



Hard Bargain

“Factors [Requirements] for Resolving the Nuclear Issue”

The following paper was prepared for the Center for National Policy as part of a project aimed at providing opportunity for members of the American policy-making community and others to contribute insights to the resolution of the problem posed by the existence of nuclear capacity in North Korea.

Under both the Clinton and Bush Administrations, direct dialogue with North Korea has been closely held, for understandable reasons. The volatility of the issues, the dangers posed by the situation, and the difficulties encountered in negotiating all inclined responsible decision-makers to keep details private to the extent possible. This has had the side effect, however, of precluding the kind of informed, knowledgeable, grounded public debate and discussion that are necessary for developing and sustaining an effective policy consensus over time.

The Bush Administration initiative that brought China and Russia into the process and formalized participation by South Korea and Japan has created a collaborative international framework for dealing with North Korea’s weapons capacity. Whether in the end a deal can be achieved or not is far from clear. Whatever the outcome, however, there also is a need for collaboration among elected officials and others within the U.S. to assess the options and address decisions, and ideally to ratify eventual choices on the basis of understanding and agreement.

After several attempts to organize informal, non-official meetings in service of this proposition – stymied at various points either by the North Korean government’s reluctance or by the U.S. government’s lack of approval – CNP determined that a ‘virtual’ exchange might help serve the purpose as a substitute. The distribution of this paper constitutes the first step in organizing this exchange.

What follows was prepared by Ambassador Li Gun, Deputy Director General of the North Korean Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as Deputy Director of the North Korean Institute for Disarmament and Peace. He serves as Deputy Chief Representative, North Korean Delegation to the Six-Party Talks. This document was submitted to CNP in Korean and then in translation. The version here is a separate, independent translation. For a copy of the original, please contact Kevin Lawlor at 202-682-1800 or klawlor@cnponline.org.

This document is being circulated without prior comment on its content. A number of individuals with relevant background have been invited to review the paper, and to respond to and/or critique the diagnosis and propositions found herein, and to make whatever suggestions or recommendations that occur to them as potentially useful.

Others who wish to comment are invited to do so. Submissions should be addressed to **North Korea Policy Project**, and sent via email to center@cnponline.org.

[Various] Requisites for Resolving the Nuclear Question

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(1) US Hostile Policy vis-à-vis the DPRK

The nuclear question, an outgrowth of the United States' hostile policy toward us, is the consequence of the US massive deployment of nuclear weapons in South Korea and in the region and thereby having threatened us.

During the Clinton administration, as the result of DPRK-US negotiations to resolve the nuclear question, US policy toward North Korea showed signs of moving away from pure hostility to partial engagement. For a time there was even a glimmer of hope for the eventual solution to the nuclear question, in light of the freezing of graphite-moderated reactor facilities and spent fuel rods and the supply of heavy oil and light water reactors. But with the Bush administration putting an end to bilateral political dialogue, its "axis of evil" pronouncement, and defining North Korea as a target of preemptive nuclear strike, the nuclear question has come back to the starting point.

These facts prove that the hostile politics between North Korea and the US is the root cause of the nuclear crisis [*sic.*]. As long as the US continues its hostile policy toward us the nuclear question cannot ever be resolved. If the US is truly seeking the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula it must change its hostile policy toward us. I repeat, unless the US changes its hostile policy toward North Korea we absolutely cannot give up nuclear weapons.

[Here, it is unclear whether the author is referring to nuclear "weapons" or nuclear "program" or "ambition"—however, by implication, it likely should be read as "weapons."]

If the US fundamentally changes its hostile policy toward North Korea we could also give up our nuclear deterrent.

That is, only when a legal and systematic security mechanism guaranteeing that the US will not threaten us is in place, and a certain level of trust is built and we no longer feel threatened by the US will we be able to discuss with the US issues relating to nuclear weapons we have already built.

The criteria for judging that the US has given up its hostile policy toward North Korea are as follows:

First, provide in a manner believable to us a non-aggression guarantee stating that the US will not attack us.

Second, diplomatic relations between North Korea and the US must be established.

Third, the US must not interfere with North Korea's economic transaction with South Korea, Japan, and other nations.

Our position holds that unless the above three conditions are resolved we will not be able to discuss questions about whether we possess nuclear weapons or the dismantling of any such weapons.

