Historical Origins of the North Korean Nuclear Issue: Examining 20 Years of Negotiation Records

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Abstract

Offering an analysis of the twenty years of nuclear negotiations between the international community and North Korea, this paper reveals that North Korea's nuclear weapons development is neither a fabricated nor an exaggerated problem. Does North Korea carry on its nuclear weapons development because of a lack of mutual trust between it and the United States? Is it developing nuclear weapons simply as a means of negotiation? The negotiation records of the past twenty years reveal that the North has consistently pushed ahead with the development of nuclear weapons. For the North Korean regime, nuclear armament can be seen as a means for its survival and negotiation leverage for improving relations with the United States. Since 1993, when the U.S.-North Korea senior officials meetings began, the North has sought a political solution through direct negotiations with the United States on the line that, if the United States tacitly approves its established nuclear capabilities through the freezing of its nuclear facilities, it can resolve U.S. security concerns like nuclear proliferation and long-range ballistic missiles.

It remains to be seen if the September 19 2005 joint statement, which declared the dismantlement of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, will lead to an eventual resolution of the North's nuclear problem or turn out to be nothing more than another agreement to be reneged on like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the joint statement on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and the Geneva Agreed Framework.

Keywords: North Korean nuclear issue, Geneva agreement, brinksmanship, six-party talks, NPT, U.S.-North Korea relations

Introduction

Since the North's nuclear problem emerged in the early 1990s, the Aesop fable about the traveler made to remove his cloak not by strong winds but by sunshine has been frequently cited. That fable has become a North Korea policy motto in South Korea. North Korea's practice of brinksmanship, however, reminds us of another fable, “A Shepherd Boy and a Wolf.” In the story, a bored shepherd boy playfully cries wolf twice to make the villagers stop what they are doing and run to him. However, when a wolf really does attack him, the twice-deceived villagers ignore his cries. North Korea has deceived the international community three times. It thrice promised to abandon its nuclear weapons program, signing the NPT in 1985, issuing the inter-Korean declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in 1992, and striking a bargain in the 1994 Geneva Agreement framework. But the North cheated the international community again when it acknowledged to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly in October 2002 that it was developing nuclear weapons through uranium extraction. On September 19, 2005, at the six-party nuclear disarmament talks, North Korea promised to dismantle its nuclear programs for a fourth time. Can North Korea really be trusted to keep its promises this time, resolving the nuclear standoff?

North Korean President Kim Il Sung affirmed to Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Kanemaru, who visited Pyongyang in September 1990, that "North Korea is neither capable of developing nor willing to develop nuclear weapons." At the second round of inter-Korean senior officials meetings held in Pyongyang in February 1992, the North told South Korean Prime Minister Jeong Won-sik: "We neither produce nuclear weapons nor need to do so, let alone possess them," When U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly visited Pyongyang in October 2002, however, Vice Foreign Minister Kang Suk-ju (Kang Seok-ju) revealed the existence of a uranium enrichment program and the possession of nuclear weapons. The North denied this, but later formally announced its possession of nuclear weapons.

Why does North Korea develop nuclear weapons? Regarding the origin of the North Korean nuclear issue, as many theories have been raised as on the origin of the Korean War. They range from fabrication and exaggeration theories to one that holds the U.S. responsible and another that holds both parties responsible, citing shortages in

mutual trust. Varied theories have also been presented on the objectives of the North's nuclear weapons development, ranging from the argument that it preserves the system to its use as a negotiation card.

The fabrication and exaggeration theories share a similar logical structure, and they once gained considerable force in South Korea when the nuclear problem first emerged in the early 1990s. These theories accepted at face value the North's denial of a weapons program, and further questioned the North's ability to develop nuclear weapons at all. It was also suggested that the North's nuclear issue was a Western fabrication. Supporting this assertion, they stated that North Korea could be seen to be positive about nuclear development in the course of pursuing nuclear power generation from self-suppled uranium in an effort to resolve its power shortages. They added that the North, given its low technical standards, is incapable of developing nuclear weapons, and there is a high possibility that the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon (Yeongbyeon) and elsewhere were merely camouflage facilities aimed at duping the West. These theories, however, lost their validity when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in an objective surveillance of the North's nuclear facilities conducted from June 1992 to February 1993, found that North Korea had extracted plutonium, the biggest bottleneck and core of nuclear development, and the North subsequently pulled out of the NPT.

But the fabrication theory again gained force in Korean society from October 2002. The theory of fabrication or exaggeration by America was raised in connection with the North's admission of possessing nuclear weapons in October 2002. With anti-American sentiment at its peak in the wake of the death of two Korean schoolgirls, Hyo-sun and Mi-seon, by a U.S. armored vehicle, a social climate was created that helped the public perceive as fabrication the U.S. government announcement that the North acknowledged its possession of uranium spindles and nuclear weapons. Another assertion that gained some power of persuasion in Korean society for a while was the theory that the Bush administration fabricated the North Korean nuclear issue in an attempt to restrain possible improvements in Japan-North Korea relations following Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang and progress in the inter-Korean relationship.

The theory of American responsibility stated that the United States was responsible for the North's development of nuclear weapons. Since the North had declared its development and possession of nuclear weapons, this theory that Pyongyang

had developed such weapons because the United States sought to pressure North Korea into collapsing began to emerge. This theory has something common with the logic the North has maintained since its admission in October 2002 to American Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly of its uranium extraction and possession of nuclear weapons. The North has maintained that, because of the U.S. policy of pressuring it into demise, it has developed nuclear weapons and even more powerful weapons. Some have asserted that it is only natural for the North to develop nuclear weapons for the purpose of defending itself. The theory that the United States is responsible for North Korea's weapons development represents the perception that both sides are wrong. It holds that the nuclear standoff remains unresolved because of a lack of mutual trust between the United States and North Korea. Not a small number of South Korean journalists and experts cite the lack of mutual trust as an important reason why the nuclear standoff remains unresolved.

Additionally, there has been a long debate over the North's intent of developing nuclear weapons, whether for negotiation or for possessing nuclear weapons. This negotiation theory has it that the North will give up its nuclear weapons development, being used for the purpose of gaining returns in negotiations for the preservation of its system, once adequate compensations are secured. Of course, North Korea may have carried out nuclear negotiations based on such a premise. On the other hand, some assert that the North will not give up nuclear weapons because it sees them as the only means of preserving its system.

The international community and North Korea have conducted negotiations for nearly 20 years. Through a historical illumination of the process of the North Korean nuclear negotiations, this paper aims to reveal the origin of the North Korean nuclear issue, how the North Korean regime has very consistently pushed through with the possession of nuclear weapons, and how it has utilized nuclear weapons development as a negotiation card for securing political and economic benefits.

