



## A Regional Discussion of the Six-Party Process: Challenges and Opportunities in North Korea

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### Introduction

Let me begin by thanking the National Committee on North Korea, the Brookings Institution, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership for organizing this important forum today.

It's a great pleasure to address this distinguished gathering, and to be on the same program as the eminent panelists who will also speak today. I look forward to taking your questions following my brief remarks.

The task assigned to me today is to describe the direction of the Six-Party Talks and to speak about U.S. objectives for the Talks. I intend to do so. But, in keeping with the main theme of this forum, I will also try to address what I see are the opportunities the Six-Party Talks present, particularly the one being provided by this process for the D.P.R.K. to break out of its growing international isolation.

As the title of this forum also states, we are facing challenges, as well as opportunities. Indeed, the challenges facing us, as we seek to secure true peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, are significant. We were reminded of this recently when Pyongyang issued an unfortunate and troubling statement on February 10.

Yet, if the D.P.R.K. follows the path to the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue that the U.S. and our allies and partners have laid out, the opportunities are also great. The door is open for the D.P.R.K., by addressing the concerns of the international community, to vastly improve the lives of its people, enhance its own security, normalize its relations with the United States and others, and raise its stature in the world.

### D.P.R.K. Complaints Without Foundation

Unfortunately, this is a reality that the D.P.R.K. has yet to recognize. Instead, the D.P.R.K. has taken steps that only isolate it further from the international community. On February 10, the North Koreans issued a Foreign Ministry statement, claiming that:

- Nuclear weapons are "for self-defense to cope with the Bush administration's ever more undisguised policy to isolate and stifle" the D.P.R.K.; and it further said that
- "[We are] compelled to suspend our participation in the talks for an indefinite period" until the U.S. abandons its "hostile policy."

In this and other statements, the North Koreans have continued to mischaracterize U.S. policy towards the D.P.R.K. by their frequent references to so-called "hostility." One of my tasks today, rather than dwelling on what U.S. policy is not, will be to convey to you what U.S. policy is. In this connection, -- the senior-most levels of my government have made clear what our policy approach is D.P.R.K.

The essence of our approach was spelled out by Secretary Rice, who said in her confirmation hearing: "we've made clear to the North Korean regime that the President of the United States has said that the United States has no intention to attack North Korea, to invade North Korea, that multilateral security assurances would be available to North Korea, to which the United States would be party, if North Korea is prepared to give up its nuclear weapons program, verifiably and irreversibly."

I invite you to contrast that statement with the odd rhetoric that Pyongyang has used to mischaracterize our policy. And for any in the D.P.R.K. who still are having trouble understanding our approach, let me summarize it in even clearer terms:

- If the D.P.R.K. is prepared to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions, the U.S. remains ready to work in the context of the Six-Party Talks to resolve the issues between us.
- D.P.R.K. rhetoric that it needs nuclear weapons because of an alleged "hostile policy" of this Administration ignores important historic reality:
- We know that the D.P.R.K. set out to acquire nuclear weapons decades ago. Our estimates have long suggested a North Korean nuclear weapons capability, and previous D.P.R.K. statements have hinted that they possess nuclear weapons; thus the latest claim is a troubling, but not surprising, development.
  - I don't need to remind anyone here today that the D.P.R.K. has not carried out its promises under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, failed to live to its 1994 Agreed Framework obligations and violated its commitments to the R.O.K. under the 1991-92 North-South Denuclearization Agreement. Pyongyang began to develop a covert program of uranium enrichment, even while promising publicly that it would abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and live up to its international obligations.
  - And, after three rounds of Six-Party Talks designed to resolve the nuclear issue once and for all, the D.P.R.K. has refused to return to negotiations and instead has escalated its rhetoric.

### U.S. Proposal in June 2004

The proposal the U.S. presented at the last round of Six-Party Talks was developed in close coordination with the R.O.K. and Japan. Under the U.S.

proposal, the D.P.R.K. would, as a first step, commit to dismantle all of its nuclear programs. The parties would then reach agreement on a detailed implementation plan requiring, at a minimum, the supervised disabling, dismantlement and elimination of all nuclear-related facilities and materials; the removal of all nuclear weapons and weapons components, centrifuge and other nuclear parts, fissile material and fuel rods; and a long-term monitoring program.

