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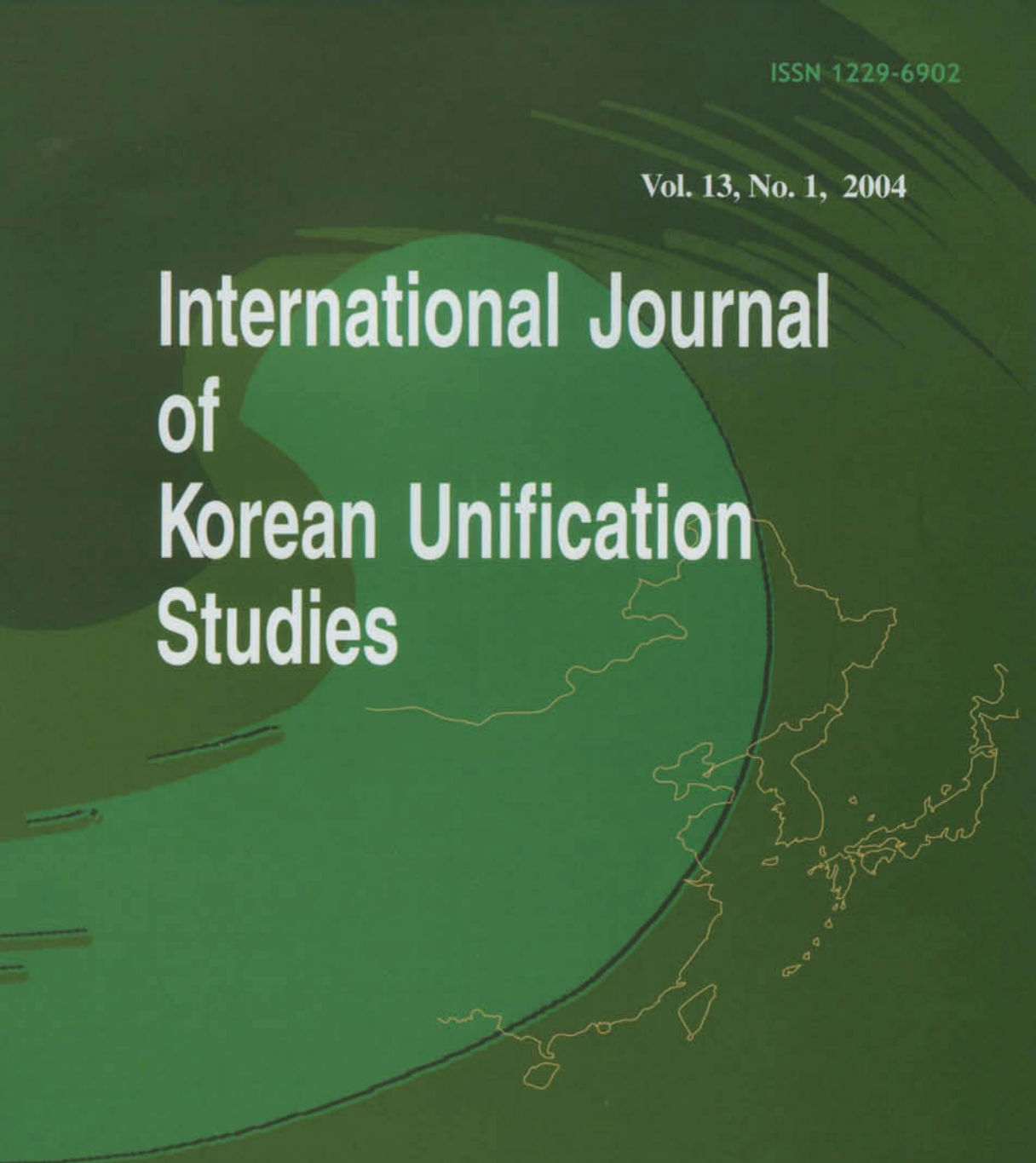

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NORTH KOREA AND NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

Patrick Morgan

Contrary to the usual view, deterring a state like North Korea is not really more difficult if it has nuclear weapons. Preventing North Korea from deterring a government like the US, or a UN coalition, is also not more difficult if the North has nuclear weapons. It is very difficult to make a decision to use nuclear weapons. It is especially difficult if a government is devoted to its survival, will certainly cease to exist if it uses nuclear weapons (the reaction would be so extreme), and its opponents may not react so harshly if it decides not to use nuclear weapons. This is the situation the North will be in with a modest number of nuclear weapons. Thus those who pressure the North should stop short of threatening its existence. And the North should take seriously the current opportunity to negotiate a settlement of the Korean problem.

Since early in the nuclear age, when it was suggested that states would soon have to *rely on nuclear deterrence* to keep safe, the idea of doing so has aroused uneasiness, particularly on the grounds that this is too static and leaves too much of the responsibility for national secu-

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rity in the hands of another state, one that may be a dangerous opponent. Simultaneously, the idea of *not being able to rely on deterrence* has also aroused uneasiness, often leading to efforts to develop nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to gain more control over threats to national security. Finally, the idea of *being deterred*, of having foreign policy options constrained by others' threats of retaliation, has also aroused uneasiness in various governments, leading to efforts to escape from nuclear deterrence of others via such steps as developing a preemptive attack capability and strategy or a national missile defense system.[1] Thus, for various states at various times, nuclear deterrence has been disturbing when it seemed unavoidable, unavailable, or too available.

All of this has repeatedly evidential in the relationship between North Korea on the one hand and the US and its allies in Northeast Asia on the other. Deterrence has, of course, contributed a good deal to the prevention of another Korean War which is very important. However, on both sides the uneasiness with deterrence in general and especially with nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence has been profound, reflecting and then also contributing to tension and hostility among the states in the area. Both as a real phenomenon and as a prospective additional development, deterrence has frequently provoked fears and resentments. Because of this, deterrence, and particularly nuclear deterrence, was never fully accepted as just a stabilizing factor in the Korean situation and often is not seen as such now. Along with being a way of coping with the conflict, therefore, it is at least partly responsible for it as well.

To see how this has been so, we can briefly review the relevant history pertaining to deterrence, conventional and nuclear, in relation to the Korean peninsula. To start with, the outbreak of the Korean War in

1 The best analysis of this is in Robert Jervis, *The Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989).

1950 was a striking failure of security policy for the US and the ROK. A question raised as a result was whether it constituted a failure of deterrence or a failure to practice deterrence properly. In the US and much of the West, it was soon concluded that the attack represented both. It was asserted that the Soviet Union, in ordering (so everyone believed then) the attack by the North, must have seen Western deterrence in general as weak, as containing "soft" spots, presumably in part because the Soviet Union's recent acquisition of nuclear weapons had devalued US deterrence. But it was also charged that the US had not properly and effectively practiced deterrence because it had not clearly established a commitment to South Korea and, in fact, had seemed to indicate that the ROK was not a vital American interest, not included in the US defense perimeter in East Asia.

One result was a strenuous effort to strengthen Western deterrence everywhere: tightening up the NATO alliance and sending US troops to Europe, pursuing Western European rearmament along with US efforts to rearm and send military aid to its allies, extending containment to China, and undertaking rapid expansion of the US nuclear arsenal including an intensive program to develop the hydrogen bomb. Another reaction was to make American deterrence commitments more explicit through formal alliances and informal, yet clearly indicated, ties to others such as Yugoslavia or Sweden. The ROK experienced the effects of both of those responses: installation of a formal, highly integrated alliance with the US that included significant US forces stationed in Korea or nearby, US nuclear weapons also located in the country or nearby, and years of US military assistance. North Korea secured alliances with China and the Soviet Union, military aid, and the rebuilding of its armed forces both for deterrence purposes and for a possible future attack on the South.

Yet another reaction to the Korean War was the emergence of the first explicit US nuclear deterrence strategy, massive retaliation, under which the US threatened to deal with a future East-West war, regional

or global, via the early use of tactical nuclear weapons and perhaps an early massive escalation to the strategic nuclear level. For a time, this was also the declared posture of NATO and, more or less, of the Soviet Union.

After the Korean War, neither side on the peninsula was satisfied with deterrence. Each readily concluded that it had to be constantly on high alert against a possible attack, the demilitarized zone became highly militarized, there were recurring military incidents, and the political conflict remained very tense and hostile. Each was not certain that deterrence would work given its view of what the other side wanted and was planning for, and since nuclear weapons might well be involved in a future war, any failure of deterrence could be deadly. Korea remained a highly dangerous place.

As well, neither side was happy with being deterred. North Korea maintained huge forces armed and trained, and eventually deployed, for fighting by immediately going on the offensive. It periodically launched small attacks and probes, sent commandos or assassination squads into the South, or sought other ways to destabilize the ROK. Clearly hoping to someday unify the peninsula, by force if need be, it objected vociferously to the ROK-US alliance (and the US-Japan alliance in the background) and the presence of US forces.

On the other hand, there were always Koreans and Americans who, in a similar fashion, chafed at being constrained by deterrence because it prevented putting an end once and for all to the North Korean regime, the military threat it posed, and its harassment. In the ensuing decades, the US and ROK clearly were unhappy about the ongoing possibility of another war, and thus the necessity and burdens of relying on deterrence - maintaining large forces on relatively high alert status, backed by nuclear weapons. The peninsula too often saw occurrences and developments that reinforced its reputation as one of the most likely places for the outbreak of a major war and one that could possibly trigger a full East-West conflict.

Eventually, North Korea began to drop behind the ROK economically, and therefore, lagged in the ability to maintain large modern forces. It also began to lose support for an attack on the South among its allies (and possibly their support even in a war it did not initiate). It became increasingly uneasy about its eventual ability to deter an attack on itself with just conventional forces. Facing a looming military deficit at the conventional level in a future war, the North launched a nuclear weapons program sometime in the 1980s. Since then, it has never completely abandoned its ambition to have nuclear weapons and a suitable delivery system. The official American view for years has been that the North has fabricated perhaps two nuclear weapons, but with no assessment as to whether these are operational weapons with suitable delivery systems. The South Korean and Chinese governments have been less certain on this estimation, suggesting that the North may well not have any nuclear weapons. Since 2002, the US has charged that the North has a nuclear enrichment program and that it may be reprocessing fuel rods from one reactor to make an additional few nuclear weapons. Again, others are not certain that this is the case, and North Korean pronouncements or offhanded comments are ambiguous.

The ROK-US response to the North's nuclear weapons program was to develop even more uneasiness about having to continue to rely on deterrence. One result over the years has been periodic efforts to achieve a detente with the North, to seek engagement leading to more normal relations.[2] Another has been repeated efforts to pressure the North into suspending or abandoning its nuclear weapons program, pressure that at one point was headed toward US attacks on the North's nuclear program installations.[3] With respect to each of these

2 Details on this can be found in Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A contemporary History* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1997).

3 See Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004) for details.

policies, there has also been suspicion in various quarters that Pyongyang is fundamentally unsuitable as either an engagement partner or a target of deterrence. Often, this has taken the form of charges that its leadership is too unstable in its decision making for either cooperation or being deterred - that it is irrational, or too closed to the outside world to have a firm grip on reality, or driven to pursue goals that permit neither a meaningful relaxation of tensions nor a comfortable confidence that deterrence of the North will always work.

The North's nuclear weapons program and its development of other WMD has served to reinforce this uneasiness among the allies, raising additional concern about the utility of deterrence. That concern has had two, somewhat contradictory, aspects. First, there has been fear that *deterrence of the North would not work*; that nuclear weapons would embolden the North to take excessive risks of war by such steps as resisting the accommodations needed to reduce tensions and avoid crises. This concern was never extreme, and thus, has not been overly important, and this remains true today (as is discussed below). The probability of an attack by the North has been seen as declining over the years. While there are hypothetical scenarios under which the North could instigate another Korean War, including some in which it uses WMD in a preemptive fashion to win a lighting victory and confront the US with a fait accompli, they seem plausible only if the North becomes utterly desperate. Lacking reliable allies and a meager economic base, and armed largely with obsolete weapons, the North is in a very poor position to start a war, particularly one with no realistic prospect of success. Using its nuclear weapons (if it has any) not to preempt but to forestall any escalatory response would still leave the North highly vulnerable to complete defeat at the conventional level.

Second, there has been fear that *deterrence by North Korea will someday work* when the allies have been compelled to think about resorting to force. In recent years, this has been a very serious American concern about a number of the so-called "rogue" states. On numerous issues

the US and others want the North to curb its unacceptable behavior - stop selling missiles, stop developing nuclear weapons, etc., or adopt important policy changes - implement thorough economic and political reforms, demilitarize the demilitarized zone, improve human rights conditions. Over the years, they have tried negotiations, engagement, containment, sanctions, and deterrence, but always with very limited results. Their ultimate recourse would be to threaten, and after that fails, to turn to the use of force. The fear is that North Korean nuclear weapons would cancel the option of using force as a last resort, leaving the North free to continue its unacceptable behavior. Since evidence has been plentiful that the North may not concede to outsiders' wishes, or do so only at a price they are unwilling to pay, fear of being deterred by the North from forcing it to do what outsiders want it to do is a serious matter, particularly when nuclear proliferation in Korea is considered likely to spread proliferation elsewhere in the region and probably stimulate it in other regions. Since the North regards giving in to outside pressure not only as an affront to its independence and dignity but likely to undermine the regime and even the future of the country, having no military option would mean having to put up with the North's behavior indefinitely.

This fear that our deterrence won't work but the North's will is somewhat odd. How can the weakest state be expected to have the most success in practicing deterrence? One answer might be that the North always has greater stakes at risk in a confrontation because its survival is on the line, and therefore, its determination to not give in and to fight with any weapons it has is more credible than that of its opponents, so its deterrence would be more effective. But South Korea would likely also have its survival at risk in another war on the peninsula. As for the US, it has demonstrated in the past that it will fight to defend South Korea, and more recently (in Iraq), that it will fight to prevent nuclear proliferation by regimes it especially dislikes. It also has much at stake in preventing a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia.

Finally, as will be apparent shortly, having one's survival at stake is not necessarily a great asset in a deterrence situation. Thus, it is not at all clear that, in a fundamental sense, the balance of resolve always favors the North.

Another answer is that often the US and its friends have been contemplating the use of *compelling force*, not deterrence, toward the North. Compelling force is the use of threats of harm to induce a state to stop doing what it is already doing, as opposed to deterrence where the threat of harm is to prevent it from doing something it has not yet done. It is generally agreed that compelling force and deterrence overlap a great deal, such that in crises the distinction between them is often artificial. However, it is also generally agreed that when the compelling component is uppermost, in principle it is more arduous than deterrence to carry out successfully because it seeks a more politically and psychologically repugnant response from the target government, one that seems more humiliating because the submission to coercion involved is more obvious. This would mean that the deterrence mounted by the North to offset a compelling threat would have more credibility.

The fears that deterrence of the North (and other rogue states) will not work and that deterrence by the North - particularly if it rests on nuclear weapons - will work have been widely expressed,[4] and their imprint can be seen in various national policies and many proposals from commentators and analysts for dealing with the North Korean situation. A careful assessment of these fears in light of what we know about deterrence may be useful.

4 Fears of this with regard to "rogue states" are reviewed in Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence Now* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 269-276.

On Deterring North Korea

In view of what various studies tell us about how deterrence works, deterring the North need not be of great concern. The US, ROK, and Japan would probably all have to be involved in some way in a military confrontation with North Korea, and they are clearly superior militarily, economically, demographically, and technologically. It has been a long time since North Korea fought a war and this is apparent. If the North is in such a deficient position on a possible war, deterring it from other very provocative actions may also be possible. Then, why is concern over deterring the North repeatedly voiced? The typical answer is that the leadership of the North may be irrational or not rational enough to take the deterrence threats seriously, or, as a closed society, too vulnerable to miscalculation in its periodic brinksmanship crises about how far its opponents will really go. This concern is reinforced when the North announces that several often discussed steps - interdicting its trade in weapons or proliferation items, sanctions, air attacks on some of its installations - would be treated as acts of war and when it threatens in response to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire" or do something similarly destructive.

Several things can be said. First, it is possible that the regime is, or can be, irrational and it has a lengthy history of serious miscalculations; these things cannot be completely ruled out. That is the main reason that nuclear deterrence is often said to pose an "existential threat." There is always a possibility it might be carried out. Second, contrary to standard views about deterrence, rationality of the target state's leadership is not required for deterrence to work. Deterrence *theory* was initially constructed by assuming rational decision-making on the part of the target, such that deterrence was depicted as using threats to manipulate the cost-benefit calculations of that state launching a possible attack. But deterrence in *practice* does not actually require rationality on the part of either party.

All that is required for retaliation is sufficient fear of the consequences of the threatened retaliation to not do what has been indicated. The underlying perceptions and judgments that constitute and are shaped by this fear and that lead to abandoning plans to attack may be irrational, rational, or some combination of the two. This is also true of perceptions and judgments that lead to disregarding deterrence threats - they may be rational or irrational. It need not take an elaborate calculation of relative costs and benefits to be very afraid of being hurt and earnestly attempt to avoid that. Moreover, there are many variants of what is called irrationality, and some can make a leader or a government easier to deter. In fact, it is usually impossible to determine how rational leaders and governments are, even in retrospect (historical analyses of cases regularly disagree on this), so there is no solid evidence that rationality plays a key role in cases of deterrence success or failure. Finally, particularly on nuclear deterrence, even explaining how deterrence works came to rely fairly heavily on the parties understanding that they may not be consistently rational, in that threats that are foolish to carry out may nevertheless work because governments cannot guarantee to be rational at all times. In short, there is no fixed relationship between rationality and deterrence success or failure.

Elaborate studies to determine what factors make for success in practicing deterrence include comparative analyses of a multitude of cases, in-depth analysis of particular historical examples, and logical investigations of hypothetical cases. The most potent factor for determining whether deterrence fails turns out to be the *will or determination of the target government to carry out the attack*. Deterrence is an attempt to dictate the strength of that will, and deterrence threats do have an effect, to some extent, on it, but its strength is often significantly independent of deterrence threats. The result is that it often plays a major role in determining how successful deterrence is and how the target state responds. That will can be strong because of rational calculations and strategies or irrational drives and desires.

Thus, for US and ROK deterrence in a crisis with the North, the key question must always be: how strong is North Korea's determination to attack? It seems clear that its determination to attack is not very high. We can certainly cite the North's military inferiority (one basis for the allies' deterrence) as a factor. But we can also cite the weakness of the North's economy, and the North's dependence on outsiders, of which most, if not all, would suspend their assistance, trade, and political support after an attack, and we can cite the North's lack of true allies. Most importantly, in any significant attack, the regime's continued survival would definitely be at grave risk. Thus, deterrence of a military attack by the North does not seem very likely to fail. The only plausible route to failure is if a truly desperate Pyongyang, in terms of its survival prospects, conjures up a fanciful scheme for attacking as a last resort.

Deterrence of lesser but still very serious provocations is another matter. Throughout its history the conflict between the US and its allies on one side and the North on the other has had periodic outbreaks of what I call "serial deterrence." It is the kind of conflict which, because of its intensity, leads periodically to actions by one side which are unacceptable to the other and which it had threatened retaliation to prevent, but where the retaliation is limited for various reasons. The retaliation inflicts *unacceptable* but not *unbearable* damage. Deterrence is practiced not just by threatening harm but by inflicting it - the message is roughly "don't do something like that again." Often the other side, then or later, responds in much the same way or sends the same message in connection with some other grievance that it holds. If escalation is contained but the hostility is unrelieved, such conflicts readily settle into episodic or continuous outbreaks of force or other forms of harm inflicted in pursuit of deterrence. Exchanges of pain or other harm become the way the parties regulate their relationship, one way they carry on negotiations about what is acceptable behavior or not, and one way to emphasize how angry they are at the other side's behavior

under the current status quo so as to provoke additional kinds of negotiations.[5] In and around Korea, these exchanges of painful actions have sometimes been very nasty, and the North Korean behavior of this sort (pursuing WMD, selling missiles, attacking naval vessels) consistently arouses anger and frustration.[6] However, these sorts of actions cannot readily be deterred because they have become an integral part of the relationship, a component of the communication and bargaining involved in it. Only transforming the relationship can completely end such behavior.

Deterrence by North Korea

On this subject, we can start with the fact that since its inception, survival of the regime has been due to its overwhelming preoccupation. This thread runs through all of the available evidence. For decades the North frequently, almost desperately, sought to end or negate the existence of the South as a competitor for legitimacy and rule. Failing in that, it consistently resisted recognizing the ROK's existence as an independent government, referring to it as a puppet - behavior less likely if the regime had been supremely confident of survival. The design of the state and ruling party, like other Stalinist states, reflected a fixation on regime and leadership survival; that has been one source of its totalitarian nature. Heavy reliance on a huge, tightly controlled, military capability for internal repression and resistance to serious domestic reform or opening up to the outside world were more of the same.

5 Examples include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the India-Pakistan relationship. Often what are called "extended rivalries" involve serial deterrence.

6 As do many of the allies responses to the leaders in Pyongyang - big military exercises, crippling economic sanctions, restricting hard currency flows, etc. are deeply resented by the North Korean regime.

The regime and state have always been at serious risk. This was gravely so during the Korean war. The North was able to settle into a consolidation and rapid development phase, but became increasingly at risk once the Park government put the ROK on the road to economic, and eventually, military superiority. The risk has also always included a severe military threat from the United States, a threat that has grown with American exploitation of the revolution in military affairs.

The North has therefore taken chances and gambled - to destabilize the South through probes, provocative incursions, and assassination attempts on ROK leaders, to engage in terrorism of other sorts, to overspend deeply on its forces and seek nuclear weapons - any of which might have provoked war and its decisive defeat. It has had to rely heavily on deterrence based on: 1) insisting it would put up a huge fight against an invasion with its conventional forces, possibly through a preemptive attack at the outset of a war. Some years ago the central purpose of forward deployment of its ground forces shifted from preparations for a blitzkrieg style attack to being able to respond to an attack by doing as much damage as possible, on defense or by offensive reactions, to US forces in the South and the South itself. The North has sought to deter the South, and also to deter the US by holding its ally hostage, just like what the Soviet Union did with Western Europe before it acquired a nuclear delivery system that could attack the US directly; 2) threatening to seriously damage Seoul by artillery attack, which would have a very serious impact on the entire country well beyond the immediate casualties and destruction; and 3) threatening to use weapons of mass destruction. Long an implied threat, it is now made more explicitly at times.

The regime goes to great lengths to make its deterrence threats credible. It has always projected an image of tenacity and belligerence - highly bellicose rhetoric, taking risks in various incidents, using a highly rigid approach in negotiations particularly as a crisis builds, and giving foremost attention to the armed forces ("putting the mili-

tary first"). It has long had interest in securing nuclear weapons, displayed in costly and complex efforts to develop them at considerable risk. It is almost certainly pleased with some of the effects of its image of being irrational, such as keeping opponents unsettled and worried.

For all its efforts, however, North Korea does not have a particularly attractive deterrence posture. To begin with, the regime faces an enormous military threat with inferior forces, no reliable allies, and no sustainable fighting capability for an extended war. It is therefore virtually certain to lose a new war on the peninsula, and thus, the regime needs to avoid a war at all costs. Naturally, it is interested in having effective deterrence for this purpose. However, given its past and recent behavior, its deterrence posture is not particularly reliable and the chief determinants of its security are not under its control.

To be effective in deterrence it is not necessary to be able to win a prospective war. All that is necessary is to be able to do "unacceptable damage" to an attacker. North Korea might be able to do a lot of damage, particularly if it used WMD. However, what is an "unacceptable" level of damage depends on the will of the attacker to go through with an attack - how much it wants a war and wants to attack. Deterrence is not difficult, and is of little use, against opponents who have little desire to attack, which has typically been true of the ROK and the US vis-a-vis the North. If they ever decide to attack North Korea it would only be because its policies or actions have provoked enormous dissatisfaction on their part, because it has become excessively provocative. They have tolerated the regime for decades and know that, under the right circumstances, they can go on doing so for decades - time is on their side in terms of North Korea's eventual fate. Only if the North seems prepared to do something quite intolerable, or has already done so, would it appear that waiting for the North to change has become unacceptable.

At that point, their opponents, who by then would have developed a very strong desire to attack, would confront North Korean deterrence

with an enervating dilemma. The attackers might have a variety of objectives, from punishment to regime elimination. A regime dedicated above all to its own survival would come face-to-face with the fact that use of its most dangerous weapons in a war would, for the attackers, almost certainly create a profound determination to continue with their attack, destroy the regime, and eliminate North Korea itself. This is something that the opponents could inflict even if they only employed conventional forces, much less turn to WMD for a response in kind. Use of WMD by North Korea would be virtual suicide.

States with nuclear weapons have often found it very difficult to use them even when they do not face such a terrible prospect as a result. They have even suffered attacks and sometimes defeats by conventional forces without responding with the use of their WMD, attacks by parties that have WMD, and sometimes by parties that do not. China and the Soviet Union fought a series of pitched battles in 1969 with no escalation. India and Pakistan have had long periods of border skirmishes and worse when each knew the other had nuclear weapons. In 1962, the US was fully prepared to invade Cuba and fight the Soviet forces there despite the nuclear weapons on the island and the Soviet Union's nuclear deterrence forces back home. Iraq's possession of missiles and WMD did not deter the initiation of the Gulf War. Israel's WMD did not deter Iraq from firing missiles at it during that war. Argentina attacked British territory and forces in the Falklands. Thus, a state with WMD is not therefore guaranteed to be safe from military attacks, and this is even more the case if such a state faces suicidal consequences if it used its WMD.

Ironically, it may well be easier to prevent a state that is much weaker than its opponents but possesses a few WMD from fully defending itself (with those WMD), than to keep one that does not have such weapons from mounting an all-out defense. Having nuclear weapons, for example, gives the opponents a very strong incentive to go for a preemptive attack, conventional or otherwise, particularly if it

brandishes its WMD for purposes of deterrence. Alternatively, it invites the opponents to be consistently poised to detect their opponent's preparation for possible use of WMD and respond in some massive way. In other words, it would be a hair-trigger situation with an increased possibility of escalation of the war as a result. The pressure to be cautious about the possibility of escalation weighs particularly heavily on the state in a conflict of who has the most to lose.

A state that is militarily inferior to its opponents should by all means want them to confine their attack to using a good deal less than all the military capabilities they have available, increasing its chances of evading a complete defeat by its defenses or of eventually bargaining successfully to prevent a total defeat. It wants the consequences of the war, however unacceptable, to be less than totally unbearable. If it has its survival readily at stake once the fighting goes too far and its opponents do not, use of its limited WMD would drive the situation in exactly the opposite direction from how it would want the war to go.

Thus, North Korea's deterrence threats to use WMD would lack inherent credibility, while the U.S. or other threats to attack North Korea in spite of the North's WMD capabilities and threats to use them would be much more plausible. Only the threat by the North to resist on the conventional level would be highly credible, since that would not compel the extinction of the regime by the opponents. Also credible would be the threat to damage Seoul as part of the resistance. However, a strongly motivated attacker who is greatly superior militarily may not threaten unacceptable damage and forestall the attack.

North Koreans can readily comprehend all of this. Suggesting that they are irrational enough so as to deliberately commit suicide by electing to retaliate in a way that would guarantee their elimination runs counter to their enormous commitment to survival for many years. Facing North Korea is, in this respect, much different from facing terrorists whose central mode of action is to commit suicide in the process. The only plausible route towards a deliberate choice by

Pyongyang to use WMD to respond to a US attack would be acceptance of extinction as inevitable, and inflicting destruction on the attacker to that extent is purely a matter of getting at least some revenge before the end comes. Thus, the proper way to move towards an attack would be to offer something substantial in advance in the form of reassurances and incentives to induce the sorts of concessions demanded, so that an attack is coupled with assurances that the end of the regime is not the necessary outcome. In keeping with this, it would be valuable to limit the attack at the outset in terms of targets and objectives.

North Korea could best avoid getting into this situation and having to face an impending attack not by relying on deterrence, but by taking steps to curb the intensity of the opponents' desire to launch the attack, particularly before the main preparations for it have significantly progressed or is complete. That calls for it to take steps leading to significant concessions so that viable alternatives to an attack are seen as realistic options by its opponents. This is not a North Korean forte, given its penchant for striking extreme rhetorical postures and rigid negotiating postures. However, some of this are simply classic Stalin-era negotiating practice typical of Molotov and other Soviet diplomats at the height of the Cold War, a pattern of diplomacy and statecraft from which the North has never really emerged. In that approach to international conflict, particularly when one is playing a weaker hand, clinging rigidly to one's position is the norm and concessions are made only when it becomes clear that there is no alternative to prevent collapse of the situation, particularly when it seems the opponent is about to give up in disgust and move towards more forceful measures. The North can, and will, be moved when pushed to that point to take some of the necessary steps.

The most dangerous situation for the North, however, would be to arrive at that point too late, when the opponent regards its last minute efforts as simply a ploy, and any agreements that the North might

enter into then would be totally untrustworthy. That is just how the Bush Administration hard-liners feel. In such a situation, if the hard-liners' view comes to the fore in shaping American policy, North Korea's deterrence would carry too heavy a load and be too unreliable. In turn, the most unfortunate outcome for the US would be to arrive at that point and, seeing the fundamental weakness in the North's deterrence and completely mistrusting its intentions, be so intent on attacking that it fails to seize the late-in-the-day concessions offered and move to obtain a workable settlement. In short, deterrence amidst a very severe conflict approaching or already within a crisis stage may not hold if no alternative to settling the conflict is offered or the opponent is so provoked that the alternative is not taken effectively. It is therefore not completely, and certainly not indefinitely, reliable. It is best accompanied by steps to ease the conflict and attain a modicum of agreement. The acquisition of a small nuclear deterrence capability *does not change this*, particularly when that capability is an exceedingly provocative step in itself.

Conclusion

Gathering the elements of this perspective together with recent developments, the opportunity offered by the six party talks is very welcome, but nevertheless, worrisome. Time is a problem because of continued fears in the US that the North is simply using it to expand its nuclear capabilities. It is also a problem if the North's expanded nuclear capabilities were to be mistakenly taken as a guarantee that it is safe from attack. The 6-party negotiations constitute an opportunity that might not have arisen if there had been no Iraq War and its nasty aftermath. Without that conflict, building a sufficient consensus in Washington to take negotiation seriously would have been very difficult, and arriving at an agreement among all the participants that negotiation is now the best way to deal with North Korea might have proven impossible. Negotiations are being used because in the wake of the Iraq War and in an election year the Bush administration cannot now gain domestic support for another war and it certainly lacks support in the region for that option, particularly in South Korea. But they are also being used because the use of force to prevent WMD proliferation in North Korea is being handled far better than it was with Iraq, and might well enjoy greater international support, if and when the US becomes so inclined.

Everyone in the region will benefit if North Korea's deterrence is never put to the test because the opportunity that the 6-party talks represents is effectively being exploited. The policy of engagement as the ultimate route to a thorough solution to the conflict will have to be pursued not just by the ROK, Japan and the US, but *by North Korea as well* to make the most of this opportunity. No one should conclude that the US will simply acquiesce indefinitely to more progress towards nuclear weapons by the North or no progress in rolling back the steps towards proliferation that have already occurred. No one should welcome an effort to bludgeon the North either. Thus, no one should be confident that deterrence will prolong unsettlement of the conflict for much longer or even indefinitely.