The Origin of Nuclear Weapons Development: Atomic Ambitions

Keeping in step with the Soviet Union's call for denuclearizing Northeast Asia, North

Korea demanded the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from South Korea since the mid-1970s. In 1976 the North added the issue of nuclear weapons withdrawal to its military proposals to the South. Bak Seong-cheol, in an address at the fifth non-aligned bloc summit on August 17, 1976, demanded that nuclear weapons and bases be withdrawn from South Korea.[1] On June 23, 1986, North Korea announced its "statement concerning the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula." The North's draft denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was virtually focused on removing the American nuclear umbrella from South Korea, calling for 1) withdrawal of nuclear weapons deployed in the South, 2) ban of experimentation, production, storage, and inflow of nuclear weapons, and 3) ban of intrusion into and passage of the Korean peninsula of aircraft and vessels carrying nuclear weapons. All in all, North Korea cannot but be regarded as having adopted denuclearization as a publicized state policy. A close observation of the North's atomic facilities, however, reveals that the North, contrary to its stated policy, has pushed ahead with the development of nuclear weapons for a very long time.

Nuclear weapons are not of the nature to be produced over a short period of time. They require expensive, long-term infrastructure and must be preceded by the investment of vast human and material resources. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the North, with the help of the Soviet Union, started learning nuclear technologies and training engineers and secured basic atomic power technologies, based on which it developed nuclear weapons in earnest, away from laboratories, from the mid-1970s.

Recognizing the need to possess a long-range striking capability from its bitter experience gained during the Korean War, North Korea is found to have initiated the development of weapons of mass destructions, such as nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, from the early 1960s. In 1965, at a ceremony inaugurating Hamheung Military Academy, an institute for the technologies and manpower needed for the development of specialized weapons including missiles, Kim Il Sung said, "If another war breaks out, the United States and Japan will join the war. To block their intervention, we must be able to produce rockets capable of reaching Japan."[2] North Korea, despite its lightening attack,

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[1] "Bak Seong-cheol's Address at the 5th Non-aligned Bloc Summit Meeting (August 17, 1976)" in Yi (1989, 533).

[2] Statement of Colonel Joo-hwal Choi and Young-hwan Ko, Before the Senate Committee on

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lost in the 1950-1953 Korean War because it failed to block a prompt intervention by the United States, which in turn took advantage of American bases in Japan. From such experiences, the North aggressively developed ballistic missiles capable of attacking the South from the rear and U.S. bases in Japan. Ballistic missiles, almost without exception, are developed as a means of carrying extremely destructive warheads, namely nuclear warheads. All in all, the North's nuclear weapons development, it can be said, was initiated primarily for military purposes.

North Korea began training scientists after signing an agreement in 1956 for participation in the inauguration of the Dbuna Nuclear Institute of the Soviet Union. Concluding the North Korea-Soviet Union Agreement concerning the Peaceful Use of Atomic Power in September 1956, North Korea developed the Yongbyon Atomic Energy Research Estate in 1964 and imported from the Soviet Union an IRT-2000 experimental reactor in 1965 to start earnest atomic power activities. Since the mid-1970s the North began to show the direction of its atomic power activities geared to the development of nuclear weapons on the strength of nuclear engineers and basic atomic power technologies accumulated with the help of the Soviet Union.

North Korea began to develop nuclear weapons in earnest in the early 1980s by positively initiating a series of its own nuclear facilities in the Yongbyong area. Initiating the construction of a 5 MW graphite reactor, designed by itself in Yongbyon in July 1980, the North went into its operation in 1986. The North then constructed a 180-meter-long 6-story reprocessing facility (purported to be a radioactive chemical research reactor), which went into operation in 1989. Until the eve of the Geneva Agreement framework, North Korea was constructing a 50 MW reactor in Yongbyon and another 200 MW reactor in Taechon. A 5 MW reactor is capable of producing plutonium enough to make one nuclear bomb a year, a 50 MW reactor plutonium for 11 bombs, and a 200 MW reactor plutonium for 44 bombs. In or about 1989, North Korea secured a base for possessing plutonium, the raw material of nuclear bombs, that is the very core of and the biggest bottleneck to the production of nuclear weapons. Between 1986 and June 1992, when the North accommodated IAEA inspections, North Korea, through the operation of the 5 MW reactor, obtained plutonium enough to make one to three nuclear bombs.

Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Series (October 21, 1997).

Through a 70-day shutdown of the atomic reactor in 1989, North Korea is highly likely to have extracted plutonium enough to make one or two nuclear bombs and produced bombs.[3]

It is evident that North Korea started developing nuclear weapons initially with great ambition. Based on their atomic facilities and the process of ballistic missile development, it's the initial goal was nuclear power. North Korea's atomic facilities, when completed, were capable of mass-producing over 50 nuclear bombs a year. North Korea under Kim Il Sung, it is assessed, aimed at becoming a nuclear power whose nuclear warheads could target not only all of South Korea but also all of Northeast Asia, including Tokyo, Beijing, and Okinawa. Kim Il Sung's ambition, however, was destined to be revised or postponed in the face of deteriorating strategic circumstances.

Joining the NPT and Joint Statement on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula

North Korea Joins the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Early in the 1980s, North Korea began to attract international attention. Construction of nuclear facilities in the Yongbyon region had begun in the mid-1970s. The North began to build a graphite reactor and reprocessing facilities for plutonium production. Atomic power-related facilities held by the North at the time were offered by the Soviet Union and managed under an atomic power accord signed with them. Should North Korea build its own atomic facilities, however, it could develop nuclear weapons outside the oversight of the international community. For that reason, U.S. intelligence agencies paid close attention to the North's reactor construction. The United States and the Soviet Union, despite the Cold War, cooperated with each other in blocking the North from developing nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union, based on U.S. intelligence, pressured and persuaded North Korea to join the NPT in December 1985. North Korea's nuclear facilities thus came under international surveillance, and the North promised to give up nuclear weapons development.

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[3] Albright (1994).

Though it is difficult to access specific negotiations records between North Korea and the Soviet Union regarding the North's joining the NPT, the North, in return for signing the NPT, secured from the Soviet Union such weapons as Mig23 fighters and SAM missiles, plus technology and a loan for the import of four power generation light water reactors.