[Trans.Note.: Here, the deliberate ambiguity—as opposed to what appears to be an explicit reference above to nuclear weapons North Korea is saying it already possesses—implies that possession of nuclear weapons is not something North Korea is willing to discuss, much less the question of dismantling any such weapons.]

However, the US position is that we must first dismantle our nuclear program and that only when the dismantlement has been verified will the US provide security guarantee and economic support. This is impossible to effect in the present circumstance under which DPRK-US bilateral relations are the most hostile and utterly without trust.

From the point of view of justice in the historical causes of the nuclear question or practicality in international relations, for one party—between two mutually distrustful parties—to bring pressure to bear on the other to make the first move is an unacceptable proposition [*literally, logic*].

To make the first move for us means capitulation. Our people and our military believe capitulation as death itself.

The Bush administration might make various nice-sounding statements, but we cannot believe them. In resolving the nuclear issue it is imperative that the US reverse its [*hostile*] policy.

(2) The Agreed Framework

The US was the first to violate the Agreed Framework. As per Article I of the Geneva Agreed Framework the US is to provide us with light water reactor power plants by 2003. We are to freeze at the time of the conclusion of the Agreed Framework graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities.

However, in the past nine years that we have maintained the freeze the LWR project has failed to install even basic facilities and has moved little beyond digging the basic ground depression for the site. Just when the two LWR plants each generating 1,000 megawatts will be completed remains uncertain. Due to the US violation of the agreement for building the LWR plants we will suffer electricity loss this year of 1,000 megawatts and from next year 2,000 megawatts per year.

As per Article II of the Agreed Framework the DPRK and the US are to move toward full normalization of political and economic relations.

However, in the past nine years US economic sanctions have continually been in place. The Bush administration, upon coming to office, under the pretext of review of the Clinton administration's North Korea policy, completely cut off dialogue with us. And by labeling us as part of "axis of evil" changed the course of the bilateral relations toward the worst possible direction.

As per Article III of the Agreed Framework the US is neither to use nuclear weapons against us nor threaten us with nuclear weapons.

Since assuming office the Bush administration has mentioned with respect to its newly formed national security strategy the right to take preemptive strike against security threats and has included our Republic among that target. Moreover, the US has publicly stated that the use of nuclear weapons would not be excluded from the options available to such preemptive strikes.

As per Article IV of the Agreed Framework and Section 7 of the undisclosed agreed provisions we are to "receive inspections only after the full delivery of non-nuclear components including the LWR turbine

and generator.” But the US has been forwarding the one-sided theory that we have to submit to early inspections, and has been fomenting world public opinion toward the view that it is we who have violated the Agreed Framework.

(3) Proposal for simultaneous action and package settlement

We seek, on the basis of [reciprocal] “word versus word” and “action versus action,” and the principle of simultaneous action, a comprehensive settlement.

In some circles there is the notion that when the US provides non-aggression guarantee we will renounce our nuclear intentions.

[However,] We fear that the US will, from the day it extracts from us our renunciation of nuclear intent, tie our hands and feet together and pressure us to disarm. This is tantamount to “word versus action.”

What is fair is not “security guarantee versus renunciation of nuclear intent” but a statement of intent of “renunciation of hostile policy toward North Korea versus renunciation of nuclear plans.” This is “word versus word.”

“Action versus action” means thoroughly taking simultaneous steps based on the principle of package settlement.

Package deal:

The US

- Guarantees non-aggression
- Establishes DPRK-US diplomatic relations
- Guarantees DPRK-Japan, DPRK-South Korea economic cooperation
- Compensate for the loss of electricity due to the delay in the construction of the LWR plants and complete the construction of the LWR plants

For which the North will

- Not build nuclear weapons and allows inspections
- Ultimately dismantle its nuclear program
- Place a moratorium on missiles tests and stop missiles exports

The order of simultaneous action:

- The US resumes the supply of heavy oil and greatly expands humanitarian food aid, and North Korea declares renunciation of nuclear intent
- The US guarantees in writing non-aggression and compensates for electricity loss, at which time North Korea allows for the freeze and surveillance/inspection of the nuclear facilities and nuclear material
- With the establishment of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and the US, and the DPRK and Japan, the DPRK settles the missiles issue
- With the completion of the LWRs North Korea dismantles its nuclear program.

The above proposal for a package settlement based on simultaneous action specifically reflects the scheme for a package settlement and the order of simultaneous action that can resolve the nuclear question in a comprehensive and fair manner, such as the reversal of the US hostile policy toward North Korea, North Korea’s renunciation of nuclear plan, the normalization of North Korea-US relations, etc.