NORTH KOREA'S ROAD TO THE ATOMIC BOMB

Alexandre Mansourov*

Despite its considerable age, the DPRK's nuclear program has progressed slowly and has accomplished relatively little since its inception in the mid-1950s. All major breakthroughs in the nuclear field seem to have been achieved either as a result of official foreign technology transfers (for instance, from the former Soviet Union, China, and Pakistan) or on the basis of stolen foreign blueprints and reverse-engineering, rather than indigenous research and development efforts. Whenever the North Korean leaders experienced some insurmountable difficulty in overcoming the opposition from a foreign government to its nuclear expansion plans, they just patiently waited and waited until eventual regime change in the hostile foreign land brought a new friendlier government in power that was willing to satisfy their nuclear requests. But, the on-again off-again development of the DPRK's nuclear program under the gathering clouds of international suspicion about the strategic intentions of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il could do little but exacerbated the energy crisis and put in jeopardy the country's

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national survival, by alienating the world community and inviting near-unanimous international condemnation and open-ended sanctions. The making of the ultimate weapon, the Atomic Bomb, requires the ultimate aggregate national power to succeed, which North Korea does not possess at present. North Korea may never become an internationally recognized nuclear weapon state, even despite its strong political will and single-minded determination to pursue the nuclear Holy Grail, absolute individual sacrifice for the sake of the government, and glorious self-image of the day as being "the great prosperous powerful nation."

Determined Quest for the *Juch'e* Atom: The Broader Perspective

Recently, the world has witnessed a number of contradictory developments in the nuclear nonproliferation field. In March 2003, the United States launched a pre-emptive attack against Iraq in order to eliminate its alleged weapons of mass destruction (WMD). But, the fruitless protracted 1,000-man hunt for the WMD in the U.S. occupied Iraq failed to produce any evidence of the pre-war existence of such, thereby undermining the credibility of the U.S. WMD counter-proliferation strategy and President Bush's doctrine of preemptive strike. In the meantime, North Korea continues to build up its nuclear arsenal without any restraint and shows increasing interest in regional nuclear proliferation, especially in providing technical assistance in the nuclear field to the military junta in Myanmar outside the constraints and regulations of the NPT regime.[1]

1 North Korean scientists are reported to be involved in making a preliminary survey for the construction of a nuclear research reactor at Natmauk in Myothit in Central Burma. Allegedly, the Burmese government first approached the DPRK with a request for technical assistance in the nuclear field in November 2002, but could not place the order due to the lack of cash funds. In December 2003, the Burmese government allegedly came up with two million U.S. dollars for a preliminary survey and supply of initial equipment and offered to pay the rest through the barter of precious gems and timber, and Pyongyang accepted the offer. Since then the DPRK-Myanmar official communications have increased in frequency, including the DPRK's Air Koryo flights to Yangon airport. See "North Korea Reactor for Myanmar," *News Insight*, June 23, 2004.

On the positive side, in December 2003, following decades of pressure from the Western governments, Libya decided to open up and totally dismantle its nuclear and other WMD facilities under unconditional full-scale international inspections. Despite some strong reservations, Iran has recently agreed under European prodding to sign an Additional Protocol to the Nonproliferation Treaty, allowing for immediate intrusive inspections of any site suspected of having anything to do with nuclear activities. In 2003, President Musharaf's government succumbed to U.S. pressure and opened an official investigation concerning the involvement of A. Q. Khan, the founding father of the Pakistani nuclear program, in all sorts of shadowy dealings on the global nuclear black market, shedding unprecedented light on clandestine nuclear ties between Pyongyang and Islamabad in the past decade. Finally, at the third round of the six-party talks held over June 21-26, 2004, in Beijing, the United States and the DPRK demonstrated new "flexibility" through the exchange of some innovative proposals aimed at facilitating an early freeze and eventual permanent dismantlement of all North Korea's nuclear programs as part of a possible package deal solution in the future.

As totalitarian regimes, traditionally closed societies, and so-called rogue states with nuclear ambitions begin to change domestically and open up, our assessments of their power capabilities and intentions, including in the nuclear field, tend to undergo dramatic re-evaluations

due to our greater exposure to new information, new discoveries, and new speculations. What has been secret for decades all of a sudden becomes public knowledge. What has been regarded as solid fact-based assumptions turns out to be nothing but ideological myths. The risk is that each new day may bring new revelations, which may shake up our understanding of the reality and make our most up-to-date research findings obsolete even before they see the light of day. Hence, the challenges are to avoid presentism, to recognize the limitations of subjective analysis, and to ponder over not only the known unknowables but also to explore the unknown unknowables in examining the North Korean nuclear efforts.

The North Korean nuclear program is more than fifty years old. Its de facto inception after the establishment of the independent North Korean state in the late 1940s long precedes international negotiations over the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and formation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime in the mid-1960s, as well as the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its safeguards regime in the early 1970s. It is older than the nuclear programs of quasi-nuclear states of Israel, India, and Pakistan, let alone such former short-lived nuclear hopefuls as South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina.

Noteworthy by international standards is how slow the nuclear program has progressed and how relatively little it has accomplished since its formal initiation in the mid-1950s. Despite the devotion of considerable national resources to decades' worth of nuclear pursuit, North Korea appears to be close to making only several atomic devices of the 1945 vintage. Profound dearth of indigenous expertise in fundamental science and nuclear technology, perennial shortage of financing, and vacillating political will may have hampered a more rapid and successful expansion in the DPRK's nuclear capabilities.

Even more telling is the startling reality that all major breakthroughs in the nuclear field seem to have been achieved either as a result of official foreign technology transfers (for instance, from the

former Soviet Union, China, and Pakistan) or on the basis of stolen foreign blueprints (perhaps, from Germany) and reverse-engineering, rather than indigenous research and development (R&D) efforts. In other words, in the land of *juch'e,* or the self-proclaimed kingdom of self-reliance, at all critical junctures in the past fifty years, diplomacy and espionage seem to have been the primary driving forces in the development of the DPRK's nuclear program. North Korean diplomats, spies, and entrepreneurial middlemen arguably did more for advancing the cause of building the *Juch'e* Bomb than the WPK-educated scientific-technical intelligentsia and the hard-laboring *Juch'e* proletariat.

Whenever the North Koreans experienced some insurmountable difficulty in overcoming the opposition from a foreign government to their nuclear expansion plans, they just patiently waited and waited and waited until eventual regime change in the hostile foreign land brought a new friendlier government in power that was willing to satisfy their nuclear requests. Regime change in Moscow led to a new turn in the DPRK-Soviet nuclear cooperation in 1965 and in 1984. Regime change in Beijing opened nuclear exchanges between the DPRK and PRC in 1975. Democrat President Clinton's victory led to a breakthrough in Pyongyang's relations with the United States in 1994. Bearing in mind such historical experience, a dynastic ruler Kim Jong Il seems to believe that time is on the side of his clan, and, therefore, he should wait until there is a regime change in Washington, D.C., when President Bush leaves the White House in 2004, or even in 2008, before striking any new deal with the international community again.

At present, the DPRK's nuclear program has not yet reached the point where it could satisfy the country's energy needs or enhance national security by nuclear deterrence against potential foreign aggression. On the contrary, its off-again on-again development under the clouds of international suspicion about the strategic intentions of

the North Korean leaders only exacerbated the worsening energy crisis and put in jeopardy the country's national survival by alienating the world community and inviting near-unanimous international condemnation and open-ended sanctions.

North Korea is not the only developing nation that has been pursuing a nuclear ambition for many decades. The basic science of the nuclear chain reaction is well known. Detailed information on basic engineering principles behind the atomic and hydrogen bombs is also publicly available. Despite multinational nuclear non-proliferation controls, there exists a well-lubricated international black market for some engineering blueprints, equipment, materials, and spare parts required in producing the bomb. This notwithstanding, A-bomb manufacturing is still an extremely complex undertaking. It is very hard to make an ultimate weapon, even if a developing nation is single-mindedly determined to concentrate all national resources on the pursuit of the nuclear Holy Grail.

For various reasons, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Libya, Iraq, and others in the past decided to give up and abandon their fruitless atomic programs, despite years of experimentation and billions of dollars invested in trying to manufacture nuclear weapons. Should the DPRK leadership decide to abandon completely, verifiably, and irreversibly the country's deeply entrenched nuclear program because of failure and frustration or under duress or because of some self-interested rational calculations, it will not be the first, last, or only developing nation to do that. The ultimate weapon requires the ultimate aggregate national power, which North Korea does not possess, even despite its strong political will, absolute individual sacrifice for the sake of the government, and glorious self-image of the day as being "the great prosperous powerful nation."

Soviet Occupation and Early Traces of North Korea's Nuclear Activities

Historical records reveal that the security and survival of the North Korean regime has been closely linked to the nuclear activities from the first days of its existence. In order to demonstrate his personal loyalty to the ever suspicious aging Soviet dictator Stalin in 1947, when the latter was still undecided as to who should be appointed as the future leader of the northern Korean communist state, his front-running protege Kim Il Sung upon the recommendation of his handlers at the Soviet Occupation Administration invited a team of scientists from the Soviet Union to conduct a geological survey of monazite mines and uranium ore deposits.[2] The results of the survey confirmed substantial radioactive natural deposits discovered by the Japanese geologists in the northern part of the Korean peninsula in the late 1930s, which could be relatively cheaply exploited for the benefit of the burgeoning Soviet atomic industry. Kim Il Sung received praise from Stalin and a vote of confidence: on September 8, 1948, Moscow's man was elected as the first leader of the newly founded Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

When Kim Il Sung's government was gearing up for the "war of national unification," having launched an unprecedented arms buildup in late 1949-early 1950, the national economy was still in shambles, following a painful partition of the country. A mass repatriation of the Japanese technical experts, industrial management, and experienced government administrators to Japan was quickly followed by a dramatic exodus of the indigenous proprietary classes and their million-plus relatives and associates to the South amidst large-scale expropriations of private wealth and nationalization of land, industry, banks,

2 See *Letter from Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK Terentiy Shtykov to Stalin*, dated March 12, 1949, The Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, fond 07, opis 22a, delo 223, papka 14, 1, pp. 1-2.

and transportation under the new communist regime. Human capital was exhausted. Rice harvests were poor. Industry barely functioned. Government coffers were empty. But, there was no free lunch even in the Soviet camp. Kim Il Sung had to find a way to pay for his upcoming purchases of military hardware from the Soviet Union.

Nuclear trade offered an easy and lucrative way-out. From late 1949 to the outbreak of the Korean War, the DPRK exported concentrated monazite, tantalum, niobium, and about 9,000 tons of uranium ore to the Soviet Union, which had just tested its first atomic bomb in the fall of 1949, in partial payment for military equipment and arms delivered to Pyongyang in 1949-1950.[3] Kim Il Sung got the offensive weapons to fight the Korean War in exchange for selling nuclear raw materials to its communist benefactor and one of the five founding members of the exclusive nuclear club, the USSR. Ironically, the clandestine Soviet-North Korean nuclear trade on the eve of the Korean War may serve as one of the earliest examples of significant limitations to face the credible and effective implementation of the Baruch plan, designed by the United States in the late 1940s to ensure the U.S. worldwide atomic monopoly through a total global ban on and interdiction of nuclear proliferation.

What is interesting about these early pre-war signs of Kim Il Sung's emerging interest in the nuclear activities is that they had nothing to do with the search for alternative sources of energy generation or economic development. First, Kim Il Sung appears to have used the nuclear incentive to boost his standing in Moscow as a loyal communist, who wanted to contribute to the development of the Soviet atomic program, prior to Stalin's selection of the future DPRK leadership. Second, Kim Il Sung used the proceeds from his nuclear sales to Moscow to partially bankroll his Southern campaign. In both cases, the nascent elements of

3 See *Memorandum from Andrei Gromyko to Stalin*, dated October 31, 1949, The Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, fond 07, opis 22a, delo 223, papka 14,1, pp. 6-7.

the nuclear program were founded in strategic calculations about the survival and security of the North Korean leadership, rather than in any economic needs and energy requirements.

Post-Korean War Reconstruction and Soviet Assistance to the DPRK's Nuclear Program

Barely a year and a half passed after the Korean War ended in a fragile armistice, when Kim Il Sung decided to revive his nuclear dream, despite the total devastation of the national economy and tremendous human sacrifices inflicted by the three year-long fratricidal hostilities. On February 5, 1955, the Soviet and DPRK governments signed a five-year agreement on science and technology cooperation, providing for the exchange of technical experiences and data, transfer of technical documentation, exchange of technical specialists, and other forms of technical assistance in all fields of the people's economy, including "joint nuclear research."[4] In June 1955, the DPRK was invited to send six representatives of the DPRK's Academy of Sciences to participate in the Eastern European scientific conference on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.[5] In early 1956, North Korea was invited to become one of the founding member-states of the United Institute for Nuclear Research (UINR) opened in the Soviet town of Dubna on March 26, 1956.[6] Having signed the inter-governmental agreement on

4 See *Otnosheniya Sovetskogo Soyuza s Narodnoy Koreyey, 1945-1980. Dokumenty i materialy* (Relations of the Soviet Union and the People's Korea, 1945-1980. Documents and Materials), Moscow, 1981, pp. 109-110.

5 See Michael J. Mazaar, *North Korea and the Bomb* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 25.

6 See Alexander Zhebin, Political History of Soviet-North Korean Nuclear Cooperation, in eds. James Clay Moltz and Alexandre Mansourov, *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia* (Routledge: New York, London, 2000), pp. 28-29.

the establishment of the UINR and its charter in February 1956, Pyongyang sent more than 250 nuclear scientists and specialists to Dubna in the past four decades. Eighty percent of the DPRK representatives worked in various areas of experimental research at the Laboratory of Nuclear Problems, Laboratory of Nuclear Reactions, and Laboratory of Neutron Physics, whereas 20 percent of them worked on theoretical problems of nuclear research. The number of the DPRK nuclear scientists and specialists working at the UINR at a time varied from the maximum of sixteen in 1992 to the minimum of three in 1997.

The North Korean graduates of the UINR, including 25 Masters of Science and two Doctors of Science, went on to occupy the top-level positions in the DPRK's national nuclear research program. They were placed in charge of the Scientific Research Center on Atomic Energy in Yongbyon (Dr. Paek Kwan-oh), the Yongbyon Institute of Nuclear Physics (established in 1964), the Yongbyon Institute of Atomic Energy (established in January 1962, a well-known North Korean chemist Dr. Lee Sung Ki was named its first Director), the Pakch'on branch of the Institute of Atomic Energy (established in 1962), the Yongbyon Radiochemistry Laboratory (Dr. Li Sang Gun), the Department of Nuclear Physics at the Kim Il Sung University (since 1973) and Departments of Nuclear and Electrical Engineering, of Nuclear Fuel Engineering, and of Atomic Reactor Engineering at the Kimch'aek Polytechnic University (since 1973), the Kim Il Sung High Physics Academy in Ryanggang Province (since 1963 also known as the Nuclear Engineering Department at the National Defense College in Hyesan, Ryanggang), P'yongsong Institute of Science (a course in nuclear physics since 1963), and Nanam Branch of the Institute of Atomic Energy in Nanam-kuyok in Ch'ongjin (since 1965).[7]

In addition, over a period of forty years the Soviet Union trained

7 See *Obyedinenniy institut yadernykh issledovaniy* (Dubna: United Institute for Nuclear Research, 1994), pp. 4-5.

more than 300 North Korean nuclear specialists at various Soviet institutions of higher education such as the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MEPHI), the Bauman Higher Technical School (Bauman VTU), the Moscow Energy Institute (MEI), and others.[8] All these people constituted the backbone of the DPRK's nuclear establishment and became one of the driving forces in the evolution of the national nuclear program, especially in various joint collaborative projects between their respective institutions and the UINR in a number of key areas of theoretical and experimental nuclear research.

What is interesting about the year 1956 is that it was one of the most challenging times in Kim Il Sung's entire political career. The whole socialist camp was in turmoil, following Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's cult of personality at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). In June-July 1956, Kim Il Sung had to cut short his seven-week official tour of the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist countries, where he tried to solicit the capital funds for the first five-year economic construction plan, to return home in order to head off a growing domestic challenge to his political leadership from a group of liberally minded reformists from the Soviet-Korean and Yenan (Chinese-Korean) factions, who orchestrated the so-called August coup inspired by the de-Stalinization campaign sweeping the rest of the socialist world. At the August 1956 Plenum of the WPK Central Committee, Kim's Kapsan guerrilla faction won an open intra-party confrontation and harshly prosecuted its factional rivals, despite their Soviet and Chinese origins and connections.[9]

The Kremlin was embarrassed. Khrushchev had to placate Kim Il

8 Georgy Kaurov, A Technical History of Soviet-North Korean Nuclear Relations, in eds., Clay Moltz and Alexandre Mansourov, *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia* (Routledge: New York, London, 2000), p. 17.

9 See Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945-1960* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ, 2002), pp. 154-194.

Sung in order to avoid further deterioration of the already worsened bilateral relations. Moscow's invitation for thirty North Koreans to come for nuclear studies and research at the UINR in Dubna starting in late 1956 must have been one of those concessions designed to assuage hurt feelings, patch up an old friendship with the Cold War ally, and display strengthened international socialist solidarity to the rest of the world. For Kim Il Sung, it offered a ticket to the one-way transfer of nuclear technology from the Soviet Union to his country and gave him a peak at what was happening inside the exclusive and previously forbidden and inaccessible nuclear club. Domestic political crisis created a nuclear opportunity for Kim Il Sung, and he did not let it slip away.

Moscow-Beijing Split and Soviet Construction of the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex

The next significant development in the DPRK's nuclear program took place in September 1959 when Moscow and Pyongyang signed an inter-governmental agreement on cooperation in the field of atomic energy and a number of the so-called Series 9559 contracts, providing for the Soviet technical assistance to the DPRK in the conduct of geological studies, construction of an nuclear scientific research center in Yongbyon (called a "furniture factory" by the DPRK's side and Object 9559 by the Soviet side), project financing, and training of the North Korean nuclear specialists to be employed at the Yongbyon atomic complex.[10]

These events took place against the background of deepening Soviet-Chinese schism and emerging trend of "self-reliance" in the DPRK. Kim Il Sung was sitting on the fence, playing off the Soviet interests against the Chinese, as always.[11] As the North Korean-Chinese relations gradually deteriorated in 1959-1960, following the purge of the Chinese-Korean faction within the WPK leadership and an abrupt withdrawal of several hundred thousand PLA Chinese People's Volunteers from North Korea, Pyongyang signaled to Moscow that it could be swayed towards the Soviet position, if the USSR were to increase its financial aid for the DPRK's first five-year economic development plan, including the localization of nuclear expertise in Korea, by helping Koreans to set up their own nuclear research center.

Khrushchev apparently decided to use a nuclear stick with the recalcitrant Mao and a nuclear carrot with the compliant Kim in order to demonstrate to the other socialist countries that defiance of the Soviet line would entail heavy developmental costs, whereas loyal following would produce extra benefits, including the nuclear payoff, within the socialist camp. Having decided to halt all sensitive technology transfers to the increasingly radical Mao's government, Moscow withdrew en masse its technical specialists, including nuclear experts, from China in the late 1950s.

In contrast, in the early 1960s, the Soviet government dispatched thirty Soviet nuclear specialists led by the well-known Soviet nuclear scientist Vladislav Kotlov to assist the DPRK government in establishing the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Complex, the construction of which began in 1961, and it was commissioned in 1965. The USSR supplied the required Soviet engineering blueprints, nuclear equipment, and nuclear fuel, and contributed the bulk of the 500 million U.S. dollars (in 1962 prices) required to finance the total start-up costs of the Yongbyon core facilities.[12] In essence, in the 1960s, North

10 See Kaurov, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-16.

11 It is worth noting that in September 1959, Pyongyang also signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with Beijing as a part of its strategy of its equidistance and independence from both communist allies. See Harry Gilman and Norman Levin, *The Future of Soviet and North Korean Relations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, October 1984), p. 2.

12 See *"Contract for the Construction of the Object 9559"* (in Russian), State Committee on

Korea acquired its first nuclear facilities (a Two MW (th) IRT-2000 nuclear research reactor procured in 1962 and made operational in the summer of 1965, a 0.1 MW (th) critical assembly and a B-25 betatron, both procured in 1968, a radiochemical or isotope production laboratory, a K-60,000 cobalt installation, a set of UDS-10 decontamination drains, a nuclear waste storage site, a special nuclear laundry, and a boiler plant) as almost a free gift of the Soviet government for its declared allegiance to the Soviet communist cause.[13] What a bargain for the cash-strapped war-torn underdeveloped economy with few friends and a lot of enemies around the world. That was quite an accomplishment for the North Korean party diplomacy under Kim Il Sung's personal guidance.

Obviously, an aggravating ideological and geopolitical confrontation between the DPRK's two great power benefactors, the USSR and PRC, opened room for a diplomatic maneuver by Pyongyang. The Yongbyon Nuclear Complex was born as a product of Kim's skillful manipulation of Moscow's sensitivities and Beijing's excesses in his nascent quest for greater self-reliance and more powerful self-defensive capabilities. In other words, a geopolitical crisis in Northeast Asia created another nuclear opportunity for Kim Il Sung in 1959, and he rushed to exploit it to his advantage.

It is clear that Kim Il Sung was not guided by any economic rationale or energy requirement when he conceived of and commissioned the North Korean nuclear program in the second half of the 1950s. The underdeveloped agrarian North Korean economy and predominantly rural society had just completed the post-war rehabilitation and only began to embark on the path of industrialization and urbanization. The largely pre-modern country neither needed nor could afford very

Atomic Energy, USSR Council of Ministers, Moscow, 1962.

13 See *"Report on the Work of the Soviet Specialists' Team in the DPRK on Contract # 9559/5 for the period 1963-1965"* (in Russian), State Committee on Atomic Energy, USSR Council of Ministers, Moscow, 1965.

sophisticated and tremendously expensive nuclear energy for its embryonic economic development and meager public consumption. Instead, from the very beginning, Kim Il Sung apparently sought the power of the atom in order to secure the survival of his own regime and to gain more international prestige for his nation.

Paradoxically, the conclusion of the DPRK-USSR and DPRK-PRC mutual defense treaties in July 1961 during Kim Il Sung's landmark trips to the Soviet Union and China, respectively, did not succeed in alleviating the growing insecurity and threat perception in Pyongyang in the wake of the General Park Chung Hee-led military takeover in Seoul in May 1961. The prospects of war with the newly minted military junta in the South loomed large in Kim Il Sung's mind. Their respective Articles One, providing for mutual defense with all means available in the event of external aggression, failed to reassure the North Korean leader of the credibility of the Soviet and Chinese security guarantees. For it was the time when both his allies were exchanging mutual recriminations and increasingly sought after divergent goals on the Korean peninsula: when the Soviet government was advancing the concept of "peaceful co-existence," recognizing the two Korean states and urging them to co-exist peacefully, whereas the Maoist China was rapidly radicalizing in its nationalist fervor, attempting to expand and surge ahead via a "great leap forward" in its mortal struggle for the permanent worldwide communist revolution against the world imperialism and hegemonism.

That lingering insecurity was demonstrated in the decisions of the WPK Fourth Party Congress in September 1961, which set before the North Korean nuclear scientists and engineers the urgent tasks of "advancing research in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, widely utilizing radioactive isotopes and rays in industry, agriculture, and other spheres, and manufacturing all necessary isotopes and measurement instruments."[14] In his speech, Professor To Sang Rok, the so-called "father of the North Korean nuclear program," urged the nation

to "support nuclear research and training of specialists in the field of atomic energy."[15] Continued progress in the nuclear development program was seen as a necessary *juch'e* supplement to the freshly inked allied guarantees of the survival of the North Korean regime and a major self-reliant component of the DPRK's national security strategy. Geopolitical alliances proved to be transient and unreliable, whereas a self-reliant nuclear deterrent was hoped to be permanent and absolutely dependable.

The DPRK government rushed to construct the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex with the forthcoming Soviet assistance because of the growing crisis of mutual confidence and slow deterioration in the DPRK-USSR relations in the last two years of the Khrushchev administration against the international background of the perceived Soviet surrender in the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 and escalating Sino-Soviet conflict. Khrushchev increasingly saw Kim Il Sung as being "nationalistic" and "pro-Chinese Maoist," and, therefore, attempted to gradually reduce the Soviet economic and military aid to Pyongyang. Moreover, Khrushchev apparently began to have second thoughts about his offer to share nuclear technology with an unpredictable ally in Pyongyang and attempted to scale down the budding Soviet-North Korean nuclear cooperation.

In turn, Pyongyang did not like Moscow's "arrogance" and "big power chauvinism." It resented Moscow's decision to withhold the supplies of advanced offensive weapons to the Korean People's Army in late 1962. Pyongyang often voted against the Soviet-sponsored resolutions in international organizations, and refused to join the Moscow Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in August 1963.[16] At the same time, the North

14 Svetlana G. Nam, *Education and Science in the DPRK under the Conditions of Scientific-Technical Revolution*, Nauka Publishing House: Institute of Oriental Studies, The USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1975, p. 54.

15 See ROK Ministry of Unification, *Pukhan Kaeyo 2000* (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, December 1999), pp. 104, 113.

Korean government resettled hundreds of young physicists, chemists, and other specialists educated in the USSR, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia in the newly built "closed academic towns" in Yongbyon-kun and redoubled its efforts to conclude the construction of the main nuclear facilities in Yongbyon ahead of the mutually agreed upon schedule, despite increasingly obvious Soviet reluctance to complete the nuclear project 9559, especially after the successful explosion of the first Chinese nuclear bomb at the Lop Nor nuclear test site in 1964. Moreover, in order to prod Moscow into action, Pyongyang once again used the Chinese card, by requesting that Beijing provide technical assistance in conducting a uranium mining survey of the entire country, which revealed large deposits of commercial grade uranium ore in Unggi (North Hamgyong Province), Hamhung (South Hamgyong Province), Haegumgang-ri, Kosong-kun (Kangwon Province), and P'yongsan-kun (North Hwanghae Province).[17]

Interestingly, the construction of the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center was completed only after Khrushchev was deposed in October 1964 and a more conservative and pragmatic Brezhnev administration was installed in the Kremlin. In May1965, the newly appointed Soviet Prime Minister, technocrat Kosygin, paid an official visit to the DPRK to mend fences and to give a final green light to the commissioning of the IRT-2000 nuclear research reactor in Yongbyon,[18] after he received the top-level assurances from the North Korean leaders that the purpose of the DPRK's nuclear program was peaceful in nature. He

16 Vadim P. Tkachenko, *Korean Peninsula and Russian Interests* (Vostochnaya Literatura Publishers: Moscow, 2000), p. 110.

17 See Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., "Exposing North Korea's Secret Nuclear Infrastructure - Part One," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1999, pp. 38, 41.

18 Experts believe that during the lifetime of the IRT-2000 reactor, North Koreans could have reprocessed approximately 4.0 kg of plutonium from the reactor's spent fuel, given the assumption that they did not return it to the USSR for final disposal. See David Albright and Kevin O'Neill, eds., *Solving the North Korean Nuclear Puzzle* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Science and International Security, 2000).

signed a number of inter-governmental agreements rolling over the old North Korean debts, including the atomic debts, and extending new industrial loans for economic construction, as well as providing for the supply of a new line of MIG-23s and land-to-air missiles to the DPRK. In other words, only the "regime change" in Moscow saved Kim Il Sung's nuclear dream and allowed Pyongyang to obtain its initial nuclear capabilities. The aggravating international situation around the Korean peninsula amidst the raging Cold War in the mid-1960s forced Moscow to place a greater strategic value on North Korea and reinforced Moscow's earlier commitment to provide its North Korean communist ally with nuclear research capabilities.

By the way, after Kosygin's departure, the Soviet nuclear specialists employed at Yongbyon gradually transferred the controls over the key nuclear installations to their North Korean counterparts and all thirty left the DPRK by the end of 1965. Afterwards, the Soviet participation in the further expansion of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities was limited to the Soviet nuclear safeguards over the North Korean exploitation of the betatron and cobalt installations and the Soviet supplies of nuclear fuel assemblies for the 2 MWt reactor and the 0.1 MWt critical assembly via the "Tekhsnabexport" - "Yonhap" annual supply contracts.[19]

In reality, one can make an argument that there was nothing peaceful and very little of anything indigenous about the origins of the DPRK's nuclear program. From its very inception, the nuclear program was driven primarily by national security considerations, not any economic demands. Its intermittent evolution was much more closely associated with strategic bargaining between North Korea and its communist allies and the latter's oscillating willingness to share nuclear technology with Pyongyang, than any scientific and technical progress made by the North Korean nuclear establishment.

19 See Kaurov, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

DPRK's Nuclear Program and Parallel Economic and Military Construction

Kim Il Sung once described the second half of the 1960s as "a period of grim ordeal in which very complex and difficult circumstances were created in our revolution and construction... Our spending on national defense was too heavy a burden for us in the light of the small size of the country and its population."[20] Against the background of the escalating Vietnam War, deepening Soviet-Chinese split, normalization of the South Korean-Japanese relations, increasingly menacing Cultural Revolution in China, and entrenching military rule in the South, North Korea witnessed an acute domestic political crisis in 1966-1969. A severe policy conflict and fierce power struggle erupted between the proponents of a military hard-line, who advocated a radical defense build-up, total defense mobilization, and a militant policy towards the United States and ROK, and the so-called moderate group, who argued for the more proportionate economic development and continuation on a "peaceful road to socialism."[21]

Until after the Pueblo crisis, Kim Il Sung sided with the military and ideological hard-liners. Consequently, the victory of the hard-line faction over the moderate group in the leadership structure resulted in the nation-wide defense fortification campaign and efforts to accelerate the development of the DPRK's atomic industry. The defense-first policy of the *juch'e*-oriented North Korean leadership emphasized the need to advance the self-reliant and self-defensive aspects of the nuclear program. Kim Il Sung wanted to start accumulating the fissile material for future bomb-making without any more delay. But, without Soviet technical assistance, the *juch'e* nuclear science proved to be futile.

20 See Kim Il Sung, Report to the Fifth Party Congress, November 2, 1970, in *The Pyongyang Times*, Pyongyang, November 3, 1970), p. 8.

21 See Ilpyong J. Kim, *Communist Politics in North Korea*, Praeger Special Studies, pp. 73-76.

The lesson of the nuclear developments in the DPRK in the 1960s was quite revealing. External geopolitical crises in Northeast Asia led to an abrupt interruption of foreign assistance for the North Korean economic development and its nuclear program, derailed the long-term economic development plans, heightened the sense of military insecurity of the North Korean regime, and caused an internal political turmoil. Ensuing political purges and a thought-unification campaign shifted political power to a group of belligerent military hard-liners, who persuaded Kim Il Sung to shift the dominant policy line towards the defense-first politics and defense-first economics, including a push for the accelerated development of the "self-defensive component" of the North Korean atomic industry. But, the semi-war footing, fortified siege mentality, heated anti-imperialist rhetoric, and massive defense build-up produced little good for the advancement of the DPRK's nuclear capabilities. If anything, all nuclear activities appeared to have been temporarily frozen by January 1969 when, as a result of its brinkmanship, North Korea found itself on the verge of a full-scale military confrontation with the U.S.-ROK military alliance, following a failed KPA commandos' raid against the Blue House in Seoul and the Pueblo debacle. The second Korean War was averted in 1969 only thanks to the last minute Soviet-the U.S. compromise and the two superpowers reigning in the recalcitrant behavior of their respective Korean allies.