Accommodation of Nuclear Inspection and Joint Statement on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula

With the disappearance of the Soviet bloc in the 1990s, North Korea's weapons of mass destruction capability, which was built laboriously and at great expense over a long period of time, became the only safety valve for its survival as well as a strong negotiation lever. The North began to aggressively use their WMD card in a bid to create an environment favorable for the survival of its system. The North faced the worst possible political and economic situation in the 90s. North Korea's rigid economic system of *juche*, or self-reliance, began malfunctioning, resulting in negative growth and an irrevocable economic gap with the South. Since its allies, the Soviet Union and China, established diplomatic relations with South Korea under the latter's aggressive northern policy, the North's international isolation became decisive. With the socialist camp falling like dominos, beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the North Korean regime found itself in a situation in which it could not but give primary consideration to the survival of its system.

Despite its joining the NTP, North Korea expedited the construction of secret nuclear facilities by refusing to sign a safeguards agreement with the IAEA, mandatory under the NTP, and rejected the subsequent opening of nuclear facilities for inspection. Its deteriorating strategic environment increased the urgency of developing nuclear arms. During a visit to Pyongyang in November 1990 to inform North Korea that the Soviet Union had established diplomatic relations with South Korea, Soviet Foreign Minister Sebardnaje heard his North Korean counterpart Kim Yeong-nam say, "If the Soviet Union forms relations with South Korea, we'll consider it as relieving us of the obligation to ban the development of nuclear weapons."[4]

[4] *Pravda*, November 29, 1990, Yun (1995, 38-39).

Amidst the crisis of imminent absorption into South Korea due to its gradually deteriorating strategic circumstances stemming from German unification, the diplomatic relations between South Korea and the Soviet Union and China, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe, and its own economic plight, North Korea reinforced its reliance on nuclear arms as a political and psychological safety valve for preserving its system and preventing unification through absorption. With international pressure on the North's nuclear weapons development mounting in the 1990s, the North gradually began to realize that its own policy on the enforcement and abandonment of nuclear arms development was an effective lever for maintaining its system. By maintaining nuclear development on the one hand and maximizing the ambiguity of its development as a negotiation lever on the other, the North has aggressively exercised a dual strategy of improving relations with the West and gaining economic assistance and other needs necessary for its survival.

A French commercial satellite photograph of the Yongbon nuclear facilities made public in 1989 drew world attention to the North's nuclear arms development. The satellite photo displayed the shapes of a reactor and massive reprocessing facilities, the operations of which the North denied. As the nuclear reprocessing facilities appeared to have been completed in the photo, concern about the North's imminent nuclear arms development began to arise at home and abroad.

At an IAEA board meeting in February 1990, amid mounting international pressure, North Korea, under the condition of joining the safeguards agreement and accepting IAEA inspections, assured that nuclear weapons would be withdrawn from the Korean peninsula, and that neither nuclear arms nor the threat of such would be used. On November 16, 1990, the North Korean foreign ministry announced this statement: "We will sign the safeguards agreement only if the United States provides legal assurance that they will not threaten us with a nuclear attack. We hope to hold negotiations with the United States regarding this matter."

The South Korean government, considering the fatal adverse impact the North's nuclear armament would have on the Korean peninsula and the East Asian region, sought in cooperation with the United States to solve the nuclear problem by accommodating the preconditions of inspection requested by North Korea. To begin with, the United States proclaimed at the 4th NPT evaluation session held in August 1990 and on other occasions

that the general principles of the Negative Security Assurance would also apply to North Korea.[5] In the wake of a June 1990 summit between Korean President Roh Tae-woo and U.S. President William W. Bush, the White House spokesman issued a statement, saying, "The U.S. won't threaten North Korea." Meanwhile, Seoul, securing the rights to nuclear negotiations at the summit, subsequently led such negotiations with Pyongyang.

In the meantime, South Korea and the United States unexpectedly accepted the North Korean demand that nuclear arms be pulled out of the Korean peninsula. With the issue of safeguarding nuclear arms following the end of the Cold War and in view of the political confusion in the Soviet Union, the notion prevailed in the United States that the dismantlement of strategic nuclear arms was necessary for strategic safety. Deployment of nuclear arms in South Korea was deemed to become more difficult in view of democratization in South Korea and rising civic consciousness, increasing the political burden on Seoul and Washington. On September 27, 1991, President Bush declared the complete withdrawal of strategic nuclear arms from the Korean peninsula. On November 8, 1991, President Roh Tae-woo made public the "Korean peninsula denuclearization declaration," an almost total acceptance of the North's preconditions of nuclear inspection. On November 25, 1991, the North Korean foreign ministry announced a four-point statement, saying 1) that the North would sign the nuclear safeguards agreement once the U.S. began withdrawing its nuclear arms from the Korean peninsula, 2) that the simultaneous inspection of U.S. nuclear arms in South Korea and North Korean nuclear weapons would be conducted, 3) that North Korea would negotiate with the U.S. over simultaneous inspection and the removal of nuclear threats against the North, and 4) that inter-Korean negotiation would be launched regarding the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The North's proposal of simultaneous inspection, however, was quite unreasonable because an IAEA inspection, mandatory under the NPT, calls for inspecting military facilities of NPT signatories at the same time. South Korea abruptly accommodated the "simultaneous inspection" offer at the fifth round of inter-Korean senior officials meeting in December 1992, and proposed a simultaneous inspection in both Koreas including U.S. military bases in the South. North Korea was thus deprived of

[5] The NSA assures countries not possessing nuclear weapons, from among those that have joined the NPT, that no nuclear arms will be used against them except when the United States and its allies are attacked militarily.

justifications to further reject IAEA inspections.

In January 1992, the South Korean government announced the suspension of the Team Spirit joint South Korea-U.S. military exercises. A Washington-Pyongyang senior officials meeting was held in Washington in the same month between U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Political Affairs Cantor and North Korean Workers' Party Foreign Affairs Secretary Kim Yong-sun. At the meeting, Kim reportedly referred to possible improvements in Pyongyang-Washington relations and the continued stationing of U.S. forces in South Korea even after reunification. North Korea signed the nuclear safeguards agreement on January 30, 1992 after a six-year interval since its initial joining of the NPT in 1985, which was ratified by the Supreme People"s Assembly on April 10 of the same year. The IAEA started a provisional inspection of North Korea in May 1992.

