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**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF
LIBERAL ARTS**

**THE ISOLATION OF NORTH KOREA – THE
CLEANEST RACE FACTOR**

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Declaration of Originality

I declare that this Bachelor Thesis “The Isolation of North Korea – the Cleanest Race Factor“ is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

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Abstract

Key terms: racial nationalism, cleanest race, Juche ideology, isolation, cult of personality, reunification, “military first” policy

The goal of this thesis is to prove that the actions of North Korea are mainly influenced by racial nationalism. The next goal is to find out and show reasons why North Korea is isolated from the outside world.

The method is mainly based on the content analysis of chosen sources. Since there aren't many reliable primary sources, the thesis will center on propaganda materials and relying on the aid of secondary literature. This topic was chosen because of the growing importance of the rogue regimes in the world spectrum. After many terrorist attacks that happened in last decade, Western world states became concerned about these regimes.

The first argument is about the impact of the racial nationalism on North Korean society. The concept of the cleanest race contributes the most here. By the cleanest race, it is meant the purity of the people. The cult of personality is linked with the first argument of the cleanest race, because people are perceived as clean and vulnerable, in need a strong leader. The personalities of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il play a significant role in the history of the country. In addition the Kim family is responsible for the formulation of foreign policy of the country. The relationship with the Republic of Korea is discussed in the third chapter.

The results show that the impact of racial nationalism and the Juche thought is almost equal and both of the concepts contribute to the isolation.

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Abstrakt

Kľúčové pojmy: rasový nacionalizmus, najčistejšia rasa, ideológia Juche, izolácia, kult osobnosti, reunifikácia, politika armády na prvom mieste

Cieľom tejto práce je dokázať, že konanie Severnej Kórey je hlavne ovplyvnené rasovým nacionalizmom. Ďalším cieľom je zistiť a vysvetliť dôvody prečo je Severná Kórea izolovaná.

Moja metóda výskumu je hlavne založená na obsahovej analýze zvolených zdrojov. Keďže neexistuje veľa primárnych zdrojov, téza bude zameraná na propagandistické materiály a bude sa spoliehať na pomoc sekundárnej literatúry. Táto téma bola zvolená z dôvodu narastajúcej dôležitosti nebezpečných režimov v rámci sveta. Po mnohých teroristických útokoch v poslednej dekáde sa západné štáty začali zaujímať o tieto režimy.

Prvým argumentom je vplyv rasového nacionalizmu na severokórejskú spoločnosť. Koncept najčistejšej rasy najviac prispieva v tejto otázke. Najčistejšou rasou sa myslí nepoškvrnenosť ľudí. Koncept kultu osobnosti je naviazaný na argument najčistejšej rasy, pretože ľudia sú považovaní za čistých a zraniteľných a preto potrebujú silného vodcu. Osobnosti Kim Ir-sena a Kim Čong-ila hrajú dôležitú úlohu v histórii krajiny. Okrem toho, rodina Kimovcov je zodpovedná za formuláciu zahraničnej politiky krajiny. Vzťah s Južnou Kóreou je vysvetlený v nasledujúcej kapitole.

Výsledky ukazujú, že vplyv rasového nacionalizmu a Juche ideológie je takmer rovnocenný a oba koncepty prispievajú k izolácii.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Abstrakt.....	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Table of Contents	7
Introduction:.....	8
History of the 20 th century:	9
Background of North Korea’s International Isolation:	13
The Juche Thought:.....	19
Cult of personality:	20
Transition after the death of the Great Leader:	22
Impact of the “military-first” policy:	24
Development of nuclear weapons:	26
North Korea’s Relations with the South:	28
Conclusion:	32
Bibliography:	34
Zhrnutie:.....	37

Introduction:

There are only a few communist states left in the world. History proved that democracy and capitalism are, so far, the winners of the ideological struggle that was most intense during the Cold War. North Korea is one of the remaining communist regimes. It isn't the only one, but it is the most isolated among them. China is becoming more open to the world day by day. Cuba isn't the same regime as it was during the Cold War, as there are elements of the Western world being introduced into it. The other ones that remain, Vietnam and Laos, are not so important in the map of today's world (Pipes, 2003). That is the motivation behind the choice to study the isolation of North Korea.

North Korea is a politically and economically an isolated country. It isn't isolated only because of the branch of the communist regime, but other important factors contribute to this isolation. According to the American scholar B.R. Myers, the most important factor is the strong racial nationalism that drives the actions of the country (Myers, 2010). This assertion is based on the research that led to the book named *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters*. According to Myers, people in North Korea consider themselves to be members of the cleanest race, a concept that is based on the idea of racial purity.

The goal in this bachelor thesis is to prove this assertion and to further examine it by discussing history, the political system and the key tenets of international relations from the perspective of the role played by racial nationalism.

North Korea was labeled as one of the states that make up the so-called "Axis of Evil" (Bush, 2010). The American president George W. Bush coined this term in his speech in 2002, after the U.S. and allies have declared the War on Terror, engaged militarily in Afghanistan and was preparing to engage in Iraq. Bush grouped North Korea with Iraq and Iran among the countries that are considered as states supporting terrorism. This label highlighted the importance of these states in international relations. North Korea has become the hot topic and this bachelor thesis will explain the North Korean isolation and attempt to link the reasons for this isolation to the role of the racial nationalism in North Korean ideology. I chose North Korea for this research, because

it is considered a dangerous regime. It was dangerous in 2002, and it is even more dangerous nowadays. Our world has to be aware of each country that owns the nuclear bomb. And North Korea proved that it has one (McCurry, 2009). It is important to understand this country and its nation to prevent any unexpected situations.

History of the 20th century:

The origin of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is dated to the early years of the Cold War. This state was established as the result of the ideological war on the Korean peninsula that involved the larger conflict between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. In 1948, two states originated from one nation. The North Korea was supported by the Soviet Union and the second state, the Republic of Korea, by the United States of America. This was the first time since the Greater Korean Empire when the Korean people could live in an independent state. But the circumstances didn't allow them to live under one flag and as a united nation. North Korea declined the possibility of joining the UN and both countries claimed the sovereignty of their state over the Korean peninsula. The subsequent Korean War in 1950-1953 made the situation even worse and the two nations were separated by the demilitarized zone and by two different ideologies. The Korean War was important in shaping the path of the late 20th century, because it was the first military conflict in which two ideological blocks and the winners of the WWII stood against each other (Gaddis, 2005). In 1953, the armistice between the both Korean countries was signed and 38th parallel became a demilitarized zone that divides the peninsula. This was the time when one state started its journey to the prosperity and the other one to the isolation (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011). The Republic of Korea has become one of the most developed countries in the world with a fast growing economy. On the other hand, the North Korean regime and its policies brought the country to the near collapse, just the opposite as their southern neighbors. The reasons and actions that lead to this situation will be discussed in this bachelor thesis.

In 1948, the year when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea formally started to exist, everything was prepared for the emergence of the new leader that will lead the new independent country. With blessings from Stalin and Mao, leaders of the closest

allied countries of North Korea, Kim Il-sung was declared the country's first prime minister and its leader.