Juch'e-style Domestication of the West's "Atoms for Peace" Initiative

Termination of the large-scale Soviet technical assistance, including the departure of the Soviet nuclear specialists from the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex in 1965, delivered a severe blow to Kim Il Sung's plans to accelerate the development of the DPRK's nuclear program as

part of his strategy of parallel defense build-up and economic modernization. Initially, by inertia, the North Koreans tried to tinker and "modify" the Soviet-built Two MWt ITR-2000 reactor in Yongbyon with some moderate success.[22] But, soon they realized that it was a dead-ended strategy, leaving them permanently dependent on the Soviet supplies and controls, and therefore, vulnerable to Soviet demands and interference, which contradicted the governing juch'e ideology of the ruling Workers Party of Korea. So, in November 1970, the WPK Fifth Party Congress urged the nuclear establishment to follow the party's "mass line," by "trusting the creativity and the wisdom of the masses," and "to speed up the R&D in the atomic industry on the basis of indigenous nuclear raw materials[23] and equipment to be used with maximum efficiency," as well as "to initiate our own scientific research in the field of thermonuclear reactions."[24]

In the 1970s, North Korea ardently pursued its search for independent nuclear capability. Following the decisions of the WPK Fifth Party Congress, in 1971, the DPRK government organized geological surveys in North and South P'yong'an Provinces, in North Hamgyong Province, and in North Hwanghae Province, which confirmed the existence of significant uranium deposits in Musan-kun (North Hamgyong Province), P'yongsan-kun (North Hwanghae Province),

22 The Two MWt IRT-2000 research reactor used to produce radioactive isotopes for medicine, industry, and scientific research is a pool-type reactor that has the capacity to use highly enriched uranium as fuel. The reactor is said to have gone critical on August 15, 1965, and then underwent two years of testing before beginning regular operations in 1967. The North Koreans managed to increase the capacity of the IRT-2000 research reactor to Four MW (th) in 1974 and to Eight MW (th) in 1977. See, Kaurov, *op.cit*., p. 16. Also, see Kim Byong Ku, *North Korean Nuclear Issues and LWR Project*, KAERI/AR-552-99, Technology Center for Nuclear Control, November 1999, at http://tcnc.kaeri.re.kr/.

23 The DPRK has plenty of pure graphite and a high-grade uranium reserve of more than 26 million tons. See *Geology of Korea*, eds., DPRK Academy of Sciences: Pyongyang, 1995 (in English).

24 See Svetlana G. Nam, *op. cit*., p. 54.

Sunchon (South P'yong'an Province), and P'yongwon-kun (North P'yong'an Province).[25] In the early 1970s, North Korean nuclear scientists began primitive "nuclear fuel-related" research aimed at utilizing locally available nuclear raw materials.[26] In December 1972, Kim Il Sung encouraged further efforts "to promote research for the development of atomic energy" during his address on the DPRK's economic development plan. In 1975, North Koreans began to conduct "chemistry experiments" with uranium and performed plutonium extraction activity on a small scale by reprocessing 300 milligrams from the IRT-2000 NRR's spent fuel at the Isotope Production Laboratory in Yongbyon.[27] In 1976, the first nuclear waste storage site was built in Yongbyon.[28]

As the nuclear establishment expanded its ranks and the nuclear program slowly progressed, in order to better plan, organize, and coordinate nuclear research and development efforts on a national scale in line with the overall economic development plans and to secure proper attention and funding from the central government, on January 23, 1974, the Supreme People's Assembly enacted the Atomic Energy Act that created the Atomic Energy Bureau (transformed into the Ministry of Atomic Energy Industry under the Administrative Council, on December 29, 1986) under the Cabinet of Ministers to supervise and guide all nuclear activities, including the operations at the Yongbyon Scientific Nuclear Research Complex and various related nuclear research institutes and academic departments under

25 See *Yonhap News Agency*, Chapter Eight "Kunsa," in 2002 Pukhan Yon'gam (Seoul: Yonhap News Agency, 2002).

26 See *KAERI*, "Pukhanui Wonjaryok'iyonggaebal Hyonhwang," Seoul, http://www.kaeri.re.kr/.

27 See David Albright, Kevin O'Neill, *Solving the North Korean Nuclear Puzzle* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Science and International Security Press, 2000), pp. 97, 121-122.

28 See Joseph J. Bermudez, "Exposing North Korea's Secret Nuclear Infrastructure - Part Two," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1999, p. 44.

the DPRK's Academy of Sciences, as well as to coordinate the nuclear activities with other relevant government ministries and agencies.[29]

But, the real story of the self-reliant 1970s was the North Korean push overseas to obtain new technical information about nuclear technologies abroad, which could propel the DPRK's "indigenous" nuclear program out of its near decade-long slump after the departure of the Soviet specialists in 1965. It was the time when in the wake of the historic 1972 North-South agreement and ensuing brief thaw in the inter-Korean relations, the DPRK attempted to normalize trade relations with Western Europe by purchasing a number of major industrial turn-key plants and expensive manufacturing equipment on Western loans. Among other things, in the mid-1970s, Pyongyang was rumored to have obtained some kind of "nuclear equipment" from Austria and France for its alleged underground nuclear facility near Pakch'on Air Force Base in Pakch'on-kun (North P'yong'an Province).[30]

However, the most important development was the DPRK's entrance into the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on September 16, 1974, and the ensuing North Korean drive to pump the open literature of the "Atoms for Peace" program available in the IAEA databases. Dr. Ch'oe Hak Kun was assigned as a counselor to the DPRK's mission at the IAEA in Vienna, Austria, in 1975. During his four-year tenure, Dr. Ch'oe is said to have obtained large quantities of information concerning the design of Western-built nuclear reactors and other nuclear fuel cycle technologies at the IAEA library.[31] Apparently, the deal was that the DPRK government would have to open the Yongbyon Atomic Complex for limited international inspections and allow the IAEA some limited access to the DPRK's nuclear secrets in

29 See ROK Ministry of Unification, *Pukhan Kaeyo 2000* (Seoul: Ministry of Unification, December 1999), p. 414.

30 See "North Korea Suspected of Building Second Nuclear Arms Base," *Agence France Presse*, October 29, 1991.

31 See Lee Chae Sung, *Pukhan'ul Umjig'i'nun Technocrat* (Seoul: Ilbit, 1998), p. 114.

Yongbyon as a price for North Korean access to Western nuclear databases at the IAEA. Dr. Ch'oe was responsible for negotiating the first INFCIRC/66 trilateral safeguards agreement between the DPRK, USSR, and IAEA, signed on July 20, 1977, that allowed the IAEA to monitor the Soviet-supplied IRT-2000 research reactor and 0.1 MW critical assembly located in Yongbyon. He supervised all the North Korean dealings with the IAEA until his return home in 1979.

At the same time, Pyongyang again attempted to play off Moscow against Beijing. As the Soviet-DPRK relations steadily deteriorated, whereas the PRC-DPRK relations rapidly improved throughout the 1970s, the North Korean government attempted to solicit Chinese assistance for its nuclear development program. During his goodwill visit to Beijing on April 18-26, 1975, Kim Il Sung asked the Chinese leaders to reaffirm their security commitment under the 1961 mutual alliance treaty to defend the DPRK in the event of foreign aggression by extending its nuclear umbrella over North Korea. He also expressed interest in advancing the DPRK-PRC technical cooperation in the nuclear field. Apparently, the Chinese government agreed to have scientific exchanges and joint training among nuclear scientists and engineers. As a result, in March 1977, a delegation of 27 North Korean nuclear and missile specialists, led by the WPK Party Secretary Kang Song San, visited the Lop Nor nuclear test and research facility in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China and took part in a reception given by the PRC's Seventh Machine Industry Ministry responsible for China's ballistic missile development program.[32] Obviously, the Chinese-North Korean discussions held at the nuclear test site had nothing to do with peaceful nuclear power generation. But, guess what? Several years later, from 1983 to 1991, North Korea conducted "on its own" about 70 or 80 high explosive tests along the

32 See So Yong-ha, "Capacity for Nuclear Weapons Development," *Hoguk*, July 1989, pp. 119-122, in "North's Nuclear Capability Assessed," FBIS-EAS-89-148, August 3, 1989, pp. 23-26.

banks of the Kuryong River at the Yongduk-dong explosives facility in Yongbyon-kun, believed to be part of its nuclear weapons development program.[33]

Undoubtedly, the highly-valued lessons from the Chinese at the Lop Nor nuclear test site did not cost the North Koreans much. Perhaps, sharing of Chinese nuclear expertise might well have been the price paid by Beijing for its unilateral decision to normalize relations with Washington and Tokyo without consultations with its closest ally in Pyongyang. By agreeing to step up bilateral nuclear cooperation and revealing some of the Chinese nuclear secrets to the visiting North Korean scientists and politicos in 1977, the Chinese government may have attempted to placate the DPRK and demonstrate its continuing confidence in the time-honored defense alliance, despite ongoing normalization talks between the PRC and the United States. From Pyongyang's standpoint, however, playing a security-paranoid *prima donna* upset at the ally's infidelity proved to be an almost cost-free way of obtaining very valuable technical information that probably laid the foundation for the North Korean "indigenous" and "self-reliant" experimentation with high-yield explosions in Yongbyon-kun throughout the 1980s.

Also, it is worth mentioning that in the second half of the 1970s, North Korea began to explore possible technical partnerships in the Middle East known for its emerging interest in nuclear proliferation. The DPRK signed a protocol on technical cooperation with Pakistan and a cooperative agreement on science and cooperation with Libya, respectively on November 24, 1976, and on July 6, 1977.[34] These documents established the framework for the future bilateral exchange of scientists, scientific documentation, and mutual training of specialists

33 ROK Ministry of National Defense, *Taeryangsalsangmugi (WMD) Mundappaekkwa: Hwa Saeng Pang Missile Olmana Algo Kyeshimnikka?* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, 2001), p. 93.

34 See Lee Chae Sung, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

in various areas, including the nuclear field.

In general, the decade of the 1970s was the time when North Korea decided to revise its strategy of defense modernization and import substitution of the 1960s and attempted to normalize relations with the West, especially Western Europe and Japan, in order to continue its industrial expansion through foreign investment and trade. Pyongyang borrowed a lot of money from its Western trading counterparts, but defaulted on its short-term debts en masse at the end of 1974, following the first oil shock of 1973 and a sudden collapse in the world prices on non-ferrous metals, its main export item at the time.[35] After losing access to the international capital markets and being frozen out of the respectable trading circles, the North Korean government asked for help from its old-time ally, China, and turned its eyes to the emerging opportunities in the developing world, especially in the oil-rich Middle East.

In its dealings with the West, the cash-strapped country relied on the same mode of operations it had previously perfected in its relations with the Soviet Union - always gain something for nothing. Accreditation at the IAEA's headquarters in Vienna in 1975 proved to be a "gold mine." The North Korean ardent excavation of the IAEA databases and ruthless exploitation of its intellectual expertise in the second half of the 1970s laid the foundation for a new chapter in the North Korean "indigenous and self-reliant" nuclear development that unfolded in the 1980s. The whole operation was cheap and almost self-sufficient. The result was that the main cost of the visible nuclear advances made by the DPRK in the 1980s consisted of the administrative and operational expenses incurred by the DPRK's representative office at the IAEA in Vienna. What a bargain, considering that Dr. Ch'oe Hak Kun's work allowed the North Korean government to save the major portion of the

35 Natalia E. Bazhanova, *External Economic Ties of the DPRK: In Search of a Way Out of the Deadlock* (Nauka Press: Moscow, 1993), pp. 155-158.

long-term R&D expenditures that would have been required from the central budget for truly indigenous nuclear R&D.

Race for the Power of the Atom Accelerates

In the early 1980s, following the decisions of the WPK Sixth Party Congress in 1980, when the DPRK government urged for a major expansion of the atomic industry, Dr. Ch'oe Hak Kun introduced in North Korea a number of foreign nuclear technologies copied from the IAEA technical manuals in Vienna, including uranium milling, uranium refinement, fuel rod fabrication, and nuclear waste storage. Dr. Ch'oe's efforts received the supreme blessing and a tremendous boost as a result of Kim Jong Il's first ever visit to the Yongbyon Atomic Complex on August 29, 1981. In April 1982, the DPRK began to operate a uranium milling facility (sometimes referred to as a uranium concentrate facility) called the "April Enterprise,"[36] with a capacity of 210 MTU per year in Pakch'on-kun (North P'yong'an Province). The facility produced "yellow cake" from uranium ore extracted at the Sunch'on Uranium Mine.[37] In 1981, North Korea began the construction of a pilot-scale nuclear fuel rod fabrication facility in Yongbyon, which was expanded in 1986 into a full-scale fuel fabrication plant called the "August Enterprise," completed in August 1987.[38] In 1984 (or, perhaps, in 1986), North Korea constructed a uranium milling facility and a "uranium refinement facility" near its uranium mine called the

36 It appears that many North Korean nuclear facilities built in the 1980s on the basis of the IAEA-originated blueprints copied by Ch'oe Hak Kun were named after the months of the year such as the January Enterprise, the February Enterprise, the March Enterprise, the April Enterprise, the May Enterprise, the August Enterprise, the December Enterprise - the monthly series, so to speak.

37 See Kim Byong Ku, *op. cit*., November 1999, http://www.tcnc.kaeri.re.kr/.

38 See Bermudez, *op. cit*., p. 43.

"January Enterprise" in P'yongsan-kun (North Hwanghae Province) that could convert uranium ore into UO_2.[39] In 1983, nuclear scientists began to "take first steps" in the uranium enrichment process of converting UO_2 to UF_6.[40] In 1985-1986, North Korea began the construction of a "radiochemistry laboratory" or plutonium reprocessing plant (referred to as the "December Enterprise"),[41] with some limited operations detected as early as 1989.[42] Lastly, in 1986-1989, North Korea constructed the so-called "Building 500" to be utilized as an undeclared waste storage facility.

Dr. Ch'oe Hak Kun also guided the model selection and construction of the first North Korean "indigenous" 5 MW (e) experimental power reactor (gas-graphite British design of the 1940s, Calder Hall-type) called the "February Enterprise" in Yongbyon. The construction work was started in 1979, the reactor went critical on August 14, 1985, and, despite a number of start-up problems, began regular operations in February 1986.[43] Dr. Ch'oe and his colleagues chose the old-fashioned British design in 1979 from several reactor options available in the "Atoms for Peace" program because it was relatively easy and cheap to build, almost all of its important details were publicly available, and its simple design allowed the *juch'e* nation to advance the nuclear power program without relying on the Soviet Union or any other country.[44] But the reactor's most salient feature was that it could

39 See Joseph J. Bermudez, Jr., "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 1994, p. 75.

40 See KAERI, *op. cit*., http://www.kaeri.re.kr/.

41 See Chang Chun Ik, *Pukhan Haek-missile Chonjaeng* (Seoul: Somundang, May 1999), pp. 117-118, p. 126.

42 The reprocessing plant was scheduled for completion in 1996, but frozen in 1994 under the terms of the Agreed Framework, and again unsealed and restarted after the breakdown of the Agreed Framework in 2003.

43 See Kim Byong Ku, *op. cit*., http://www.tcnc.kaeri.re.kr/.

44 See Robert Alvarez, North Korea: No Bygones at Yongbyon, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 2003, p. 41.

produce plutonium more efficiently than water-cooled graphite reactors.[45] Before being frozen under the Agreed Framework in October 1994, the 5 MW (e) reactor was shut down for 71 days in 1989, about 30 days in 1990, and about 50 days in 1991, which allowed for the opportunity to discharge spent fuel and reprocess it into 6.9-10.7 kilograms of plutonium.[46]

The Vienna file also offered valuable blueprints for the construction of the 50 MW (e) Nuclear Power Reactor No. Three, called the "March Enterprise," in Yongbyon. It was started in late 1986 and was due to be completed in 1995. The British Calder Hall reactor or the French G-2 reactor (both are graphite-moderated, gas-cooled, and good sources of weapon-grade plutonium) would have served as a model for the 50 MW (e) Reactor in Yongbyon. Had it not been frozen under the Agreed Framework, it would have been capable of producing about 55 kilograms of plutonium per year.[47]

Finally, the IAEA-originated blueprints were used to design and construct the 200 MW (e) Nuclear Power Reactor No. Four, called the "May Enterprise," in T'aech'on. The French G-2 reactor developed in the 1950s primarily for plutonium production served as a model for the graphite-moderated, gas-cooled T'aech'on 200 MW (e) Reactor, whose construction began in T'aech'on-kun (North P'yong'an Province) in 1989 and was scheduled for completion in 1996. Had that reactor not been frozen under the Agreed Framework in 1994, it would have been capable of producing about 220 kilograms of plutonium per year.[48]

Indeed, Dr. Ch'oe Hak Kun served his country very well. But, there was nothing original or self-reliant or academic in his service. As a professional spy-technocrat trained in mining scientific and technical

45 *Ibid*., p. 42.

46 See David Albright and Kevin O'Neill, eds., *Solving the North Korean Nuclear Puzzle* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Science and International Security, 2000).

47 See David Albright and Kevin O'Neill, *op. cit*.

48 See David Albright and Kevin O'Neill, *op. cit*.

intelligence, he stole the treasure trove from the nuclear vault of the West at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, Austria. The motherland appreciated his tremendous contribution to the development of the North Korean atomic industry and, in December 1986, Dr. Ch'oe Hak Kun was appointed the first Minister of Atomic Energy Industry of the DPRK.

Furthermore, quite revealing was Kim Il Sung's personal attempt to procure the advanced Soviet nuclear technology during his two official visits to the USSR in May 1984 and October 1986. It was like the 1965 deja-vu twenty years later. Regime change in Moscow in the wake of Brezhnev's and Andropov's deaths, respectively in 1982 and 1983, opened a long-absent opportunity for Pyongyang to improve rather frosty relations with his old-time Soviet ally. Once again the North Koreans attempted to fish for a nuclear bonanza in the murky waters of the domestic political transition in the Soviet Union. They also hoped that the warming international climate and the mood of gumbaya spreading around the world would loosen up various international restrictions imposed on the exports of sensitive technologies and allow them to benefit from greater international nuclear cooperation.

During his talks in Moscow in May 1984, the first thing the Great Leader asked for was the economic aid for his country's stagnant development, including Soviet technical and financial assistance in the construction of four 440 MW (th) light-water reactors, in exchange for the DPRK's continued loyalty to the Soviet communist cause and increased military cooperation. This time, however, the Kremlin told Kim Il Sung "thank you, but no thanks," and urged him to open the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex to the Soviet-IAEA inspections, as required by the 1977 trilateral safeguards agreement but never implemented,[49] to join the Nonproliferation Treaty, which Pyongyang

49 The IAEA conducted its first safeguards inspection of the Soviet-supplied IRT-2000 research reactor in Yongbyon only in May 1988.

refused to do in 1968 despite Moscow's insistence, and then wait until the mid-1990s when the backlog of the LWR construction orders from other client-states clears out. In other words, Kim Il Sung returned home empty-handed.

It was only after the DPRK joined the NPT under the Soviet pressure on December 12, 1985 that Moscow agreed to sign the inter-governmental agreement with Pyongyang on December 26, 1985, concerning Soviet technical assistance in the construction of four 440 MW (e) LWRs in the DPRK. Despite some initial steps undertaken by both sides to implement the agreement, it proved to be stillborn and left bitter memories of unfulfilled promises, acrimonious exchanges, and outright betrayal in both capitals.

For the last time Kim Il Sung raised the issue of nuclear cooperation during his visit to the USSR in October 1986. He asked for Soviet assistance in constructing an underground nuclear power plant, pointing his mighty finger at the "looming threat of the U.S. nuclear bombardments." The then Soviet leader, Michael Gorbachev, replied that the USSR had no experience in building underground nuclear power stations.[50] Besides, times had changed and North Korea should not worry too much about the prospects of nuclear war on the peninsula. Kim Il Sung did not buy that argument and departed from Moscow frustrated. In turn, the Kremlin was left puzzled: why on earth would a "peaceful nuclear program" need underground nuclear reactors, unless the North Koreans wanted to develop in hiding a clandestine plutonium production capability?

It is possible that the Soviet reluctance to provide the DPRK with the light-water reactor technology in the mid-1980s, despite Kim Il Sung's repeated personal lobbying, contributed to the North Korean decision to rely on the "Vienna File" and to start building the plutonium-rich 50 MW (e) and 200 MW (e) reactors on their own as the next-

50 Vadim P. Tkachenko, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

generation way to advance their atomic industry in the 1990s. That was the essence of the decision proposed by the DPRK's Ministry of Atomic Energy Industry after its delegation led by Minister Ch'oe Hak Kun returned from its fruitless official visit to the Soviet Union in 1987.[51]

In sum, the first home-made *Juch'e* reactor went into operation almost thirty years after the communist North launched its nuclear exploration program. Clearly, nuclear developments proceeded at a very slow pace in the kingdom of the Great Leader. It took three decades for the North Korean turtle to unleash the power of the atom in the land of the morning calm. Moreover, the national pride of the DPRK's nuclear establishment, the "Yongbyon Experimental Nuclear Power Plant No. One," turned out to be just a poorly copied replica of the 1950s-vintage Western atomic reactor. Obviously, self-reliance is loudly preached but hardly practiced in the land of *Juch'e*. International cooperation, not the WPK-inspired isolationism, has always been the driving force in the North Korean nuclear progress.

Indeed, the DPRK government can be proud of its mastery at the art of unconditional one-way transfer of highly sensitive nuclear expertise from the rest of the world at little cost to the hard-working North Korean people, innocent in their ignorance, "happily living their simple lives in the *Juch'e* paradise on Earth." Appeals to "international solidarity in the world communist movement" calls for international technology cooperation within the United Nations system "for the sake of our common humanity," or shakedowns and persistent demands for "security guarantees" from allies and neighbors - whatever it takes to obtain advanced knowledge with little pain but plenty of gain. That is the modus operandi of North Korean nuclear establishment, its diplomats and spies in their quest for the power of the atom, hoped to ensure the survival of the Kim's clan and the People's Republic.

51 See Lee Chae Sung, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

Also, there must be a very good reason why all three "indigenous" nuclear reactors that the DPRK government decided to build in the 1980s were best suited to produce maximum plutonium in their class rather than to generate electricity. Besides, for some reason, the nuclear reactors under construction were not connected with the national electric power grid via electricity transmission lines. No wonder that, in the second half of the 1980s, some outside observers began to study the random satellite photographs of the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex more closely and question the so-called peaceful nature of the DPRK's nuclear intentions, and rushed to estimate how many nuclear bombs the North Koreans could build after all three nuclear reactors should become operational one day.

Conclusion: From Nuclear Freeze to Nuclear Breakout

The progress of the official "indigenous" nuclear program of the DPRK was frozen in 1994 under the Geneva Agreed Framework signed by North Korea and the United States as a way to resolve the first nuclear crisis that erupted on the Korean peninsula in the early 1990s. Despite the eight-year nuclear freeze, continuous IAEA and DOE monitoring of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, and the DPRK-KEDO cooperation in New York and Kumpo, many lingering questions remained unanswered.

Some analysts believe that the North Korean nuclear program has never been genuinely peaceful in nature. Since its inception on the eve of the Korean War, it has never been designed to generate electricity and satisfy the nation's power consumption, no matter what the DPRK government officials asserted in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. North Korean nuclear learning has always been aimed at garnering the power of the atom for the sake of national security and

regime survival.

North Korea does have the plutonium reprocessing capability, the so-called "Radiochemistry Laboratory" at the Yongbyon Atomic Complex, frozen under the Agreed Framework in 1994 and unfrozen after the breakdown of the Agreed Framework in January 2003. The question is how much plutonium Pyongyang may possess at present. The official DPRK declaration to the IAEA lists 300 milligrams from the IRT-2000 reactor separated in 1975. However, the international community suspects that the DPRK may have clandestinely separated additional 2-4 kg of plutonium from the IRT-2000 reactor and 6.3-8.5 kg of weapon-grade plutonium from the 5 MW (e) reactor's three shutdowns in 1989, 1990, and 1991. In total, North Korea may possess 6.9-10.7 kg of weapon-grade plutonium enough to make 1-2 nuclear bombs. In addition, now that the DPRK announced the completion of reprocessing the formerly canned 8,017 spent fuel rods removed from the spent fuel storage site at Yongbyon, it may have acquired an additional supply of 27-31 kg of weapon-grade plutonium enough to make 5-6 nuclear bombs.[52] One can ask legitimate questions as to whether and why North Korea has been pursuing a plutonium route to the *Juch'e* bomb, where and how much of the North Korean weapon-grade plutonium stockpile is stored, and what does the North Korean leadership intend to do with that plutonium stockpile?

In addition, many Korea observers persistently wonder whether there is a "Second Core," namely, a concentration of "other" nuclear facilities around the highly enriched uranium (HEU) program designed to produce the HEU-based *Juch'e* bomb. If North Korea does have a HEU program,[53] the international community would be interested in finding out where the uranium enrichment facilities may be located, including uranium mining, conversion, storage, gas centrifuge and component facilities, - under the Mt. Ch'onma (Taegwan-kun, North P'yong'an Province),[54] or around the Pakch'on uranium mine in Pakch'on-kun (North P'yong'an Province), or around the P'yongsan uranium mine (P'yongsan-kun, North Hwanghae Province), or elsewhere. How much nuclear material was produced (possibly 25 kg HEU / year)? Where is the alleged HEU inventory stored?

Is there any truth to the allegation that North Korea may have obtained the centrifuge technology for uranium enrichment from Pakistan in the late 1990s in violation of its obligations under the Agreed Framework? There is credible evidence that the father of the Pakistani Bomb, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, visited the DPRK 13 times in the late 1990s. What kind of nuclear expertise did he share with his North Korean counterparts? Did he really see "three nuclear devices" at a secret underground nuclear plant during his visit to the DPRK in 1999, as he alleged during his testimony in April 2004?

Once in 1957, at North Korea's request, the USSR Academy of Sciences dispatched a Soviet nuclear physicist, Ivan M. Gramenitsky, to the Physics and Mathematics Institute of the DPRK Academy of Sciences to assist in organizing research on nuclear interactions by means of thick-layered emulsions and to conduct ten seminars and

52 See Albright and O'Neill, *op. cit*.

53 James Kelly, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific Affairs, claims that DPRK First Vice Foreign Minister, Kang Sok-ju, confessed to him that the DPRK had a clandestine HEU program during their official talks in Pyongyang on October 3-4, 2002. Since then, the DPRK government, however, repeatedly denied the fact of the alleged confession. The latest example is DPRK Vice-Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan's emphatic denial of the existence of a HEU program during his nine-hour talks with the visiting U.S. delegation in Pyongyang on January 6-11, 2004. See Joo Yong-jung, "Jack Pritchard: North Korea's Plutonium Reprocessing Confirmed," *The Chosun Ilbo*, Seoul, January 16, 2004.

54 Lee Ch'un Son, a former KPA brigadier general who defected to the PRC in 1999, testified that North Korea began to build a "nuclear production base," including an underground uranium milling facility and a power plant, in Mt. Ch'onma in 1983. See "Exclusive - Shocking Testimony of Defected DPRK General, 'North Korea's Nuclear Material Production Base Exists Under Mt. Ch'onma,'" *Shindonga*, August 1, 2001, pp. 196-204.

dozens of lectures on nuclear physics. That mission laid the foundation for basic nuclear studies in North Korea.[55] In the same vein, could Dr. A. Q. Khan, an ardent believer in nuclear proliferation as a way to deter the "American evil empire," open a new chapter in the DPRK's nuclear development by teaching his North Korean colleagues the secrets of clandestine uranium enrichment process? The international community believes that the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), Pakistan's main nuclear weapons facility, may have provided the DPRK with some blueprints, sample equipment, and technical assistance in the development of G-2 centrifuge technology for uranium enrichment in exchange for the technology transfers related to the North Korean Nodong missile program.[56] North Korea is even alleged to employ some of the nine Pakistani nuclear scientists in its HEU program, who have been missing since they left their country in 1998.[57] In other words, the HEU-based *Juch'e* bomb, if it exists, may well have some Muslim origins.

Now that the DPRK government officially declared its intention to "strengthen the nuclear deterrent force" to prevent the "U.S. preemptive nuclear threat," following the collapse of the Agreed Framework in October 2002, Pyongyang's withdrawal from the NPT on January 10, 2003, and unfreezing of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, including the 5 MW (e) reactor,[58] it is legitimate to ask the big question: does North

55 See Alexander Zhebin, *op. cit*., p. 30.

56 See "Pakistan and Nuclear Proliferation," *Jane's Intelligence Digest*, January 16, 2004, http://www.janes.com/.

57 See "Pakistani Nuclear Scientists in North Korea," *AFP*, Seoul, June 20, 2004 (citing a report prepared by Dr. Cheon Seong Whun, a Senior Research Fellow at the Korean Institute for National Unification in Seoul).

58 A private five-man delegation of American observers went to inspect the Yongbyon nuclear facilities upon the invitation of the DPRK government on January 6-11, 2004, and confirmed that the 5 MW (e) reactor has indeed been reloaded, restarted and is "in full operation," and that the 8, 017 spent fuel rods had been removed from their storage pond and reprocessed sometime before June 2003. See Joo Yong-jung, "Jack Pritchard: North Korea's Plutonium Reprocessing Confirmed," *The Chosun Ilbo*, Seoul, January 16, 2004.

Korea have the bomb? What type? How many? Does it plan to test its nuclear device, if it exists, and where and how? Does Pyongyang have plans to weaponize, miniaturize, deploy, and operationalize its self-proclaimed "nuclear deterrent capabilities? What is their ultimate purpose? Is North Korea pursuing a limited deterrent capability or an absolute denial capability?

North Korea has never had a peaceful nuclear program. The DPRK's ruling regime has always been dedicated to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and making the DPRK a limited nuclear weapon state in order to guarantee the survival of the *Juch'e* republic in a self-reliant way. The nuclear option is not simply dictated by the strategic situation and the alleged U.S. nuclear threat; after all the DPRK had enjoyed the Soviet and Chinese nuclear umbrellas for almost forty years of its existence but continued to pursue the *Juch'e* bomb regardless. It is not inherent in the Korean culture: ROK President Park Chung Hee chose to abandon the South Korean nuclear weapons program in a "verifiable and irreversible manner" in the late 1970s, when he was presented with a rational choice.

History is important because it reveals subliminal fears, dormant frustrations, traditional expectations, vain ambitions, and national pride that shape the decision-making context of nuclear program development. Personalities matter because their idiosyncratic behavior sets the limits of rationality and precludes certain policy choices. Internal politics determines the domestic legitimacy and social price of the nuclear strategy, whereas domestic economics dictates the pace and scope of the nuclear developments. But, the bottom line is that regime survival and national prestige are paramount in the DPRK's quest for nuclear weapons. Yes, indeed, North Korea learned too little too late in its nuclear development program before the nuclear freeze in 1994. But,

that did not stop it from reasserting its nuclear ambitions and embarking on a nuclear breakout strategy after the total breakdown of the Agreed Framework a decade later.

KEDO may be gone from the moribund LWR site in the now ghost town of Kumpo, but the DPRK learned some valuable lessons and picked up a few novel nuclear technologies from its interactions with KEDO throughout the 1990s. In its quest for the power of *juch'e* atom, the hermit turtle once again duped the foreign rabbits and got something for nothing. The second nuclear standoff offered the Dear Leader a free pass to demonstrate in public his nuclear shield with impunity and relatively little reprimand from the international community. And he did it without any second thoughts. Welcome to the new world order - a nuclear zoo where the dragon, bear, eagle, bulldog, frog, and other wildlife are joined by a paranoid turtle with nuclear claws.

THE U.S.-DPRK RELATIONS AND CONTENDING OPTIONS FOR THE NUCLEAR STANDOFF

Kim Kookshin

North Korea restarted its nuclear reactor in Yongbyon and expelled IAEA inspectors in December 2002. In coping with the North Korean challenge, the Bush administration initially devised a plan to apply an increased international diplomatic isolation and economic pressure on North Korea, called 'tailored containment.' Washington's preoccupation with a possible war against Iraq, however, has limited U.S. options in dealing with North Korea. Consequently, the U.S. stressed the primacy of diplomacy to resolve the crisis. At the six-party talks, North Korea demanded a non-aggression pact, political normalization, and economic aid in return for the dismantling of its nuclear weapon program; The U.S. urged the North to take a first step for a complete and verifiable dismantlement of its nuclear program. The six-party talks laid a foundation to maintain the dialogue momentum, but the U.S. and North Korea failed to narrow their differences. Disappointed by the Bush administration's ineffective North Korean policy, liberal and conservative intellectuals suggest their policy recommendations respectively. The divergent recommendations suggested by these intellectuals can be arranged broadly into two contending options: negotiated settlement and regime change.

