain consistent, but given the softening of attitude of the Moon Government and the



Trump administration toward the DPRK, China is expected to resume economic cooperation with North Korea with fewer constraints.

My conclusion is that the likely outcome is that, with North Korea's gestures of denuclearisation, plus some superficial, or artificial, dismantling of its nuclear sites in exchange for easing of international sanctions and increased foreign trade, the DPRK may win broader international recognition without sacrificing the essence of its nuclear capacity. However, if its demands are not satisfied, Pyongyang may again resort to the threat of force. I hope I am not right in this regard.