The regime in the North Korea is a single-party rule. North Korea's only and ruling party is named the Korean Workers Party. Since North Korea was established under the Soviet wings, it is clear that the main ideology was Marxism-Leninism. Throughout the years, the original branch of it was established by Kim Il-sung and was named Juche. The Juche ideology is based on independence, self-sustenance and self-defense (Lee, 2003). But few really know what it is about, because it is written in a vague and ambivalent way. However, it was the aim of the Kim Il-sung, to establish it this way, to allow him the freedom of personal leadership without any interruptions. The whole ideology only serves as a supporting piece for the ruling party. Surprisingly, citizens accepted this ideology smoothly. It was enough for them to know that it was established by Kim Il-sung, their Great leader, to support it.

Since all the political power belongs to the ruling party, the cult of personality that supports the leader was able to emerge. The cult of personality in the North Korea is visible everywhere. The omnipresent examples of it prove the attitude of the weight it has gained over time. This cult began with the first leader of the country Kim Il-sung and it is continuing with his son Kim Jong-il (Martin, 2006). The new leader, Kim Jong-un has already developed strong cult, thanks to the propaganda. The cult of personality in North Korea is perpetuated through massive propaganda and control of the media sphere that reached the highest level. North Korea annually ranks on the top ranks for the lowest freedom of the press (Press freedom index, 2010). Kim's cult was supported by statues of the leader in every bigger town. There have to be portraits of both leaders in every household. Young pupils memorize all the great speeches by Kim Il-sung word for word (Chon-Hwan & Rigolout, 2000). All of these examples illustrate the strength of the cult of personality. It is so powerful that people praise the leader for everything good that happens in their lives. On the other hand, all the troubles and restrictions that he life under one strong leader brings, can be easily justified by the regime.

There is another phenomenon that helps the regime to justify their actions and helps legitimize it. According to the American scholar B.R. Myers, the reason is the strong racial nationalism (Myers, 2010). He examined this assertion in the book *The Cleanest*

Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters. Racial nationalism portrays the people in the North Korea as members of the cleanest race; a concept that is based on the idea of racial purity. The idea of racial purity is also legitimatizing the personality cult that happened to be one of the most infamous in the world (Myers, 2010). Since people are considered as racially pure, there should be no bad qualities and vices in their behavior. That's why they need someone who will guard and guide them throughout the life in the world that is far from just.

North Korea has become a hot topic in the international community since the world started to get more information and understand its regime. In 2006, things became even worse because of the successful underground test of nuclear weapons (Sanger, 2006). Since the country has the weapons of mass destruction, negotiations have to be more attentive and North Korea should be considered as a real threat to the rest of the world. According to the North Korean propaganda, USA is ideologically the greatest enemy. They are the opposite of their cleanest race. Because of the "military-first" policy and maintenance of a powerful army, the country has financial problems and the only way to sustain the predicament is to ask for international humanitarian aid (Myers, 2010).

The regime in North Korea is strict and oppressive. Anyone who violates the law is punished. The domain of the communist regimes is that the spreading of anti-regime thoughts is considered the biggest crime by the establishment. There is a network of secret agents that are omnipresent, forcing people to live in constant fear. One never knows who's listening. The most disturbing fact is the presence of concentration camps (Chon-Hwan & Rigolout, 2000). It is disturbing that in the 21st century, decades after the condemnation of the German concentration camps, there are any left in the world. People around the world weren't aware of this problem until North Korean refugees spoke up. Thanks to their testimonies, the world knows how it really looks like in reality. According to refugees, there is evidence that there are at least five of these camps. The biggest one is the camp named Yodok. It is primarily used as a camp for political prisoners (Chon-Hwan & Rigolout, 2000).

Koreans are one nation that was divided by the superpowers of the Cold War. It is possible to expect the unification of the Korean peninsula? They fought against each other and a demilitarized zone divides their countries. There are also two totally

different ideologies, so the reunification seems impossible in recent situation. In 1998, the Sunshine policy was established by the leader of the Republic of Korea. The goal of this policy was to establish closer cooperation and initiate a closer contact between the leaders. It was successful in the beginning, some meetings occurred, but after the testing of the nuclear bomb in 2006, South Korea suspended funding for their aid and the relationships became cold again (Popeski, 2010). Meanwhile, sportsmen of both countries were presented under one flag in the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000 which was a gesture of cooperation that worked at that time.

Background of North Korea's International Isolation:

The isolation of North Korea is a problem that is based on a few key topics. This paper discusses them in order to understand the isolation of North Korea. Majority of existing and accessible literature about North Korea focuses on ideological arguments or approach it concretely via the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. On the other hand, cultural explanations and studies of nationalism aren't as explored. That's one of the reasons why this paper focuses on the explanation of racial nationalism and how it influences the isolationist policy of the country.

First of all, the key terms that contribute to the isolation of North Korea have to be explained in this theoretical part. Juche thought is an ideology developed by the first leader of the country, Kim Il-sung. It is based on the independence of North Korea, so it corresponds with the idea of the cleanest race that is unique and has to be self-preserved. It is difficult to separate the understanding of the ideological and cultural explanation in order to understand them correctly. That's why all of the important topics are connected and result in a situation, when North Korea is a hermit country.

The Juche ideology is based on independence, self-sustenance and self-defense (Lee, 2003). The importance of this ideology influences the whole direction of the country. Since Juche calls for political, economical and military independence, the isolationism is the result of its policy. Moreover, Kim Jong-il predicted that dependence on foreign powers would lead to the failure of the socialist revolution in Korea (Lee, 2003). If such idea was embraced by the Korean people, there was no way to stop the making of the family dynasty that would eventually last till these days. The Juche ideology was created to further strengthen the influence of Kim Il-sung and his single-party rule. According to the B.R.Myers's (2010), Kim wasn't eager to create an ideology of his own to back up his actions. However, his advisors persuaded him to adopt a new line of thinking that would set the ground rules for the country. "He had to be careful not to make the new ideology clear or appealing enough to distract the domestic masses from the de facto ideology of race-based nationalism. He had to come up with something innocuous, impenetrable, yet imposing" (Myers, 2010, p. 45).

Before the emergence of the cleanest race idea, there had to be ordinary nationalist approach from which the racial dominance emerged. Korean nation has existed for centuries, but after the WWII, new state was founded and people had to familiarize themselves with the new state, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "Nationalism as an ideology requires the identity of the modern territorial state and the nation" (Winderl, 1999). According to this explanation, there is also a need for the nation-state unit in the nationalist ideology. The state building is a process taking place on a few levels.

1. Constituting a permanent territory with clear, defended boundaries. This criterion is met, because North Korea has its own territory that borders with China, Russia and South Korea.
2. Establishing a monopoly of physical use of power within demarcated territory. The Workers Party of Korea controls power within the country and the monopoly of physical use of power is included there.
3. Modeling administrative, political, and legal institutions on the basis of division of power which guarantees the continuity and functioning of the state. As the constitution and state making were based on the communist model, the idea of independence and division of powers isn't as important for state apparatus as it could be. But, the Juche ideology explains the lack of political freedom with the aim of independent state.

State-building may present fewer obstacles than nation-building when a new country emerges. To justify the existence of an independent North Korea, the idea of the North Korean nation had to be presented to the people. This idea has to sink in and be accepted as part of people's identity, collectively as well as individually.

