

**PANEL VIII:
NORTH KOREAN KNOT**

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North Korea might stop its nuclear program if a carrot and stick approach is used. It should be multilateral, even though there might be a number of problems, including complexity and diversity of viewpoints. Japan, for example, is concerned about abduction and about missiles. China is concerned about refugees and a potential nuclear arms race in North East Asia. Russia is a strong supporter of the non-nuclear status of this region. South Korea might be shilly-shallying in its support of squeezing North Korea in negotiations. Younger South Koreans are angry about such an approach.

Three reasons why it should be multilateral”

1. The North Korean nuclear program is not a problem between North Korea and the United States, but between North Korea and the rest of the world.
2. The multilateral approach will allow more benefactors for North Korea
3. It could be a stepping stone in the future when a regional security cooperation is envisioned. The six countries should cooperate for regional peace, bringing North Korea into the community of nations.

The packaging and sequencing of the six party talks will be very complicated. First the situation needs to be “frozen.” That is, the escalation needs to be stopped, and both parties should exchange a memorandum. There should be a mutual agreement on having regular talks. Then, a detailed road map is needed. Aid should be consortium based - food, energy and financial compensation. The financial assistance should be through the World Bank or Asian Development Bank. There should be a normalization of relations between Japan and North Korea and a Peace Treaty between the two Koreas. Finally, there should be a four-power guarantee pact for the peace and security of the peninsula, and an establishment of a Korean forum.

North Korea might use brinkmanship, and may not cooperate until after the South Korean elections and the U.S. elections. Hence, negotiations should have a time limit to prevent North Korean delaying tactics to eliminate its nuclear program. If the talks fail, regional security will fail, but if they succeed the road to peace and stability in the region will be paved. A divided Korea is not natural.

Leonard Spector, *Deputy Director, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, USA*

The capability and thinking of North Korea remains a mystery. Questions remain on the amount of plutonium separation prior to 1994, or how many weapons could be made with that. Is it two? In addition, there is a question about how much plutonium has been separated this year. Enough for four weapons?

Uncertainty also exists over their HEU program. It is possible that both North Korea's and Iran's program benefited from Pakistan, with supplies to both countries around the same time. Also possible that Pakistan supplied North Korea, who supplied Iran. Hence, North Korea's program might be comparable to Iran's.

Uncertainty also exists regarding U.S intelligence. How good is it? Can it be trusted?

In the 1980s, North Korea's program started as an offensive program (to forcibly unify the Korean peninsula), but given North Korea's economy and the loss of two communist allies, the idea of forced unification of the peninsula is no longer possible. It is now a weapon of intimidation. And

the United States support to South Korea may erode. It is unclear if the DPRK program is a program for deterrence. It may be a bid to develop a bargaining chip or a means for commercial gain through the sale of missiles and uranium enrichment technology.

What North Korea really needs is economic and political integration.

These six party talks have been entered into without a great deal of knowledge and certainty. North Korea's domestic politics is also an unknown quantity. The hardliners are headed by the military and the moderates by the Foreign ministry. But we are not sure how is winning the battle, and who is in charge of nuclear policy in North Korea.

South Korea fears a military clash with the North. Seoul is, therefore, more inclined to accommodation rather than confrontation. This in contrast to 1994, when South Korea was more hawkish.

Japan is concerned about the No Dong, and is now taking a tougher approach by interdicting WMD cargoes and inspecting ferries.

Russia and China remain key players. They are in a unique position because they can apply pressure on North Korea without fear of military response from Pyongyang. It is not clear, however, how far these two countries are willing to go in applying pressure on DPRK and its nuclear program.

The final mystery is U.S. policy. No other choices are available to the United States, except negotiations. Talks, however, are only one prong of the policy. Direct military intervention seems completely impractical now. U.S. strikes on North Korean nuclear facilities would spread radioactive material because of the "hot" targets, and the U.S. would not get all the plutonium facilities. The U.S. has created a different coercive component - that is the ability to strangle North Korea economically, if talks don't work.

The noose is tightening around DPRK: China has pressured North Korea to start talking. It started the pressure with an oil embargo. Russia has also pressured DPRK through diplomatic channels. It has also held military exercises on its border with North Korea, and has held unprecedented naval exercises with Japan and South Korea, in order to send a message to North Korea. The Proliferation Security Initiative covers the rest of the coast by interdicting WMD cargo to and from North Korea. PSI countries are holding exercises in the Pacific. These collective actions are pressuring North Korea.

The United States should offer this deal: Economic support and political engagement in return for the elimination of North Korea's nuclear program and exports, and a freeze of its missile capabilities. How could North Korea give such assurances? Inspections - but President Bush would want to see profound political change, amounting to regime change, with the hawks losing control. This is not inconceivable. For example, for five years, North Korea has not supported international terrorism externally.

In all of this, Russian political support will be critical.

Alexander Vorontsov, *Head of Section on Korea, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Federation*

This problem emerged as a crisis of American-North Korean relations. The key persons driving this issue are North Korea and the United States. Pyongyang took the threat of regime change seriously, as it emerged from the Axis of Evil speech. Iraq shows that it was not just rhetoric, but a program of action for the United States. So North Korea is in survival mode. It was pushed into this position. North Korea feels that the nuclear program is a deterrent, and it is based on North Korean conclusion drawn from the Iraqi experience, and from the comments of hawks in the United States.

What is the way out? A military solution has no prospect. The present Administration ignored steps taken by the Clinton Administration, and is now starting from scratch.

We have to hope that the 6-Party talks will yield a result, offering a package as a solution. The root of the problem is that North Korea wants security guarantees, and without security guarantees they will not give up their nuclear program. They have said that they would agree to sign a non-attack agreement. Under the present circumstances that is not possible. Specific guarantees are needed by the United States. North Korea's concerns are justified.

The international media portrays Russia as North Korea's ally, alleging that Moscow does not support the multilateral approach. This is not true, but because North Korea only wanted a bilateral exchange, Russia accepted the concept of bilateral negotiations. Russia is not happy with the international community pressuring North Korea economically. The country has unique access to DPRK, and it understands that economic squeezing of North Korea can't lead to the overthrow of that regime. The regime in North Korea is very viable, even in terrible economic circumstances. Economic isolation is very dangerous because it could lead to further escalation, and even to military conflict.

North Koreans are very good at predicting their counterparts' behavior. North Korea's logic is different, but is bent on protecting the country. A change of regime in North Korea means a loss of jobs for millions of North Koreans, and a fear of repression against them. If the regime is overthrown, the consequences may be very dangerous for the North Korean people and for neighboring countries.

China's pressure on North Korea should not be overestimated. But the international community has developed experience in addressing international non-proliferation (in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus), and so there are good reasons to be moderately optimistic.