Meanwhile, on December 11, 1991, South Korea announced its readiness to withhold the Team Spirit exercises if and when the North agreed to nuclear inspection within the year. On December 18, President Roh Tae-woo, accommodating the North's demand that nuclear weapons be withdrawn from the South, declared the non-existence of nuclear arms in South Korea. Inter-Korean nuclear negotiations subsequently made immediate progress and reached an accord on the "joint statement on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" on December 31, 1991, which was announced on February 19, 1992 at the sixth round of the senior inter-Korean officials conference. The joint declaration stipulates 1) that nuclear weapons should not be experimented with, manufactured, produced, received, possessed, stored, deployed, or used, 2) that nuclear energy should be used for peaceful purposes only, 3) that nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities should not be held, and 4) that an inter-Korean nuclear control joint committee should be established to verify the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and conduct mutual inspections. The inter-Korean accord, which called for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and mutual inspections for verification, was assessed by some as having paved the way for independently settling the nuclear issue. The inter-Korean commitment, contained in Article 3 of the joint declaration, to not possess nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities, in particular, was seen as considerable progress toward fixing the nuclear problem as the North itself rendered illegitimate the reprocessing facilities in Yongbyon, core facilities for nuclear arms development. But the provision faced domestic criticism that South Korea abandoned its

"nuclear sovereignty" on the grounds that it considerably restrained the South's legitimate use of atomic power. The most serious problem with the joint declaration was the existence of a poison clause in Article 4, which read, "Objects selected by the other party and agreed upon by both sides" would be inspected, which permitted the North to legitimately reject requests to inspect suspicious facilities. The inter-Korean nuclear negotiations ended in virtual rupture in January 1993 despite the thirteen plenary sessions held since the Inter-Korean Nuclear Control Joint Committee was set up in March 1992.

First Nuclear Crisis and the Geneva Agreement

North Korea's Declaration of Withdrawal from NPT

The IAEA conducted six interim inspections of the Yongbyon area from May 1992 to February 1993. Their findings revealed the status of North Korea's nuclear development to a considerable extent. The IAEA uncovered the following suspicious activities.

First, what the North claimed to be a radio-chemistry laboratory was in fact a huge reprocessing facility in operation that, despite still being under construction, had produced plutonium on several occasions.

Second, serious divergence was found between what North Korea reported in its first notification to the IAEA and the findings of the IAEA inspections. The North claimed it only extracted 90 grams of plutonium once from depleted fuel rods, but the North was estimated to have extracted kilograms of plutonium on three or more occasions.

Third, regarding the divergence problem, it was disclosed that the North had more nuclear-related facilities not made known to the IAEA. The fact emerged that the North, despite its denials, had two unreported waste facilities involving plutonium extraction. To revolve the divergence between what the North had reported and what the inspections revealed, the IAEA requested access to both facilities. The North rejected the request on the grounds that they were military facilities. In February 1993, the IAEA board finally adopted a resolution calling upon the North to accept special inspections. The North's Central People's Committee in the seventh round of its 9th term conference abruptly resolved to bolt from the NPT on March 12, 1993, criticizing the IAEA board resolution

as unfair. The North's declaration of withdrawal, the first since the treaty was announced in 1970, posed a serious challenge to the global nuclear nonproliferation system.

In accommodating IAEA inspections, the North is quite likely to have calculated that it could conceal its nuclear arms development. With the inspections gradually reaching the core of its covert nuclear development, however, North Korea's nuclear capabilities were about to be exposed completely. If and when the North's possession of nuclear arms becomes evident as a result of special IAEA inspections, sanctions from the international community would be unavoidable; if and when the North's nuclear capabilities are found to be insufficient to develop nuclear arms, on the other hand, the international community would find it unnecessary to continue responding to the North's nuclear game. Should Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities ultimately be exposed as a result of an inspection, the North would lose its sole negotiation lever. Accordingly, the North found it unavoidable to break away from the NPT-IAEA system. By maintaining the efficacy of its nuclear card through the outright rejection of special inspections and thereby increasing the ambiguity of whether or not it possesses enough plutonium to make nuclear arms, the North may have fixed an eye on the possibility of reinforcing its negotiation lever. The North might also have calculated that, by taking the ultra-firm stance of bolting from the NPT at a time when new administrations were set to begin in both South Korea and the United States, it could sound out the responses of both new administrations.

On March 29, 1993, the North Korean foreign ministry announced, "The United States should give up its hostile policy toward the republic, withdraw nuclear weapons and troops from South Korea, abandon its nuclear threat, and publicly pledge to guarantee the unconditional non-use of nuclear arms against the Republic. To these ends, North Korea and the United States should ... hold negotiations." North Korea rationalized that it withdrew from the NPT because of the U.S.'s hostile policy of nuclear deterrence and asserted that direct Washington-Pyongyang negotiations were required to eventually resolve the nuclear problem. The North's demand for direct negotiations with the United States can be understood as part of its consistent tripartite negotiation logic. The North consistently maintained the conclusion of the non-aggression agreement with South Korea and the peace accord with the United States. Since it signed an "agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression and exchanged cooperation" with the South in 1992, or the

so-called basic agreement, what remained to be done, in a sense, was only a peace agreement with the United States.

The South's Kim Young-sam administration, inaugurated in February 1993, sought clues to the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue by not opposing direct Washington-Pyongyang negotiations and instead pushing for their realization. Seoul's accommodation of U.S.-North Korea negotiations signaled a shift in leadership from South Korea to the United States in the nuclear negotiations and provided momentum for the collapse of the principle of resolving Korean peninsula issues between only the parties concerned, which the South had gained through negotiations with the United States. The Clinton administration in the United States, meanwhile, also took an appeasement stance on the North Korean nuclear problem.

On May 11, 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 825, urging North Korea to retract its withdrawal from the NPT and comply with the safeguards agreement, adding that, in the case of further rejection, the council would consider pursuing additional sanctions. Article 4 of the resolution requested all member countries to participate in persuading the North. The article provided a basis for the United States to respond to negotiations with North Korea.

Geneva Agreement

The first stage of the U.S.-North Korea senior officials meeting, headed by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Galluchi and North Korea's Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju, got underway in New York on June 2, 1993. Three days prior to the meeting, North Korea test-fired a *Nodong* missile toward the Nodo peninsula of Japan in an attempt to influence the U.S.'s negotiation stance. The most important task in the first stage of the meeting was to convince the North to reverse its announced withdrawal from the NPT by June 12, the deadline set by the United States. On the eve of the deadline, the two countries announced a joint statement affirming the North's remaining in the NPT, and the United States guaranteed it would assure North Korean security and not use nuclear weapons against it.