Winderl describes also a few levels of nation-building:

1. The creation and promotion of myths of common ancestry and collective memories. Since the Korean nation existed long before the origin of the North Korea, all of these requirements were fulfilled. Moreover, the North Korean propaganda created its own myths, mostly about the leader and the brave actions that were necessary to gain freedom.
2. Establishing a mass public culture for all members of the nation, including language, religion and national symbols. This level is most developed in North

Korea. There are symbols that carry the North Korean identity, such as the leader or the cleanest race concept. Language is also important, because the North Korean citizens are socialized through propaganda from cradle to grave. Since North Korea is an officially communist state, it is considered atheist. On the other hand, religion in the pre-DPRK era consisted mainly of Confucianism and Buddhism.

3. Forming a common economy with mobility within the territory of the nation.

Requirements for the nation-state building that are mentioned were successfully fulfilled and North Korea could be considered a nation state, because people are identified with their group within this particular area (Winderl, 1999).

The idea of racial nationalism is a new approach to understand the isolationism of North Korea and serves well in describing other important aspects of the country. According to Myers, this worldview is removed from the idea of communism or Juche ideology. It could be summarized in one sentence: “The Korean people are too pure blooded and therefore too virtuous, to survive in this evil world without a great parental leader” (Myers, 2010, p. 15). With the idea of the cleanest race and the vulnerability of people, there is a need for a strong leader, “the parental leader” that will guide people through their lives. In fact, people are voluntarily subordinated to this parental figure and thankful for his actions that are made in order to make their lives satisfying. The leader and the party are the parents, while people of North Korea are the children (Myers, 2010, p. 48).

The idea of the cleanest race also serves as a cornerstone for the origin of the strong personality cult. When people look up to their leader as a parental figure and admire his abilities, it is easy to spread the thoughts and great actions that were made for people. In such environment, where people praise their leader for everything good that happened to them, the personality cult is becoming stronger.

“Nationalism, especially this kind of race-based nationalism which we see so little of in the rest of the world these days, is, psychologically speaking, an enormously appealing doctrine. It is just as well suited to good economic times as to bad ones, because when things go well you can say it's because your race is so great, and when things go badly you can blame them on foreigners. This worldview gives every North Korean citizen a role to play in this sacred racial mission of kicking the Yankees out of South Korea and reunifying the peninsula.” (Myers B. , 2010)

German sociologist Max Weber offered another view on the personality cult topic. In his work *Politics as a Vocation*, he defined three reasons for the legitimacy of rule. The three types of legitimacy are: traditional authority, legal authority and the charismatic authority. The term charismatic is the important one here, because it completely fits the depiction of the Kim family members in the North Korean propaganda. According to Weber, charisma is: “a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader” (Weber, 1998). These qualities easily justify someone to become the Eternal Leader. Even though Weber mainly thinks of the charisma that flows from within, it is hard to prove whether Kim Il-sung was only a figurehead that was praised and made charismatic by propaganda or he was really charismatic within.

There is one similarity in considering the history and ideology with Japan that strengthen the cult of personality. Since the Korean peninsula was under the Japanese supremacy, there has to be some influence left. Mount Fuji is considered as a sacred mountain for Japanese and plays a significant role in the domestic culture. Mount Paektu is the North Korean equivalent of it. It was always considered a sacred Korean mountain where their nation was originated. However, according to the propaganda, the brave Kim Il-sung started the liberating fight against the Japanese on the slopes of the Mount Paektu. Moreover, his son, Kim Jong-il was born there. That’s why it is so important for the contemporary North Koreans (Myers, 2010).

Propaganda plays a crucial role in the North Korean isolation. It defines the way how the leading party deals with and communicates every issue in the country. It doesn’t consist only of the internal propaganda apparatus, but also an external component, which communicates its’ image to the rest of the world. B.R. Myers is convinced that these are two different faces of the North Korean propaganda. The first one is oriented towards their own people and the second one is designed for the outside world.

“The main difference is that North Korea has always tried to convey the impression to the outside world that it is a kind of communist state which seeks integration into the world community, which is very fearful of its own security

on the world stage, which wants nothing more than a peace treaty with the United States so that it can get back to its own business of improving the standard of living for its people.”

“North Korea is a country that will forever be hostile to the United States, which some day will wreak revenge on America — a country that is not afraid of any other country in the world. Rather, the rest of the world is terrified of North Korea. You can read books, for example, about North Korean diplomats barging in on U.N. officials, laying down the law, telling the U.N. what to do and so on.” (Myers B. , 2010)

The propaganda is also linked to the personality cult, because the cult is founded on and supported through the work of the propaganda apparatus. All stories about the brave actions of the Kim Il-sung, his every speech are exaggerated and spread among the Korean people. In the end, people are indoctrinated about their uniqueness, about the evil Americans, and about their wonderful leader. Every mentioned aspect helps the leading party to maintain and spread the isolationism policy.

The position of North Korean people, as the pure nation is also linked to the background of the emergence of the Kim Jong-il's “military-first” policy. When Kim Jong-il inherited the entire power in the country after his father's death, the “military-first” policy became an official country's policy. The policy that puts the military matters into the forefront of the country's interests is quite controversial. Not only that North Korea is a country with the unstable and weak economy, but it is also reliant on international help. That's why the intention to focus everything on the army doesn't look like as a clever idea. However, ordinary North Korean can feel safer, because their enemies are scared of their powerful army, according to the North Korean propaganda (Myers, 2010).

The internal justification of the military-first policy is based on the notion that the United States are still a threat and can attack the country as unexpectedly as in 1950, when the South Korean army started the Korean War. But thanks to the military-first policy and the foresighted leadership of Kim Jong-il, the attack is very unlikely. People in North Korea are led to think that the United States Army is afraid of the next armed conflict, because they are aware of the strong North Korean army that would be hard to defeat. On the other hand, the arming of the North Korean army is closely observed by the world leaders. It certainly contributes to the country's

isolationist status, because there are further sanctions imposed by international organizations and the leaders are aware of the possible nuclear threat from North Korea. However, North Korea seeks to up its stakes in the balance of power on the peninsula and with nuclear weapons and powerful army; they claim to be able to keep the Americans out of the country. That's why the armament is taken as a preventive measure in North Korea, to balance the power of the United States in the southern part of the Korean peninsula.

Reunification of the Korean peninsula is one possible end of the two different ideologies there. The relations with South Korea understandably create a significant part of the foreign policy. These relations are important in understanding North Korea since they are one nation that was separated. Moreover, it would be interesting to observe the possible unification since there was one under similar circumstances in the past, the unification of the West and East Germany. On the other hand, the possibility of reunification seems unlikely due to military-first policy and South Korea's alliance with the US. The prosperity of their southern sibling is important, too. "At present the DPRKs main security problem is not America, but the prosperity of the other Korean state, whose citizens are content to prolong the division of the peninsula indefinitely". Moreover, it would be difficult to propaganda to explain that not the Americans are obstacle in reunifying process, but their own blood brothers (Myers, 2010, p. 167).