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In October 2002, President Bush sent an envoy to Pyongyang to reopen dialogue. At the U.S.-DPRK talks, North Korea allegedly admitted its clandestine nuclear activities in violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework. The following month, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) cut off fuel oil shipments promised under the Agreed Framework. In response to KEDO's decision, North Korea ejected the IAEA inspectors in December 2002 and restarted its nuclear reactor shortly thereafter. To resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis, multilateral talks were held. At the six-party talks in August 2003, North Korea demanded a non-aggression pact, political normalization, and economic aid in return for the dismantling of its nuclear weapons program; The U.S. urged the North to take the first step towards complete and verifiable dismantlement of its nuclear program. As the U.S. and North Korea failed to reconcile their differences of opinion regarding the terms of a possible resolution to the nuclear dispute, the six-party talks ended without any agreement.

Tension over the nuclear standoff was relieved slightly after Bush pledged in October 2003 to provide a written guarantee that it would not attack North Korea. In February 2004, the second round of six-party talks yielded some progress on procedural issues and laid the foundation to maintain the dialogue momentum. However, the participating nations failed to overcome major barriers to resolving the crisis over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Although the six nations agreed to hold the third round of talks by June, the likelihood of any breakthrough still appeared slim.

The purpose of this article is to examine the U.S.-North Korea relations since the inauguration of the Bush administration with an emphasis on U.S. policy towards North Korea. This article first discusses the basic principle of the Bush administration's North Korea policy, as well as the factional problems of the Bush foreign policy team. Second, the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S.-DPRK relations focused on the Bush doctrine. Thirdly it takes a look at North Korea's reaction to the U.S. hard-line policy and the dual track U.S. approach to dealing with the North Korean nuclear crisis. Finally, it will compare two diametrically opposite options, that is, negotiated settlement and regime change, which were suggested by liberal and conservative intellectuals, respectively. These options will be compared by analyzing their explanation of the main factors of the current nuclear standoff and policy recommendations to resolve the crisis.

The Bush Administration's Policy Towards North Korea

Early Bush Administration Policy

In January 2001, George W. Bush brought with him a new foreign policy team: Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Council Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs James Kelly. All had extensive foreign policy experience under the Reagan and first Bush administrations. The upper echelons of the Bush foreign policy team generally share a common world-view - namely, the conservative political philosophy of the Republican Party and the realist approach to international politics. The Bush team agreed that their foremost responsibility is to preserve U.S. hegemony with a strong defense posture.[1] In dealing with international agendas, however, the Bush team split into contending factions.

Powell and officials in the Department of State prefer to advance

1 Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Policy*, January / February 2000, pp. 45-62; The Republican National Committee, *Republican Platform 2000: Renewing America's Purpose Together*, August 3, 2000.

foreign policy in cooperation with other governments and international institutions. For them, resorting to armed force is to be held in reserve as a final option. Rumsfeld and other officials in the Department of Defense were skeptical of multilateral diplomacy and favored a heavy emphasis on the building up of strategic military power, but the foreign policy arguments go beyond the traditional State Department-Pentagon split. Vice President Cheney and National Security Adviser Rice preferred a unilateralist foreign policy based on the belief that in a dangerous world the best way to ensure America's security is to shed the constraints imposed by allies and international institutions. Furthermore, the neo-conservative wing of the administration - Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton and Richard Perle, a member of the Defense Policy Board - advocated a more radical right wing ideology, according to which, America should actively deploy its overwhelming military, economic, and political might to remake the world in its image. As a result of the factional strife within the foreign policy team, the Bush administration has shown 'two faces' of pragmatism and hard-line unilateralism in its foreign policy from the start.[2]

In early 2001, after a review of U.S.-North Korean policy, the Bush team agreed on several conclusions: The policies of the Clinton administration towards North Korea as well as the South Korean Sunshine Policy were appeasing in orientation; The Agreed Framework fell short of exercising a binding power to deter the North from developing nuclear weapons; And the U.S.-DPRK missile deal was fraught with uncertainty. However, the Bush team was divided regarding strategy to achieve Bush's goals. The pragmatic wing, headed by Secretary of State Powell, believed Pyongyang could be induced through diplomatic

2 Bruce W. Jentleson, *American Foreign Policy: The Bush Administration and the Dynamics of Choice* (Special Update) (New York: W.W. Norton&Company, 2002), p. 3.

negotiations to forego its nuclear ambitions, and favored the traditional approach of diplomacy backed by deterrence.[3] By contrast, the hawkish wing, headed by Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, preferred hard-line policies and maximum terms of negotiations in spite of the danger of a diplomatic breakdown. The hardliners assumed that North Korea could be brought to its knees by profoundly increasing pressure.

On completion of his North Korean policy review, President Bush announced a reopening of dialogue with the North on June 6, 2001. Bush's proposed agenda included an 'improved implementation' of the Agreed Framework related to the North's nuclear activities, 'verifiable constraints' on its missile programs, and conventional military posture.[4] Bush said that Washington would pursue these discussions in the context of a comprehensive approach towards the North to encourage progress towards inter-Korean reconciliation and peace on the peninsula. The final product of the review process reflected the pragmatist's view more than the conservative hard-line attitude,[5] but President Bush's announcement implied that the U.S. would seek to revise the 1994 Agreed Framework to ensure transparency of North Korea's past nuclear activities and would demand to re-deploy North Korean forces back from the Demilitarized Zone at the U.S.-DPRK talks.

Around the time of Bush's inauguration, North Korea accused the U.S. of exaggerating the threat of North Korean missiles in order to justify the continuance of Missile Defense (MD) projects. Regarding

3 C. Kenneth Quinones, "Dualism in the Bush Administration's North Korea Policy," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2003, pp. 197-224.

4 The White House, *Statement by the President*, June 6, 2001,www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/2001/06/20010611-4.html.

5 Sebastian Harnisch, "U.S.-North Korean relations under the Bush administration: From 'slow to go' to 'no go'," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XLII, No. 6, November/December 2002, pp. 867-868.

the Bush administration's announcement to resume talks, the North accused the U.S. of setting new agenda items of negotiations unilaterally, and said that the Bush administration's proposal was an attempt to disarm and stifle North Korea. From the North Korean point of view, the nuclear inspection should depend on implementation of the Agreed Framework, and the North emphasized the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea as a precondition for talks regarding its conventional weapons. Henceforth, North Korea reiterated that the Bush administration should resume a stance similar to that of the Clinton administration and should honor the Albright-Cho joint communique of October 2000 on non-hostile intent, mutual respect, and non-interference with domestic affairs, and with this, North Korea displayed little eagerness to resume dialogue with the U.S.

The U.S.-DPRK Relations After 9/11

After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, Pyongyang swiftly condemned the attacks and reiterated its opposition to terrorism in general. On November 3, North Korea pledged to sign two antiterrorism agreements, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, reportedly one of four conditions set by the Clinton administration last year for North Korea to be removed from the list of rogue states. However, the Bush administration's attitude towards North Korea became more negative with the intensifying war against terrorism. President Bush urged the North to submit to full International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections immediately, and made it clear that the U.S. would consider all options if the North continued to develop weapons of mass destruction.[6]

6 The White House, *President Welcomes Aid Workers Rescued from Afghanistan*, November 26, 2001, www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/2001/11/20011126-1.html.

After 9/11, Bush concurred with the neo-conservative belief that America should use its strength to change the status quo in the world. In his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, Bush branded North Korea, Iran and Iraq an 'axis of evil' that armed itself with weapons of mass destruction and threatened world peace.[7] Furthermore, he warned that the U.S. would strongly cope with the development of weapons of mass destruction by these countries. The 'axis of evil' passage was thought by some to have been drafted as an applause line, designed to dramatize the threat of weapons of mass destruction by the rogue states. However, it was not clear whether the goal of the Bush administration was to have North Korea abolish its weapons of mass destruction or bring about the collapse of the Kim Jong-il regime because Bush often displayed his personal dislike of Kim Jong-il. When he visited Seoul on February 20, 2002, President Bush expressed hope for talks with the North, but harshly criticized the Kim Jong-il regime. Bush said that he doubted that Kim represented the will of the North Korean people, implying that the U.S. would separately deal with the North Korean regime from its own people for the regime change.

In March 2002, the Los Angeles Times ran a summary of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), a classified Pentagon contingency plan. The NPR laid out recommendations for the U.S. nuclear policy that included the development of new nuclear weapons and a list of potential targets of nuclear strikes.[8] It singled out seven nations as possible targets of a nuclear strike: China, Russia, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya and Syria. Along with the NPR, Bush's subsequent emphasis on the potential need for preemptive action against terrorist groups and rogue states armed with weapons of mass destruction led to considerable speculation about whether North Korea might be subject to attack after the U.S. invasion of Iraq.[9]

7 The White House, *President Delivers State of the Union Address*, January 29, 2002.

8 U.S. Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review (Excerpts)*, January 8, 2002, www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm.

Pyongyang reacted with outrage to President Bush's rhetoric of the 'axis of evil,' arguing that it was a declaration of war, in fact. Regarding Bush's remarks on February 20, 2002 that the U.S. would separately deal with the North Korean regime from its own people, the North expressed harsh reaction. After it was disclosed that the NPR had included North Korea on a list of possible targets for a nuclear weapons strike, North Korea threatened to reexamine its participation in the 1994 agreement. Nevertheless, the North, concerned about the hawkish stance of the U.S. after 9/11, attempted to resume dialogue with the Americans.

The White House announced on April 30, 2002 that North Korea had offered to reopen talks with the U.S. At that time, it was reported that the U.S. would send a special envoy to Pyongyang in May, but the plan was delayed because of divisions within the Bush administration over the message the special envoy would carry to Pyongyang. In the meantime, North-South Korean naval vessels clashed in the West Sea on June 29, 2002. Soon after the naval clash, however, Pyongyang took a series of positive steps at home and abroad. In July, it lifted price controls and increased wages to reform the North Korean economy. In August, it agreed to reestablish road and rail links with South Korea, and Kim Jong-il held a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi the next month.

At the Japan-North Korean summit on September 17, 2002, Kim Jong-il surprisingly confessed to and apologized for the kidnapping of at least 13 Japanese to North Korea as part of a program to assist North Korean espionage against Japan—an act the North had denied for decades.[10] Kim promised Koizumi that his government would observe international agreements related to nuclear matters, including nuclear

9 The White House, *President Bush delivers Graduation Speech at West Point*, June 1, 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html.

10 Okonogi Masao, *et. al*., "Four Views of the Pyongyang Summit," *Japan Echo*, December 2002, pp. 43-47.

inspections by UN officials, and expressed his willingness to extend Pyongyang's moratorium on missile tests beyond 2003. He also reaffirmed Pyongyang's willingness to resume dialogue with Washington. Thus, Kim Jong-il had demonstrated an accommodating attitude to Washington's demands. Nevertheless, the Bush administration's hardline stance towards the North had not been totally alleviated.

When the North took measures to reform its economy and improved its relations with South Korea and Japan, the Bush administration geared up for the war against terrorism. On September 19, two days after the North Korea-Japan summit, President Bush submitted to the U.S. Congress a draft resolution that would grant him authority to use all means necessary to eliminate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and the next day, the White House released The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,[11] which stressed that "in the past decade, North Korea has become the world's principal purveyor of ballistic missiles, and has tested increasingly capable missiles, while developing its own Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) arsenal." That means that North Korea would be included as a possible target in a U.S.-led preemptive strike.

North Korean Nuclear Crisis and Dual Strategy of the U.S.

North Korea's Brinkmanship Diplomacy

As the North-South Korean relations improved and North Korea-Japan summit talks were held, the U.S. dispatched Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, to Pyongyang as a special envoy from October 3 to 5, 2002. During his three-day stay

11 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

in Pyongyang, the U.S. envoy discussed concerns over weapons of mass destruction, missile development, and the deployment of conventional forces along the border. Moreover, he stressed that the dialogue between North Korea and the U.S. could be resumed only if North Korea admitted to its development of nuclear weapons through an enriched uranium formula and vowed to cease any further development of such weapons. North Korea at first denied having anything to do with the development of nuclear weapons, but later admitted to possessing a uranium enrichment program, and justified its nuclear card as a self-defensive measure against an American nuclear attack.[12] Thereafter, the North asserted that it could solve the problems related to U.S. concerns over security-related matters if the U.S. would abandon its hostile policy against North Korea.

Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry said in a statement released on October 25, 2002 that the U.S. failed to comply with its part of the points laid out in the 1994 agreement, and it presented a long list of American wrongdoings: violation of the negative security assurance provision in the Agreed Framework as well as the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) by positing North Korea as a target for a preemptive nuclear attack; attempts to overthrow the regime by declaring North Korea as a part of an 'axis of evil.'[13] However, it reiterated that North Korea would be willing to resolve security concerns if the U.S. would issue a legally binding promise of non-aggression towards the North.

North Korea may have made the shocking admission to stimulate a major breakthrough in the U.S.-DPRK dialogue, just as their acknowledgement of the Japanese kidnappings sought improvement to DPRK-Japan relations. However, the U.S. called the DPRK nuclear program a serious violation of the Agreed Framework, the NPT, its IAEA safeguards agreement, and the 1992 Joint North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and the U.S. maintained that it would not hold any further discussions with the North to normalize relations until Pyongyang took steps to dismantle its nuclear program.

12 Richard Boucher, Spokesman, *North Korean Nuclear Program, Press Statement*, October 16, 2002, www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/14432.htm.

13 The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, *East Asian Strategic Review 2003* (Tokyo: The Japan Times, 2003), pp, 40-41.

North Korea's admission severely damaged the pragmatist's credibility, but consolidated the hardliners' ascent in foreign policy towards North Korea. Robert Joseph, the National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for nonproliferation, and Bolton, the Undersecretary of State for Arms Control, assumed increasing influence over North Korean policy with the backing of Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld.[14] Guided by these hardliners, the U.S. increased pressure on North Korea. On November 14, KEDO decided to halt fuel oil shipments to North Korea that they had been providing under the 1994 agreement. On December 9, two Spanish warships halted a North Korean cargo vessel in the Gulf of Aden, and after boarding it, discovered a hidden cache of 15 disassembled Scud missiles, conventional warheads and rocket fuel. Upon finding the missiles, the Spaniards turned over control of the ship to the U.S. Navy. The U.S., after determining that the missiles had been legitimately ordered by the government of Yemen, allowed the ship to make its delivery.[15]

The hardliners might have assumed that Pyongyang would submit to their pressure, but Pyongyang became increasingly intransigent. On December 12, 2002, North Korea announced its plan to reactivate the nuclear reactor in Yongbyon to generate electricity. It removed seals and monitoring devices at the Yongbyon reactors on December 21, and over the next few days, unsealed the pond where the 8,000 spent fuel rods were stored. It expelled IAEA inspectors who were stationed in

14 Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Has a Shifting Script on N. Korea: Administration Split as New Talks Near," *The Washington Post*, December 7, 2003.

15 Joseph Bermudez, "Yemen continues ballistic missile procurement programme," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 2003, pp. 28-29.

the country to monitor its compliance with international nuclear non-proliferation agreements, and then announced its withdrawal from the NPT on January 2003. North Korea claimed that its withdrawal from the NPT is a legitimate act of self-defense in order to cope with the U.S. nuclear threats and strategy of strangulation. By the end of January 2003, North Korea reactivated its 5MW nuclear reactor, and began to move 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods out of storage in an attempt to prepare them for chemical reprocessing.[16]

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated that North Korea probably had one or two nuclear bombs built with plutonium it had extracted from its 5MW reactor prior to the shutdown of Yongbyon in 1994. If the 5MW reactor is in full operation, North Korea can obtain 6kg of additional plutonium annually, enough for one or two nuclear weapons; The 8,000 rods, containing a total of 25-30 kg of plutonium, could be used to make four to six bombs within several months.[17] U.S. intelligence agencies also estimated that North Korea's recently disclosed weapons program, with which it sought to make use of highly enriched uranium rather than plutonium, would produce enough material for a nuclear weapon within two to three years. If those nuclear facilities are allowed to fully operate, the North Korean nuclear arsenal could grow to about 10 warheads in three years, but it was not certain whether North Korea possessed all the technical expertise required to create a detonable nuclear weapon.

16 CIA, *Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions*, January 1 through June 30, 2003, www.cia.gov/cia/reports/721reports/jan_jun2003.htm.

17 Sharon A. Squassoni, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: How Soon an arsenal?" *CRS Report for Congress*, Updated July 29, 2003; Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," *CRS Report for Congress*, Updated August 27, 2003.

Multilateral Diplomatic Approach

North Korea has been pressing the U.S. with provocative actions to secure major economic and political concession in exchange for its promise to give up its nuclear weapons program. In Pyongyang's strategic calculation, the U.S. would be unable to take military action simultaneously against Iraq and North Korea, and by taking advantage of this situation, the North resorted to brinkmanship strategy. In coping with the North Korean challenge, the Bush administration initially devised a plan to apply increased international diplomatic isolation and economic pressure on North Korea called 'tailored containment.'[18] Key aspects of that strategy included backing the IAEA to refer the matter to the United Nations Security Council, encouraging North Korea's neighbors to cut their economic ties with North Korea and using the U.S. military to intercept North Korean exports of missiles and other weapons technology. However, South Korea opposed the idea of economic sanctions and military threats, and it appeared that China and Russia would disallow economic sanctions against North Korea in the UN Security Council. Judging that the push for the sanctions could not produce effective results, the U.S. played down the role of economic sanctions.

Washington's preoccupation with a possible war against Iraq, as well as the uncooperative attitude of North Korea's neighboring countries, has limited U.S. options in dealing with North Korea. Consequently, the U.S. stressed the primacy of diplomacy to resolve the crisis, but rejected North Korea's demand for bilateral talks. It looked to have diplomatic efforts solve the North Korean nuclear issue in a multilateral framework, asking for support from South Korea, Japan, China and Russia. The Bush administration justified its actions on the

18 Michael R. Gordon, "North Korea faces isolation over reactors," *The New York Times*, December 29, 2002.

grounds that the North Korean nuclear issue is an international issue rather than a bilateral issue between Washington and Pyongyang, and emphasized that it needed other parties to guarantee North Korea's pledge to scrap its nuclear weapons development.

The Bush administration's multilateral diplomatic approach was supported by the Chinese, who shared a common interest with the U.S. in maintaining a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. To some extent, the administration has subcontracted its policy out to China.[19] As China played an active role as a mediator between the U.S. and North Korea, North Korea dropped its demand for one-on-one talks with Washington, and agreed to hold three-party talks which included China.

At the three-party talks on April 23, 2003, North Korea presented its step-by-step approach to solving the nuclear issue: First, the U.S. would have to resume the supply of heavy fuel oil and continue construction on the light-water reactor project, and North Korea would pledge not to develop nuclear weapons; Second, the U.S. would have to fulfill its promise not to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK and conclude a non-aggression pact, and North Korea would cease all nuclear activity and allow inspections; And third, the U.S. would have to remove North Korea from its list of terrorist-sponsoring states and normalize relations with the North, and the North would negotiate for the complete abandonment of its nuclear program and the halting of missile technology exports. However, the U.S. could not accept a proposal in which the North would not abandon its nuclear hedge until the last moment. For its part, the U.S. repeated its position that North Korea would need to disarm completely and verifiably before Washington would consider providing it with any political and economic benefits.[20] The U.S. insisted that North Korea would first need to scrap

19 Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Has a Shifting Script on N. Korea: Administration Split as New Talks Near," *The Washington Post*, December 7, 2003.

20 Washington File, *Powell Says Beijing Talks Show United Opposition to Nuclear Korea*, April 25, 2003, usembassy.state.gov/seoul/wwwh41ai.html.

its nuclear weapons program. However, North Korean officials told U.S. diplomats at the three-party talks that the North possessed nuclear weapons and was making weapons-grade plutonium.[21] After the three-party talks, the North again announced that it had completed separating plutonium from its stored fuel rods by June 30 and that weapons production had begun.

Isolation of North Korea

Ever since North Korea confessed to having a nuclear program, the hardliners in the Bush administration have been advocating coercive measures. For them, the attempt to negotiate with the North was to repeat the mistakes of the Clinton administration by rewarding the bad behavior of North Korea. They favored isolating the North, holding open the possibility of military action, rather than attempting dialogue and diplomacy. They thought that the nuclear issue would not be solved so long as the Kim Jong-il regime was in power. With the collapse of the three-party talks in April 2003, the hardliners strongly urged Bush to establish an international cooperative system with allies to impose selective sanctions as a first step of the North Korean containment policy.

On May 31, 2003, Bush suggested that the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) impedes the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction by rogue states. In addition, on June 21, the US established the PSI together with 10 other like-minded states—Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Holland, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Thereafter, the participating countries of the PSI first agreed on the principles of interdiction for the impediment of narcotics, counterfeit currency, and shipments of weapons of mass destruction.[22] Then, they

21 John Feffer, *North Korea South Korea: U.S. Policy at a Time of Crisis* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), p. 12.

22 U.S. Department of State, *U.S. to Host 5th Meeting on Proliferation Security Initiative,*

conducted interdiction exercises. For the participating countries, the aim of the PSI was the obstruction of proliferation, not focusing on any particular country, but Pentagon officials pointed out that the first major PSI exercise held on September 13, 2003, was aimed at sending a sharp signal to North Korea. The long-term objective of the PSI was to create a web of counter-proliferation partnerships that would impede trade of WMD.

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense drafted a new war plan for a possible conflict with North Korea, known as Operation Plan 5030. The prewar phase of OP 5030 focused on destabilizing North Korean military forces: it would give commanders in the region authority to conduct maneuvers to drain North Korea's limited resources, strain its military and sow confusion that North Korean generals might turn against the Kim Jong-il regime.[23] However, the draft plan was not approved by the White House. While the military officials in the Department of Defense were preoccupied with Iraq, Secretary of State Powell seized an opportunity to get Bush to give ear to continuing diplomatic engagement in the six-party talks.

U.S.-DPRK in the Six-Party Talks

At the six-way talks in Beijing on August 27-29, 2003, North Korea proposed a four-step measure to solving the nuclear issue: First, the U.S. would resume fuel oil shipments and large amounts of food aid, while North Korea would declare its intention to abandon its nuclear weapons development; Second, if the U.S. signed a non-aggression treaty with North Korea and compensated the North for its energy losses, North Korea would freeze its recently reactivated nuclear facilities and allow outside nuclear inspections; Third, North Korea would resolve international concerns about its missile programs while the U.S. and Japan would normalize relations with North Korean communists; And finally, North Korea would dismantle its nuclear weapons program if the U.S. completed construction of the two light-water reactors that had been built under the Agreed Framework. The North emphasized that it would be willing to abolish its nuclear program completely if the U.S. accepted its proposal for simultaneous actions of the package deal,[24] but the U.S. insisted that the North would first need to show its commitment to a complete, irreversible and verifiable elimination of its nuclear program. As North Korea and the U.S. engaged in a tug-of-war over which one of them would act first in settling their dispute, the first round of six-party talks ended without any tangible result.

The other four nations in the six-party talks shared the U.S. determination to keep the Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons, but were concerned about the possible effects of the U.S. preemptive strategy. Their common position was neither nuclear weapons nor war on the Korean peninsula. South Korea insisted that a war should be avoided at any cost. Although Japan introduced more rigorous inspections of shipping to and from North Korea, it was reluctant to go much further. China wanted to see North Korea give up its nuclear weapons and the U.S. guarantee Kim Jong-Il regime survival and forgo North Korean containment policy. Russia tended to take a position similar to that of China.

As the four other nations would not cooperate unless the U.S. exhausted diplomatic solutions, the Bush administration began to soften its hard-line stance. On the occasion of the Bangkok summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in October 2003,

December 2, 2003, www.usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/03120201.htm.

23 Bruce B. Auster and Kevin Whitelaw, "Upping the Ante for Kim Jong il," *U.S. News & World Report*, July 21, 2003.

24 *Korean Central News Agency (KCNA)*, Keynote Speeches Made at the Six-way Talks, August 29, 2003, www.kcna.co.jp/index-e.htm.

President Bush proposed that the U.S. would guarantee Pyongyang's security in the multilateral context in return for the termination of its nuclear program.[25] North Korea at first rebuffed the U.S. offer by saying that the proposal was not even worth considering. Under increasing pressure from neighboring countries to respond positively to Washington's overture, however, the North announced that it was willing to consider the proposal. As the North dropped the longtime demand for a formal bilateral non-aggression treaty with the US, the crucial issue for the six-party talks to make progress seemed to be the principle of simultaneous action. However, Washington remained firm that Pyongyang would first have to make progress in scrapping its nuclear facilities.

After the first round of six-party talks, China intensified its diplomatic efforts to open a second round of talks. On October 30, talks with the head of China's legislature, Wu Bangguo, Kim Jong-il agreed in principle to restart the six-party talks. Thereafter, North Korea offered to freeze its nuclear weapons activities on two conditions: The U.S. remove North Korea from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism, and provide the North with fuel and economic aid. Recalcitrant as ever, Washington reaffirmed its stance that the North would have to dismantle, not freeze, its nuclear program before receiving any rewards. There could be numerous sub-steps between a freeze and dismantling in terms of inspections and verifications. Once having accepted the North Korea's proposal, Washington reasoned that the U.S. would be obliged to give economic aid for each step taken by North Korea.

When Muammar Gaddafi announced the decision to abandon his weapons of mass destruction program and to open his nuclear sites to IAEA inspectors on December 19, five days after U.S. troops captured

25 Mike Allen and Glenn Kessler, "Bush Says Pact With N. Korea Possible: Security Guarantee Linked to Steps on Nuclear Programs," *The Washington Post*, October 21, 2003.

former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Bush, in a clear reference to North Korea, said that he hoped other leaders would follow in the example of Libya's action. It is expected that the capture of Hussein and Gaddafi's decision to abandon weapons of mass destruction may strengthen the hardliners' position in the Bush administration. On the other hand, Kim Jong-Il may decide to pursue nuclear armament even more desperately so as to avoid Hussein's fate. Indeed, North Korea repeated the statement that the war in Iraq proved its case for acquiring a tremendous deterrent to invasion.

At the second round of the six-party talks from 25 to 28 of February 2004, the six nations expressed their commitment to a nuclear weapons-free Korean peninsula, and to resolving the nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect and consultation on an equal basis; they agreed to hold a third round of the six-party talks in Beijing no later than the end of the second quarter of 2004; They agreed to set up a working group in preparation for the plenary session.[26] However, prospects for a peaceful resolution at the third round of the six-party talks seem dim because of deeply rooted U.S.-DPRK mutual distrust.

Uncertain Future and Contending Options

Pyongyang says that it will freeze nuclear activities if Washington provides free oil shipments, lifts economic sanctions and removes North Korea from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, but the real intention of North Korea is not clear: Is the nuclear threat a negotiating tactic or do they really want to go nuclear?[27] Moreover, the Bush

26 Ryu Jin, "6 Nations to Meet Again by June," *The Korea Times*, March 1, 2004.

27 Alexandre Mansourov, "The Hermit Mouse Roars: North Korea," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 88-95; Ted Galen Carpenter, "Living with the Unthinkable: How to Coexist with a Nuclear North Korea," *The*

administration's North Korea policy is still confused: While the officials in the Department of State emphasize diplomatic solutions to the North Korean nuclear issue, hard-liners advocate a regime change as their goal. Disappointed by the Bush administration's ineffective North Korean policy, as well as its ambiguous goals, liberal and conservative intellectuals are suggesting their policy recommendations in response. They have taken quite different views in interpreting the origin of the current nuclear standoff and have suggested opposite methods for resolving it. The divergent recommendations suggested by these intellectuals can be arranged broadly into two contending options: negotiated settlement and regime change.

Negotiated Settlement

Liberal intellectuals in the U.S. and South Korea, former officials of the Clinton administration, Congressmen of the Democratic Party, as well as pragmatists in the Bush administration advocate engagement policy and peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis. They generally share an opinion on the causes of the problem and methods for the resolution of the nuclear crisis, but express slightly different evaluations on the specific issues and policy recommendations.

Liberal intellectuals indicate the early Bush administration's hostile neglect as the primary cause of the current nuclear standoff. The Bush team, instead of following through on the Clinton's administration's missile deal, turned a soluble North Korean problem into a major crisis by radically changing the terms of engagement by insisting that North Korea immediately cease its nuclear activities and by severely limiting diplomatic engagement as well as any talk of possible incentives to Pyongyang.[28] After 9/11, Bush made Pyongyang suspicious of his

National Interest, No. 74, Winter 2003/4, pp. 92-98.

28 Chung-In Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, "The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2003, pp. 9-45.

intentions by declaring North Korea a part of an axis of evil. In addition to the harsh rhetoric, the new security strategy of the U.S., which emphasized the preemptive strike and regime change, created fears in North Korea that it might be the next U.S. target, and liberals maintain that the tough negotiating position of the U.S. in the six-party talks made the North undertake a series of brinkmanship measures including the admission of possession of nuclear bombs.

For the liberals, coercive diplomacy of the U.S. is unlikely to change North Korea's intransigent attitude, and the PSI efforts to isolate and contain the North would not bring about the collapse of the Kim Jong-il regime because the North Korean people are well accustomed to hardship under the Juche system.[29] Outside pressure on North Korea will rather enhance the regime's internal cohesiveness. Surgical strikes to the North Korean nuclear facilities are undesirable and infeasible, in that a military strike would mean a significant risk of provoking an all-out war on the peninsula. Although liberals disfavor military options, a discernable gap of perception exists between progressive-liberals and moderate-liberals on use of the military option. South Korean intellectuals and progress-liberal intellectuals in the U.S. emphasize that a second Korean War should be avoided at any cost. Yet, some moderate liberals do not totally rule out the military option. In the case of diplomatic failure, O'Hanlon and Mochizuki maintain that the U.S. should be determined to go to war.[30] For them, the risk of a second Korean War is no greater than the risk of allowing North Korea to develop, and possibly sell or even use, dozens of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, they reiterate that coercive options should be kept as last resorts until all other alternatives for peaceful resolution have been exhausted.

The liberals, in general, maintain that there is a good reason to think

29 Han-Shik Park and Kyung-Ae Park, "U.S. lacks options in crisis with Pyongyang," *Jane's Intelligence Reviews*, April 2003, pp. 38-39.

30 Michael O'Hanlon and Mike Mochizuki, *Crisis on the Korean Peninsula* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), pp, 92-93.

that grand bargaining could succeed based on the history of negotiations with North Korea. The negotiation of the 1994 Agreed Framework showed that North Korea was willing to trade away substantial nuclear capability for a package of benefits that included an alternative source of energy and the hope of gradual diplomatic engagement and economic recovery. And, North Korea urgently needs international political engagement and economic assistance to ensure survival of the Kim Jong-il regime. According to the liberals, threats from the U.S. are real and pressing for North Korea, but Pyongyang's threat is a negotiating tactic: if the U.S. removes its nuclear threats, Pyongyang would be willing to give up nuclear arms and missiles. There is no reason for the U.S. to not accept North Korea's demand for security assurance. If the U.S. ends economic sanctions, removes North Korea's name from the list of state sponsors of terrorism and opens up diplomatic relations, according to the liberals, North Korea would give up its efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction and would more seriously consider the reform path.[31]

Resolving Nuclear Issue through Regime Change

Conservative intellectuals in the U.S., especially neo-conservatives, Congressmen of the Republican Party, as well as hardliners in the Bush administration suggest isolation, containment, and regime change as the only viable alternative to a negotiated settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue. They generally share the view that the ultimate goal of U.S. policy should be the removal of the Kim Jong-il regime. Given the difficulty of the preemptive strike, however, they differ on the depth of U.S. commitment to coercive measures.

31 Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); Damjan de Krnjevic-Miskovic, *North Korea and Non-proliferation: A conversation with Selig Harrison*, January 28, 2004, www.inthenationalinterest.com / Articles / Vol2Issue9 / vol2issue9harrison.html.

