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US-North Korea negotiations will not yield inevitably a peaceful resolution to the second Korean nuclear crisis. Success in this regard would become possible only if both sides find sufficient common ground to forge an agreement. Here we assess North Korea's expectations of the United States in the event negotiations eventually occur.

North Korea has a long and complex wish list that includes: regime continuity, national defense, economic revitalization and national reunification

Regime Continuity: Kim Jong Il's foremost priority is the perpetuation of his regime. Kim's political legitimacy is genetically linked to his father, North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung. The younger Kim must remain faithful to his father's legacy as defined by the state ideology of *Juche*. Often mistranslated as "self reliance," the term more accurately means "self determination." The ideology retains the socialist economic and anti-imperialism themes of Marxism-Leninism, but rejects submission to a universal political movement in favor of nationalistic self determination. Kim Jong Il's regime, in short, is inseparable from both his father's legacy and ideology. This makes adaptation and adjustment of North Korea's political, social and economic institutions to changing circumstances politically acceptable, but rules out extensive systemic reform.

Unlike the rulers in other now defunct communist states, Kim Jong Il cannot blame his predecessors for North Korea's shortcomings. Instead, he focuses his people's frustrations on the "imperialists," i.e. the United States and Japan. He uses U.S. economic sanctions and Japan's long ago colonization of Korea to explain North Korea's pervasive and continuing food shortages, feeble industrial production and isolation from the international market. Probably out of equal shares of nationalism and fear, North Koreans remain generally loyal to their "Supreme Commander."

National Defense: Kim Jong Il initiated in September 1998 his campaign to build a "strong and great nation" (*kangsong taeguk*). Integral to it was a "defense first" policy. The campaign began with a bang - the launching of a multiple stage *Taepodong* ballistic missile through Japanese air space. While the Japanese people reacted with outrage, Kim Jong Il proudly, but incorrectly, claimed his nation had placed a satellite in space orbit.

Pyongyang's new campaign and pompous boasting disguised intensifying insecurity. The nation's food supply remained heavily dependent on foreign compassion. The economy's civilian sector languished on the edge of collapse while the military sector remained extensively dependent on the production and export of obsolete military hardware, except for ballistic missiles. That fall, the United States and Japan reached an agreement to expand their Defense Cooperation Guidelines that defined Japan's anticipated role in the event of another war on the Korean Peninsula. More significantly, Pyongyang no longer could count on the protection and aid of its half century benefactor - Russia. At the end of 1998, Moscow confirmed that it would no longer

“automatically” come to Pyongyang’s aid in the event of external invasion as had been promised since their 1961 mutual defense treaty. Kim Jong Il’s apparent response was to intensify his efforts to build “an impregnable fortress” and to fend off Washington’s demands that he halt the production, deployment and export of ballistic missiles. Ever since, Kim has placed generals in positions previously reserved for civilian officials. To punctuate his determination to defend his regime rather than succumb to Washington’s demands that he unilaterally disarm without compensation, Kim sent his highest ranking general Marshal Cho Myong-nok, not a diplomat, to Washington in October 2000 to meet President Clinton.