It is important to understand that all of these key concepts are linked together and in the end they all contribute to the current isolationist status of North Korea. First of all, historical approach shows the development of the country and its relations with the foreign world. The Korean War in the early 1950s was a cornerstone for the relations between two separate Koreas. It also strengthens the ideological differences, because both Koreas became more tied to their ideological allies and only confirmed the bipolar status of the world during the Cold War. Since the division, there were a few attempts of reunification of the Korean peninsula, still unsuccessful. After the division of the Korean peninsula, both countries chose different approaches. While South Korea gradually became an open country with an open economy, North Korea was leaning towards totalitarianism and isolation. The isolationist policy was a result of the communist regime that was established in North Korea. The single-party state was typical for the communist states. That's why there was no political freedom, no

political opposition and the power was held by one party, one leader. The nationalist approach that includes the notion of racial dominance is overlapping in this point with the political branch. Since the racial nationalism calls for the idea of the cleanest race in which people are pure and vulnerable, there is a need for a strong charismatic leader. Kim Il-sung introduced his own ideology, supported by a strong propaganda. Because the Juche thought is based on the independence of North Korea with the need of one strong party, people of North Korea had no problem to accept the lack of political freedom and the absence of opposition. This, together with propaganda machine, contributes to the strong personality cult that is related to the leader. The overall policy of the country that contributes to the isolation of North Korea is the result of the Juche thought and of the racial nationalism.

The Juche Thought:

The Juche idea is composed of three key elements: political, economic and military independence. Firstly, the political independence (*chaju*) is based on the domestic and foreign independence. There is an assertion that “every state has the right of self-determination in order to secure the happiness and prosperity of its people as it best sees it” (Lee, 2003, s. 106). The sovereignty of small countries such a North Korea is important for their leaders and people. For this part of the Juche ideology, North Korea became a hermit kingdom, because it makes tougher to cooperate with other countries in order to maintain the independent status. It certainly contributes to the isolation, because country wants to be self-reliant as much as possible. On the other hand, the cooperation with the ideological allies such as China or Soviet Union (later Russia) was needed, for Kim Il-sung (Lee, 2003, s. 106). However, the main point and goal in maintain the political independence was the internal unity. To be successful, people should be rallied around the current leader and the leading party. This unity definitely helped in justification of the personal power, because it secured the independence. Secondly, the economic independence (*charip*) is other factor contributing to the successful country. According to Kim Il-sung, the economic independence is an important basis for the political one. That’s why he was always afraid of the economic dependence of other countries. On the other hand, Kim was

aware of the fact that North Korea wouldn't be able to survive without the help of their communist partners (Lee, 2003, s. 107). But it didn't represent any problem for the maintaining the independent status, because the close cooperation with their friends was a normal phenom. The later dependence of the US aid was also easily justified by propaganda with the use of the "military-first" policy (Myers, 2010). The third aspect of the Juche thought is a military independence that became the most important part of the North Korean policy making over the years. Kim Il-sung said: "*We don't want war, nor are we afraid of it, nor do we beg peace from the imperialists*" (Lee, 2003, s. 107). It is clear that the original thought was that strong army will help to stay independent and will save country from the imperialists attack. But, the other thing is the later development of the North Korean policy that included massive armament and the possession of the nuclear weapons.

Cult of personality:

What makes the North Korean leaders so admired is the cult of personality. Isolation of the country is the reason why the cult of personality has no internal boundaries and can be spread without any external influence. The cult of personality evolved because of the political system where the single party rules. And while the party has a strong leader, it is obvious that the idea is to praise him and his actions. Moreover, people in North Korea need a strong leader that would protect them from the evil world. In the cleanest race ideology, people are vulnerable and need someone to protect them. In such situation, it is easy to build the cult of personality, because people praise their leader for everything good that happens to them.

The cult of personality tends to be understood as a negative connotation. The main reason could be that it is linked to the Stalin or Mao that are considered as villains for the majority of population. The personality cult is "a situation in which people are encouraged to admire and praise a famous person, especially a political leader" (Longman Dictionary). The leading party in North Korea uses a propaganda and mass media as a tool in creating a strong bond to the current leader, whether it was Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il or Kim Jong-un nowadays. The media in North Korea are subject to heavy control and censorship, used to praise the leader.

The first thing that amazes a foreigner when he or she enters the North Korean borders is the omnipresence of the images of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. They are in the Pyongyang airport, in the train stations across the country and moreover, they are in every household in the country (Chon-Hwan & Rigolout, 2000). There are statues of them in many towns, too. The biggest statue of Kim Il-sung is located in Pyongyang and it is 20 meters high, made of bronze. Statues, pictures, and other evidence of the leaders were present also in other totalitarian regimes where the cult of personality was strong enough. What makes the North Korean personality cult even more emphatic is the nation that is fully devoted to this Kim cult. They are thankful for the leader. That's why Kim Il-sung is also known as an Eternal Leader and Kim Jong-il as a Dear Leader (Myers, 2010).

The attitude of the North Koreans towards their leader is the most important factor of the power of the personality cult. They consider their leader as a father figure that is there to protect them and to guide them (Martin, 2006). In fact, the love for their leader could be easily considered as a religion. The birthday of Kim Il-sung is a state holiday and there are huge celebrations on every occasion that is linked to the anniversary of any kind. Christians have crosses with Jesus in their households; North Koreans have portraits of the beloved leaders. The devotion of people was clearly visible on two occasions: funerals of Kim Il-sung in 1994 and Kim Jong-il in 2011. The whole country cried and mourned for their loss. There are pictures and videos from these funerals and those people looked despaired. Of course, there are voices that everything is only a charade and that people have to behave this way, otherwise they would be punished and sent to the reeducation camps.

There are significant cultural differences and historical experience that have to be considered when considering the spectacle of mourning after the death of Kim Jong-il. First of all, the demography of North Korean people is one of them. The population of the North Korea is about 22 million. According to the CIA World Factbook, there are only 9% people older than 65 years (CIA The World Factbook, 2009). It means that there are less than 2 million people that lived before the WWII and the emergence of Kim Il-sung and its totalitarian regime. The overwhelming part of the North Korean population was born to the era of propaganda and Kim personality cult. Everything what they know about the world and their country is what they were taught in school. They didn't have any connection to the foreign world. They are indoctrinated from

cradle to grave. It is clear that the constant repetition of all the great actions by Kim Il-sung and all of his famous speeches helps to adore him. The life story of Kang Chol-hwan supports the theory people could be really sad when the leader died. Thanks to him, the existence of the Yodok camp was revealed. In his book, *Aquariums of Pyongyang*, he revealed his life story and his ten years stay in the camp. The brutalities of the guards, food shortages or daily executions were events that were happening there on a daily basis. Kang was only 9 years old when his family was transported to Yodok. His grandfather was accused of treason which means the concentration camp for him and his relatives. They were sent there for “reeducation”. The bottom line here is that although he was sent to the Yodok camp and he eventually escaped from the country and can freely say his opinion, he admits that he still loves Kim Il-sung (Chon-Hwan & Rigolout, 2000). He was confronted with the idea of a Great Leader his entire childhood that it seems impossible to dislike him.