The conservative intellectuals argue that the North's weapons pose the immediate challenges to international security. Combined with its long-range missiles, North Korea's nuclear weapons could inflict devastation at long distances, even on the U.S. For the conservatives, the current nuclear crisis was set off by North Korea's secret nuclear-weapons program in violation of the Agreed Framework. Since breaking the agreements, North Korea has vehemently proclaimed that the U.S. has been planning to attack and has therefore demanded a guarantee of security from the U.S. However, according to the conservatives, North Korea is already a nuclear power.[32] They take the North Korean diplomats' allegations seriously such as the one according to which North Korea will take a measure to open its nuclear deterrent to the public when the appropriate time comes. If North Korea is able to possess five to six nuclear bombs rather than one or two, according to the conservatives, it would obtain a formidable strategic deterrence against U.S. military forces as some nuclear weapons will survive preemptive strikes and thereby allowing a DPRK second strike.

The conservatives emphasize that North Korea is not a credible negotiation partner: Any new agreement with the North Koreans must begin by acknowledging that North Korea cannot be trusted to honor its promise. In any case, the conservatives believe that the North Koreans would not agree anytime soon to abolishing their weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. From the perspective of the conservatives, North Korea's emphasis on the step-by-step simultaneous actions derives from its calculated tactics to protract negotiations while producing more nuclear weapons. Even if the U.S. accepts the principle of simultaneous action, the negotiations over practical details would be long and difficult. Particularly, the nuclear inspection task would be formidable. In order to confidently accept that North Korea

32 Henry S. Rowen, "Kim Jong Il Must Go," *Policy Review*, No. 121, October & November 2003, pp. 3-16.

has really eliminated its nuclear program, the IAEA inspectors must be allowed to go anywhere at anytime, and must be allowed to remove North Korean nuclear scientists and their families to neutral territories and interview them there. However, North Korea is not a sufficiently open country to allow thorough verification. Thus, a diplomatic settlement resulting in permanent and irreversible denuclearization is an exceedingly unlikely prospect.[33]

The conservatives emphasize coercive measures in dealing with North Korea. Perle suggests a three-stage approach to topple the Kim Jong-il regime: Decisive action would begin with a comprehensive air and naval blockade of North Korea; Next, accelerating redeployment of our ground troops on the Korean Peninsula; And third, developing detailed plans for a preemptive strike against North Korea's nuclear facilities.[34] He assumes that a credible buildup to an American strike will persuade the Chinese to increase pressure on North Korea to replace Kim Jong-il by a North Korean communist who is more subservient to China. Given the risks associated with the preemptive strike, which would eventually escalate to a full-scale war on the Korean peninsula, some conservatives are shifting their focus to the human rights problems in North Korea, rather than costly military attacks.

Rowen suggests a serious human rights campaign to bring down Kim's regime. According to Rowen, if China agrees not to return North Korean refugees in China, and if South Korea agrees to accept more of them, there will be a massive exodus of North Koreans like that which took place in East Germany.[35] And, he expects that if conditions become worse enough, members of the North Korean elite might act

33 Nicholas Eberstadt, *Diplomatic Fantasyland: The illusion of a Negotiated Solution to the North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0342_Eberstadt.html.

34 Richard Perle and David Frum, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003), pp. 103-104.

35 Rowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

out against Kim Jong-il. Thus, conservatives suggest hostile neglect to topple the Kim Jong-il regime.

For the conservatives, the only and surest way by which the U.S. would feel security with North Korea is a North Korean regime change, but they acknowledge the limits and risks of unilateral U.S. actions to force a regime change in the North. Therefore, they emphasize the importance of the Chinese role in replacing the Kim Jong-il regime.[36] Nevertheless, it is not clear whether China would support the U.S. in removing Kim Jong-il from power. Those options suggested by the conservatives are based on purely hypothetical assumptions that the Chinese would be enthusiastic in joining with the U.S. to create a new regime in North Korea, if the U.S. would allow it to be a pro-Chinese communist regime.

President Bush reportedly somewhat favors the coercive strategy recommended by the conservatives, but he does not want to stir up another controversial issue in the campaign for the upcoming presidential election. Therefore, the Bush administration emphasizes the diplomatic resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue through six-party talks. If negotiations stall without producing tangible results even after his reelection, however, the U.S. would likely take the North Korean issue to the UN Security Council to adopt a sanctions resolution against North Korea.

If a candidate from the Democratic Party were to win the presidential election, the U.S. would take a more flexible and practical attitude towards North Korea. That means a new Democratic administration would show some degree of compromise in dealing with the nuclear issue by accepting the North Korea's proposal of a package solution with simultaneous action, and it would pick up the missile deal where

36 Stephen F. Morris, "Averting the Unthinkable," *The National Interest*, No. 74, Winter 2003/4, pp. 106-107.

the Clinton team left off. Although the U.S. would adopt specific step-by-step measures to solve the North Korean issue, it would never give up its demand that North Korea abandon its nuclear program completely and undergo thorough verification. Therefore, in the case of future U.S.- DPRK talks, the issue of verification would be the main issue of contention.

NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR CRISIS AND THE SIX-PARTY TALKS: ISSUES AND PROSPECT

Park Jongchul

This article will analyze the structure of conflicts concerning the North Korean nuclear crisis. First, the process of the North Korean nuclear crisis will be reviewed. The legacy of the Geneva Agreement, the emergence of second nuclear crisis, the interaction patterns of North Korea and the United States, and the pursuit of multilateral talks will be examined. After examining the contrasting views in the Six-Party Talks, prospects will be made concerning the evolution of the nuclear issue. Finally, policy proposals for the resolution of the issue will be suggested.

Introduction

After the DPRK withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993, the North Korea nuclear problem became a key issue that influenced the Korean peninsula and international affairs until the Geneva Agreement (Agreed Framework) was reached. The North

International Journal of Korean Unification Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2004, pp. 85-112.

Korean nuclear issue reemerged on the international stage after some 10 years with Pyongyang's admission of a highly enriched uranium program in October 2002. After the United States suspended the supply of heavy fuel oil in response to the confession, North Korea reactivated its nuclear reactors and expelled International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors. After it withdrew from the NPT and admitted possession of nuclear weapons, North Korea became uncertain and unpredictable on nuclear issues.

In order to evaluate the North Korean nuclear issue, the complicated characteristics of the problem should be considered. The North Korea nuclear problem exhibits the following characteristics in terms of the nature of the problem, relevant issues, and players. First, the North Korean nuclear issue is significant as a model case of international dispute in the post-cold war. Through an attempt to develop nuclear weapons, North Korea is challenging international concerns about the proliferation of WMD. North Korea is a model case of a country with a complicated geopolitical background that is attempting to develop WMD. Especially after the U.S. military campaign in Iraq, the world's attention is now focused on how U.S. policy towards North Korea will take shape.

Second, the North Korean nuclear issue is also relevant to the dynamics of the Korean peninsula and the surrounding Northeast Asian countries. The North Korean nuclear issue is closely related to diverse issues such as inter-Korean relations, the effects of containment and inducement policies, the future of the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance, and the dynamics of relations in Northeast Asia. The formula that emerges in the process of solving the issue could operate as a fundamental framework for reordering relations on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia.

Third, the North Korea nuclear problem is a multi-dimensional and complex issue. The North Korean nuclear issue is not only a matter of military security, but also a matter of politics, economics, and technology. Moreover, as step-by-step roadmaps are being examined, a number of aspects concerning the issues are becoming interconnected. Therefore, these correlations and the possibilities of resolving related issues are becoming the objectives of discussion.

Fourth, various players are related to the North Korean nuclear issue. The primary parties concerned are the United States and North Korea. In addition, other related countries like South Korea, Japan, Russia, China, and international organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the IAEA are playing a minor role. It is interesting to note that the role of each player is not determined by a scripted plot, but is changeable, according to developments of the situation and the intentions of the players. As the drama unfolds, each player will take various measures to form its own image and ensure its role.

Fifth, it is possible for negotiations on the nuclear issue to proceed simultaneously through various parallel negotiation channels. Currently, the six-party talks are a main channel, but various bilateral and tripartite forms are working along with the six-party talks. Theses various negotiating channels sometimes complement each other, but at other times may become mutually contradictory and hindering.

Sixth, some aspects of the settlement of the nuclear issue will cause a qualitative change in the dynamics of the Northeast Asian region. In the case of the nuclear issue being resolved, inter-Korean relations, U.S.-DPRK relations, and DPRK-Japan relations would go through structural changes in various forms. In addition, the effects of the nuclear issue would cause changes in the U.S.-ROK alliance and change the relationships among the three parties: South Korea, North Korea, and the United States.[1]

This article will analyze the structure of the conflict concerning the North Korean nuclear crisis. First, the process of North Korean nuclear

1 Jong Chul Park, *The United States and the Two Koreas: The Trilateral Relationship of Conflict and Cooperation* (Seoul: Oreum 2002), pp. 83-87.

crisis will be reviewed. The legacy of the Geneva Agreement, the emergence of second nuclear crisis, the interaction patterns of North Korea and the United States, and the pursuit of multilateral talks will be examined. After examining the contrasting views in the six-party talks, prospects will be made concerning the evolution of the nuclear issue. Finally, policy proposals for the resolution of the issue will be suggested.

The Unfolding of the North Korean Nuclear Crisis

Legacy of the Geneva Agreement

The U.S.-DPRK Geneva Agreement in 1994 not only became a milestone for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully, but also functioned as a framework influencing U.S.-DPRK relations, inter-Korean relations, and regional order in Northeast Asia. The assumptions and plans for implementation included in the Geneva Agreement are still operating as a legacy influencing North Korean issues and order in Northeast Asia. To bring about a solution to the reemerging North Korea nuclear development issue, it is necessary to examine the legacies of the Geneva Agreement.

The Geneva Agreement was a testing ground of the engagement policies of the Bill Clinton administration in the post-cold war era. The Clinton administration declared an enlargement and engagement policy as strategic guidelines for the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War environment.[2] According to this new strategic planning, North Korea, at one time an enemy of the United States, became an enlargement policy objective to be brought into the sphere of U.S. influence.

2 U.S. Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia Pacific Region* (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, February 1995).

To carry out this enlargement strategy, a policy of persuasion and reward was suggested instead of a policy of containment and punishment. These policy approaches were an important means in the process of nuclear negotiations with North Korea and realization of the Geneva Agreement.

Against the backdrop of the Geneva Agreement, gradual rapprochement between Washington and Pyongyang was possible. In addition, resumption of normalization talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang was carried out. Moreover, the inter-Korean summit in June 2000 was held because the North Korean nuclear issue was handled by the Geneva Agreement.

However, after the inauguration of the Bush administration, the Agreed Framework was subjected to an overall reexamination. The Bush administration worried that the investigation into North Korea's past nuclear activities had been postponed due to the delay in the construction of the light water reactors, and because the Geneva Agreement focused on freezing North Korea's nuclear weapons program, the issue of its past nuclear activity was postponed until construction of the reactors could be completed.

The United States believed that the freezing of Pyongyang's nuclear program under the Geneva Agreement was not sufficiently thorough, and that stricter inspections of the DPRK's nuclear facilities should be carried out through revision of the agreement. Transparency concerning North Korea's past nuclear activity is also related to the light water reactor project schedule. According to the Geneva Agreement, North Korea was supposed to allow temporary and general inspections in compliance with the safeguards agreement as the key components for the light water reactors were delivered to North Korea. However, since it takes three to four years to carry out nuclear inspections, inspections of North Korean nuclear facilities should have started at least by the year 2002.

In addition, the Geneva Agreement has no guaranteed mechanism

for its implementation. The agreement is designed as a framework that relates North Korea's freezing of its nuclear program with gradual compensation from the United States. Therefore, when the implementation of the agreement is delayed by a breach in obligation by either party or from an unforeseen crisis, it becomes difficult to implement the entire framework. Moreover, there are no regulations concerning a breach of the agreement and no set of provisions to guarantee its implementation. In addition, since the Geneva Agreement is a two-party accord between the United States and North Korea, there is no third party or international organization to supervise its implementation.

The Bush administration believes that the Geneva Agreement taught North Korea the wrong lesson by rewarding its brinkmanship tactics. The Bush administration argues that providing rewards to North Korea that disobeyed international norms actually tempts Pyongyang to seek further benefits through intimidation and threats.

The Advent of North Korea's HEU Program

The basic direction of the Bush administration's North Korea policy was announced on June 6, 2001. Bush would hold U.S.-DPRK talks to improve the implementation of the Geneva Agreement, to resolve the issue of Pyongyang's missile development and missile technology exports, and to reduce its conventional forces threat. President Bush announced that he would take a comprehensive approach to these issues in relation to inter-Korean relations, establishment of peace on the Korean peninsula, improvement of U.S.-DPRK relations, and security on the Korean peninsula. In addition, he expressed interest in removing sanctions and seeking improvement of U.S-DPRK relations in response to positive steps taken by Pyongyang.[3] U.S.-DPRK talks

3 Statement by President George W. Bush, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, June 6, 2001, USKOREA@PD.STATE.GOV.

were resumed in New York on June 13, 2001, but ended after one round without any definite outcome.

In September 2002, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Pyongyang for a summit with Kim Jong Il, and the DPRK-Japan Pyongyang Joint Declaration announced a new attempt at reconciliation. As North Korea displayed gestures of reconciliation toward the international community through the summit talks with Japan, U.S. Assistant Secretary James Kelly visited North Korea on October 3, 2002 as a special envoy of the president of the United States. After his visit, Kelly stated at a press conference that he expressed to North Korea officials the U.S. concerns over the DPRK's nuclear and missile development programs, the development and exports of WMD, the threats from its conventional military force, and its violation of human rights. He mentioned that he had suggested to the counterparts that U.S.-DPRK relations could be improved if Pyongyang made a comprehensive effort to address these concerns.[4]

However, on October 17, 2002, with the U.S. State Department's announcement that North Korea acknowledged its HEU program in response to the evidence of that plan presented by Kelly, the North Korean nuclear issue entered a new phase.[5] Although there had been much debate about the intention of North Korea's admission of a nuclear program,[6] the discussions came to an end after North Korea's official acknowledgment of its plan. A spokesman for North Korea's

4 Daily Press Briefing of State Department by Richard Boucher on October 7, 2002, On Assistant Secretary Kelly's visit to Pyongyang, http://www.state.gov.

5 Daily Press Briefing of State Department by Richard Boucher on October 17, 2002, http://www.state.gov.

6 Regarding North Korea's nuclear intentions, there were opinions that it was just bluffing and that it was not an actual admission. Wook-shik Cheong, "The Truth about North Korea's Admission to a Nuclear Development Program," *Forum on North Korea's Admission to a Nuclear Weapon's Program and Media Reporting*, jointly sponsored by The Korea Federation of Media Worker's Unions and Citizen's Coalition for Democratic Media, October 23, 2002.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated: "We clearly mentioned that in order to protect our national sovereignty and right to survival from the nuclear threat posed by the United States, and we have come to possess not only nuclear weapons, but also more powerful weapons than that," which made it clear that Pyongyang had a plan to develop nuclear weapons.[7]

With North Korea's admission of having a HEU program, the character of North Korea's nuclear issue fundamentally changed. The Geneva Agreement was intended to prevent North Korea from developing plutonium-based nuclear weapons and from extracting plutonium in the future, while deferring the issue of its past nuclear development. However, because of the HEU program, the North Korean nuclear problem is not only a matter of preventing the DPRK's acquisition of plutonium, but also curbing its HEU program.[8]

During the negotiations in Geneva, North Korea's intention in developing nuclear weapons remained a mystery. With its HEU program, North Korea's intentions have come under question again; according to the DPRK's reasons for developing nuclear weapons, the context of negotiations changes. Generally, national security, domestic political reasons, and national prestige are reasons for developing nuclear weapons.[9] North Korea pursues nuclear weapons for security, domestic political solidarity, and international status, as well. In addition, North Korea hopes to use their nuclear program as leverage in order to receive economic favors and to have negotiations with the United States.

Some analysts explain North Korea's development of a nuclear weapons program as a way to deal with security threats. According to

7 *Korean Central News Agency*, October 25, 2002.

8 Ju Seok Suh, "Prospects for U.S.-DPRK Relations after the North Korea Nuclear Sensation" *National Strategy*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (December 2002), pp.30-33.

9 Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter 1996 / 1997).

this view, military might is all the DPRK can rely upon, as it is inferior in all other aspects of national power. With North Korea's economic difficulties, its conventional military forces have become weaker. As a result, the leadership in Pyongyang cannot help but rely on the development of WMD. According to this view, the only reason North Korea accepted negotiations with the United States was to ease international pressure and to gain more time to develop its nuclear program.[10]

If we assume that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons as a last resort to maintain its regime, then the possibility that North Korea will scrap its weapons program through negotiations is unlikely. If this is the case, the countermeasures are likely to be centered on a hard-line policy of deterrence and sanctions. Hardliners in Washington assume that even though North Korea agreed to the Geneva Agreement, it has been developing a secret nuclear program. Even if North Korea accepts the benefits of negotiations, it will not easily give up a nuclear program that it believes is its last means for ensuring security.[11]

Second, there is the view that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons to enhance its international status and for the purpose of domestic propaganda. According to this perspective, unless a plan to enhance its international status is suggested, North Korea will not easily abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Third, other analysts believe that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons as a tool for negotiations in order to procure material benefits. From North Korea's perspective, it can acquire more political and economic gain through nuclear negotiations than through actual nuclear development. If negotiations fail, North Korea still retains the potential to develop nuclear weapons. In particular, as North Korea observed

10 James A. Bayer, "The North Korean Nuclear Crisis and The Agreed Framework: How Not to Negotiate with North Korea," *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall-Winter 1995), p. 192.

11 Chuck Downs, *Over the Line: North Korea's Negotiating Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1999), pp. 247-252.

economic incentives being offered by the United States to the Ukraine and Kazakhstan for their abandonment of nuclear weapons, it has also expected economic compensation from Washington.[12]

The opinion that North Korea was motivated by a need to have bargaining chips for negotiations gained prominence through the Geneva Agreement. Negotiations on the nuclear issue offered an appropriate level of compensation for Pyongyang.[13] However, when it was discovered that North Korea is developing HEU program, the opinion that nuclear development is for the purpose of negotiations alone began to receive criticism. Even after North Korea agreed with the Geneva Agreement, it did not entirely give up its nuclear program. People who emphasize the negotiation factor explain the HEU program as a reaction to the Bush administration's conservative policy towards North Korea. However, hardliners have pointed out that North Korea had been pursuing a HEU program since 1998 during the Clinton administration—a period when the U.S.-DPRK relations were improving. The theory of negotiations as a motivational factor, therefore, lacks validity.

On this point, it is not easy to determine clearly whether the intention of North Korea in developing nuclear weapons was national defense, improvement of international status, domestic propaganda, or for use in negotiations. North Korea could have considered all these factors. It would have considered as many factors as possible and would want to possess various options to deal with them. North Korea's intentions and policy priorities could change according to the unfolding of the situation and circumstances. North Korea's motivation to develop nuclear weapons, rather than being set in stone, could also again change according to contextual changes in the future.

12 For more on U.S. incentives offered to the Ukraine and Russia for their abandonment of nuclear weapons see John C. Baker, *Non-Proliferation Incentives for Russia and Ukraine*, Adelphi Paper 309 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997).

13 Leon V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 10-14.

Escalated Conflict

After North Korea admitted to its nuclear program, tension increased as Washington and Pyongyang faced off for an offensive and defensive battle. While focusing on Iraq, the United States chose to use delaying tactics in order for the nuclear issue to not hinder its engagement with Baghdad, and it continued to restrain North Korea through the multilateral framework of the international community. Instead of responding immediately to North Korea's confrontational actions, the United States tried to bring the issue to international attention by pointing out that Pyongyang was in violation of global standards. With the belief that it would be difficult for the United States to carry out coercive measures toward North Korea until the end of the war in Iraq, the DPRK tested the United States by its brinkmanship strategies, insisting that the demands of both sides be met in an overall package deal.

The United States pointed out that North Korea's nuclear program was in violation of the NPT, IAEA Safeguards Agreement, Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and the Geneva Agreement. It demanded that Pyongyang abandon its program. The United States demanded that North Korea's nuclear program be dismantled in an immediate, visible, and verifiable way.

On the other hand, Washington repeatedly emphasized its resolve to settle the issue peacefully, but it insisted it would not allow the DPRK to possess nuclear weapons. President Bush stated on November 15, 2002 that the United States has no intention of attacking North Korea and will seek to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully.[14] The prin-

14 News Conference of President George W. Bush, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases, November 15, 2002.

ciple of a peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue was reconfirmed several times through U.S. senior officials such as Secretary of State Colin Powell. The U.S position of peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue was somewhat related to the growing crisis with Iraq and the deployment of troops to the Gulf. In addition, the United States reflected Seoul's appeals for a peaceful solution and was attempting to acquire justification for its hard-line policy in the event of the worst-case scenario.

While declaring a policy of peaceful resolution, the United States undertook gradual coercive measures against North Korea. At the KEDO executive board meeting on November 15, 2002, the board decided that supplies of heavy fuel oil would be suspended in December. In addition, the board announced that if North Korea's attitude did not change, the KEDO project would be reexamined.

Through cooperation with the international community, the United States utilized global pressure in demanding that North Korea scrap its nuclear program. During the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting, South Korea, the United States, and Japan announced a Joint Statement on October 27, 2002 urging North Korea to drop its nuclear program. The APEC Chairman's Declaration on October 28, 2002 upheld denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and insisted on the abandonment of North Korea's nuclear weapons program. The IAEA chose on November 29, 2002 to draft a resolution urging North Korea to drop its weapons program and implement safeguards. It then passed a resolution on February 12, 2003, referring the issue to the UN Security Council. Through these steps, the North Korean nuclear issue was referred to the UN as it was in 1993. Consequently, a UN Security Council board meeting was held on April 10, 2003. Since China opposed the nuclear issue being discussed at the Security Council, neither the UN resolution nor the Security Council chairman's statement could be adopted.[15]

15 A spokesman for China's foreign ministry expressed the position that China did not want the issue referred to the UN Security Council, and instead of discussing the nuclear issue in the council, China could take the role of a mediator with the hope of starting talks between the United States and North Korea, *Joongang Daily Newspaper*, March 25, 2003.

Meanwhile, Pyongyang sought U.S. attention by gradually increasing threats and adopting a policy urging negotiations while Washington continued to pursue its policy of hostile neglect. After North Korea declared it was restarting its nuclear program on December 12, 2002, it removed IAEA surveillance equipment on December 21, 2002, and expelled IAEA inspectors on December 27, 2002. North Korea declared its withdrawal from the NPT on January 10, 2003. When North Korea withdrew from the NPT in March 1993, the nuclear crisis surged and U.S.-DPRK talks resumed afterwards. However, despite this most recent withdrawal from the NPT, the United States has not accepted negotiations. Then, North Korea raised the danger level by transferring spent fuel rods on January 31, 2003 and restarting its 5MWe reactor on February 26, 2003. Moreover, during the Beijing three-party talks in April 2003, North Korea proposed a step-by-step resolution, yet ventured across redlines established by the United States by stating it possesses nuclear weapons and started reprocessing spent fuel.

Multilateral Framework

A Search for Multilateral Approach: The Three-Party Talks

In the early stages of the reemerging North Korean nuclear issue, the United States held fast to a hard-line stance: "Abandon nuclear weapons first, talk afterwards." There would be no talks with North Korea unless it completely abandons its nuclear program. However, the U.S position changed to "talks possible, negotiations impossible" after the ROK-U.S.-Japan TCOG meeting in early January 2002. The

U.S. policy is that it is possible to have talks with North Korea, but not possible to have negotiations on terms that involve compromise. However, the United States softened its stance and started to express consideration of compensation to North Korea after it abandons its nuclear program. President Bush proposed a "bold initiative" on January 14, 2003, stating that if North Korea gives up its nuclear weapons program, food and energy can be provided.[16] Richard Armitage, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, mentioned that a non-aggression pact would not be possible because of congressional opposition, but it is possible to express non-aggression intentions in the form of an official declaration or exchange of letters.[17]

In January 2003, various efforts were made to seek U.S.-DPRK talks. Governor Bill Richardson and Han Song Ryol, North Korea's deputy permanent representative at the UN, held an unofficial meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico that discussed the possibility for talks. Technical problems concerning the nuclear issue were discussed at a meeting between U.S nuclear experts and representatives from the DPRK's Department of Atomic Energy in Berlin, Germany. The role of China as a mediator in the U.S.- DPRK talks manifested by visits to North Korea of high-ranking Chinese officials in early March and a visit to China by North Korea's Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission, Cho Myong Rok, in mid-March.[18]

While the possibilities for U.S.-DPRK talks were explored, the end to the war in Iraq promoted a situation for the pursuit of dialogue. With the early victory in Iraq, the United States gained the confidence and time to focus its attention on the North Korea issue. After carefully observing the unfolding progress of the war in Iraq, North Korea felt the urgent need to have talks as it realized it might be the next target. Under these circumstances, North Korea expressed its intentions to

16 *Joonang Daily Newspaper*, January 16, 2003.

17 *Joongang Daily Newspaper*, January 20, 2003.

18 *Chosun Daily Newspaper*, April 17, 2003

accept multilateral talks through a foreign ministry spokesman interview on April 12, 2003.[19]

Mediating between North Korea's insistence on U.S.-DPRK bilateral talks and the U.S. demand for multilateral talks now became possible. Regarding the formation of multilateral talks, while various plans were discussed such as the six-party talks (South Korea, North Korea, the U.S., Japan, China, Russia), ten-party talks (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, South Korea, North Korea, Japan, European Union, Australia), the three-party format with North Korea, the United States, and China was chosen as an initial formula for negotiations. When North Korea refused the suggestion of multilateral talks by the United States, China proposed the three-party talks as an alternative plan and obtained agreement from the United States and North Korea.

As the first step to resolving the issue in the three-party talks in Beijing from April 23-25, 2003, problems arose in relation to the nature of the talks, the present situation of North Korea's nuclear program, and the agenda. Washington defined the three-party talks as preliminary before substantial multilateral talks and insisted that South Korea and Japan participate in subsequent talks. However, Pyongyang maintained that China offered only a venue, and the meeting would technically be bilateral talks between the United States and North Korea. Instead of opposing discussions on the nuclear issue at the UN Security Council, China recommended the three-party talks as an extension of its policy to resolve the problem through U.S.-DPRK talks. It seemed that China was satisfied with its role as a mediator rather than as a party taking an active stance.

On the other hand, questions regarding the current situation of North Korea's nuclear program were raised before the three-party talks were held. Just before the talks, a DPRK spokesman of the For-

19 *Korean Central News Agency*, 2003. 4.12.

eign Affairs Ministry stated: "We are successfully reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods at the final phase." This statement raised questions about the capacity of North Korea's nuclear reprocessing activities. The English translation of the statement, which indicated that North Korea had completed the reprocessing, cast doubt on whether the talks would even be held. However, North Korea pointed out that there was an error in the English translation and stated that reprocessing had not been completed. Thus, the three-party talks were held as planned.[20]

However, during the talks, the conflict intensified when the DPRK representative insinuated that North Korea already had nuclear weapons and had completed reprocessing. In light of this surprise, the incident involving North Korea's incorrect English translation before the talks may have been an intentional mistake meant to test the intentions of the United States. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld mentioned on various occasions that there is the possibility North Korea has enough plutonium to make one or two nuclear bombs or may already have one or two bombs in its possession.[21] Therefore, North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons was not a new fact. With North Korea's shift from a position of No Confirmation-No Denial (NCND) to that of admission of possession of nuclear weapons, it became necessary to consider a concrete countermeasure policy.

North Korea suggested a step-by-step settlement plan at the talks. It required the resumption of heavy fuel oil provisions, the continuation of construction on the light water reactor project, the conclusion of a non-aggression pact, the normalization of relations, and its removal from the U.S. list of terrorism- sponsoring states. In return, it would freeze its nuclear activity and completely abandon its nuclear weapons

20 *Joongang Daily Newspaper*, April 19, 2003; April 21, 2003.

21 U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld commented at a press conference on October 17th 2002 that North Korea already has one or two nuclear bombs in its possession, *Yonhap News*, October 18, 2002.

program.[22] For the sake of the negotiations, North Korea proposed a step-by-step resolution plan on the one hand and, on the other, it admitted to having nuclear weapons and reprocessing in order to increase its leverage in the negotiations.

Issues and Contrasting Views in the Six-Party Talks

Following the tripartite meeting concerning North Korea's nuclear program, it was agreed that six-party talks would be held. North Korea expressed its willingness to accommodate the North-U.S. dialogue within the framework of the multi-party talks via Chinese President Hu Jin-tao, who was attending the G-8 meeting held in Evian, France on June 1, 2003. Thus, China again played a role of mediator between the North and the U.S. Chinese Senior Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bing-guo paid a visit to Pyongyang on July 14, 2003 and urged Kim Jong-il to participate in the multi-party talks; he also concurred with the views of U.S. State Secretary Colin Powell on a visit to Washington. As a result, the first round of the six-party talks was held from August 27 to 29, 2003 with the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan.

Several factors were considered in deciding on the six-party talks. The U.S. had insisted on holding five-party talks including South Korea and Japan, while China wished to hold further rounds of the tripartite (North Korea-the U.S.-China) talks, while Russia requested that six-party talks (including itself) be held. It appears that the North's position was considered in deciding on the six-party talks: Recognizing that South Korea, the U.S. and Japan form a united stance with respect to its nuclear program, the North wanted Russia, its long time ally, to participate in multi-party talks. As it were, what the North wanted to see was its sphere of activities expanded as much as possible with the

22 *DongA Ilbo*, April 28, 2003.

support of China and Russia, but against the cooperative stance taken by South Korea, the U.S. and Japan.

The six-party talks are useful for the following reasons: They will provide a chance to settle the crisis caused by the North's nuclear program in a diplomatic manner, in addition to having the North's real aim confirmed, and foster conditions to deter the North from engaging in nuclear brinkmanship. From the U.S.'s point of view, rupture of the six-party talks will provide a reason to take severe measures against the North.

In outward appearance, the six-party talks have South Korea, the U.S. and Japan on the one side, and North Korea, China and Russia on the other. But in reality, the talks are led by the North and the U.S., with South Korea and China playing secondary roles, and Japan and Russia tertiary roles. Aside from the six-party talks, various types of official and unofficial meetings have been held, including those between the North and the U.S., the North and China, and the North and Russia, as well as tripartite meetings between South Korea, the U.S. and Japan, and between North Korea, China and Russia.

The first round of the six-party talks has historical significance in that it was the first international meeting between the two Koreas and the four powers, where each played a role in dividing the two Koreas. In addition, the six-party talks may be looked upon as an attempt to internationalize problems that occur on the Korean peninsula. One positive outcome of the first round of the six-party talks was the consensus formed concerning the need to hold further rounds of the talks. It was also agreed that no action should be taken that may aggravate the present situation, and that a second round of the talks should commence in the near future. However, one drawback was that the schedule for the second round of talks was not fixed immediately; only the host country's summarized statement was announced, as opposed to a joint statement, due to the gap in the participating countries' positions and the North's negative stance.

The second round of the six-party talks was held from February 25 to 28, 2004 after six months of the first round of the meeting. The second meeting achieved some results compared to the first one. The Chairman's statement at the meeting included the followings: A nuclear weapons-free Korean peninsula, peaceful resolution of the problem, taking coordinated steps, forming a working group, and holding the third round meeting.[23]

The second round meeting discussed detailed issues, while the first round one was a kind of overture. Although the parties concerned never reached an agreement on critical issues, several issues were highlighted for the next meeting. Overall, the U.S. and Japan shared hardline position, while China and Russia showed a sympathetic attitude towards North Korea's claims. As South Korea basically agreed to the U.S. view on the ultimate dismantlement of the nuclear program, it attempted to find a compromise by suggesting energy provision to North Korea in return for its freezing of nuclear programs.

Four issues were raised in the second round six-party talks: Scope of nuclear dismantlement, Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) program, compensation for freezing of the nuclear program, and security guarantee for North Korea. Among these, the first two issues are related to the degree of completeness of dismantlement, while the remaining two issues were about economic and security incentives for North Korea.