Based on Pyongyang's staying with the NPT, the second stage of the senior officials meeting was convened in July 1993. The United States tried to prevent North Korea from deviating from the existing framework of the nuclear safeguards agreement,

which was in effect keeping the North from diverting its nuclear facilities into military purposes. The United States maintained that the nuclear safeguards agreement must remain in force, banning nuclear reprocessing and keeping the North from diverting nuclear facilities for military purposes. As preconditions for observing the IAEA safeguards agreement, North Korea, on the other hand, presented a six-point demand asserting a package solution and simultaneous enforcement. The six points were 1) that the non-use of nuclear arms be guaranteed in writing, 2) that large-scale U.S.-South Korea military exercises be suspended, 3) that the U.S. declare it would not deploy nuclear arms on the Korean peninsula, 4) that the armistice agreement be replaced by a peace accord, 5) that North Korea be removed from the U.S. list of terror-sponsoring countries, and 6) that the Goreyo (Koryo) confederation unification formula be supported. In the second stage of the meeting, both parties announced a joint agreement in which they reaffirmed that the North, while remaining with the NPT, would resume negotiations with the IAEA and South Korea respectively for inspection, and that the United States wouldn't use arms, including nuclear weapons, to threaten the North.

But despite that agreement, the North persisted in avoiding IAEA inspections and dialogue with the South, causing a stalemate in the U.S.-North Korea talks. In May 1994, the North unilaterally began withdrawing fuel rods from the Yongbyon reactor. The North did not allow the IAEA to collect samples and measure the rods, steps required to confirm atomic energy operations. This was a step designed to eliminate evidence of the North's past nuclear activities. It was a precondition of the talks, insisted upon by the United States, and the so-called red line of the talks, that the North should have IAEA inspectors present when fuel rods were replaced

On May 13, the UN Security Council adopted a chairman's statement demanding that North Korea guarantee IAEA gauging. A debate on sanctions against North Korea started at the Security Council, with South Korea, the United States, and Japan circulating a draft resolution against the North. On June 8, the IAEA formally confirmed the impossibility of inspection, because North Korea had completed the removal of fuel rods, and overwhelmingly approved a sanction resolution against the North. Notably, China effectively dropped its objection to sanctions against the North when it abstained from voting on the sanction resolution. This was a leading indicator of China's stance on the North Korean nuclear issue. On June 13, North Korea bolted from the IAEA and declared

it would regard U.N. sanctions as a declaration of war.

With the international community's debate on sanctioning the North intensifying and the possible U.S. bombing of Yongbyon being discussed, North Korea resorted to brinksmanship. While taking such extreme steps as threatening secession from the IAEA and going to war if necessary, however, Pyongyang employed a carrot-and-stick policy by inviting world figures to a diplomatic offensive and presenting the possibility of compromise. On June 9, President Kim Il Sung offered a hint of compromise to Selig Harrison, a researcher at the Carnagie Foundation in the United States: “If diplomatic issues, including the normalization of relations with the United States, are settled in a package deal and support is assured for a conversion to a light-water reactor, North Korea can freeze its nuclear development program.”

On June 17, President Jimmy Carter rushed to Pyongyang and conferred with Kim Il Sung. Kim proposed that the North would not divert removed fuel rods into military purposes, that it would resume talks with the United States, and that it would freeze its nuclear development program if support was given to the construction of light-war reactors. He also proposed a summit with the South. The South Korean and U.S. governments, which were pushing for sanctions against North Korea, abruptly shifted to negotiation, as they positively regarded Kim Il Sung’s proposals for freezing the nuclear development program and holding an inter-Korean summit. In fact, the Senior Policy Steering Group on Korea, inaugurated in April 1994, adopted the so-called freeze and engagement strategy, placing top priority on freezing the North's nuclear development in view of its possible imminent mass nuclear weapons production and with a view to inducing the North into changing its attitude on past nuclear problems in the course of pushing improved relations with the North in general. The Clinton administration’s policy is judged to have been arbitrated by the freeze and engagement strategy.[6] The United States appears to have shifted its policy toward prioritizing freezing, recognizing that, while the past suspicions that the North possessed one or two nuclear bombs remained a regional issue, the North's possible mass production of nuclear weapons and their export to the Mideast would raise it to the level of a global problem. On the other hand, the North can be said to have sought a Pakistan-style solution. Namely, the North

[6] Yun (1995, 98-99).

obtained tacit approval of its existing nuclear arms in return for freezing further possession of nuclear weapons and nuclear development program.

The third round of U.S.-North senior officials talks, resumed on July 8, 1994, dramatically adopted the Geneva agreed framework, setting forth the comprehensive resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue on October 21 in Geneva. Under the agreed framework, North Korea promised to give up its plutonium production capacity and fully enforce the nuclear safeguards agreement in return for gaining political and economic compensations, like the construction of two light-water reactors costing over US$5 billion, the annual supply of 500,000 tons of heavy oil, improved relations with the United States, and the guarantee of no preemptive nuclear attacks. Containing a comprehensive framework for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, the agreed framework, if implemented, was evaluated as eventually blocking the North from developing nuclear weapons. Given that the construction of light-water reactors would take over ten years to complete, the Geneva agreement, however, acknowledged the North's nuclear card to the last by permitting it to gradually enforce the nuclear safeguards agreement and gradually abandon its plutonium production capability. The most serious flaw of the Geneva agreement is that the agreement, though it could block the quantitative proliferation of nuclear weapons, could not block their qualitative proliferation. In other words, the North was given time to spare in strengthening its nuclear weapons, albeit banned from increasing their number until core parts of the light-water reactors were brought into the country.

Six-Party Talks and the September 19 Joint Statement

Perry Process

Betraying the general expectation that it would seek to improve relations with the United States as well as boost its economy under the framework of the Geneva Agreement, North Korea launched a diplomatic offensive. The establishment of U.S. and North Korean liaison offices was aborted due to the North's insincerity. The North instead took a series of actions designed to neutralize the armistice agreement and demanded the

establishment of a peace regime with the U.S. Faced with Kim Il Sung's death in July 1994 and serious food shortages caused by floods, the North found it necessary to solidify its internal system over attending to the external environment. The North's actions aimed at neutralizing the armistice agreement are judged to have been intended to solidify itself internally by maximizing the legitimacy of its system through anti-American moves. Four-party talks, consisting of North and South Korea, the United States, and China, were convened to deal with the North's nuclear problem and peace system, but to no avail.