North Korea became more open to the world in matter of allowing tourists to travel there. There are many groups from the whole world that visit this country, every year. Even tourists reflect on the reality of the strong personality cult. Of course, tourist cannot do sightseeing alone or see what is meant to be hidden from them. They cannot talk to civilians and the only North Korean that can talk to is their assigned guide and guard. There is a certain schedule that has to be fulfilled. And that schedule consists of all the main landmarks that are connected to the Kim personality cult. The capital town of Pyongyang is full of them. Kim Il-sung Square, the Juche tower or Kim Il-sung mausoleum are the most visited ones. The birth house of Kim Il-sung is also considered as a sacred place for North Koreans.

Transition after the death of the Great Leader:

Kim Il-sung, the Great Leader of the North Korean people died on July 8th 1994. He died at the age of 82 of a heart attack. The death of the first leader brought a lot of sorrow to the souls of people. But, it also brought a lot of questions about the continuation of the country. Kim Il-sung was a leader with unthreatened position, so it was logical that his son, Kim Jong-il became the country’s second leader and his father’s successor.

Rojko: The Isolation of North Korea

Since 1971, it was clear that Kim Jong-il was being prepared for the role of the leader. During the next twenty years, he was increasing his position in the Korean Workers Party hierarchy. In 1994, he inherited the power over the country. In 1997, he was named General Secretary of the Korean Workers' Party and in 1998 he became a Chairman of the National Defense Commission which is the highest office in state. This was the first time when such kind of family succession occurred in the communist regime (GlobalSecurity, Kim Jong-il).

The 1990s didn't start well for North Korea. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the country lost its greatest ally. It happened to be a great loss, because Soviet Union has subsidized many actions of the country and without the inflow of money and support from the Soviet Union, North Korea had to reform its economy to be able exist independently. The loss of the country's Great Leader was another strike to the weakened state.

While the country was dealing with the succession and other problems, the Great Famine, known as the Arduous March broke out. The country was going through economic changes. Such a situation is difficult in good circumstances, so the process of it was extremely difficult for North Korea. According to the United Nations, the country was more stable and developed before the beginning of the 1990s than during those years (United Nations). The alliance with the Soviet Union was one factor of that stability. Kim Il-sung was still alive, so the country was politically stable. The economy and other sectors were in relatively good shape. Everything changed because of these circumstances. On top of that, natural disasters occurred. North Korea was stricken with floods in 1995 that totally paralyzed the country. Industrial production suffered. There were food shortages. Per capita income fell by 50 per cent and mortality rate increased (United Nations). The exact number of people that died because of the famine is not available, but the estimates say about one million people. It definitely caused a demographic crisis.

Kim Jong-il had to ask for the international aid. First ones to offer support were international organizations, such as United Nations (Yang-ho, 2001). But the situation was dire, so other countries offered help. Among them the United States, South Korea, or China. During the famine years, the United States was the largest aid donor among all countries. That seems quite paradoxical when we know the attitude of

North Korean people towards Americans. But the government wasn't shy in admitting that the United States were sending the aid during the famine. They explained it through the strong army and the American fear of it. It is obvious that the argument of the "military-first" policy and the strong army is always handy for the propaganda apparatus. When North Korea announced the idea of creating its own nuclear program with the goal of reaching the possibility of producing nuclear weapons, economic blockades and embargos were accepted by many countries. That's why China became the largest aid donor and the only close ally to North Korea. But the main interest of China isn't a strong North Korea for itself, but the stability of the region. China is aware of the fact that with a stable regime, there will be no uprising or regime change. And if an abrupt change would happen, there could be millions of refugees that will move to China, causing a serious problem for China (China 'Wedded to Status Quo on Korean Peninsula', 2012).

The famine and economic struggle was a great opportunity for Kim Jong-il to prove his ability to lead the country. He used this situation and established the "military first policy" as a main ideology and orientation. While people of North Korea were starving, he decided to put army first among national interests.

Impact of the "military-first" policy:

The North Korean slogan "*Let us hold fast the gun to carry out the revolutionary cause pioneered with the gun!*" clearly shows the connection between the military first and the Juche thought. They are so linked that it is unthinkable to discuss the North Korean policy without the considering the impact of the Songun (military first policy) (GlobalSecurity, Songun Chongchi).

The Songun policy has several purposes. First of all, it aims to establish the balance of powers on the Korean peninsula. The propaganda claims that after the Korean War the US army is occupying the Republic of Korea and is waiting to finally deal with the DPRK. Thus, the military-first policy is reason why there wasn't any major conflict since 1953 because the United States are scared of the DPRK's army. This fear of the North Korean strong army is a reason why South Korea is so developed,

according to propaganda (Myers, 2010, pp. 152-162). The North Koreans were always indoctrinated with the assertion that people in south are poorer and live under the occupation of the United States.

In the 21st century, it is more and more difficult to avoid any external influence and information coming to the country. That's why the propaganda had to deal with the issue of spreading the information about the real state of the South Korean wealth. It appears that this could be insolvable task, but not for the North Korean propaganda apparatus. The military first policy and strong army served well in a new lie. Since Americans are scared, they allow South Koreans to live freely and develop their country that leads to the one of the strongest economies in the world. It means that the orientating the country's policy on army let their South Korean siblings live in the free world, without the oppression of the US army that is in the country. North Korean people are proud of themselves; they put more effort to improve their army and the North Korean apparatus is satisfied with how they handled this issue. In a way, it is a win-win situation for the government (Myers, 2010).

The second purpose of the military-first policy is logical. Every authoritarian leader wants to be able to control everything and feel safe against any kind of opposition. By building the strong and loyal army, Kim Jong-il was strengthening his position inside the ruling party. It could be considered as kind of a precaution against the overthrowing his position as a single leader (Vorontsov, 2006).

The other is linked to the ideology and the idea of the cleanest race. The power of army isn't only a physical power. It is also an ideological and psychological power. According to Kim Jong-il this power is: *"a military power is the first power of the country in the struggle against the imperialism and for independence and socialism and, if the country overpowers the enemy in the military front, it can emerge victorious in all other fronts."* (GlobalSecurity, Songun Chongchi).).A strong army makes people more confident and secure, and hence they are able of greater actions. It is a pillar of all changes that happened after the Kim Il-sung's death. Country had to execute economic changes because of the bad state of the finance sector and the army became the motor of everything. The cleanest race ideology enters this issue with the idea of the purity of the North Korean people who had to struggle in this evil world. And with the help of the Dear Leader and the strong army, they are able to survive it.

For them, it is very important to live with the feeling that their country is able to protect them against the ideological enemies (Myers, 2010). Since the United States is portrayed ideologically as the greatest enemy, the Songun is formulated this way. That's why it is *"based on the Juche idea in the new situation in which the sovereignty of many countries is tragically violated and the cause of human independence as a whole has met with serious challenges under the policy of extreme arbitrariness and domination pursued by the US that has become the "only superpower" of the world after the Cold War"* (GlobalSecurity, Songun Chongchi).