The first critical issue was the scope of dismantlement of the nuclear program. The U.S. and Japan strongly insisted Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement (CVID) of all forms of nuclear programs including peaceful use of nuclear power. Even if North Korean accepted the ceasing of development of nuclear weapons, it claimed the right of peaceful use of nuclear power. While China agreed to the CVID in principle, Russia was willing to allow peaceful use of nuclear power by North Korea. South Korea, siding with CVID, implied a

23 Chairman's Statement for The Second Round of Six-Party Talks, February 28, 2004.

review of granting peaceful use of nuclear energy by North Korea after North Korea abandons all forms of nuclear programs.

Secondly, the Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) program was one of the stumbling blocks in the negotiation. The HEU problem is itself the cause that brought about the second North Korean nuclear crisis. Although the U.S. is expected to find evidence of North Korea's HEU program, it is reluctant to make it public due to the apprehension that North Korea might conceal the HEU facilities in such a case.[24] North Korea strongly denies the HEU program and insists on evidence prove it. Japan and South Korea support the U.S. position in insisting on abandonment of the HEU. China and Russia took a middle-of-the-road position. China's position is that the HEU problem can be discussed if the evidence is presented. Russia suggested that the HEU problem can be reviewed in the working group meeting, or in the process of freezing the nuclear program.

The third issue is the compensation measures in return for the freezing of North Korea's nuclear program. In particular, North Korea was expected to ask for energy aid in exchange for the freezing. China and South Korea were positive to the North Korea's proposal, as they expressed their willingness to participate in the energy aid program for North Korea. China and South Korea tried to reduce tensions and steer towards finding a way for compromise by raising the energy aid issue. Although the U.S. and Japan had negative reactions to the energy aid idea at first, they finally expressed their understanding of the idea by the persuasion of China and South Korea.

The last issue is the security guarantee to North Korea. North Korea consistently claimed the renunciation of the U.S. antagonistic policy towards North Korea as a condition of the dismantlement of its nuclear program. In particular, Pyongyang enumerated specific

24 James Kelly's Testimony at the Hearing of the U.S. Senate, March 2, 2004, http://ifins.org/pages/kison-archiv-kn545.thm.

<Contrasting Views on Core Issues in the Six-Party Talks>

	Scope of Nuclear Dismantlement	HEU	Incentives for Freezing Nuclear Facilities	Security Guarantee for North Korea
The U.S.	CVID on all forms of nuclear activities	Dismantlement of HEU, having HEU related information	Understanding of the energy provision to North Korea for its freezing	Security guarantee and diplomatic improvement after CVID
North Korea	Dismantlement of nuclear weapons, but maintaining right of peaceful use of nuclear power	Denial of HEU, insisting on its evidence	Asking energy for freezing nuclear facilities	Ceasing of U.S. confrontational policy towards North Korea
Japan	CVID on all forms of nuclear activities	Dismantlement of HEU	Understanding of energy provision to North Korea	Multilateral guarantee after resolution of kidnapping issue and missile development
China	Agreement to CVID	Discussion on HEU after suggestion of its evidence by the U.S.	Contributing to energy provision to North Korea for freezing	Multilateral guarantee and additional guarantee by China and Russia to North Korea
Russia	Agreement to CVID, but permitting peaceful use of nuclear power	Discussion on HEU in the process of freezing	Contributing to energy provision to North Korea	Multilateral guarantee and additional guarantee by China and Russia to North Korea
South Korea	Agreement to CVID, but reviewing North Korea's peaceful use of nuclear power after CVID	Dismantlement of HEU	Contributing to energy provision to North Korea	Three-step security guarantee: Expression of intention of security guarantee, temporary security guarantee, permanent security guarantee

items of renunciation of the U.S. antagonistic policy: Confirmation of non-aggression to North Korea, diplomatic normalization between the U.S. and North Korea, and lifting economic sanctions against North Korea. Washington has stuck to its previous position as it suggested the possibility of a security guarantee to North Korea and diplomatic normalization after CVID. Japan attempted to broaden certain points in the talks by adding more conditions to the security guarantee: Abandonment of missile development, and the problem of kidnapping Japanese. China and Russia shared a view that the two countries can provide an additional security guarantee as well as a multilateral security mechanism within the six-party talks. South Korea proposed the most concrete, three-stage security measures to North Korea: Expression of intention of security guarantee to North Korea, interim security guarantee, and permanent security guarantee.

Prospects

Breakdown or Breakthrough

Regarding the North Korean nuclear issue, we can assume three possibilities: a worsening of the crisis, an early settlement of the issue, or a gradual settlement. The first case implies that talks will break down, leading to a deepening of the crisis. Talks will not go smoothly because the Bush administration emphasizes reciprocity, verification, and monitoring, while at the same time assuming a critical attitude towards providing rewards. Likewise, North Korea is unlikely to yield in the talks because it also wants to hold onto WMD as a last means of survival.

However, there is little possibility that the United States will carry out preemptive strikes against North Korea. As the war in Iraq ended, President Bush excluded the possibility of a military campaign against

North Korea and indicated that he would seek dialogues as a means to solve the problem of Pyongyang's pursuit of WMD. Considering both South Korea's and China's opposition to any form of U.S. preemptive strike on North Korea and the security of U.S. military personnel stationed in the South, it is difficult for the United States to use military force. In addition, the use of armed forces would be accompanied by North Korean counterattack.

The second scenario envisions an early settlement. In accordance with the progress of talks, an overall agreement in all areas might be reached or detailed agreements might be made according to each issue. However, there is very little possibility of such an early settlement because of the many pending issues and the sharp opposition on both sides.

Gradual Settlement

The third scenario presents a settlement gradually brought about after many ups and downs. Although talks are sustained, reaching an agreement will take significant time. In this scenario, partial compromise on North Korea's nuclear issue will be made and an agreement will be reached step-by-step despite the repeated breakdown.

The Bush administration is expected to maintain a dual policy of dialogue and pressure against North Korea until the presidential election in November 2004. The U.S. considers applying pressure on the North by Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and psychological warfare. The U.S. pressure against the North includes extension of the broadcast hours of Radio Free Asia (24 hours a day from 4 hours), passage of the bill for distribution of radios for North Koreans, North Korean Freedom Confederation (NKFC) led by human rights activists and religious organizations in the U.S., and passage of the bill for accommodation of North Korean refugees through the Senate. The ceasing of the work for the light reactor project is also a part of the U.S.

pressure against the North.

If the six-party talks produce no results, Washington is likely to adopt a tailored containment policy towards North Korea in the course of the talks. The tailored containment policy may include various sanctions: Withdrawing humanitarian aid, a UN resolution towards North Korea, selective sea blockades to curb North Korean's export of weapons, attempts to stop pro-North Koreans living in Japan from providing financial support, reduction of trade between North Korea and China, and halting technological and educational support by international organizations.[25]

Nevertheless, it is expected that the U.S. will place more emphasis on peaceful settlement of the North Korea nuclear problem through the six-party talks. This expectation results from several domestic constraints of the U.S.: The ever-increasing burden of the prolonged stay of its troops in Iraq, the aggravation of their economic situation, and the forthcoming Presidential election.

North Korea, for its part, appears to be adopting a dual policy (i.e. attempting to enhance its position in negotiations with the U.S. by means of brinkmanship), while trying to make its nuclear weapons an established fact if the negotiations break down. On October 3, 2003, the spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry announced the country's plan to enhance its "nuclear deterrent" through operation of a 5-MW nuclear reactor, construction of an additional graphite reactor, and use of plutonium obtained as a result of the reprocessing of 8,000 spent fuel rods.

North Korea will use brinkmanship tactics to increase negotiating leverage, while adopting a more detailed policy means through "salami tactics." In particular, North Korea's brinkmanship tactics such as demanding unilateral concessions from the other party, bluffing and

25 Michael R. Gordon, "North Korea Faces Isolation over Reactors," *The New York Times*, December 29, 2002.

threatening, establishing deadlines of its own choosing, and breaking off talks will erect barriers to finding a solution.[26]

However, the North knows that its rejection of further rounds of the six-party talks will lead to its own isolation in the international community, and will worsen food and energy shortages. Therefore, the North is showing a reconciliatory attitude in the six-party talks and refraining from escalating the tension.

Despite the contrasting view between North Korea and the United States, both realize the necessity and inevitability of dialogue and are expected to try to find a solution despite the bumps along the road during negotiations. Both sides recognize that it is not easy to find an opportunity for resolution if their demands are not dealt with through dialogue. The United States has expressed its commitment to a peaceful resolution without an appeal to arms, while North Korea suggests that, through dialogue, it is willing to abandon its nuclear development program.

As the six-party talks maintain its momentum, core issues in a tedious series of negotiations are the format of the talks, the sequence of implementation of agreements, and means of remuneration for North Korea.

First of all, the six-party talks should be periodically held, with systemized methods of operation, and in order to systemize talks, it is necessary to form working-level groups in charge of individual agenda: Verification of the North's nuclear program, a security guarantee for the North, and economic support for the North.

The working-level group in charge of verification of the North's nuclear program should work out efficient methods of carrying out inspections of the North's nuclear facilities. In addition to the IAEA's inspections, it is necessary to form a multinational group (consisting of

26 Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior* (Washington. D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), pp. 68-96.

South Korea, the U.S., Japan and Russia). It is also necessary to insist on inspection of nuclear facilities based on the Joint Statement for Non-Nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula concluded in 1992.

The working-level group for providing a security guarantee for the North should seek both bilateral and multilateral security mechanisms. First of all, it is possible to guarantee the North by adopting a joint statement on the six-party talks. It may be considered to offer such a guarantee in the form of a multi-party treaty (or agreement or convention). It is also possible that the U.S. Congress may adopt a resolution that reaffirms the North's sovereignty.

The working-level group for economic support for the North should find diverse methods of providing economic and energy aid for the North. In the first place, the U.S. should take a series of measures for the North, including the lifting of economic sanctions against the North, removing the North from terrorism support countries, and allowing international financial institutions to grant loans to the North. Japan's provision of economic compensation for its past colonial rule to the North following normalization of diplomatic relations between the two will provide an important impetus for invigoration of the North's economy. Other alternatives include China's provision of aid to the North, including the aid for the formation of the Special Economic Zone in Shineuiju, and the promotion of joint development of the three provinces in its Northeast and nearby areas in North Korea, as well as Russia's development of natural resources in Siberia, and the linkage between the railroads on the Peninsula and the TSR.

Multi-party economic aid for the North may also be promoted, like the formation of an international consortium for energy development in the North or establishment of a Northeast Asia economic development bank for the North's economic development.

Concluding Remarks

The unfolding pattern of the North Korean nuclear issue will definitely have a critical effect on inter-Korean relations, regional order in Northeast Asia, and global security. The following policy provisions are suggested in order to solve the North Korean nuclear issue.

In anticipating various scenarios of the North Korean nuclear issue, concrete policies must be prepared to deal with each possible situation. Various policy measures should be prepared for the best-case scenario, a stalemate, or a worst-case.

Based on the results of negotiation, South Korea is likely to bear its share of economic support for North Korea. It is desirable for South Korea to provide its economic support through the international economic consortium supported by the international community. Economic support from South Korea should have beneficial returns for Seoul, such as South Korea's participation in a Siberia gas development project or other energy developments in the North, and should not be one-sided economic support for the DPRK.

In addition, guidelines need to be prepared for minimizing rising tensions and resuming talks when negotiations break down. Crisis management plans should also be prepared so that North Korea does not unexpectedly increase tensions on the peninsula when talks come to a standstill. When talks break down, South Korea should explore its mediating role through inter-Korean dialogue.

At the same time, a multi-cooperative system should be envisioned for the settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue. Its first step should focus on the trilateral coordination amongst South Korea, the United States, and Japan. A consensus among the three countries should be sought through the harmonization of differences in each party's perception of threat, policy approach, and policy means. For this purpose, the role of the TCOG should be upgraded. At the same time, comprehensive cooperation with China and Russia should be

explored.

In connection with the nuclear issue, concrete plans for cooperative projects between the two Koreas should be established. South Korea should draw a clear "red line" that indicates its disapproval of North Korea's nuclear pursuits. If North Korea complies, mutual talks between the two Koreas and economic cooperative projects should be maintained; if it crosses the red line, the South must review how to regulate the speed of economic cooperation and strengthen its vigilant posture towards North Korea.

SOUTH KOREA'S POST-9/11 SECURITY ENVIRONMENT: CURRENT KEY ISSUES AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Park Yongok*

This article presents an author's personal view with the objective of providing several recommendations for security policy and military strategic planners as to how the ROK needs to adapt itself to the post-9/11 international security environments and deal with the related defense issues. Historically, the Korean peninsula has never been free from geopolitical interests and power dynamics of the neighboring nations, largely due to its unique geographical location. This truism still holds today. As the powerful neighboring nations believe that any significant change in the state of affairs on the Korean peninsula would variously affect their own interests, they are highly likely to intervene in Korean issues, thus solutions to the Korean problems should be devised not only in the inter-Korean but also at the international dimensions. Keeping these historical perspectives in mind and with special attention to a revolutionary change in the international security environments following the events of September 11, 2001, this article addresses the major security

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challenges and the related defense issues the ROK currently face or is likely to face, and offers some policy suggestions and recommendations, which are, for convenience, delineated according to the three levels of national strategy, security strategy and military readiness.

Introduction

It is trite yet true to note that the Korean Peninsula has historically served as the geo-strategic crossing point of traditional continental and oceanic powers such as Russia, China, and Japan. In other words, the security environment in and around the Korean Peninsula has never been free from geopolitical interests and power dynamics of the neighboring nations. This truism still holds today.

Moreover, in the post-Cold War era, the Korean Peninsula is probably the only part of the world where the Cold-War reality still looms. The ROK-US and the US-Japan military alliances constitute an informal yet *de facto* framework of trilateral security cooperation among the three countries, whereas China, Russia, and North Korea—albeit their current practical differences—remain an informal cooperative network of its own, thus illustrating the lingering effects of the major powers' geopolitical interests involving the Korean Peninsula and how a balance of power is still being played out in Northeast Asia.[1]

In a similar vein, as the major powers believe that any significant

1 For an earlier discussion on the geopolitical significances of the two trilateral relationships in Northeast Asia, ROK-US-Japan and DPRK-China-Russia, see Park Yong Ok, "Korean-American-Japanese Triangle: Problems and Prospects," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter 1986); and *idem*., "Sino-Soviet-North Korean Triangle and Pyongyang's Choices," *Korea and World Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer 1986).

changes in the state of affairs on the Korean Peninsula would variously affect their own interests, depending upon the nature and direction of such changes, they are highly likely to intervene in Korean issues in order to steer the course of events to their favor. Thus, Korean issues are most likely to invite foreign interventions, and likewise, solutions to Korean problems should be devised not only at the inter-Korean but also at the international level.

Against this backdrop, this article addresses the major security challenges and the related defense issues we currently face or are likely to face. After a comprehensive yet detailed overview of Korea's security environment at the global and regional level, it offers some suggestions as to how we need to adapt ourselves to such challenges.

International Security Environment

Post-Cold War Order before September 11

The breakdown of the East European communist bloc and the former Soviet Union ushered in a new era in which the U.S. has not only consolidated its status as the world's only superpower, but led the process of globalizing such values as human rights, freedom, democracy, and market economy. The Clinton administration's "Enlargement and Engagement" stands as a shining example of such a trend and stands for new U.S.-led policies in the new era.[2]

On the other hand, U.S.-led unilateral globalization efforts have fanned international concerns, and at one time or another such major powers as France, Germany, China, and Russia sought to constrain the potential expansion of U.S. unilateralism. In particular, as the Bush

2 The While House, *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (February 1995).

administration has pursued such controversial policies as the missile defense (MD) program and refused to join the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Kyoto Protocol, there has been a steady yet unmistakable increase in international criticism.

From this point of view, the post-Cold War international order prior to 9/11 can be characterized as a "uni-polycentric system,"[3] in which there exists one superpower and several other major powers around the world. In a sense, it was transitional in nature, as the so-called "U.S. runs alone phenomenon" has yet to forge.

Post-September 11 International Order

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 were a watershed for a new and different world order, which transpired even before the "post-Cold War order" matured. It was surprise attacks carried out by a small terrorist group with no nationality and unclear location, and resulted in immeasurable damage. Furthermore, it happened at the heart of U.S. military and economic activities through unthinkable inhuman methods. It subsequently altered the fundamental framework and priority of U.S. foreign policy, and in turn, the international security environment gravitated towards U.S.-centered efforts. The post-9/11 international security environment can be described as follows.

First, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have shown the world that they can be employed as a kind of effective offensive weapon. In particular, the post-9/11 international community was awakened to the dawning reality that terrorism may well function as "the poor man's strategic weapon" with dreadful destructive power, especially if combined with

3 Huntington has defined this as uni-multipolarity indicating that there exists multipolarity in unipolarity. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower: The New Dimension of Power," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (1999), www.foreignaffairs.org.

biochemical weapons, and that it could be recklessly employed not only by terrorist groups but by other criminal organizations or even by a handful of individuals.

In addition, for the terrorists, terrorism is a means of attack that can inflict significant damage at an inexpensive cost and relatively little effort; but for the defenders, it is a completely new means of assault, that is, by definition and in reality, virtually impossible to predict as to by whom, where, and when a terrorist attack will take place. For these reasons, it is exceedingly difficult to respond or counter, thus further raising concerns in the international community.

Second, after 9/11, terrorism has emerged as a new breed of security threats, which includes both "transnational" and "non-military" threats. War against terrorism, as an effort to defeat such threats, also differs from regular warfare we have experienced up until today. There is no clear front, boundaries, or any distinctive division of combatants and civilians and no difference between military and non-military facilities. For this reason, military theorists or analysts have used such expressions as "asymmetric war" or "fourth-generation warfare" so as to indicate that the existing traditional symmetric military concepts are no longer able to respond to it effectively.[4] Indeed, if there exists one expression to depict the most salient nature of the current international security environment, it is the "globalization of threat and security."

Third, the post-9/11 international community has witnessed that war against terrorism is now almost entirely run by the U.S., as it is the focal point of today's international security concerns and a related measure for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

4 For a detailed analysis on "Fourth-generation Warfare," see Col. William S. Lind, Joseph W. Sutton and Lt. Col. Garry I. Wilson, "The Changing Face of Wars into the Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette* (1989); Arnold A. Gould and Franklin C. Spinney, "Fourth Generation Warfare Is Here," *Fall 2001 Newsletter* (University of Virginia: Center for South Asian Studies, 2001).

(WMD). The Bush administration does not regard terrorism as merely a criminal act which is simply accompanied by violence, but as an entirely new form of "war activity." Accordingly, its counter-terrorism measures are not intended to just establish 'law and order,' but to pursue and eliminate the roots of terrorism by employing a full spectrum of military measures.[5]

One underlying problem, however, is that there is no way of knowing in advance when and where U.S. interests would be threatened, and if it is attacked, what kinds of as well as what degree of damage the attack will inflict. Thus, the U.S. intends to dig out and eliminate the roots of such a threat rather than wait for such a threat and attack to take place.

For this purpose, the Bush administration has designated the war against terrorism as its top foreign-policy priority and developed a new military policy allowing the U.S. to reserve the right to carry out "pre-emptive" attacks, if necessary. Subjects of this war are no longer limited to "terrorists and those who support acts of terrorism," but now include rogue states that are engaged in the development of WMD, and dictatorial states.

Furthermore, while the U.S. seeks international cooperation from the U.N. and NATO as well as from its allies and friends as much as possible in order to carry out its war against terrorism, it is in some cases willing to take unilateral actions regardless of outside cooperation. The U.S. has made it clear that its criteria for assessing relationships with allies and friends are based on whether or not they agree to cooperate with its war against terrorism.

Fourth, the adamant stance and bold policies for anti-terrorism and prevention of WMD proliferation that the U.S. has adopted since 9/11 are now bearing fruit. One month after 9/11, the U.S. entered a war in

5 Regarding the legal aspects of the Bush administration's war against terrorism, refer to Kenneth Roth, "The Law of War in the War on Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2004).

Afghanistan, and after merely two months into the war, the U.S. annihilated Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and removed the Taliban regime, which supported the terrorist group. Following the Afghanistan War, the U.S. shifted its aim at rogue states that were in pursuit of developing WMD. The reason behind it was that the U.S. now treats "rogue states, WMD, and terrorism" to be in the same package. The war in Iraq, which broke out in March 2003, is the proof of such U.S. stance. In three weeks, the U.S. seized Baghdad and, eight months after the outbreak of the war in December, captured Saddam Hussein.

Last October, Iran declared that it would accept the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) mandatory inspection of its nuclear facilities that were allegedly designed to develop nuclear weapons.[6] In the following December, moreover, Mr. Gaddafi of Libya also officially declared that he too would give up WMD.[7] North Korea also repeatedly showed its willingness to freeze and dismantle its nuclear development program since last November, and by taking such measures as voluntarily inviting a U.S. civilian delegation in January 2004 to see the Yongbyon nuclear facilities[8] and participating in the six-nation nuclear talks, the North is showing the world that it is actively engaged in a peaceful resolution of the nuclear crisis.

Finally, while the U.S.-led war against terrorism and WMD nonproliferation are being accelerated, key nations such as the EU, China, Russia, and Japan have also tried to secure and strengthen their ties with the U.S.—even if they at the same time seek to constrain what they perceive as U.S. unilateralism. For instance, China's active engage-

6 *Yonhap News*, "Iran Signs Supplementary Agreement, Promises to Halt Nuclear Enrichment," October 21, 2003.

7 *Yonhap News*, "Libya Declares Renunciation of Its WMD," December 20, 2003.

8 A U.S. civilian delegation including Jack Prichard, former U.S. State Department special envoy for negotiation with North Korea visited various areas such as Yongbyon nuclear facilities in North Korea for five days (January 6-10, 2004). See *Yonhap News*, "U.S. Civilian Delegation Visited Yongbyon Nuclear Facilities," January 10, 2004.

ment in hosting the six-party talks for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis can be construed as an act to co-opt the issue from being the target of U.S. unilateralism.

The North Korean Nuclear Issue and Emerging Multilateralism in Northeast Asia

Northeast Asia is today witnessing two regional security challenges simultaneously. One is positive, as there are emerging signs of a regional security cooperation framework, due mainly to the initiation of the six-party talks. The other is negative, as there also exist symptoms of an arms race among the major nations in the region, which are reflected in their active pursuit of military modernization.

Against this backdrop of the two somewhat contradictory security challenges in the region, it is imperative for the Republic of Korea (ROK), while actively responding to the North Korean nuclear crisis on the one hand, to pursue its forward direction national strategies, and on the other, to strengthen "self-defense posture," to sustain the solid ROK-US alliance, and to promote "peace and prosperity." They all constitute critical security challenges the ROK needs to deal with. In particular, the ongoing process of solving the North Korean nuclear issue and the ensuing results brought forth by the six-party talks seem to have substantial impact on peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and a broader Northeast Asia as well.

As is well known, North Korea's October 2002 admission of a clandestine uranium enrichment program fueled the second North Korean nuclear crisis, put an effective end to the Agreed Framework, and consequently caused a drastic change in China's stance on multilateralism. The North Korean nuclear issue provided decisive opportunities for China to demonstrate its perceived, real role in and influence over the issue, and to enhance its regional status as well as its relations with the United States. The latter also realized that it was imperative

to establish strategic cooperation with China in order to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. Their recognition of this grim reality led to the establishment of multilateral cooperation for resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. Accordingly, the first U.S.-China-North Korea trilateral talks were held in April 2003, which was followed by the six-party talks in August 2003 with addition of the ROK, Japan, and Russia.

The six-party talks cannot be taken at face value, however. That is, if the current six-party talks were to be considered as burgeoning "regional security cooperation structure" in the region, it must be able to solve the North Korean nuclear issue through any possible means—be it peaceful or coercive. Iran's decision to accept IAEA's inspection on its nuclear facilities last October, arrest of Saddam Hussein last December, and Libya's denunciation of its pursuit for WMD in the same month, all evidently shows that the unswerving "anti-terrorism and non-proliferation" policies of the Bush administration is producing positive results. It is entirely possible to optimistically predict that North Korea would never overlook such international trends. On the other hand, considering the nature of the North Korean regime and different views and stances posed by the regional players who are involved in the North Korean nuclear issue, chances that North Korea would voluntarily give up its nuclear programs-if it ever does so—are not high.

If the current six-party talks fail to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, there is a great chance that military tension in Northeast Asia will further escalate; the military modernization programs that key regional players are currently undertaking may result in a new spate of an arms race, and it would challenge the ongoing global nonproliferation efforts. In particular, if the issues of North Korean nuclear weapons and facilities are not resolved in the manner of "Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement (CVID)," it will not be an exaggeration to argue that the consequences could be national calamity

to the ROK, both politically and militarily.

In the meantime, even if the six-party talks successfully resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, there is also a chance that anther problem may arise. That is, one cannot ignore the possibility that this regional multilateral security structure, after solving the current nuclear issues, could be transformed into a "concert of major powers." In this respect, the Bush administration's premise for conducting war against terrorism should be noted. With regard to the war against terrorism, *National Security Strategy* of the Bush administration emphasizes "great power cooperation," while pointing out that great powers in the 21st century "compete in peace instead of continually preparing for war," as had been the case in the past centuries.[9] However, even if relations between the great powers are based upon peaceful competition, the weak cannot feel comfortable with such presumption. Taiwan provides an outstanding case, as it is concerned with the six-party talks we hope are successful and with China's active role and influence in it.

The six-party talks strongly indicate that the nuclear issue, security assurance of the North Korean regime, and North-South Korean military relations can no longer be confined to an internal issue of the two Koreas, but they are most likely to evolve into a multilateral cooperation issue including the U.S. and China. Further, efforts for force modernization by the regional players, particularly China and Japan, are inextricably intertwined with nationalism. Therefore, we should not take an optimistic stance in all respects on the rise of multilateralism and trends of force modernization in Northeast Asia.

The participating nations in the six-party talks, especially the four major powers, should not only actively initiate and implement appropriate confidence-building measures among themselves, but also avoid

9 Colin Powell, "A Strategy of Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2004). On the possible emergence of a "concert of major powers" in Northeast Asia, refer to Professor Robert A. Scalapino, "Trends in East Asian International Relations," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 24, Issue 4 (December 2001).

giving the wrong impression that their force modernization efforts are intended to be offensive or portend a new spate of an arms race. In addition, those great powers need to ensure transparency for all cooperation efforts in order to avoid any chance that their rare multilateral cooperation structure may lead to a concert of major powers.

U.S.-led War against Terrorism and Korea's Changing Security Environment

The success or failure of the U.S.-led war against terrorism and WMD non-proliferation would undoubtedly affect the future of Korean and Northeast Asian security environment. The ongoing U.S.-led wars on terrorism as well as its non- and counter-proliferation policies may be said to have been fairly successful, and they are expected to expand even further in the future. Furthermore, plans for reconstruction and democratization of Iraq are being implemented as planned—notwithstanding sporadic yet strong insurgencies. Once a democratic government is established, stability can be restored with extensive supports from the international community.

Then, what are the underlying implications of such situations for security environments on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia? First of all, the U.S. stance and political lines on such issues as the North Korean nuclear programs, the China-Taiwan standoff, and the relocation of U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK) are expected to become more obvious and more adamant.

Even if the current six-party talks continue with the U.S. and China leading the way, the former is expected to maintain its firm stance on North Korea. China and Russia will continue to insist on a peaceful resolution to the North Korean nuclear issue, while maintaining distance from the United States. However, if North Korea continues to take a negative attitude towards, or rejects proposals made by the pertinent nations, chances are high that they might eventually cooperate with the

U.S. to pressure North Korea. Recognizing the necessity of U.S. leadership in containing North Korea's nuclear program, they are more likely to cooperate with the U.S. as a more desirable course of action to enhance their national interests rather than try to exercise their influence on the U.S., while using North Korea as a bargaining chip.

Furthermore, the North Korean nuclear issue can be linked to the Taiwan issue. While maintaining a firm stance on the "One China Policy," the U.S. will continue to strictly deter Taiwan's attempt for independence. The U.S. finds it imperative to maintain a strategic partnership with China in dealing with Korean issues including the North Korean nuclear program. Realizing this, China also will have some leeway in dealing with the Taiwan issue, while being able to support the U.S. with respect to the North Korean nuclear issue. In this respect, Taiwan seems to have serious concerns over the process and results of the ongoing six-party talks.

Finally, the ROK's policy towards North Korea, including its stance on the North's nuclear program, cooperation with the U.S. with respect to its additional troop dispatch to Iraq and relocation of USFK may well affect the future development of the ROK-US alliance. In particular, mutual trust and a "will-for-alliance" between the ROK and the U.S. will be critical. Since 9/11, the U.S. has been re-evaluating its ally status with the U.N., NATO, international organizations, and a host of its existing allies. In other words, the U.S. is asking the world over to choose "terrorism or anti-terrorism" or "proliferation or non-proliferation."

In particular, the ROK faces an imminent situation to respond to both North Korea's nuclear weapons development programs, and its WMD including biochemical weapons. As North Korea both directly and indirectly admitted its nuclear weapons development programs and possession of such weapons since October 2002, it proved to the world that the promises, agreements, and declarations it made to the international community with respect to its nuclear development programs were all lies.[10]

The Korean security situation, as outlined above, demands the ROK to choose to either wait for Korean peace to be realized at some time in the future while continuing its lopsided support for North Korea, or actively engage in international efforts to root out all sources of terrorism and prevent possession of nuclear weapons including WMD by rogue states through actively assisting U.S. efforts for the reconstruction and establishment of a democratic government in Iraq and the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

Key Security Tasks and Defense Issues

Basic Premise and Scope

Against what should we protect ourselves and prepare? This question eventually provides a frame of analysis on the scope and characteristics of security issues. Every state has its own "national goals" and "defense objectives." These are what we need to protect, and constitute challenges and external threats we need to prepare against.

The national goals of the Republic of Korea are: 1) Korea will uphold its nationhood, seek peaceful unification, and ensure lasting independence under the ideologies of free democracy; 2) Korea will protect the freedom and rights of its citizens and create a social welfare system that achieves equality in their standard of living; And 3) Korea

10 Since its withdrawal from NPT on January 10, 2003, North Korea both directly and indirectly admitted a possession of nuclear program, indicating that it had reprocessed 8,000 spent fuel rods and showed its will to strengthen nuclear deterrent capability. Also, during the U.S. civilian delegations' visit to North Korea, the latter apparently tried to demonstrate its nuclear deterrent capability to the delegation including Dr. Hacker of Los Alamos Research Laboratory by showing the plutonium it announced it had finished reprocessing.

will work to improve its status in the international community in order to demonstrate dignity as a nation and contribute to world peace."[11] Its defense objectives are: 1) The ROK military will defend the nation from external military threats and invasion; 2) Uphold peaceful unification; and 3) Contribute to regional stability and world peace."[12]

Accordingly, our security tasks can first be derived from an analysis of all internal and external situations, their changing trends, and causes that promote changes that undermine or threaten our national and defense objectives. For one thing, analyzing and devising countermeasures to the post-9/11 trends of the changed international security environments and U.S. foreign policies and their effects may fall into this category. For another, we may delineate our security tasks in terms of policy-making and strategic planning, which include defining our stance in the international arena and making choices as a responsible member of the international community. For instance, this may include whether or not we should participate in the U.S.-led war against terrorism, and if so, the scope and size of our participation, or preparations in response to the restructuring of U.S. forces overseas. For still another, we can also derive our security tasks from the military capability dimension, which is comprised our self-defense capability, maintaining alliances, and crisis management capabilities. Tasks include how we evaluate our relative military capabilities, set directions for the force modernization, dissolve the anti-American sentiment, and maintain and strengthen the ROK-US alliance.