In August 1998, North Korea demonstrated its considerably advanced capability in long-range ballistic missiles by firing a *Taepo-dong* (*Daepodong*) missile. Suspicions about alleged underground nuclear facilities at Kumchang (Geumchang)-ri and suspected preparations for firing a *Taepo-dong 2* missile prompted strong doubts in the U.S. Congress regarding the Clinton administration's North Korea policy. Under these circumstances, the Clinton administration named William Perry as North Korea policy coordinator to review its general policy toward the North. Perry proposed a package deal offering the lifting of economic sanctions by the United States and Japan, economic aid, and the establishment of diplomatic relations in return for the North's ending its missile firing and nuclear development programs. Despite the Perry proposal, North Korea reinforced preparations for the firing of a *Taepo-dong 2* missile. With Hawaii and Alaska within its range, a *Taepo-dong 2* missile, if fired, could place the United States under an unprecedented direct military threat. This raised a considerable outcry in the United States, endangering the Clinton administration's engagement policy toward North Korea. The Clinton administration, facing a presidential election, had to offer an additional incentive to restrain the North's missile firing. As a result of a U.S.-North Korea senior officials meeting, the United States in September 1999 lifted economic sanctions against the North under the Trade with Enemy Act and permitted comprehensive investment in and trade with the North, while the North Korean foreign ministry in return announced a moratorium on long-range missile firing.[7]

In the wake of the Washington-Pyongyang accord in Berlin, the Perry Report was announced on September 15, 1999.[8] The Perry process, based on the engagement policy, sought the comprehensive and gradual settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue

[7] *Chosun Ilbo*, September 3, 1999.
[8] Perry (1999).

stipulating that South Korea, the United States, and Japan, if and when North Korea fixed weapons of mass destruction problems like nuclear weapons and missiles, would reduce pressures deemed by the North to be threatening on a step-by-step basis and offer improved relations, economic assistance, and the lifting of economic sanctions. But the Perry process contained a more stern, alternate path in case the North's WMD issue was not settled based on “dialogue and restraint.” With the Perry Report made official, not only U.S.-North Korea senior officials and missile talks and Japan-North Korea normalization negotiations resumed, but also an environment was created favorable to inter-Korean dialogue. In search of a senior negotiations channel elevated in the experience of the Geneva agreed framework, the United States pushed ahead with a U.S. visit by a top North Korean official.

The Washington-Pyongyang missile talks, which progressed at a snail’s pace, were expedited by a North Korea-Russia summit held in Pyongyang in July 2000 between Kim Jong Il and Vladimir Putin. Kim noted the North's restraint in their missile development program on the condition that the international community assisted the North in launching a satellite. The remark provided a clue to straightening out the North's development of long-range missiles targeted at America, the primary concern for the U.S.

In October 2000, North Korean Vice Marshal Jo Myong-rok, following a series of talks with senior Washington officials including President Clinton, announced a joint U.S.-North Korea statement, the gist of which was the U.S. president's visit to North Korea. The joint statement provided important momentum for liquidating the hostile relations between the United States and North Korea, dating back to the Korean War. In addition to delivering to Clinton Kim Jong Il’s personal letter noting his positive will for improved relations with the United States, Jo Myong-rok formally announced the North's readiness to abandon the development of *Taepo-dong* missiles if and when the international community provided financial support to the North's satellite launch in a third country. In the joint statement, the North also acknowledged that a resolution of its nuclear issue would make an essential contribution to peace and security in the Asia Pacific region and fundamental progress in the U.S.-North Korea relations.

On 23 October 2000, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Pyongyang and discussed with Kim Jong Il pending issues between the two countries like eased tension on the Korean peninsula, opening U.S. and North Korean diplomatic missions,

and the missile issue. In the meeting between Kim Jong Il and Albright, they discussed the idea of North Korea restricting the development and export of missiles in return for the international community's support for the North's satellite launch.

Second Nuclear Crisis and Six-Party Talks

The Republican Bush administration, inaugurated in January 2001 and deeply suspicious of the Clinton administration's North Korea policy, conducted a general review of the North Korea policy. But the North Korean nuclear problem was not a priority for the Bush administration. Preoccupied with the problem of creating new order in the Middle East following the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Bush administration found it necessary to safely manage the situation involving the North's nuclear issue for the time being.

Though the United States took a tough stance toward North Korea, with President Bush calling the North part of an "axis of evil," the United States resumed talks with the North, agreeing to holding senior officials meeting in Pyongyang in early July 2002. Following the twists and turns of the sinking of a South Korean naval patrol boat by the North, the U.S.-North Korea senior officials meeting was held in Pyongyang in early October.

In June 2002, the CIA submitted to President Bush a national information estimate, noting that in 1997 Pakistan began nuclear weapons development information with North Korea in return for missile technology. It was also found that Pakistan had delivered high-speed centrifuge samples and manufacturing technology to the North, and that North Korea had started uranium enrichment in or around 2001.[9] The report concluded that Pakistan had offered the North data from which nuclear bombs could be produced and experimented with.[10] Upon evaluating the report and instructed by the presidential national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice, U.S. intelligence agencies in August 2002

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[9] U.S. intelligence agencies from around 1990 suspected the possibility that North Korea would attempt to enrich uranium in secret with the aid of Pakistan, but could not find decisive evidence. The U.S. Energy Department in 1999 publicized a report assessing that North Korea was promoting nuclear arms development through uranium enrichment. Niksch (2002, 8).

[10] U.S. intelligence agencies caught Japan attempting to purchase a frequency converter needed for uranium enrichment from Japan in 1999. They also caught the North attempting to buy a large quantity of materials, such as aluminum, needed for manufacturing a centrifugal separator. They are said to have uncovered the Pakistan route while ferreting out companies involved in the purchasing routes of those materials. McGoldrick (2003, 5).

reached the unanimous conclusion that North Korea had made considerable progress in the development of highly enriched uranium and that it should be suspended without fail. The U.S. government then concluded that North Korea was in breach of the Geneva agreement. North Korea, with the use of uranium that was blocked by the Geneva agreement, can be seen as having taken a shortcut to nuclear development through uranium enrichment. In November 2002, the CIA submitted to Congress an assessment that North Korea started manufacturing a large-scale centrifuge in 2001 and was capable of producing highly enriched uranium sufficient to make two or more uranium nuclear bomb a year by around 2005.[11]

At a U.S.-North Korea senior officials meeting held in Pyongyang in October 2002, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kelly inquired about the uranium enrichment program. The next day, North Korea's Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju admitted to the existence of the program. North Korea subsequently denied the uranium enrichment program[12] in its entirety and abrogated its nuclear freezing on grounds that it needed a nuclear deterrent because the United States was attempting to squeeze the North to death, giving rise to the second nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula.

On October 25, the North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman announced that the North was ready to dispel U.S. security concerns if a non-aggression agreement was signed with Washington. Kang Sok-ju, too, conveyed this message to the former American ambassador in Seoul Donald Gregg: “If the United States agrees to hold a senior officials meeting on the premise of guaranteeing it will not attack the North, we are ready to prepare responses to U.S. security concerns.”