Development of nuclear weapons:

Having a nuclear weapon was the goal of North Korean army since the 1956 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). According to the sources, North Korean and Soviet Union governments signed the Founding charter of the Soviet Union's Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in this year. After the end of the Korean War, the country was pursuing a goal to be able to defend itself should any new conflict emerge. These actions led to one and only goal – to obtain nuclear weapons. It was a logical move, because North Koreans were threatened by the U.S. Army, South Korea's ally. The United States was the nuclear superpower at that time. Any weaker military force could lead to the final defeat if the US decided to use their nuclear force. North Korea was pursuing for the balance of powers in terms of nuclear weapons, because having them could deter the US to use their nuclear weapons. In October 2006, North Korea claimed that successfully tested nuclear weapon. The North Korean army executed the nuclear test even though the threats from the world community. United Nations Security Council warned North Koreans that the test could lead to the serious consequences (Sanger, 2006). Executing the test was the clear answer to the world about what the country thinks about the external opinion. In fact, the propaganda apparatus acclaimed the "military-first" policy for making the North Korea a nuclear power. "Only the Great Leader's liberation of the peninsula now occupies a more important place in the national history" (Myers, 2010).

Because of the successful underground test, North Korea joined the group of nuclear powers. But what makes the North Korea dangerous having the nuclear weapon is its

unpredictable leader. It was valid during the Kim Jong-il era and it still appears valid nowadays, because Kim Jong-un is relatively unknown and we are not familiar with his purposes with the nuclear weapons. The only thing the world knows about his future steps is the stressing the military as a top priority (Choe, 2012). It is difficult to accept that there are weapons of mass destruction in the hands of many different leaders. The problem is that the world is being exposed to the mood of one person that can anytime push the button and no one would be able to forbid it. That's why the world leaders urged for the greater acknowledging the possible threat.

After another successful test that occurred in 2009, American president Barack Obama mentioned the Korean issue in his Prague speech. The key point of his speech was the issue of nuclear proliferation, since the occasion for the visiting Prague was to sign a nuclear treaty that instructs their reduction, with Russian President Medvedev. The test conducted by North Koreans emphasized the importance of actions mentioned in this speech:

“North Korea broke the rules once again by testing a rocket that could be used for long range missiles. This provocation underscores the need for action -- not just this afternoon at the U.N. Security Council, but in our determination to prevent the spread of these weapons. Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something. The world must stand together to prevent the spread of these weapons” (Obama, 2009)

However, the real aim and the possible continuation of the nuclear program of the North Korean army are unclear. Because of the death of Kim Jong-il and the succession of Kim Jong-un, there will be changes in the policies of the country. It is questionable whether it will affect the nuclear program, because this issue will play an important part in the setting of the relationships with other world leaders, for Kim Jong-un.

North Korea's Relations with the South:

The beginning of this chapter about the Korean relations will be mainly the description of situations that happened after the WWII. The description will be based on a U.S. Department of State file, Background note: North Korea. Among other facts in this file, the North-South relations are well described in chapter Reunification efforts since 1971. It will be complemented with the more recent incidents that play its part in possible reunification of the Korean peninsula.

The outcome of the WWII divided the Korean peninsula. After the long years of the Japanese oppression, the war and the defeat of Japan brought some hope for Koreans. But the Japanese were substituted by the Soviets and the Americans. In subsequent years, two independent states emerged and one nation was separated. Moreover, one nation became separated by the demilitarized zone as the result of the bloody Korean War that de facto still isn't over, because it ended by armistice. All of these problems are represented in the relations between both Koreans. There were efforts for mutual co-operation or even for unification, but it never worked out. The big problem of the relationship is the mutual killing during the Korean War because it definitely harms every relationship between countries, in this case, even one nation. There is a similar example of dividing the country during the Cold War. West and East Germany are also states that emerged after the WWII on behalf of the post-war arrangement. But there was no civil war between the Germans.

It is obvious that the relations with South Korea weren't as good as they could have been after the Korean War. Since the end of the Korean War till 1971, there were comments about the unification of both states. But until 1971, there was no official contact that would lead to the cooperation with the aim of unification of both Koreas (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011). First attempt was made through the Red Cross societies with the attempt of allowing a reunion of families that were separated by the Korean division. 1972 brought further communication between the Koreas. Leaders agreed to commit themselves to work on reunification and improving the damaged relations. But again, all of the preliminary success was devalued in 1973 when the South Korean president announced the desire to join the United Nations (UN) solo. Additionally, the leader of the South Korean opposition that wanted the

join the UN as a unit with the North Korea was kidnapped by the South Korean secret service (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011).

Floods in South Korea in 1984 were a reason that led to the repeated dialogue between the two states. North Koreans provided relief goods for people affected by the floods. New dialogues were discussing the possibility of further economic and trade cooperation and issues that were solved in past. But again, the period of time with better relations didn't last long, because North Koreans felt offended by the United States-South Korea military exercise (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011).

The real progress, after all those years of failures, happened in the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. On behalf of the activity of the South Korean president who urged its government to achieve any progression, two major agreements occurred. The Basic Agreement (the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation) was signed in 1991 and was dealing with reconciliation, economic and military affairs and cultural exchange. The second agreement, the Joint Declaration (the Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula) forbade both countries from any activities concerning the nuclear program.

But as it was discussed above, North Korea developed its own nuclear program. These nuclear attempts were the reason why the bilateral talks ended in failure again. Although North Korea signed a nuclear safeguards agreement that would allow the internal inspections by unbiased inspectors from International Atomic Energy Agency, such inspections were forbidden. It brought tension to the North-South relations. The situation worsened in 1993, when North Korea announced the intention of withdrawing from the NPT (the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty). It was a clear signal that North Korea didn't give up its nuclear efforts which represented a serious issue for the international community. The United States took over the situation and started bilateral talks with the North Korean officials that were successful at that time, because North Korea was seeking U.S. aid and the concessions on the nuclear issue were asked in return (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011).

“The Sunshine Policy” is a policy that was established by the new South Korean president Kim Dae-jung towards North Korea. This policy was based on three principles: “no tolerance of provocations from the North, no intention to absorb the

North, and the separation of political cooperation from economic cooperation” (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2011). Thanks to this policy, the first inter-Korean summit was held in Pyongyang in 2000. On the other hand, it wasn’t only one-sided policy towards North Korea; the deal was based on mutual reciprocity in using of government resources.

In 2003, the new South Korean president was elected, but he didn’t change his predecessor’s direction towards the inter-Korean cooperation. That’s why the second inter-Korean summit was held again in Pyongyang, in 2007. The summit was followed by an up-and-down period, because the South Korean president was seeking greater reciprocity and the North Korean government didn’t like that attitude. On the other hand, there were discussions about the joint economic projects. Thanks to the progress in the economic discussion between Korea, something unexpected emerged. Few kilometers north of the DMZ, there is Kaesong complex where labor forces from North and South Korea work together (Feffer & Schwartz Greco, 2005). It was a very significant deal because allowing such a complex north of the DMZ was an unprecedented move and was act of closer mutual cooperation.