The proposal includes a short initial preparatory period, of perhaps three months' duration, to prepare for the dismantlement and removal of the D.P.R.K.'s nuclear programs. During that initial period, the D.P.R.K. would:

- provide a complete listing of all its nuclear activities, and cease operations of all of its nuclear activities;
- permit the securing of all fissile material and the monitoring of all fuel rods, and;
- permit the publicly disclosed and observable disablement of all nuclear weapons/weapons components and key centrifuge parts.

These actions by the D.P.R.K. would be monitored subject to international verification. For the D.P.R.K.'s declaration to be credible and for the process to get started, the North would have to include its uranium enrichment program and existing weapons, as well as its plutonium program.

Under our proposal, as the D.P.R.K. carried out its commitments, the other parties would take some corresponding steps that would be provisional or temporary in nature and would only yield lasting benefits after dismantlement of the nuclear programs had been completed.

Upon agreement of the overall approach, including a D.P.R.K. agreement to dismantle all nuclear programs in a permanent, thorough and transparent manner subject to effective verification, non-U.S. parties would provide heavy fuel oil to the D.P.R.K.

Upon acceptance of the D.P.R.K. declaration, the parties would:

- provide provisional multilateral security assurances, which would become more enduring as the process proceeded. (D.P.R.K. rhetoric on this issue notwithstanding, it is reasonable to conclude that security assurances given through the multilateral Six-Party process would have considerably more weight than bilateral assurances);
- the parties would begin a study to determine the energy requirements of the D.P.R.K. and how to meet them by non-nuclear energy programs;
- they would also begin a discussion of steps necessary to lift remaining economic sanctions on the D.P.R.K., and on the steps necessary for removal of the D.P.R.K. from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

#### **No Response From D.P.R.K.**

The D.P.R.K. has never responded formally to our proposal, nor have the North Koreans sought to explore it through subsequent contacts since we presented it in Beijing in June.

#### **Diplomatic Efforts Ongoing**

Despite the North's unwillingness to re-engage, diplomatic contacts among the six parties are continuing as we explore ways to resolve the current impasse:

- Ambassador Christopher Hill was recently nominated by President Bush to be the Assistant Secretary of State for the East Asian and Pacific Affairs. As the current Ambassador to South Korea and Head of Delegation to the Six-Party Talks, his nomination reaffirms in a clear and demonstrable way the U.S. commitment to the Talks.
- You may have seen that Ambassador Hill traveled to Beijing for talks with the Chinese, held talks in Seoul with China's Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei as well as South Korean and Japanese officials, and traveled to Japan this week for talks with senior officials in Tokyo.
- The visit late last month to Pyongyang of Wang Jiarui, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party International Department, and his meeting with Kim Jong-Il, reflected the importance China places on moving the process forward. We welcome this, even as we ask the P.R.C. to do even more to urge the D.P.R.K. to return to the Six-Party Talks.
- You will recall that we met with the North Koreans in New York twice late last year, to reiterate that we remain ready to resume the talks at an early date, without preconditions, and to ask them to return to the table. We expressed our willingness to respond at the table to any questions the D.P.R.K. might have, and indicated we have questions for the D.P.R.K. about its proposal. We underscored that we are not prepared to negotiate conditions for a return to the table.
- We have also discussed with our North Korean counterparts the example of Libya, detailing the benefits Libya is now receiving for its transformed behavior.
- All five parties have sent a common message to the D.P.R.K. that the Six-Party process provides the best mechanism for peaceful resolution of the current problem, and for assistance with D.P.R.K. integration with its region and the international community.

#### **D.P.R.K. Isolating Itself**

Our diplomacy, and that of others, has sought to drive home the message to Pyongyang that its brinkmanship and threats only lead to its further isolation in the international community. Statements from other parties have also encouraged the D.P.R.K. to return to talks and abandon its nuclear ambitions.