North Korea's confession diplomacy turned out to be a miscalculation in the face of the cold response of the Bush administration. The United States, under the principle that there is no compensation for a bad act, held fast to the stance that it could respond to dialogue only if the North dismantled its uranium enrichment program. The board of

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[11] McGoldrick (2003, 23). *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 23, 2002.

[12] Former U.S. ambassador in Seoul Donald Gregg met Kang Sok-ju on November 4 in Pyongyang. Asked about his talk with Kerry, Kang replies, “I did not know of the program (on uranium enrichment). We had to decide upon our response in a meeting of those who knew about the program. (To Kerry the next day) I replied that North Korea has a right to develop any weapon to counter U.S. threat.” Asked if Kim Jong Il attended the meeting, Kang replied, “I leave it to your imagination.” Concerned about becoming a target of United States attacks following Iraq, North Korea is seen to have opted for admitting its development of nuclear weapons and using it as a negotiation card with the United States. *Mainichi Shimbun*, February 24, 2003.

directors of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) decided on November 2002 to suspend the supply of heavy oil to the North. On December 22, 2002, North Korea declared the end of its nuclear freeze, expelling the IAEA inspection team. Beginning in January 2003, North Korea resorted to brinkmanship by seceding from the NPT and de-freezing its nuclear program through the re-operation of nuclear facilities like the atomic reactor.

The United States responded to multilateral talks with the basic stance that it would respond to talks, but not to bilateral ones. By exerting pressure on the North through China, the United States pushed though its demand for multilateral talks at a tripartite meeting with North Korea and China in Beijing on April 23, 2003. At the Beijing meeting, Pyongyang proposed a step-by-step package formula. If the United States resumed supplies of heavy oil, food aid and economic assistance, and light-water reactors on a step-by-step basis, North Korea would resolve American security concerns correspondingly. But during the meeting, North Korean delegate Yi Geun provoked controversy by telling Kelly that the North possessed nuclear weapons and threatened that they could be transferred depending on U.S. attitude,.

Through a series of summit talks with South Korea, Japan, and China, the United States later promoted an expanded form of multilateral talks with the participation of South Korea and Japan. In a summit meeting with China on June 1, President Bush, when told of North Korea's desire for bilateral talks from Chinese President Hu Jintao, informed Hu that a dialogue with North Korea could be done only in a multilateral framework.

The fact that the North proceeded with nuclear development despite the Geneva agreement made the United States question the efficacy of bilateral talks. Furthermore, the North Korean attitude of admitting its nuclear development to the United States and then denying it toward the international community deepened the U.S. perception that multilateral dialogue, not a bilateral one, was needed. The American preference for multilateral talks was based on the idea that greater roles were needed by regional powers most seriously affected by the North's nuclear arms. Because North Korea's nuclear issue posed the most serious security threat to regional powers before being an American problem, the United States reasoned that regional powers should assume a larger role in resolving the issue. The United States basically held that it would not shoulder the burden

of resolving North Korea's nuclear problem alone, but would resolve it in tandem with regional powers.

With a presidential election approaching and the challenge of creating a new order in the Middle East through the foundation laid in the Iraq War, the United States at the time did not want to see tensions develop on the Korean peninsula. The United States sought to resolve the problem through the constructive roles of regional countries in multilateral talks. Washington wanted China to positively induce North Korea into attending six-party talks. Supported by strong U.S. pressures on North Korea, China played an important mediation role in bringing Pyongyang to six-party talks. China's Vice Foreign Minister Dai Binqua, while visiting Pyongyang, reportedly conveyed China's disapproval of the North's nuclear program to North Korea for the first time. It is no exaggeration to say that the United States and China finally managed to draw North Korea to six-party talks through a division of labor, with the United States playing the bad cop and China the good cop.

The first session of six-party talks, participated in by the two Koreas, Russia, Japan, China, and the United States, was held in Beijing on August 27, 2003. At the talks, North Korea proposed a four-stage package formula. The first stage dictated that if the U.S. supplied heavy oil and drastically increased food assistance, North Korea would declare its intention to abandon its nuclear development program. For the second stage, when the United States signed a non-aggression treaty and compensated for electricity loss from the delayed construction of light-water reactors, North Korea would freeze its nuclear facilities and materials and permit monitoring and inspection. In stage three, if and when diplomatic relations were established with the United States and Japan, North Korea would resolve the missile issue. For stage four, North Korea would dismantle its nuclear facilities when the light-water reactors were completely built. The North asserted the so-called "package solution and simultaneous action" formula, holding that measures for resolving the nuclear problem between the United States and itself should be settled on a lump sum basis and enforced in matched simultaneous actions.

North Korea's Declaration of Possessing Nuclear Weapons and the September 19 Joint Statement

Following the third round of six-party talks, in which the United States and North Korea sharply confronted each other, the North stayed out of the talks, taking into account the U.S. presidential election. On October 22, 2004, the North Korean foreign ministry spokesman set out three conditions for returning to the six-party talks, namely, the United States should change its hostile policy toward the North, it should participate in a discussion on compensations for the freezing of the North's nuclear facilities, and the issue of South Korea's nuclear experimentations should be taken up first.

Along with the reelection of the Bush administration in January 2005, a new diplomacy and security team, led by Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, began to take a flexible attitude toward North Korea. While active efforts were underway for the resumption of the six-party talks, however, the North's Foreign Ministry on February 10 abruptly announced the North's possession of nuclear weapons and the indefinite postponement of the six-party talks. In the statement, North Korea made it clear that it was not interested in the six-party talks, maintaining that Bush's inauguration speech and state of the union address, plus Rice's confirmation testimony, contained nothing about the abolition of hostile policy and peaceful coexistence it demanded, but instead "declared a new ideological confrontation aimed at overthrowing our system." Immediately after the statement, the North demanded direct dialogue between itself and the United States to settle the situation. North Korea appears to have declared its possession of nuclear weapons under the assumption that the United States, preoccupied with the Middle East amid the deteriorating situation in Iraq and the emergence of the Iranian nuclear issue, would not be able to take a stern step against it even if it made the declaration.