In addition to the criteria for classification mentioned above, security tasks can be identified and classified in accordance with the levels of analysis. For instance, security issues can be divided and scrutinized at the global, regional, and national levels, or they can be categorized into national strategic, security strategic, and military readiness levels for in

11 Cabinet Council Resolution, February 16, 1973.
12 Cabinet Council Resolution, March 10, 1994.

the near-, medium-, and long-term time span. Unfortunately, space does not permit us to fully examine these in this paper. However, giving the first consideration to military-security aspects, I will refer to several tasks that are believed to be exceptionally important, and those tasks that we need to wisely deal with both at present and in the future.

National Strategic Level

Regarding global affairs, it is paramount for the ROK to assess the impacts the ongoing U.S.-led war against terrorism may have on the overall international security environment. In particular, it needs to ensure that these impacts will not affect its security situation so as to invite another war on the Korean Peninsula, while at the same time prevent North Korea from possessing nuclear weapons. From the regional standpoint, it is important to pursue peaceful reunification, while maintaining friendly and cooperative relations with neighboring powers. At the peninsula level, it will be crucial to promote reconciliation and cooperation between North and South Korea, by which we may induce reform and opening in North Korea, while consolidating a national consensus on the nature of a unified Korea founded on liberal democracy, market economy, human rights, and other universal common values. Further considerations of the tasks are as follows:

We need to fully understand and appropriately respond to the changing trends and characteristics of the post-9/11 U.S. foreign policies and military strategies.

As the U.S. is expected to retain its role and status as the world's only superpower for a considerable period of time in the future, many have witnessed immense changes in U.S. national security awareness, foreign policies, and relationships with its friendly nations since Sep-

tember 11. First, the U.S. realized that there exist security vulnerabilities that its homeland might be subject to external attacks, thus taking the hard-line policy that it would be willing to take all necessary measures including preemptive attacks in order to preserve its national security. Second, designating war against terrorism the highest priority of its foreign policy, the U.S. defines a friend and a foe according to whether or not a nation will cooperate with the U.S. in combating terrorism. Third, by declaring the non-proliferation of WMD a matter pertaining to the war against terrorism, the U.S. will regard any attempt to develop, export WMD, and support terrorist activities as a hostile act against the U.S. and the international community. Finally, unlike the Clinton administration, the Bush administration is developing military strategies, which include strengthening its power projection capabilities and readiness for WMD terrorism and developing a multilateral cooperation framework.

Under these circumstances, it will be important for us to maintain and develop a firm future-oriented strategic partnership with the U.S., as well as close cooperation in dealing with North Korea. While the primary objective is to ensure that the concept of a U.S. preemptive attack will not cause a war on the Korean Peninsula, it is necessary for us to prepare countermeasures in case of an urgent situation. Also, both nations must admit differences in their views on various issues including North Korea and policy priorities, and based upon this, they need to contrive the ROK-the U.S. or the ROK-U.S.-Japan cooperation schemes. Disguising different perspectives that do exist in reality as if they did not is very dangerous, and while retaining the firm ROK-U.S. alliance, it will be desirable to devise ways to develop a regional multilateral security cooperation structure.

In relation to international coalition on terrorism, we need to pursue a course of action that maintains effective cooperation with the U.S. and friendly relationships with the Islamic states, simultaneously.

Taking into full account the conflicts and distributions of the Islamic moderates and extremists, and Sunni and Shiite parties, we need to understand the dynamics of inter-relations among the three conflicting forces: International coalition on terrorism, the Islamic moderates, and the Islamic extremists. Additionally, we should clarify our purpose of joining the international coalition. That is, our participation in the international coalition is limited to anti-terrorist activities (e.g., information exchanges, precautionary actions, and if necessary, military action), and we must draw a clear line that participation in the international coalition on terrorism differs from maintaining normal diplomatic relations between nations.

However, if placed to choose either a U.S.-led international coalition on terrorism or existing relations with certain Islamic nations opposing it, we must firmly adhere to the international coalition. At present, the war against terrorism is the issue of paramount importance, not only for international security, but also for our own security as well. Therefore, it may precede any other inter-relations between nations. For instance, if the war against terrorism is escalated and the international trend is to dispatch combat troops, it would be more desirable for us as well to dispatch combat troops. Air force and navy transportation units, field medical support and civil engineering units, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, and biochemical weapons detection personnel are all essential elements in fighting a war, and in some cases, we need to consider dispatching combat units such as special operations forces.

We must ensure that any future competition between the U.S. and China does not lead to a situation of "a shrimp among whales."

When caught in the struggle between big, powerful states, small, weak states have a tendency to become neutral in order to hold on to their independence and sovereignty. On the other hand, powerful states have a tendency to distrust those small, weak states advocating neutrality because from their perspective, neutrality is nothing but a means that serves their own convenience, and they would give up neutrality anytime when there are better means available.[13] Therefore, history shows that the small, weak states' advocacy of neutrality can be ignored anytime the big, powerful states feel necessary. Belgium is an example of such historical events when caught between France and Germany on the brink of World War I.

In the process of peaceful unification, we may face a situation of "a shrimp among whales" due to the mixed interests of neighboring nations. Recognizing the Korean Peninsula as part of Chinese culture, the U.S. is concerned with possible deepening and developing relations between the ROK and China, while China is keeping its eyes on the Korean Peninsula in which U.S. forces are stationed. Relating to their national interests, Japan and Russia, too, are observing the Korean unification process and willing to intervene, if necessary.

Therefore, we need to resolve concerns of the neighboring nations as we promote inter-Korean reconciliation or peaceful unification. As a way to fulfill this goal, we may consider establishing a multilateral security cooperation structure, in which all neighboring nations such as China, Japan, and Russia may participate, while retaining the current solid ROK-US alliance. In some sense, this could be the most rational and most realistic option.

13 Regarding some paradoxical and dangerous aspects of neutrality taken by small and weak states, see Gerald Stourzh, "Some Reflections on Permanent Neutrality," August Schou and Arneolav Brundtland, eds., *Small States in International Relations* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1971), pp. 93-98.

We must actively review and promote "a nuclear and biochemical weapons-free Korean Peninsula."

All cooperation pertaining to the North Korean nuclear issue such as the Joint Declaration of Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in 1992 and the Agreed Framework between the U.S. and North Korea in 1994 have been to no avail. The future of the Light Water Reactor (LWR) Project, which emerged in an attempt to induce North Korea to give up their nuclear program, also seems unclear.[14] Even if the project were to successfully complete, there is no guarantee that it will resolve the nuclear issue. North Korea has yet to join the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and though it joined the BWC, North Korea is widely believed to possess a vast amount of biological weapons.

Without resolving issues mentioned above, can peace still be realized on the Korean Peninsula? Can reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas bring peace and alleviate military tensions? With WMD issues unsolved on the Korean Peninsula, can we obtain support and cooperation for unification from the neighboring nations? At present, it seems that there are no definitive answers to these questions. However, it would be appropriate to clarify our stance. "A nuclear and biochemical weapons-free Korean Peninsula" could be an option to provide answer to these questions.

We must facilitate public awareness and agreement on the intrinsic attribute of the current North Korean regime and the politico-ideological orientations of a unified Korea.

Should we recognize the current North Korean regime, especially

14 *Yonhap News*, "KEDO Officially Suspends LWR Project," November 22, 2003.

the Kim Jong Il leadership, as a real partner of peaceful unification, or as a temporary expedient for maintaining talks on peace and unification? Is the northern half a subject of unilateral absorption by the south, or a legitimate constituent of a Korean commonwealth or federation? Is the governmental form of a unified Korea (e.g., politics, diplomacy, military, and economy) more continent-friendly or Pacific-friendly, or perhaps neutral? It would be desirable and even imperative to gather a public consensus on these issues.

What we can never give up or yield is the general values of humankind such as liberal democracy, the market economy, and basic human rights. These values cannot stand together with the current North Korean regime. Thus, it would not be irrational to consider the change in the nature of the regime—that is, reform and opening of the regime—as conditions that must be solved for Korean peace and unification.

Because of its unique geographical location and geopolitical conditions, the Korean Peninsula, as noted earlier, has never been free from power dynamics and conflicts of interest of its neighboring nations. Therefore, we ought to ensure the neighboring nations that a unified Korea will not threaten regional stability and security. In this respect, "neutrality" is often suggested as a way of meeting this situational demand. Historical lessons, however, show that neutrality often causes misunderstanding and distrust from the neighboring nations, and if not accompanied with physical strength to protect it, it does not have any practical meaning.

Thus, the commendable concept of foreign policy that a unified Korea must pursue is to develop a multilateral cooperation structure based on the solid ROK-U.S. alliance. This may be the most realistic measure for the ROK to maintain its status as an independent and sovereign nation, while maintaining balanced cooperative relationships with its neighboring nations.

Security Strategic Level

> We need to embark upon joint ROK-US studies and measures regarding the policy changes of U.S. forces structure overseas and the future of the USFK.

This is something we need to fully prepare in order to tackle the current and likely future challenges. As a symbol of the ROK-U.S. alliance and as part of the U.S. interests and commitment to the Korean Peninsula, its physical presence here has a long history, albeit just a series of small- and large-scale forces withdrawal carried out since the end of the Korean War.[15]

The official positions that both the ROK and U.S. governments have thus far maintained regarding the U.S. military presence in Korea is that the USFK will remain in Korea for "as long as is desired by both governments and their peoples." Therefore, a rational interpretation of this statement is that, if either government or people no longer want the USFK to be stationed in Korea, the USFK will withdraw at any time. In the past, it was not uncommon for the U.S. to unilaterally notify the ROK of its forces withdrawal plans. However, this mechanism is not very desirable, and both nations must jointly review the plan prior to its implementation. In particular, both nations should jointly study and develop mid- and long-term plans for the future of the USFK in the case of the unification process beginning or North Korea no longer posing any threats. The underlying problem for us is how to go about making a national strategic decision on the presence of the USFK. The public's emotions should not interfere in resolving this problem. The anti-American sentiment that is rising in some parts of our society today could be a factor. Yet, it is not appropriate for this sentiment to

15 Sang Cheol Lee, *Dilemma between Security and Self-Reliance: Theory of Asymmetric Alliance and the ROK-U.S. Alliance* (Seoul: Yunkyung Publications, 2004), pp. 238-47.

develop into anti-Americanism or a call for the withdrawal of USFK.

There is a need for active review and development of multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia.

Since the late 1980s, the ROK government has formally proposed to establish a multilateral cooperation structure in Northeast Asia. Although there exists the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), it is led by Southeast Asian nations; thus, focused and detailed management of Northeast Asian issues is still desired. Therefore, it is necessary to pursue a multilateral security mechanism dedicated to Northeast Asia.

Due to a combination of such factors as the lingering effects of the Cold War structure and region-wide historical antipathy and distrust, together with various causes of regional conflicts in Northeast Asia, a multilateral security mechanism of its own was lagging behind. In addition, the U.S. and China had been lukewarm on the idea, thus leaving any multilateral cooperation structure in the region a dubious idea. For instance, the U.S. and Japan hoped to develop the ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral military cooperation, whereas China took a cautious and even wary view towards the idea, viewing such a move as an effort for containment. Also, while China favors the quadripartite structure (that is, China, the U.S., and the two Koreas) for settling peace on the Korean Peninsula, in which China participates as an armistice agreement signer, Japan and Russia prefer a multilateral cooperation structure, in which all related regional players can participate. However, China had been reluctant to participate in that sort of multilateral cooperation structure desired by Japan and Russia.

Things have changed. As mentioned earlier, with the U.S. and China taking the leading role in the first six-party talks held in Beijing in August last year, official multilateral cooperation at the government level has taken the first step, which involves all pertinent regional players. In order for the six-party talks to take root as a regional multilateral security cooperation structure in the future, its relations with existing bilateral alliances must first be clarified. That is, if and only if there is a presumption that the new regional security cooperation structure does not replace but complement the existing bilateral alliances, will the structure have a chance for success?

All three nations (i.e., the ROK, the U.S., and Japan) need to share an understanding of the scope, level, and limits of their future-oriented security and military cooperation.

With respect to ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral military cooperation, the ROK has taken a rather passive position, probably due to its relations with China, whereas the U.S. and Japan have been more active. However, because this ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral security cooperation is essential in complementing the ROK-U.S. alliance, it should be beefed up as well. Therefore, it will be desirable to run and maintain ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral military cooperation in parallel with a multilateral cooperation framework including China at the same time so that ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral military cooperation would not pose a threat to neighboring nations. In the end, it will be the most realistic option to develop a new multilateral cooperation framework in parallel with the ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral relationship, with principal emphasis on the ROK-U.S. alliance.

The ROK Government must take a more proactive role in enhancing its people's understanding of the importance of the ROK-US military alliance.

Using such trendy terms as "pro-American," "anti-American," and "flunkey" is anachronistic thinking in the present era. The twenty-first century is characterized by pragmatism, national competitiveness, and welfare of the people. Nations of this century pursue general values

such as liberal democracy, human rights, and quality of life. We must reject ideas and systems rooted in totalitarianism or collectivism that are against the characteristics and requirements of the current times, and we should also be wary of exclusive and closed nationalism. Governments should not overlook the importance of educating their people about these characteristics and requirements.

What does the U.S. mean to the people of the ROK? Does it support or impede peace and unification of the Korean Peninsula? Is the USFK a security partner or merely a group of foreign troops that must be withdrawn? Why should the USFK and the ROK-U.S. alliance be retained even after unification? Should the functions of the United Nations Command (UNC) be dismantled upon the settlement of peace on the Korean Peninsula, or appropriately modified and applied so as to be consistent with our national interests? With its firm determination, the ROK government must actively engage itself in forming and expanding a national consensus on these issues.

With regard to military talks with North Korea, the ROK needs to maintain firm the ROK-U.S. cooperation.

The two principal players on the Korean Peninsula are undoubtedly North and South Korea. By signing the Basic Agreement and other supplementary agreements in 1992, both sides officially recognized this fact. However, North Korea obstinately retains a sophistry that it will not talk with the ROK on military issues, since North Korea and the U.S. are the parties directly concerned with military issues. North Korea often argues that, since there already exists the 1992 Basic Agreement and other supplementary agreements between the two Koreas, once a peace or non-aggression agreement is established between North Korea and the U.S., all issues pertaining to Korean peace will be accordingly solved. These are all fallacious arguments.

If the two Koreas cannot talk about military issues, then what do the inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation signify, and how can we achieve peaceful unification? Both the ROK and the U.S. should not tolerate such an irrational stance on North Korea's part. North Korea must be willing to engage in military talks with the ROK.

Military Readiness Level

While maintaining military readiness against the North, appropriate levels of defense budget must be ensured in the long run in order to promote defense reform and Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)

In order for our armed forces to build mid- and long-term strategies in preparation for its future environment and to facilitate force modernization plans to fulfill its objectives, an adequate level of defense budget must be consistently and steadily maintained. In addition, considering that building military capabilities and military reforms are mid- and long-term projects which often take 10 to 20 years to bear fruit, we cannot afford to defer them any longer.

Regarding the recent reconciliatory atmosphere with the North, a growing number of people insist that we cut the defense budget and redirected it for public welfare instead. However, we should seek realistic answers as to why our neighboring nations are steadily increasing their defense budget and accelerating force modernization efforts, despite the fact that the Cold War conditions do not hold in the region and that there is no direct and present enemy threatening their security.

As illustrated in a historical lesson that "It is easy to forget war in peace, but one must prepare for war in peace," we must not overlook the continuing uncertain security conditions in Northeast Asia and the standoff between North and South Korea, where the two sides are yet to build even the slightest military confidence. Under such conditions, it would truly cause perplexity if encountered with the question, "Do

we really need to increase our defense budget?"

Taking into account the current state of international security and future security uncertainties, our defense budget must reflect on requirements to build minimum level forces in order to cope with military revolutions undertaken by neighboring nations. In order to achieve this, military experts agree that at least 3% of GDP must be steadily set aside for the defense budget for 15 to 20 years.[16]

> During the process of relocation of the USFK and the Yongsan Garrison, we must prevent the ROK-U.S. combined deterrence and defense posture from being weakened and strengthen our readiness against tremendous North Korean asymmetric warfare capabilities including terrorism.

Today, the entire world is focusing its interests on the U.S. war against terrorism; and reconstruction and democratization of Iraq is a part of the U.S. war against terrorism. As rogue states possessing WMD are highly likely to have links to terrorists, any state attempting to develop, possess, or proliferate nuclear weapons or other WMD can be viewed as a potential subject of the war against terrorism.

Looking at North Korea's past history of terrorism and its support for such activities, taken together with its nuclear weapons development, a vast amount of biochemical weapons, and large number of special operation forces, it is fully capable of implementing asymmetric warfare. In particular, in light of the nature of the North Korean regime, it may implement an asymmetric type of provocation against the South.

One of the most critical security tasks may include a diplomatic effort to prevent the war against terrorism from spreading to the

16 ROK Ministry of National Defense, *Self-Reliant Defense and Our Security* (Seoul, 2003), pp. 39-46.

Korean Peninsula. In the meantime, we must exert parallel efforts in preparation for an emergency and continue to maintain and strengthen close ROK-US military cooperation for this purpose.

> With respect to our participation in UN peacekeeping operations and anti-terrorism activities, there is a need to reinforce our readiness posture that may enable our active participation in the U.N. Stand-by Arrangement System.

The United Nations is contriving measures to complement the existing UN Stand-by Arrangement System that may enhance promptness and efficiency of U.N. peacekeeping operations by ensuring rapid emplacement of combat forces, and it is calling for active participation from its members.

We need to review our plans to actively participate in the amended UN Stand-by Arrangement System so that we may contribute to the UN's preparation, not only for PKO, but also for critical requirements such as the war against terrorism.

> It is desirable for us to review our position with respect to the U.S. Missile Defense (MD) program, and make clear, internally and externally, our concrete air-defense plans to cope with North Korean missiles, in particular.

The Bush administration's missile defense project signifies changes in the U.S. defense paradigm. That is, the project has an implication of its will to solidify its status as the world's only superpower. Further, while welcoming participation from allies, the U.S. is clearly indicating that the latter's stance for and against it will not affect the future of the project.

Instead of an outright dismissal, I believe we need to strategically review the U.S. missile defense project from the mid- and long-term

perspectives. If we join the project, it may, of course, result in some negative responses from China, Russia, and North Korea. In particular, if our participation goes further than Research and Development (R&D) and moves toward development and emplacement, we expect resistance from China and Russia, which will consequently induce increased military tension in the region.

At the same time, however, we must keep in mind that we also need to establish our own independent missile defense network. Not only can our independent missile defense network respond to a possible North Korean missile attack or WMD terrorism, it also enables our military to conduct efficient operations in the case of an emergency, provides a sense of security to the people, and contributes to the development of science technologies. In particular, if we limit our participation to R&D or promote the idea as part of establishing our own air defense network, we may also defuse negative responses from China and Russia.

Regarding the inter-Korean railway/road reconnection,
we must maintain firm military readiness in case of an emergency.

Connecting railways and roads that pass through the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), while the military standoff between the ROK and North Korea still remains intense, is an exceptional endeavor, to say the least. On the one hand, it can be seen as a promising development that can promote mutual confidence and ease military tension between the two confronting armed forces. In addition, the connection of railways and roads can be seen as part of advanced military confidence-building measures.

The underlying problem is that though having agreed to such an advanced measure as railway/road reconnection, North Korea refuses to even talk about the most basic military confidence-building measures such as installation of military hotlines, mutual notification and

observation of military exercises, military personnel exchanges, and so forth.

We should not misinterpret that reconnecting the once-severed railways would lead to the establishment of a significant level of confidence between North and South Korea. Prevention is better than a cure. We should maintain firm readiness, so that we can swiftly interdict, deny all access, and respond in case of an emergency.

Concluding Remarks

At the global level, the most fundamental and important task we are facing is to participate in an international coalition for anti-terrorism and non-proliferation, while preventing North Korea from developing and possessing nuclear weapons. At the regional level, we must ensure that we do not get caught among the neighboring major powers, as signified by the traditional situation of "a shrimp among whales." To achieve this task, we must continuously maintain adequate military and diplomatic capabilities. At the Korean Peninsula level, we may induce North Korea to reform and open its society and enhance inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, while maintaining and strengthening military readiness against the North.

For this purpose, first of all, we need to enhance understanding and acceptance of the reality that maintaining and developing the solid ROK-U.S. alliance continuously is the foundation of our national security policy. No matter how we define the concept of "national power," the international order cannot escape from the logic of power. The fact that those nations who used to be hostile towards the U.S., such as China and Russia, are now vying for improving their respective relations with the U.S. buttresses this argument. Even the Kim Jong Il regime is pursuing improvement of its relations with the U.S. for its survival. In other words, classifying nations into friend or foe is even-

tually a matter of national strategic choice that is built upon national interests, not upon public sentiment.

Second, with respect to anti-terrorism and non-proliferation issues, we must clarify our domestic and foreign policies that are in tune with the ongoing U.S.-led anti-terrorism and non-proliferation policies. While actively joining in the international coalition for anti-terrorism and non-proliferation, it is necessary to strengthen our domestic counterterrorism readiness. Also, though we must do our best to prevent any conflict and trouble from occurring with certain states with anti-American disposition including North Korea, it seems desirable to decisively choose the U.S.-centered international trend, before being placed at the crossroads. From this perspective, the fact that we are neither invited nor participating in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) evidently shows how equivocal our status is in the international arena.[17]

Third, regarding the North Korean nuclear issue, alleviating military tension between the two Koreas as well as peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula, we should be able to synchronize opposing interests of neighboring nations as much as possible, while trying to build a groundwork for public consensus. In order to do this, it seems desirable to maintain the firm ROK-U.S. alliance and build a multilateral cooperation structure in which all pertinent regional players can participate. The current U.S. and China-led six-party talks have potential to develop into a multilateral cooperation structure in Northeast Asia in the future. We must be careful, however, that this multilateral cooperation structure does not become a "concert of major powers" for cooperation and negotiation. For this purpose as well, maintaining and

17 The Joint Declaration on Non-proliferation of WMD at G-8 Summit held in Krakow, Poland in May 2003 led to the emergence of PSI. The purpose of PSI is to interdict international trafficking of WMD, its delivery means, and other related material by concerned states and groups. At present, a total of 14 countries are participating in PSI.

developing a future-oriented ROK-U.S. alliance would be the most realistic course of action.

Fourth, readjustment of the USFK and relocation of the Yongsan Garrison, including Combined Forces Command (CFC) and United Nations Command (UNC), to south of the Han River clearly reflect the determination of the U.S. government, Thus, we must bring to an end unnecessary arguments on its determination. We now must exert our utmost efforts to complement estimated vulnerabilities in terms of the military readiness level, while maintaining firm mutual confidence and will for alliance and minimizing possible conflicts and discord that may arise in the process of relocation.

Finally, we must decisively promote future-oriented defense reform and military modernization, while eyeing the changing trend of the regional military situation. To achieve this goal, an adequate amount of the defense budget must be continuously ensured in the long run. For instance, Japan's pursuit of military power is a national decision that Japan must make. It is not a problem to be solved, even if the neighboring nations criticize the possibility of expanding Japanese armed forces. Similarly, crying out loud "Dok-do belongs to the ROK" will not solve the territory conflict. We need to remind ourselves of the common lesson "Prevention is better than a cure," according to which well-preparedness during peacetime will prevent calamity later.

POLITICAL CHANGES IN NORTH KOREA: WHAT IS IT, WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND WHAT TO EXPECT?

Park Hyeongjung

Nowadays, almost nobody maintains serious doubts about North Korea's changes in the economy and society during the 1990s. The question is, what are their impacts on North Korea's politics during the 1990s and the future, and vice versa. In order to answer, chapter II suggests analytical propositions for analyzing political changes in North Korea. They could be investigated; firstly, as changes in three-way relations among the top leadership, middle level officials, and the masses; secondly, as progress from forced unity to differentiation in mutual relations among politics, economy, and society; and thirdly, as being initiated by the top leadership, and/or social protest, or without subject (i.e. through simple systemic decay). Chapter III confirms that North Korea's changes through systemic decay in the 1990s increased the apolitical autonomy of the economy and society, and changed power relations among the center, middle officials, and the masses, and that the leadership attempted to come to terms with them through various ways, including the July measures in 2002. Chapter IV focuses on the necessities of political reforms of de-Stalinization and of establishing reciprocal relations between the regime and society as

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preconditions for further progress and the success of economic reform and opening. It also investigates a range of possibilities for realizing the necessary political reforms, depending on the one hand, the dynamics of changing internal power relations, and on the other, North Korea's and its Leader's fortune during and after the nuclear crisis.

Introduction

Till the mid 1990s, the main currents of North Korea studies maintained that North Korea could not be changed and stood before imminent collapse. According to these theories, as long as Kim Jong Il ruled, reform and opening would be impossible, because they would jeopardize his personal dictatorship. Information inflow from the opening would be the most serious threat to his dictatorship.

Kim Jong Il's reshuffling of state system and policy from late 1997 was accidentally followed by the initiation of the engagement policy by the Kim Dae Jung government from the start of 1998. With Kim Dae Jung's new North Korea policy, which has been based on North Korea's continued existence and changeability of internal and external behaviors, it turned out that the majority of North Korea studies silently came to agreement with the new perspective on North Korea.

However, with the inauguration of the Bush administration in 2001, the old theories returned with new accents. According to the new old theories of unchangeableness of North Korea, its 'evilness' in internal politics with its grave infringement of human rights and in and outward behavior of developing weapons of mass destruction could not be changed without a regime change in North Korea.

Nowadays, almost nobody maintains serious doubts about North Korea's changes in the economy and society during the 1990s. Besides

back and forth border crossings with China since the early 1990s and receiving considerable foreign humanitarian assistance since the mid 1990s, quite a few North Koreans have been exposed to relatively massive exchange and cooperation with the South after the first summit in 2000. Recently, North Korea put the outsider's capability of imagination to shame with its hasty installation of the Shineuju special economic zone, followed by more prudent openings of Gaesung and Mt. Geumgang in 2001, and its economic shock therapy of the July measures in 2002.

The question is, what were their impacts on North Korea's politics during the 1990s and what impacts will they have in the future, and vice versa. In order to answer, chapter II suggests analytical propositions for analyzing political changes in North Korea. They could be investigated; firstly, as changes in three way relations among the top leadership, middle level officials, and the masses; secondly, as progress from forced unity to differentiation in mutual relations among politics, economy, and society; and thirdly, as being initiated by the top leadership, and / or social protest, or without subject (i.e. through simple systemic decay). Chapter III confirms that North Korea's changes through systemic decay in the 1990s increased the apolitical autonomy of the economy and society, and changed power relations among the center, middle officials, and the masses, and that the leadership attempted to come to terms with them through various ways, including the July measures in 2002. Chapter IV focuses on the necessities of political reforms of de-Stalinization and of establishing reciprocal relations between the regime and society as preconditions for further progresses and the success of economic reform and opening. It also investigates a range of possibilities of realizing the necessary political reforms, depending on the one hand, the dynamics of changing internal power relations, and on the other, North Korea's fortune during and after the nuclear crisis. Perhaps then we can return to the first question of North Korea's continued existence or collapse, and of changeability or

unchangeableness in the divergent circumstances of 'tailored containment' or 'bold initiatives.'

What is Meant by 'Political Change'?

Traditionally, three kinds of questions have been raised regarding North Korean politics and its changes: the first subject of these questions has been Kim Jong Il's personal rule, the question of its stability, of the existence of opposing factions among the top elites, and of the possibilities of a coup d'etat against him; the second has been the three-way relations among the party, government, and the military: the changing balance of power among them in the 1990s, the enhanced role of the military under the policy of 'military first' from 1995, and the strengthened position of the administration after the revision of the constitution in 1998; the third has been the political popularity of Kim Jong Il among the people: their decreasing loyalty to him, and the question of existence and possible formation of dissident movements, etc.

However, the problem could be put into different perspectives. First, every change in North Korea can be characterized as political change because it inevitably modifies the degree of penetration and control over politics, economy, and society by the power of the center. Second, political change could be understood as the alteration of relations, and of balance of power among the three major socio-political groups of top leadership, middle officialdom, and the masses. Third, political changes could be affected by three different momentums - that of conscious choice by the top leadership, or of decay, or of societal conquest.

Political Change as Differentiation of Politics, Economy, and Society

The power of the socialist party-state should not be characterized simply as political power, but as general and totalitarian power

because it unites powers over politics, economy, and society and attempts to penetrate and control all aspects of life.[1] Then, everything and every change is political because all these are related to power. Also, the changes could not but mean a transition from the totalitarian trinity forced by the central power to the differentiation into relatively independent spheres of politics, economy, and society.[2] This process has been called the transition from totalitarianism to post-totalitarianism in the spheres of politics and society, and as reform in the economy.

Transition to Post-totalitarianism in the Spheres of Politics and Society

About the mid 1950s, communist totalitarianism evolved into post-totalitarianism. According to Linz and Stepan, post-totalitarianism can encompass a continuum varying from "early post-totalitarianism," "frozen post-totalitarianism," and "mature post-totalitarianism."[3] Early post-totalitarianism is very close to the totalitarian ideal type, but differs from in at least one key dimension, which is normally some constraints on the leader. Among East European states, Bulgaria lingered at this phase till 1989. There can be frozen post-totalitarianism, in which, despite the persistent tolerance of some civil society critics of the regime, almost all the other control mechanisms of the party-state stay in place for a long period and do not evolve (e.g. Czechoslovakia, from 1977 to 1989, the Soviet Union from Brezhnev to Chernenko, East Germany under the rule of Honecker). Or, there can be mature post-

1 Leszek Nowak, "The Totalitarian Approach and the History of Socialism," Janina Frentzel-Zagorska, *From a One-Party State to Democracy: Transition in Eastern Europe* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 50-51.

2 See Fei-Ling Wang, *Institutions and Institutional Change in China: Premodernity and Modernization* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998).

3 Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 42.

totalitarianism, in which there has been a significant change in all the dimensions of the post-totalitarian regime, except that politically, the leading role of the official party is still sacrosanct. Considerable degrees of political, economic, and societal pluralism have been tolerated, and the dissidents have organized "second culture," which could be different from the state ideology and official culture, and "parallel society," which have been allowed significant autonomy from the state (e.g., Hungary from 1982 to 1988, and Poland in the 1980s).

Reforms in the Economic Sphere

In socialism, the central power penetrated the economic sphere and monopolized the ownership of productive property, the rights for economic management, and of setting economic policy. The economic reforms have been the process of dissolving the monopoly of the center, and of gradually enhancing the autonomy of the economy.

Economic reforms have been advanced in four stages: the Stalinist centralized directive economy ¡ semi-reformed decentralized directive economy ¡ socialist commodity economy ¡ socialist market economy.[4] The first stage has been characterized by extreme centralization of economic power at the center. In the semi-reformed system, the administrative power of the center has been maintained but devolved to the firms and localities, and the plan directives from the center have been reduced and rationalized. At the third stage (i.e. at the socialist commodity economy, plan directives are gradually abolished), the market mechanism is officially acknowledged as an essential part of socialist economy. It is a market economy constituted by state firms and cooperative organizations, and by nascent market institutions, norms, and culture. At the fourth stage of the reforms, the market mechanism

4 See Park Hyeong Jung, *North Korea's Economic Management System* (Seoul: Haenam, 2002)(Korean).

plays a dominant role, and the state productive property is gradually privatized.

The semi-reformed system comprised the Soviet economy after the Kosigin reform in 1965 to the year 1987, and the North Korean economy since 1984 and 1985. The Hungarian New Economic Mechanism from the 1960s, the Chinese economy between 1985-1992, and the Soviet economy between 1987-1991 can be regarded as socialist commodity economy. The Chinese economy after 1992 can be characterized as socialist market economy.

Three-way Power Contest Among the Top Leadership, the Middle Officialdom, and the Masses

Socialist society is made of three major social groups: the top leadership, the middle officialdom, and the masses. Although, ideologically, harmony of interests among them should unite them around the central leadership, such a facade could only be maintained through asymmetrical power relations in favor of the center, and through monopolized instruments for articulation of the social reality.