Current relations on the Korean peninsula aren’t maintained at high level. Because of the military actions of the North Korean army, the relations cooled down. The South Korean warship Cheonan was sunk by the North Korean torpedo and killed 46 South Koreans in 2010. Although, North Korean officials denied responsibility for the sinking of the Cheonan, although an independent investigation declared their responsibility (Min, 2010). The most recent incident happened on November 23, 2010, when the North Korean army bombed the South Korea’s Yeonpyeong Island and killed two soldiers. There are rumors that the attack was designed to bolster Kim Jong-un’s position inside the party, as he was claimed an artillery expert (Yeonpyeong Attack 'Aimed to Bolster Kim Jong-un', 2010). The bombing provoked discussions about the Korean relations. Of course, South Koreans condemned the attack and these two violations of armistice led to the cutting off of almost all humanitarian aid that was sent to the North Korea (Foster, 2010).

Is the reunification a realistic option for the Korean peninsula? The situation in recent years indicates that the process of reunification is highly improbable.

In recent years, a common team for a few sport events, presented under one Korean flag, has been created. But reunification at every level, including political, would be extremely complex and full of obstacles. There are two different histories since the Korean War has divided the peninsula, sealed with the DMZ. South Korea is living in prosperity and is a member of international organizations that allow the country to participate on a world stage. On the other hand, North Korea chose the life in isolation, dependent on self-sustenance or on humanitarian aid. Germany was unified after the fall of the Soviet Union, because East Germany was occupied by the Soviet Union. That was an obstacle for earlier unification. But, there is no occupation of the Korean peninsula. Both countries are independent and choose their own policies. East Germany didn't have that option. On the other hand, the economy of North Korea is on lower level than it was in East Germany at that time. It makes for a great difference between both Koreas in terms of their economy and standards of living (Kelly, 2011). It would be a great burden for the South Korea to restore the other country. But, the main difference could be the world situation and the engagement of the powerful countries. While in the beginning of the 1990s the United States was the strongest country by far, nowadays China is moving forward and there is not only one superpower in the world. The reunification of the Germany was in the international, mainly the US interest as a proof of winning the Cold War and the destabilizing the East Bloc. Nowadays, China is the closest ally of the North Korea and it is also a geographically closest power to the peninsula. So, the Korean reunification would have to be in China's interest. And while China is seeking for the stability in the region, the reunification isn't on the plan, because it would bring a lot of troubles. So, the process isn't only in the Korean hands and the North Korean actions don't help it at all.

Conclusion:

What is the possible future for North Korea? Will the country stay in isolation for more years or will the regime break down eventually? When Kim Jong-il died, such questions appeared. They appeared mainly because the world didn't know whether Kim's successor, Kim Jong-un, would be strong enough to handle the role of single leader or the opposition in the Korean Workers Party will succeed in this power struggle. Recent events and mainly Kim's speech on the 100th birthday of Kim Il-sung mass celebration outlined the future orientation of the country. It looks like Kim handles the power with ease and wants to maintain the "military-first" policy as a top priority. It means that we cannot expect any major changes in North Korean policy and relationship with the foreign world anytime soon. Thus, the isolation of the country will continue.

With third Kim in the country's leading position, the strength of the foundations built in the past for this regime is obvious. Even the death of the leader in 2011 didn't start the crisis of legitimacy. The Korean Workers Party still has the support of the North Korean people and there were no demonstrations asking for free elections, for example. It brought us to the core of this thesis and the key issue of North Korea, which is the impact of the racial nationalism on people there. It is possible that familiar explanations about the conditions in North Korea, where people have to live in constant fear and in constant unhappiness aren't completely accurate. With the help of the cleanest race concept, it could be explained that people identify with the regime and its leader a lot more than we'd expect. It is contrary to the usual opinion and it brings new light to the topic on the North Korean regime.

The initial thesis statement was based on the assertion that the racial nationalism with the help of the cleanest race concept is the most important factor in judging the North Korean policy, not only domestic, but foreign policy as well. It was proven that the racial nationalism is an important factor, but the Juche thought shouldn't be left behind. The Juche thought, as the main official ideology of the regime, has to be also considered in this issue. The result is the combination of the racial nationalism with the Juche thought altogether as equal factors. The regime justifies its action with the help of both of these concepts. There is the concept of racial purity and uniqueness in

which Koreans are born and brought up and the Juche ideology supported by the propaganda machinery, both of which encourage them in this feeling. They are indoctrinated to love the leader unconditionally, no matter what. And it seems that they do. With such a position, the leader is allowed to do nearly anything he wants.

Kim Il-sung chose the isolationist policy and his son continued in this heritage. He preferred independence, even though he singled out his country for the world periphery. But with the help of propaganda, he justified his actions easily. North Koreans are proud how self-reliant and powerful they are. That's the most important point. It is easy to say that people are unhappy there. But without the understanding of the cultural background and how the North Koreans see themselves, we cannot judge. "The Koreans believe that their childlike purity renders them so vulnerable to the outside world that they need a Parent Leader to survive" (Myers, 2010, p. 166). It means that they delegate their destiny to the hands of one man. But, they are not forced to do so. That is the message that world has to accept.

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Zhrnutie:

Na svete je len zopár štátov, ktoré sa hlásia ku komunistickej ideológii. História dokázala, že doposiaľ sú víťazom ideologického boja demokracia spolu s kapitalizmom. Jeden z mála komunistických režimov, ktorý na svete ostal po Studenej vojne, je Kórejská ľudovodemokratická republika (Severná Kórea). Nie je to jediná z komunistických krajín, avšak je najviac izolovaná. Dôvod, prečo som si vybral ako tému svojej bakalárskej práce práve izoláciu Severnej Kórey je ten, že som fascinovaný tým ako je možné v 21. storočí udržať krajinu v takej izolácii, ako sa to darí vodcovi a strane v tejto krajine.

Severná Kórea je izolovaná nielen politicky, ale aj ekonomicky. Existuje viacero dôvodov, ktoré stoja za izoláciou. Práve tieto dôvody sú jadrom mojej tézy. Jej hlavným bodom je tvrdenie, že Severná Kórea je izolovaná nielen vďaka politickej ideológii Juche, ale vplýva na ňu aj faktor silného rasového nacionalizmu. Toto tvrdenie použil americký odborník na Severnú Kóreu, Brian Reynolds Myers vo svojej knihe *The cleanest race*, v ktorej sa zaoberá faktorom najčistejšej rasy ku ktorej sa Kórejci radia. Tento koncept je založený na ideji rasovej nevinnosti a nepoškvrnenosti.

Je dôležité chápať súvislosť všetkých dôležitých konceptov, pretože sú na seba naviazané a spolu prispievajú ku izolácii. V prvom rade, historický koncept je dôležitý, lebo dáva určitý rámec udalostiam, ktoré sa odohrali na Kórejskom polostrove po 2. svetovej vojne a vzniku dvoch od seba nezávislých štátov. Začiatkom 20. storočia bol Kórejský polostrov, ktorý bol miestom Kórejskej ríše, anektovaný Japonskom po Rusko-Japonskej vojne. Avšak po prehre Japonska v 2. svetovej vojne si víťazné mocnosti USA a SSSR rozdelili polostrov na svoje okupované zóny. Následne vznikli dva nové kórejské štáty: KĽDR a Kórejská republika (Južná Kórea). Obe krajiny vyhlásili suverenitu nad celým Kórejským polostrovom, čo viedlo ku Kórejskej vojne. Kórejská vojna je dôležitá pre vývoj dejín po 2. svetovej vojne. Bol to prvý vojenský konflikt, v ktorom proti sebe stáli dva znepriatelené ideologické bloky a bývalí víťazi vojny. Vojna vypukla v roku 1950 inváziou severokórejských vojsk na územie Južnej Kórey. Bola podporovaná

Stalinom a novým vodcom v Číne Mao Ce-tungom. Na obranu Južnej Kórey prišla pomoc zo strany USA a OSN. V roku 1953 bolo podpísané prímerie, ktoré trvá dodnes a 38. rovnobežka bola určená ako demilitarizovaná zóna, ktorá rozdeľuje polostrov. Kým na juhu nastal hospodársky boom a Južná Kórea je považovaná za Ázijského tigra, tak sever stagnoval pod komunistickou diktatúrou.