With the third round of six-party talks stalemated for over a year, the North declaring its possession of nuclear weapons and removing used fuel rods, the international community called for strong measures against the nuclear standoff including its referral to the UN Security Council. In their June 10, 2005 summit, South Korea and the United States reaffirmed that, if North Korea returned to the six-party talks and opted for the strategic step of abandoning its nuclear capabilities, they would not only guarantee multilateral security and substantive economic assistance including energy, but also improved relations would be possible between Washington and Pyongyang. On June 17, South Korea's Unification Minister Chung Dong-young proposed to Kim Jong Il the

supply of 2 million kilowatts of electricity in place of the light-water reactors, the construction of which was suspended. Kim Jong Il responded, “If the United States firmly intends to recognize and respect us, we’ll return to the talks as early as July." The United States pushed ahead with direct contact with the North in New York for the restoration of the six-party talks. Secretary of State Rice, while visiting South Korea, China, and Japan in May 2005, repeatedly affirmed that America regards North Korea as a sovereign state and has no intention of attacking it.

On July 9, 2005, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill and the North's Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-kwan held a surprise meeting, at which the North declared its return to the six-party talks. Resumed on July 26 after an interval of more than a year, the six-party talks held their first substantive discussion for sorting out the nuclear standoff. In the fourth session of the second round six-party talks on September 19, the participants adopted a six-point joint statement setting out principles for fixing the North's nuclear problem. North Korea committed itself to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, returning to the NPT at an early date and accommodating IAEA inspections, while the United States confirmed it has no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and has no intention of attacking North Korea with nuclear or conventional weapons. On North Korea’s use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes and the light-water reactor issue, the countries concerned agreed to respect the North’s remarks about the peaceful use of nuclear power, and to discuss light-water reactors “at an appropriate time.”[13]

Considerable repercussions took place in the United States as to North Korea’s right to use light-water reactors and the peaceful use of nuclear power. The United States originally stuck to the position that the North's right to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes could not be recognized. But it accepted China's mediation formula at the last moment to pave the way for issuing the joint statement. The United States might have found it burdensome to see North Korea's nuclear problem raised when the referral of the Iranian nuclear issue to the UN Security Council was under way. America may have found it necessary to leave the North’s nuclear issue under safe management for the time

[13] With respect to the issue of North Korea’s light-water reactors, South Korea and the United States made it clear that the provision of light-water reactors would be discussed “when the North dismantles all nuclear weapons and programs and completely abides by all international agreements and norms concerning the use

being. The United States is also judged to have conceded on light-water reactors and the right to use nuclear power peacefully in an effort to induce North Korea into dismantling its nuclear development programs and secure China's continued role in that process.
The September 19 joint statement did not mean the final solution of the North's nuclear standoff, but signaled the start of other negotiations with the principles of settlement laid out.

Conclusion

An analysis of the 20-year history of negotiations over North Korea's nuclear problem between the international community and the North tells that the North's nuclear weapons development is neither fabricated nor exaggerated, but is a real ongoing issue. Has North Korea continued developing nuclear weapons because of a lack of mutual trust with the United States? Or was the development simply for negotiation purposes? The 20-year history of negotiations shows that North Korea has promoted the development of nuclear weapons for a long time and very consistently.

With the economic gap between the two Koreans widened to an irrevocable extent since the mid-1980s and the North’s allies, the Soviet Union and China, actively approaching South Korea, North Korea trod a clear path of nuclear development by putting into operation the 5 mw reactor and reprocessing facilities in Yongbyon. With the socialist camp falling apart, triggered by the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and its allies pushing ahead with formal relations with South Korea under the latter's northern diplomatic offensive, North Korea may have judged it necessary to create two environments for the survival of its system. The first is nuclear armament. Nuclear weapons can ensure the North Korean regime political and psychological survival by reversing its unfavorable military balance with the South at once and reinforcing its negotiation card with the international community. The second is improved relations with the United States. The North's improved relationship with the United States enabled it to restrain South Korea from attempting to achieve unification through absorption and to

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of atomic power.”

overcome the unbalanced situation resulting from its allies approaching South Korea. All in all, nuclear armament can be seen as a goal in itself for the North Korean regime to sustain its system and negotiation leverage for achieving the other goal of improved relations with the United States.

North Korea's pattern of negotiations has two features. One is its attempt to bargain with the United States. In the first nuclear crisis, North Korea sought political settlement with the United States, setting aside South Korea and the IAEA that demanded complete denuclearization, and continuously demanded bilateral dialogue with the United States in the second nuclear crisis.

The other feature is that the North sought in negotiations with the United States not complete denuclearization but an interim compromise, or the political compromise of resolving U.S. security fears to the maximum possible extent in return for having its minimum deterrence acknowledged. If minimum deterrence were acknowledged, the North said, it would abandon the expansion of missiles and the development of long-range missiles, which the United States was concerned about.[14] The North also expressed its readiness to acknowledge the stationing of U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula.[15] Third, North Korea took the extreme step of threatening a mass nuclear production system and the enforcement of missile development in the event its demands were not met. In an attempt to force the United States to come to negotiations, North Korea enforced more than necessary risks, like the unilateral withdrawal of spent fuel rods, long-range missile firing, and the reprocessing of fuel rods. Fourth, North Korea used nuclear development as leverage for gaining maximum economic aid like energy and food.

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[14] Regarding the transfer of nuclear weapons and materials, regarded as virtually the only red line by the Bush administration, the North's vice foreign minister Kim Kye-kwan in May 2005 told Selig Harrison that the North is capable of transferring nuclear materials to terrorists, and added, "It is too late for the United States to prevent us from manufacturing nuclear weapons. But it is not too late to reach a verifiable agreement on blocking the proliferation of nuclear materials." With respect to the problem of long-range missiles, Kim Jong Il in June 2005 told Chung Dong-young, "If the United States opens diplomatic relations with us and becomes a friend of ours, we're willing to abandon missiles. Keeping missiles that a country can generally hold, we'll dismantle all long-range and inter-continental missiles." This suggests that not only inter-continental missiles that can reach the United States but also long-range missiles going beyond the MTCR framework, namely *Rodong* missiles, can be subjected to dismantlement. This indicates that Japan's concerns can also be resolved.

[15] In January 1992, the Workers' Party International Affairs Secretary, Kim Yong-sun, expressed to United States through Secretary of State Kenter their intent to improve relations with the United States. They also made remarks to the effect that the North would acknowledge the continued stationing of U.S. forces in

A close examination of North Korea's negotiation pattern since the U.S.-North Korea senior officials meetings began in 1993, all in all, tells that the North sought political compromise through direct contact with the United States on the condition that, in return for U.S. tacit approval of existing nuclear capabilities through a freeze, it could resolve U.S. concerns like nuclear proliferation and long-range ballistic missiles. It waits to be seen if the September 19 joint statement, declaring the dismantling of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, will prove to be a final resolution of North Korea's nuclear problem or nothing but another agreement to be reneged on like the NPT treaty, the joint declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, and the Geneva Agreement.

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South Korea even after unification.