#### **Six-Party Talks Provide Path to End Isolation**

Our individual and collective diplomacy has emphasized that the Six-Party Talks provide a path towards a real solution to the nuclear issue on the Peninsula. As Secretary Rice said recently: "The world has given North Korea a way out, and we hope they will take that way out."

If North Korea wishes to demonstrate its declared intent for a relationship based on cooperation, not conflict, and a relationship based on its membership in the international community, then it needs -- as Secretary Rice pointed out -- to return to the Six Party Talks and pursue the opportunity this forum presents.

Multilateral diplomacy is the most effective approach to the D.P.R.K.'s nuclear problem, as the problem threatens the international community. This multilateral approach is also the best way of marshalling the resources and the collective wisdom of the parties in a way that makes a permanent solution possible. If the D.P.R.K. moves to dismantle its nuclear programs, multilateral efforts can provide opportunities for better lives for the North Korean people.

Resolving the nuclear issue opens the door to improved relations with the U.S. But obviously there are other concerns that must be tackled as part of any such process: missile development and deployment; abductions and past support for terrorism; human right violations and abuse of refugees; and ongoing illicit activities.

#### **Key to Success of Six-Party Talks is Cooperation with Partners**

Other than the D.P.R.K., all of the other parties in the Six-Party Talks have reaffirmed their unqualified commitment to this important multilateral process. Each one of the five parties has an important stake in the success of this effort.

For our Japanese ally, PM Koizumi has expressed his determination to continue Japan's efforts to resolve nuclear and ballistic missile concerns and to normalize Japan-North Korea relations, as well as to resolve outstanding questions about the abduction of Japanese nationals. As the world's second largest economy, Japan would be positioned to contribute substantially to assistance programs and regional cooperation with the D.P.R.K.

China and Russia have repeatedly made clear they share the goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula. China has used its unique relationship and special access to reinforce the message that the Six-Party Talks are the best vehicle for resolving the nuclear issue.

Our allies in South Korea recognize that a Korean Peninsula without nuclear weapons is critical to maintaining regional stability and to advancing prosperity and cooperation throughout East Asia; resolving this concern should be the basis for, not an obstacle to, improved North-South relations.

#### **North Korea's Choice**

Faced with the views of its Six-Party partners, North Korea needs to understand that it has a choice. North Korea needs to understand that it is increasingly seen as an isolated, out-of-step country that is a threat to regional stability, peace and prosperity in a region where the trend has been in the opposite direction, i.e. to greater democracy, growth and regional cooperation.

Democracy is strengthening through the Asia-Pacific region. In the past year, successful elections have taken place in old democracies such as Japan and Australia, new ones in Mongolia and Indonesia, and developing ones, such as Hong Kong. Amid growing prosperity, the region is moving toward greater economic openness, lower trade barriers, and regional cooperation and integration. The Asia-Pacific region now accounts for over 25% of world production, and about 23% of world trade.

Income levels have doubled and redoubled almost everywhere in East Asia. East Asians increasingly look beyond their borders for markets, investment capital, higher education, and ideas. New security initiatives and frameworks through organizations like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) have accelerated regional cooperation on issues such as maritime security and emergency preparedness. The region recently demonstrated its capacity to work together in its collective response to the tsunami disaster.

North Korea's nuclear threat and self-generated isolation are clearly at odds with the region's overall trajectory toward cooperation and integration. The Six-Party Talks provide a path back to the international community. It is within North Korea's power to achieve both integration into this dynamic region and a wholly transformed relationship with the U.S. Today, I was asked to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the Six-Party process. I hope that my talk demonstrated both the magnitude of the challenges and the promise of the opportunities.

That road to peace on the Korean peninsula leads through the Six-Party Talks to a future in which the threat of nuclear weapons is gone forever and in which the people of the D.P.R.K. are finally able to reap the benefits of a normal relationship with the region and the world. The path that the D.P.R.K.'s leadership needs to take is clear. I hope that they will have the wisdom to do so. Thank you.

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