

resolution.⁴⁶ But what are the alternatives? Increasingly the sticks have become hollow, counterproductive rhetorical devices that fool no one unless one is to consider a full-scale American nuclear attack on the North. Short of that, what real pressure can the Americans bring to bear? Why not exploit the advantages of carrots? At the heart of the matter is the North Korean economy. The nuclear weapons programme is a product of the failing northern economy. That programme alone enables the North to bridge the gap that has begun to develop in the conventional weapons capabilities of the two peninsular regimes. Furthermore, that programme provides the Kim dynasty with threadbare proof of the ability of juche and the Kim family to deliver on its promises. Thanks to nuclear weapons, Pyongyang can treat directly with Washington and Tokyo, winning concessions, albeit vague and ephemeral, and commanding worldwide attention.⁴⁷

But the Kims are doomed. In the final analysis they will go the way of other tin-pot dictatorships.⁴⁸ The forces of history are against them, and it is the enhancement of the North Korean economy that will accelerate their slide into oblivion. There are, of course, some very real questions about the absorptive capacity of the North and the willingness of investors to commit their money to an unpredictable regime. But what is needed may be some sort of Gorbachavian new thinking; a bold departure which abandons nuclear legalism as a lost cause and promotes the recovery of the DPRK economy by whatever means possible.⁴⁹

What will that mean in practice? In the short term, aid will be resisted because it is antithetical to North Korean autarchy; but it will become increasingly acceptable because it can be portrayed by Pyongyang as a victory over the West and an illustration of the power of the