

E-5 Reflections on the State & Statelessness

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Millenarian Nationalism and the Origins of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

ABSTRACT:

After six decades of power, the Kim regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) remains a mystery to many in the West. Indeed, the North Korean revolution following World War Two is not well accounted for by Western scholars, analysts and statesmen. The elder, Kim il Sung, the founder of the DPRK, ruled from its inception in 1948 until his death in 1994. He was most often portrayed as a communist revolutionary under the control and support of Stalin and, later, Mao. As a result, the DPRK was frequently and largely oversimplified, not as an isolated strategic issue on its own merit, but as an important actor on the much larger stage of the Cold War. His son, Kim Jung Il, succeeded him and remains in firm control of a sovereign, albeit, desperate state in a strategically important region of the world. Nonetheless, the DPRK today is usually portrayed as a hopeless relic of the Cold War era, ruled by an eccentric and ruthless dictator, who is both a buffoon and unstable in his actions. Despite these characterizations, the regime remains of significant interest to the United States and its allies. These persistent mischaracterizations exemplify the fact that existing analyses of the power base of the Kim regime is inadequate and unsatisfactory. An enduring problem is the fact that many analysts focus their attention on the Kim's themselves, and not the character, culture, and ideological sources that sustain the government of the DPRK. This paper investigates the foundation and nature of Korean millenarian nationalism; an important variable in the origins and long term support of the DPRK. It goes beyond the ruling Kim family and examines the durability of millenarian expectations that stand at the very foundation of Korean culture and have performed a significant role in the evolution of Korean politics. The paper concludes that Korean millenarian nationalism, not communist ideology, is the most important variable in the continuation of the Kim regime in DPRK, nearly twenty years after the end of the Cold War.

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Isolationist States in an Interdependent World

ABSTRACT:

The concept of an *isolationist state* in modern international relations has undergone redefinition over the course of time. Whether the term isolationist state has referred to ancient Sparta, US foreign policy during the 19th century, select communist policies during the Cold War such as Albanian domestic/foreign policy, or present day North Korea and Burma, the concept has retained viability in explaining and understanding international relations. Since 1945, the modern global system of states has become politically and economically integrated, consisting of extensive networks of state-to-state engagement and interdependence. Given the globalized nature of the modern global system, this study seeks to expound upon the reasons and consequences for states that opt out of the international system. For this purpose, this paper examines the notion of isolationist states via a discursive and interpretative analysis of case studies of isolationist states that choose to cut off relations with the outside world. This paper seeks to examine in depth why and how states isolate themselves from the globalized system of international relations. Countries like communist Albania (1944-1992) have had an isolationist regime at some point in their history and later engaged the international system. Others like North Korea and Burma continue to maintain self-imposed isolationism. The question then becomes, why do some states choose to dispense with isolationism and engage while others maintain the status quo? What do states have to gain by opting out of the international system?

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External Vulnerability, Internal Volatility, and Foreign Dependence: Reflections on Weak States

ABSTRACT:

The fragile nature of their internal power structures, inherited political weaknesses, political and social fragmentation of their population, inability of the states to establish their writ, and perceived or real threats from outside create a situation that makes these states dependent upon major powers.

This relationship of dependence further complicates the situation at home turf, making the regimes weaker, dependent, and unable to penetrate and legitimize their rule. These states are, thus, under severe pressure both from inside and outside, and lead to their ineffectiveness. This paper will analyze this anomaly by focusing on Pakistan where internal strife, political fragmentation, and regime volatility are making it dependent upon foreign support. Its inability to barter the internal and external pressures has led to successive military coups, civil unrest, and rise of radicalism.

I assert that state has a key role to play; otherwise it is destined to fail that may further complicate the situation both at home and in the international arena.

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Back to Basics: State Responsibility for People. A commentary on statelessness

ABSTRACT:

The field of international studies has often ignored the situation of statelessness. Statelessness, the status of having no citizenship, affects an estimated nine to eleven million people around the globe. These stateless people effectively have no rights and no protection, and the international system has failed them miserably. This system has been unable to guarantee membership (citizenship) to these people within its own body of states even though member states of the United Nations allegedly adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (wherein Article 15 declares that that each person has a right to a nationality), and even though states are the only entities in the international system charged with providing citizenship to peoples. This paper puts forth the argument that the “sovereign” system of states is challenged at its core as long as statelessness exists. These stateless persons exist outside of the alien-citizen-refugee continuum that state immigration laws and international bodies utilize to order people. Their invisibility makes it easy for policy-makers, academicians and other actors to ignore their existence. Statelessness, however, puts into question the very legitimacy of the state system and it would befit those who study “international studies” to be aware of this challenge and attempt to resolve the contradiction, both for the field and for these people who have no rights.

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Export Promotion in the States: An Analysis of Gubernatorial Power and States’ Strategies

ABSTRACT:

U.S. states seek to better their economies through promotion of state exports. Scholars recognize that governors now serve as chief economic ambassadors, but there are few studies in IR or IPE literature that consider the new international roles of governors and U.S. states. Governors now lead missions overseas recruiting investment and promoting exports, establish international offices, sign memoranda of understanding with other subnational actors, and meet with high-level officials. This study seeks to explain what tools are best in export promotion by examining a sample of 25 states with economic and geographic diversity from 1995-2004. This study will argue that institutional theories of IPE should be expanded and applied, thus measures of governors’ institutional and personal powers will be used. Other independent variables include states’ export promotion strategies such as the number of states’ international offices, number of governor-led trade missions, and number of state-funded World Trade Centers per year. This study hypothesizes that state exports should rise with an increase in governor’s institutional and personal powers such that governors can better control and adapt their states’ economic strategies. U.S. states are not the only subnational governments to go beyond their borders, but join subnational regions, provinces and states in Asia, Europe, North and South America in such activities. Therefore, this study fits into a larger framework of reconsidering the international roles of U.S. states and governors, an important topic with relevance to American and international politics.

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