Based on the virtually absolute power concentration at the center, this constantly attempted to subordinate and control the lower units of the society. To avoid total submission, the officialdom and the masses persistently seek to modify and attenuate unconstrained power of the center. In particular, the middle officialdom, as the manager of the state power on the spot, attempted to expand power and resources on their arbitrary disposal, and to strengthen their grip on the masses in their jurisdiction. The masses, on their side, are also acquainted with the various methods to shun the public and/or private pressure and directives of the state and the middle officialdom.[5]

5 See Park Hyeong Jung, *Politics and Power in North Korea* (Seoul: Baeksan, 2002) (Korean); Mark Lupher, *Power Restructuring in China and Russia* (Westview Press, 1996).

Each group did not even constitute a united entity without internal cleavages. There have been factions in the top leadership, horizontal and hierarchal divisions among the officialdom and the masses, and especially, the imperative of restructuring power and interest relations during the process of changes made the contest among them and within each group more intensive. Time and again, a part of a group builds an alliance with the parts of other groups to advance a common interest. Time and again, the top leadership and the masses find in the middle officialdom, regarded as corrupt on both sides, their common enemy, and try to build a populist alliance to attack them and make them subservient not only / either to the center but / or to the masses.

Three Kinds of Momentums for Changes

Changes in socialist society have been generated by three analytically separate momentums: firstly, by conscious policy choice by the regime elites; secondly, by social protest and conquest, and thirdly, by decay without conscious initiation.[6] Political change may not occur only by one momentum, but by a combination of momentums, though with different relative weights.

In the case of "post-totalitarianism by choice," regime elites (often for their own sense of personal safety) may collectively decide to constrain the completely arbitrary powers of the maximum leader, reduce the role of terrorism (if that had been prominent), and begin to tolerate some non-official organizations to emerge in what had been virtually a completely flattened civil society. The representative case is the initiation of de-Stalinization by Khrushchev after the death of Stalin.

In "post-totalitarianism by decay" (or post-totalitarianism by reluctant acquiescence), commitment to ideology may simply become hollow, mobilization may degenerate into bureaucratic ritual, and pockets of resistance or relative autonomy may emerge, more due to regime incapacity or reluctant acquiescence to foreign pressure than to any choice. The typical case is Czechoslovakia between 1969-1989.

Force outside the regime can also generate a situation of "post-totalitarianism by societal conquest," in which civil society groups struggle for, and win, areas of relative autonomy. Typical cases are Hungary and Poland; because of violent revolt in 1956, the Hungarian communist party must keep fear prevalent amongst the society, and had to introduce a set of policies on behalf of society, called Kadarism. In Poland, the revolts in 1956, and the struggle of the Solidarity between 1980-1981 exerted great influence on the policies of the Polish communist party.

North Korean Changes in the 1990s

Faced with drastic economic deterioration and with dwindling resources needed for control of lower units in the 1990s, the top leadership had to give tacit permission to the increase of apolitical autonomy of the lower units and the masses in the apolitical area of their lives. After the revision of the constitution in 1998, North Korea's authorities had officially accepted the past changes in the power relations among the three groups, and chose a policy orientation of decentralization and introducing market mechanisms.[7]

6 Linz and Stepan, *op.cit.*, pp. 193-194.

7 See Park Hyeong Jung, *Ability, Direction, Speed, and Dynamics of North Korea's Change* (Seoul: KINU, 2001)(Korean).

Changes by Decay in the 1990s

Contents and Characters of the Changes

The best depiction of North Korea's changes in the 1990s are the changes by reluctant acquiescence or by decay, but in general, the term "post-totalitarianism by decay" means diminishing desire and capacity for domination at the top leadership. However, in the case of North Korea, totalitarian desire for domination at the center remains intact, and only its capacity has been drastically reduced by economic hardship. The decay of capacity for domination has not been originated by active challenge from the society, but by economic hardship and hunger, which also inflicted great damage to societal forces and individuals. They were allowed spaces for autonomy, mostly limited in the apolitical areas of their everyday lives.

The most important aspect of the decay of totalitarian domination is that, because of the economic hardship in the 1990s, the center has suffered significant loss of resources and instruments for penetration and control of lower units. With diminishing economic surpluses concentrated at the center, this could not supply adequate resources to maintain a normal management level of the firms and organizations along the hierarchical plan command system. As a consequence, the center could not penetrate and control the daily activities of the firms and individuals as it was before. Besides, informal economy has expanded extensively and has provided, though illegal, jobs and income opportunities outside the state sector. As the public distribution turned nominal, and the prices at the farmer's market continually increased, it became imperative for almost all individuals to find extra income sources outside the state sector through illegal commercial activities or corruption and embezzlement.

With this development, the relations of submission and discipline between the center and the middle officialdom and between the officials and the masses have experienced meaningful alterations. First, concurrently with the weakening of bureaucratic coherence and discipline of administrative and economic institutions, the party apparatus has fallen into disarray because its role as the infrastructure for political surveillance and direction on the spot has been dependent upon normal operation of state bureaucracy. Second, with the decline of the state's capacity, the relations of exchanging submission and discipline for guarantees of privilege and economic welfare between the state and the middle officialdom have been broken, and a significant part of the former socialist middle class (i.e. the middle officialdom) has also gone to ruin. Third, the weakening of organizational and ideological discipline went side-by-side with the drastic increase of abuse of public competences by the middle officialdom as attempts to secure livelihood. Officials of all hierarchical ladders attempted to change their politico-administrative power into economic wealth through bribery, private expropriation, abuse of state property, and involvement in illegal commercial activities. In the same manner, the decline of the state's capacity and the weakening public discipline of the middle officialdom have contributed to loosening the grip on the masses' subordination to the middle officialdom in its administrative domains.

Counter Measures to the Weakening Structure of Domination

Notwithstanding the declining capabilities and partial paralyses, the center attempted to maintain traditional totalitarian structure and method of domination. In view of the results thus far achieved, the fundamental framework of totalitarianism-cum-sultanism (i.e. extreme personal dictatorship)[8] has not been gravely shaken.

In order to cope with weakening capacities of production, politico-social discipline, and political-administrative control, the center resort-

8 Linz and Stepan, *op.cit*., pp. 349-356.

ed to various planned and impromptu measures. First of all, the center reinforced security and semi-security organizations during the 1990s, and introduced politics of 'military first' from 1995. Besides continuously maintaining concentration camps for political offenders, North Korean authorities also opted for terrorist rule, especially from the mid 1990s, such as public execution by firing squad. After the introduction of 'military first' politics, the traditional role of the party has been partially transferred to the military, which has been given the communist party's role of being the ideological and political model for the whole society, and centered on 'endless loyalty' to Kim Jong Il, and 'perfect discipline.' It has also been mobilized massively within industrial and agricultural production and partially to public order and internal security.

Increased Apolitical Autonomy of the Economy and the Society

As the state sector could not provide firms and individuals with resources, they could not continue to be dependent on the state's provision and tutelage, and exist merely as the state's functional entity. In proportion to the declining capacities of the center and of the state sector of the economy, they had to start seeking livelihood outside the state sector. The second market expanded its spheres of influence, and the individuals found more spaces for independent activities, albeit in apolitical areas, such as seeking livelihood on their own.

Though there have been no official 'reform' projects in the 1990s, significant changes have been brought about in the economy. Apparently and officially, the planned economy has been untouched, and there have been increased economic activities by firms, local governments, and individuals outside the planning and the state sector. As a result, North Korea's economy became a dual economy of the state sector and the second economy.

Concomitantly, apolitical autonomy of individuals and 'the society' has been increased. Because of the weakening of the structures of domination and the grip of the center, even without bringing up enlightened demand, they could be freed partly from totalitarian control by the center, while struggling to find ways to survive without the state's provision. The catastrophe of hunger has not only broken down the infrastructure of totalitarian control, but also the framework for individuals' livelihood and for the moral and humanitarian discipline of the society. However, because the system of brutal violence and surveillance for political submission has remained relatively intact, the individuals and the society could develop autonomy only in the apolitical spheres and activities.

The Center's Attempts to Manage and Direct Changes by Choice Since 1998

Kim Il Sung's death on July 8th, 1994 was followed by a 'march of suffering' between 1995-1997. During the period, Kim Jong Il attempted a defensive policy to avoid deterioration of the situation with the catchwords 'military first.'

After taking the post of general secretary of the party in October 1997, Kim Jong Il set out to reconstruct and restructure the party-state, which has been broken down, to 'the new environments and conditions.' His major strategic orientation appeared to be the followings: first, to keep political stability through personal cult, 'military first' politics, internal security system, and terrorist measures; second, to endeavor for maintenance and normalization of the state governing system with the revised 1998 constitution - accordingly, the status of the government, which is the country's main executive organ of economic policy, has been enhanced, and leading administrative posts have been filled with younger technocrats; third, to build an environment for economic recovery and the country's security by improving relations with South Korea, the US, and Japan; and fourth, to pay more

attention to economy while increasing on-the-spot guidance by Kim Jong Il.

Where the policy choice for reconstruction and restructuring has been most prominent was in the economy. The July measures in 2002 could be seen as attempts to reconstruct and restructure the economy on 'the new environments and conditions,' acknowledging the irreversible changes that occurred in the 1990s such as the weakened capacity of control and penetration, de facto dual economy of the state sector and the second economy, and decentralized relations between the state and firms, and between the central government and the localities.[9]

North Korea's economic policy orientation after July 2002 could be summarized in five major points: first, to enhance the competitiveness of the state sector against the illegal second economy by increasing prices and wages in the state sector; second, to trim down fiscal expenditure by abrogating rationing and drastic reduction of subsidies, and to increase fiscal revenue by issuing public bonds for people's lives; third, to establish new relations between the planning center and the firms, and between the central government and the localities, thereby guaranteeing increase of production and revenue. In other words, the state allowed the increase of managerial autonomy and responsibility of the firms and localities, for which it could not provide with adequate supply and capital so that production could be increased and the state could collect more revenue from increased production; fourth, to make the production outside the plan of the firms legal, to permit the 'socialist exchange market for goods between the state firms,' and to acknowledge the 'combined market,' as the farmers' market is now officially called as one method for the 'socialist system of goods distribution'; and fifth, to strengthen opening and cooperation while establishing special economic zones.

9 See Park Hyeong Jung, "North Korea's Economic Policy in the Era of 'Military First,'" *International Journal of Korean Unification*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2003.

The meaning of such policy orientation could be summarized as follows: the ultimate purpose is the same as in the past such as to reproduce existing power relations through political stability and production increase. However, the new orientation showed us North Korea's determination to acknowledge the reality and to actively adapt to the new reality, overcoming defensive management of the status quo as in the past. It is geared to legalize and promote the changes that occurred in the 1990s, such as alteration in the relationship between the center, middle officialdom and the masses, and between the central power and the economy, and between the center and the society. First, North Korea's dual economy transformed from the state sector-cum-illegal second economy to the state sector-cum-legal second economy. In the future, the coverage of the newly legalized second economy would be expanded when we keep in mind that North Korean authorities have accepted the word 'reform' as official vocabulary from June this year. Second, the relaxation of 'organized dependence' of individuals, firms, and localities to the center has been officially institutionalized. In other words, the July measures have officially approved the loss of 'perfect' penetration and control by the center. Accordingly, the production and exchange outside the plan, which have been punished as criminal activities in the past, became legal activities. Nowadays individuals and firms can even defend their rights to produce and exchange outside the plan against intervention from the state.

The social and economic effects of the July measures are not expected to be negligent, though it is debatable whether they have improved the economic situation. And the policy orientation would not be given up because it is not merely a possible policy for economic recovery, but reflected the changed power relationship between the state on the one hand, and individuals and firms on the other. Because the firms and individuals would inevitably increase autonomy from the weakened center, the policy orientation can only be continued in the future.

Necessity and Possibility of Political Reforms for De-totalitarianization

Internal and External Necessities

Even with the socio-economic changes in the 1990s, totalitarianism-cum-sultanism (=extreme personal dictatorship), North Korea's basic political framework, has not been gravely shaken. Typical elements of Stalinism have been prevailing till now in North Korea, such as the personal cult of the top leader, patrimonial personal dictatorship instead of one party dictatorship, extensive surveillance and a spy network both for the regime elites and for the masses, arbitrary arrest and expulsion, terrorist measures such as public accusation and execution, and concentration camps not only for political offenders, but also for minor criminal offences from hardship, etc.

With its new attempts to recognize and adapt to the 'new environments and conditions' from 1998, North Korea confronts both internal and external necessities of extrication from totalitarianism-cum-sultanism especially from 2000/2001. If North Korean elites cannot somehow manage the necessary political transition to a certain kind of "post-totalitarianism," their projects for reform and opening, despite how seriously they might be intended, would not be successful, and/or they would fall into mutually paralyzing contradictions. As the old Marxist maxim teaches us, alterations in economic substructure would force the politico-ideological superstructure to adjust, making it compatible with the former.

With the changes by systemic decay in the 1990s and by policy choice from 2000/2001, the North Korean economic policies stand on the border between the centralized directive economy and the socialist commodity economy especially after July 2002. In the centralized directive economy, the center conveys plan directives to the firms, and is involved in their daily management. In the socialist commodity economy, the central plan directives are (gradually or on the whole) abrogated, and the state firms are managed on commercial principles. At this juncture, the plan and market find not only economical, but also politico-ideological frameworks of coexistence, thereby sprouting and developing market institutions and norms, such as market prices, commercial financial organizations, differentiation of property rights, and contractual and commercial laws and minds, etc. Simultaneously with these changes, the compatibility between the internal economy and the world market will increase so that exchanges with outside world can drastically expand.

As already mentioned, North Korea's existing political system has allowed for adaptation of the economic management system through the July measures, etc., to the changes caused by systemic decay in the 1990s. The adaptation will continue, and the alterations caused by it will intensify in the future because the center lacks resources for penetration and control in the scale of the past. Instead of totally impeding the inclinations of the firms, local governments, and the individuals for expansion of autonomy, the center would try somehow to take advantage of the inevitable changes. As for North Korea's economy in the future, the question is not whether North Korea would evolve into a more mature socialist commodity economy, but the question is how to manage the evolution and how to make it successful. A good management of the evolution may introduce a period of economic growth concomitant with 'political stability' and 'liberalization' as was in China, but a bad management would cause continuation of a vicious cycle of poverty with political turbulences.

The problem is that the present political system in North Korea (i.e. totalitarianism-cum-sultanism) cannot be compatible with a more mature socialist commodity economy: as for the internal relations, a closed economy of central direction could have lived together with totalitarianism-cum-sultanism for a longer period in some countries, as was in North Korea and Romania. But socialist commodity economy,

with its extensive decentralization and numerous autonomous economic units and expanding foreign trade and exchange, it would not share the same house with a political system such as totalitarianism-cum-sultanism, as is now in North Korea.

As for the external relations, for successful entry into the world market to be possible, North Korea must receive assistance and admission from the US, South Korea, Japan, and from international organizations. The entry must fail, if North Korea is to remain a "rouge state" with its security problems with neighboring countries and infringements in human rights. Only after it has solved the twin problems, more or less successfully, can North Korea evolve into a mature and prosperous socialist commodity economy with extensive foreign trade and exchange.

Two Stages of Political Reforms for Transition to "Post-totalitarianism"

In light of experiences from the former socialist countries including the Soviet Union, the transition to "post-totalitarianism" in North Korea may pass through analytically in two stages: the first is de-Stalinization reforms, which would terminate personal cult and terrorist domination over society. In the second stage, one-sided domination of the party-state over the society would evolve into more or less reciprocal and consensual relations between them.

Political Reforms for De-Stalinization

North Korea's present political situation is comparable to Stalinism, which in other socialist countries was brought to an end in the mainstream till the mid 1950s, with the exception of Romania, and which maintained it till the end of communism in 1989. Thus, the priority tasks for political reform are similar to those which were implemented

after the death of Stalin in 1953 and the secret speech of Khrushchev in 1956 in the Soviet Union.

As was for the Soviet Union in the mid 1950s, a package of measures for North Korea's de-Stalinization in the mid 2000s, or thereafter, would be composed of the following elements:[10] first, no successor of Kim Jong Il would ever be allowed to gather as much power as he had. Second, the upper echelons of the elite are to be exempt from arbitrary arrest and surveillance, and should enjoy a certain level of stability of status. The power of the secret police must be limited. Third, the prisoners in the concentration camps should be released, and arbitrary investigation, arrest and expulsion of anyone at anytime without any due procedures should be limited. Fourth, de-politicalization of the daily lives of the people should be advanced. The spaces for private life and apolitical fields, such as hobbies and friendship, should be provided and enjoyed. Fifth, the arbitrary directive and intervention by the top leader and the communist party should be reduced in the areas of expertise, such as natural sciences. Sixth, the operation of the communist party should be normalized. The general meeting of the party should be held regularly, and the composition of the organs and the operation of the central committee should be normalized according to the party rules. Seventh, the strategy of massive, unceasing capital accumulation should be checked. There should be some shift in emphasis from capital investment and military expenditure to the production of consumer goods and agriculture.

Political Reforms for Establishing Post-Totalitarian Inclusion Regime

Though the second stage of political reforms exists in the continuation of the first stage, there is a qualitative discontinuation. At this

10 See George Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe 1945-1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992; Gyorgy Korand and Ivan Szelenyi, Die Intelligenz auf dem Weg zur Klannsenmacht (Frankfurt a. m.: Suhrkamp, 1978).

stage, the relations between regime and society or between rulers and ruled would be transformed from one-sided domination, still as in the first stage, to more or less a reciprocal and consensual one. In other words, the regime becomes inclusive of societal inputs. The second de-Stalinization has been, in fact, the last genuine, living attempt to redefine the communist agenda in a broadly consensual direction.[11] A great part of communist countries, such as transformation, has been realized between the 1950s-1960s. In China, it started with the reform attempts initiated after 1978.

A series of characteristic changes in the political institutions at this stage could be summarized as follows: first, in general, the status of the representative organ such as the people's assembly, should be enhanced, and that of the repressive organ such as the secret police, should be lowered. The supreme people's assembly and parliamentary procedures became more important, so that with encouragement of constructive criticism and effectiveness of the government could be increased. Second, attitudes of the communist party to society should be changed from one-sided direction and coercion to political management attempting to persuade the society and to arbitrate interests. Attempts should be made to give elections at least the semblance of authenticity by encouraging a choice between candidates, though not, of course, between policies. Third, the press should be encouraged to express some of the differentiation that is recognized as being in existence and to uncover abuses of power (i.e. flaws in the workings of the system). Fourth, there should also be attempts to separate the party from the state. The party's role notionally is to formulate strategy and oversee the execution of policy, though without being involved in day-to-day implementation. Fifth, a series of organizations such as the labor union and other social organizations should be encouraged to play the

11 See Schopflin, *op.cit.*; Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder. The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); An Chen, *Restructuring Political Power in China: Alliances and Opposition, 1978-1998* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

role, which they are expected to play officially. Sixth, while the official ideology retained an ideological monopoly, some areas of life could be free of political criteria and determined by other rationalities. In concrete terms, this meant that, for example, natural sciences should be free to develop according to universal norms. Seventh, though the intellectuals could not, of course, enjoy complete freedom to criticize, it should become possible within certain limits to discuss the functioning of the system, albeit not its essentials. This ought to have ensured that the system would function more effectively and that new ideas, always subject to the leading role, could be debated.

Possibilities and Prospects for Political Reform and/or Change

As has been written, with the result of alterations in the 1990s and of policy choice in the beginning of the 2000s, changes in the economy precede those in politics. Changes in politics (i.e. the adjustment of political arrangements to the changed and changing economic relations) are needed to make further economic changes possible and successful, if not for moral imperatives of human rights.

Even if necessities for changes in politics have been brought up, their realization is another matter, or they could be realized in different circumstances in different ways and degrees. To be realized, there must be subjects for implementation and environments for initiation. Here, the possibilities are analyzed according to the theory of three momentums for change, as has been written before. But in the case of North Korea, another source of momentum must be taken into consideration - the momentum of possible outside intervention such as a pre-emptive surgical strike or other mild forms of foreign intervention, as has been discussed by hardliners in the debate on dealing with North Korea's nuclear weapons development.

Change by Choice

• Change by Kim Jong Il's policy choice

North Korea's capabilities for adjustment, which have been shown in internal changes and in the expansion of exchange with the outside world since 1998, allude to the possibility that, even with the continuation of Kim Jong Il's power, political reforms for de-totalitarianization could be implemented.

The possibility would increase if Kim Jong Il resolves the nuclear problems, and normalizes diplomatic relations with the US and Japan. In this case, he could put himself among the ranks of major international leaders, and based upon his international status, his internal power could be bolstered. While international assistance to North Korea would be strengthened, Kim Jong Il could push internal reforms and external opening, and boast visible improvements in the economic situation.

In this case, even if Kim Jong Il retreated one step further from the frontline politics, he would prevail through checks and balances between different bureaucratic lineups such as the party, the government, the supreme assembly, the military, and the secret police. In general, the government would concentrate itself on economic construction. The people's assembly would criticize certain aspects of policy formulation and implementation, and attempt to insert people's wishes and interests in the policies of the government. Kim Jong Il would attempt to enhance legitimacy of his rule and expand his personal power bases in two ways: he may impute certain extreme elements in the former leadership of the responsibility for criminal repression and policy failure in the past, as he recently explained in the case of kidnapping Japanese citizens; he may also criticize the middle and lower level of party-state organizations for their corruption and decay, and reestablish them by replacement of personnel. The political police would still play an important role, but its activities would become more cautious. The military would retreat from production and internal security, but could continue to have its power felt through the defense industry and force of arms. If Kim Jong Il is not personally referred to, 'constructive criticism' would be possible, and apolitical autonomy in the spheres of economy and society would increase rapidly. In any case, it would become imperative to allow a certain level of 'liberalization.'

• Advent of stable collective leadership after the death of Kim Jong Il

After Kim Jong Il dies a natural death at a certain point in time, a relatively stable collective leadership could be negotiated and organized.

Though it has been proposed that Kim Jong Il would bestow his power to one of his sons, the possibility is low. In the case of Kim Jong Il, he inherited and maintained power after his father's death because he had adequate time to establish his own power bases over 20 years before being designated the successor. And, since there was no one, Kim Jong Il began his own rule, whose position and power could be comparable to those preceding him designated successors in the past.

Even if someone were to be designated the official successor, he would not inherit power successfully since he could not have built his independent power bases before succession. Also, if the designated successor were to attempt expansion of his independent power bases, he might be recognized as a threat to the present ruler. On the other hand, if the successor cannot ensure his own power bases before the downfall of the present ruler, failure in succession may be possible.

It is less probable that, after Kim Jong Il's downfall, someone would secure individual control of the political lines of the party, the government, the military, and the secret police. Major power factions would attempt to form a collective leadership because, on the one hand, it

would become impossible to have an absolute leader. And on the other, it would be in the interest of individual elites to avoid extreme power concentration on one individual. A new oligarchy would take measures comparable to de-Stalinization to guarantee the personal security of its members and bolster its legitimacy of rule. The collective leadership would not be able to rule the society in a one-sided manner as in the past, and would become more accommodative to both latent and patent demands of the society.

- Changes by Intervention of foreign forces and/or Splits among Ruling Elites

The possibility of open splits and power contests among top elites is low in North Korea because of Kim Jong Il's adroit management of his absolute position in the power structure and internalized ideological maxim of 'absolute' unity around him. For all that, if there emerged open splits among regime elites, it might be caused by foreign instigation, because only with outside assistance can a defecting faction or a coalition of factions expect chances for prevalence.

China would consider intervention in the internal politics of North Korea, and this would pose a grave threat to peace and security in Northeast Asia, stubbornly adhering to developing weapons of mass destruction. The neighboring countries may give a tacit permission to Chinese intervention in North Korean politics. If successful, a newly organized leadership would be dependent on and receptive to Chinese counsel. While reckoning massive foreign assistance, it could push overdue internal reforms, normalize relations with neighboring countries, and expand opening.

Changes by Decay

- Changes by Kim Jong Il's loss of hold over internal development

If talks and negotiations on North Korea's nuclear weapons development face prolonged stalemate and protraction, humanitarian assistance to North Korea, illegal acquisition of hard currency through drug trafficking, arms export, and counterfeit notes circulation would encounter reductions and active interruptions. North Korea's economy would deteriorate, and the center's hold on the society would be weakened. Influenced by foreign instigation, defection and anti-government agitation would increase.

Though, as in the beginning and mid 1990s, political stability could be maintained resorting to terrorist political measures, preservation of North Korea's diplomatic dignity, and prestige and privilege of the upper elites, and maintenance of core instruments for internal rule would encounter grave difficulty. Members of the ruling elites and middle officialdom would do their utmost to secure their living conditions through illegal activities, especially taking advantage of their share of public power. Even the discipline of core agents for system stability would be loosened gradually.

Then, Kim Jong Il or the center would not be able to maintain hold over economic and social changes, because it would lack financial instruments for control. All in all, in the midst of an impending humanitarian catastrophe, centrifugal forces would be strengthened; the discipline of the state organizations would be weakened, the autonomy of the firms and localities would increase, and with expansion of production outside the plan, the market would spread out.

- Confusion after the death of Kim Jong Il

During the complicated process of solving North Korea's nuclear

weapons development, Kim Jong Il might die a natural death, in which case, North Korea's mainstay would be lost. The remaining elites may possibly fail to form a coherent leadership for a longer period, in which case, the confusion of leadership would be prolonged.

The unity among regime elites, forced and maintained by Kim Jong Il, would disintegrate, and the leadership struggle among factions would continue. The military might be able to arrange an order by brute force and play a pivotal role in maintaining internal security and economic construction. However, in the event the military, having been controlled by Kim Jong Il through checks and balances among its several separate lineups, broken into several factions, there would definitely be complicated contests and confusions in the process of shaping a hegemonic coalition of factions from different sectors and groupings. In any case, it needs a relatively longer period to form a new power structure at the upper echelons of the elites.

Any new supreme leader or any collective leadership would be dictatorial, but could only have a weaker hold over regime elites and the society, and retreat from totalitarian rule would be inevitable. However, reorientation of internal and external policy orientation would be implemented amidst grave enmity between factions and with lesser policy coherences and in socio-political chaos.

Change by Societal Conquest

• Changes by failed societal struggle

Despite various severe internal difficulties, North Korean authorities have succeeded in repressing open resistance by the masses.

Any form of open opposition in the future would promote internal reforms. Directly after such an incursion, the political atmosphere might be hardened, but the feeling of crisis among the regime elites could force them into preventive reforms, a part of which would be

self-renovation of the regime elites and the middle officialdom through political purges, and which would make the regime more responsive to societal demands.

This might occur in any of the cases already mentioned. An open confrontation with societal forces, which once having begun can no more be covered, would facilitate the formation of critical social groups in the society. After a longer period with recurrent suppression of societal resistances, the regime could gain periods of time for self-transformations, and the 'civil society' could become powerful enough to compete for ruling power with the regime elites.[12]

• Change by successful societal revolt

As for now, the possibility of regime collapse through open resistance by the masses or replacement of ruling faction by dissident civil leaders is minimal.

However, the likelihood of mass revolt cannot be excluded, if, in specific accidental state of affairs, several elements are piled upon another, such as deterioration of economic situation, foreign intervention and instigation, and divisions among regime elites. For the time being, any mass revolt would be utilized by an elite faction or foreign powers.

Change by Foreign Choice

• Pre-emptive surgical strike and the elimination of Kim Jong Il

In a certain point in time during the process for dealing with North Korea's nuclear weapons development, the US administration may

12 See Leszeck Nowak, *Power and Civil Society. Toward a Dynamic Theory of Real Socialism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991).

consider elimination of North Korean leadership through pre-emptive surgical strike. It is highly possible that such an attempt may encounter backlash. First, even if weakened, a great part of North Korea still upholds a quasi-religious belief in their 'Dear Leader' Kim Jong Il, and regards the U.S. also in a quasi-religious manner as 'evil.' A sudden elimination of Kim Jong Il by an American military strike under this circumstance would cause intensification of anti-Americanism and xenophobia to the extreme degree. The successor regime would not be able to escape from the effects of the intensified xenophobia, and would encounter a grave difficulty in normalizing relations and finding forms of cooperation with neighboring countries.

• Induced mass defection and regime collapse

Mass defection could be applied as a way to induce regime collapse or instability, only if the Chinese government cooperates. North Korea would have infringed and be expected to encroach on the vital interests of China, for example, with acts of aggression, underground nuclear tests, or exports of fissile materials. In such a situation, inducement of mass defection may be used as one of the instruments for regime collapse besides engineering 'tailored containment,' division among regime elites, instigation of revolt, and so on.

Summary and Policy Implications

With new policy orientation in the early 2000s, North Korea attempted to adapt itself to and take advantage of the changes in the 1990s, such as the weakening of the center's power and resources and increased apolitical autonomy of the lower units. In coping with changed power relations between the center, the mid officialdom, and the masses, North Korea's center attempted to maintain its grip in

different ways in the 'new environments and conditions.'

North Korea's adaptation and change will likely be continued in the future, no matter whether by policy choice of the center or by decay, or by social protest. Simultaneously, gaps and contradictions between the progressing economic and social changes and the status quo-oriented politics would widen. In order to provide conditions and environments for successful economic reform and opening, or for evolution into a socialist commodity economy, North Korea should implement political reforms of de-Stalinization, and transform the structure and operation of the regime to be more responsive to societal wishes and demands.

In the 'new environments and conditions,' two kinds of pressure for political reform have been being amplified: first, changes in internal power relations and in the socio-economic situation have gradually increased the necessities for de-Stalinization; second, human rights infringement has become a problem, which cannot be overlooked in North Korea's relations with the outside world. Unlike the socio-economic changes, which can be progressed without significant political effects, the impact of de-Stalinization cannot be negligent with regards to North Korea's stability.

South Korea's interest demands that North Korea be changed as quickly as possible while maintaining its stability. With such intentions, South Korea's engagement policy promoted exchange and cooperation, and assisted North Korea to improve relations with the outside world. It also contributed to providing North Korean leadership with the environments and conditions for change, as well as acknowledging its leadership as an equal partner, thereby arranging more spaces for policy choice. In this sense, South Korea's engagement policy has not failed to realize a part of its original intentions.

Till now, the South Korean government has been engaging North Korea's leader Kim Jong Il with the assumption that there is the leader and the regime without society in North Korea. It has been a conve-

nient operational proposition, and might not have been totally false for the 1990s, but it may not be so in the future, simply because positive results of the South's policy helped geminate sprouts for new internal dynamics in North Korea. With its intentions of expanding exchange and cooperation as extensively as possible, South Korea's policy has contributed and will contribute not only to the regime to stabilize the system, but also to the socio-economic changes to be promoted. In this way, South Korea's policy has not only intensified the contradictions between politics, on the one hand, and economy and society in North Korea on the other, but also, those implied in its own policy were designed to recognize the regime as an equal partner and, if only for a while, to ignore the existence of the society.

Not only the North Korean regime, but also the South Korean engagement policy should be prepared for the latent civil discontent in North Korea to become more provocative in the future. As for North Korea, its policy orientation in the early 2000s may be interpreted that the regime itself has began to take the pressure from the society more seriously into consideration, having to concede, though apolitical, autonomy for groupings in the society. As for South Korea's new old North Korea policy of peace and prosperity, a new addressee in North Korea has not been implied.

Already, there has been a criticism on the South Korean engagement policy, which has fallen into immoral trade with an immoral regime. With increased attention on human rights infringement and fortunes of defectors, such criticism has been intensified internationally with the advent of the Bush administration since 2001.

Before it's too late, it is time for deliberation to devise a more complex engagement policy that engages not only the regime but also the society, albeit currently latent and at the backstage, waiting for its moment to start a long march and challenge the negligence of the South Korean government.