Izolacionistická politika bola následkom totalitného režimu, ktorý v Severnej Kórey naberal na sile. Kim Ir-sen sa stal prvým prezidentom krajiny, ktorú politicky viedol smerom ku svojim ideologickým spojencom, hlavne SSSR a Číne. Keďže krajina bola komunistická, v čele bola len jedna strana a jeden vodca. Neexistovala žiadna politická opozícia a líder mal v krajine neobmedzenú moc. Nacionalistický prístup ktorý zahŕňa faktor rasovej dominancie sa v tomto bode začína prekrývať s politickým smerovaním krajiny. Keďže rasový nacionalizmus je založený na ideí najčistejšej rasy, kde ľudia sú považovaní za nevinných a zraniteľných, tak tu vzniká potreba silného vodcu, ktorý by ľudí viedol v ich životoch. Tým sa legitimizuje vláda jednej strany, jedného vodcu. Kim Ir-sen dokonca predstavil svoju novú ideológiu Juche. Juche ideológia je založená na troch dôležitých faktoroch: politickej, ekonomickej a vojenskej nezávislosti. Dôležitým bodom, v ktorom Juche podporuje ideu jedného vodcu je tvrdenie, že táto nezávislosť bude dosiahnutá vďaka jednému silnému vodcovi a strane. Spojením tejto ideológie s propagandistickou mašínériou ľudia akceptovali nedostatok politickej slobody, pretože to bolo pre ich dobro.

Nedostatok politickej opozície prispieva ku vzniku kultu osobnosti daného vodcu. A práve kult osobnosti je v Severnej Kórey veľmi silný. Je to očividné na každom kroku. Keď cudzinec príde do krajiny, odšadiaľ naňho pozerajú tváre Kim Ir-sen a Kim Čong-ila, ktoré sú takmer všade. Portréty oboch lídrov sú dokonca v každej domácnosti. Sochy lídrov sú v každom väčšom meste. Toto sú však typické znaky každého kultu osobnosti. To, čo robí severokórejský kult osobnosti ešte silnejším, je oddanosť národa svojmu lídrovi. Ľudia považujú Kima za rodičovskú osobnosť, ktorá im pomáha počas celého života. Kult je tak silný, že by sa dal prirovnať ku náboženstvu. A z takou podporou od ľudu je líder v Severnej Kórey naozaj oprávnený robiť to, čo on sám uzná za vhodné. To ovplyvňuje aj celé smerovanie krajiny, pretože to je v rukách jednej osoby.

Po smrti Kim Ir-sena v roku 1994 sa k moci dostal jeho syn, Kim Čong-il. Obdobie po smrti prvého lídra bolo pre krajinu veľmi náročné, pretože krajinu zasiahli rozsiahle povodne a bola odkázaná na medzinárodnú pomoc. Prvou hlavnou zmenou, ktorú Kim Čong-il urobil, bolo postavenie politiky “military first“ na prvé miesto záujmov krajiny. Táto politika zameraná na nadmerné zbrojenie a pumpovanie peňazí do armády má za cieľ nastoliť rovnováhu síl na polostrove. Propaganda tvrdí, že Južná Kórea je okupovaná americkými vojakmi ešte od čias Kórejskej vojny a preto je treba vybudovať silnú armádu, ktorá by odradila Spojené Štáty Americké od útoku na sever. A keďže je USA aj ideologicky aj najväčší nepriateľ, legitimizovanie zbrojenia je postavené na tomto tvrdení. Dôležitým faktorom je skutočnosť, že vďaka silnej armáde sa obyvatelia cítia bezpečnejšie pred nástrahami vonkajšieho sveta. Podľa propagandy sa USA stále chystajú spraviť finálny krok na zničenie Severnej Kórey, avšak silná severokórejská armáda ich od tohto kroku odrádza.

Do politiky, ktorá preferuje armádu na prvom mieste patrí aj úspešný severokórejský nukleárny program. Vlastniť jadrovú zbraň bolo cieľom krajiny už počas Studenej vojny. V roku 2006 sa odohral prvý úspešný podzemný test, ktorý zaradil Severnú Kóreu medzi krajiny disponujúce jadrovými zbraňami. Následkom toho veľa krajín zrušilo humanitárnu pomoc a krajina sa znovu dostala na okraj svetového spoločenstva. V roku 2009 prebehol ďalší úspešný test, na ktorý reagoval aj americký prezident Barack Obama vo svojej Pražskej reči, kde hovoril o potrebe zbavovania sa takýchto zbraní. Avšak vlastníctvo takejto zbrane je pre Severnú Kóreu veľmi dôležité, pretože to robí krajinu nevyspytateľnou a dáva to lídrovi možnosť vyjednávať s mocnosťami vo viac rovnocennom dialógu.

Poslednou časťou práce je vzťah oboch Kórejských krajín. Vývoj vzťahov od Kórejskej vojny bol veľmi zložitý a prešiel viacerými vzostupmi a pádmi. Dôležitým prvkom celého vzťahu je možná reunifikácia do jedného Kórejského štátu. Avšak táto možnosť nevyzerala reálne a ani v najbližšej dobe sa nedá očakávať, že by sa krajiny zjednotili. Obe krajiny sú na opačných póloch, čo sa týka ideológie, politiky a aj ekonomiky. Pre Južnú Kóreu by bola obrovská záťaž obnova severného štátu a preto je zrejmé, že občania si to neprajú. Pre Severnú Kóreu by zas bolo ťažké obhajovať toto zjednotenie pred občanmi, pretože propaganda presadzuje nezávislosť. Avšak dôležitým hráčom tu je aj Čína, predstavujúca najsilnejšiu krajinu v regióne. Tá je za

udržanie status-quo, pretože zjednotenie Kórei by prinieslo otvorenie hraníc na severe, čo by znamenalo obrovský prílev imigrantov na Čínske územie.

Na záver treba dodať, že izolacionistická politika Severnej Kórey zrejme ešte nejaký čas potrvá. Nový vodca Kim Čong-un vo svojom verejnom vystúpení deklaroval potrebu ešte silnejšej armády, ktorá by zabezpečila nezávislosť krajiny. Takže armáda ostane na prvom mieste a zbrojenie bude pokračovať, aj keď mnoho ľudí hladuje a živorí. V práci bolo dokázané, že izoláciu ma na svedomí Juche ideológia v kombinácii s rasovým nacionalizmom a ideou najčistejšej rasy.