The reason we seek a package settlement based on simultaneous action is our distrust of the US.

There is no guarantee that we will not be invaded even if we trust the US and unilaterally dismantle our nuclear program.

The Iraqi situation has proven that our distrust of the US is accurate.

The Iraq war has proven that the US is an egregious nation that for the sake of its own purpose uses military force, arrogantly ignoring international law, world public opinion, and the advice of its own allies.

Despite that Iraq had faithfully subjected itself to inspections by the UN weapons inspection team, and despite the findings by the inspection team that there was not a shred of evidence that Iraq had developed weapons of mass destruction, the US still attacked Iraq.

We have come to the conclusion that in our relationship with the US we must gear everything to simultaneous action, and that only when it is clearly proven through action that the US will not attack us can we take action to give up our nuclear deterrent.

Should the US disregard our proposal for a package settlement based on simultaneous action it would mean that the US is pursuing without change its scheme of demanding “unilateral nuclear dismantlement [[literally, renunciation](#)]” and bringing pressure to bear on our nation.

That would ultimately mean opposing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The US pressure on us demanding “unilateral nuclear dismantlement” is no different from calling on us to drop all arms and live as a slave of the US. Our nation will rather die than live with peace under conditions of slavery.

Therefore, we can never accept “unilateral nuclear dismantlement.”

Our position is simple, clear, and just; that is, let us both, North Korea and the US, simultaneously drop our guns and coexist in peace. We hope that the US will use the second 6-party talks as an occasion to make a resolute political decision to accept our proposal for a package settlement based on simultaneous action.

Addendum

(4) 6-Party talks

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has, in actuality, made many concessions thus far with a view to bringing about, based on a package deal, the 6-party talks as soon as possible. The US has felt uneasy about concluding a DPRK-US non-aggression pact. Therefore, the DPRK has expressed the view that it would be open to considering President Bush’s proposal of “written security guarantee” were it predicated on peaceful coexistence between North Korea and the US and on the accommodation of simultaneous package deal with respect to the nuclear question. Moreover, should the US be apprehensive about the expression “simultaneous action,” North Korea has expressed that it would, as long as the substance remained unchanged, consider accepting a different expression more agreeable to the US.

On November 11, North Korea [literally, as in original document, “the Republic”], through North Korea-US channels of contact in New York, conveyed to the US its position that the second round of 6-party talks be resumed in early December. We consider that this position has been sufficiently conveyed to the US through various other channels as well.

Our Republic had expected until now that the US would respond to our concessions, as a matter of course, with good intentions. However, the so-called US position presently being circulated as well as those directly transmitted to us are only such that elicit great disappointment.

The US at present appears to aim to root out the Republic’s nuclear deterrent capacity by dangling a sheet of paper in the form of “written security guarantee.” In actuality, a written security guarantee is little more than a form of public pledge. Our Republic and the US have lain in hostile relations for over half a century. Moreover, the US continues to occupy by force South Korea. In South Korea and around the Korean peninsula there has been a trend toward increased military force targeting us. Under such circumstances, placing our confidence in some halfhearted lukewarm public pledge of the US—a hostile country—and to disarm ourselves is utterly inconceivable.

Recently the US has legally justified research and development of small tactical nuclear weapons. Its purpose is to target us with them. The US has even appropriated vast sums to this end.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is a goal that our Republic has consistently pursued. Nonetheless, that our Republic today has had no choice but to acquire a nuclear deterrent is wholly due to the threat by the US. Strictly speaking, if a sequence of steps should be determined, the US must, before North Korea takes action, eliminate its military threat completely, verifiably, and irreversibly.

Nonetheless, North Korea, with a view to building together with the US trust through taking actual steps, has proposed as the basic solution to the nuclear question the simultaneous package deal. In fact, North Korea has gone even further. The US might not be in a position to accept all at once our proposal for a package deal. Therefore we proposed that in the next round of 6-party talks we would be open to coming to an agreement on a “word versus word” public pledge and the measures for the first stage of implementation: Namely, that in return for North Korea freezing its nuclear activity the US would remove us from the “list of terrorism sponsoring nations” and remove its political, economic, military sanctions and blockade against us, and that the US and North Korea’s neighboring countries provide energy aid such as heavy oil and electricity, and take other corresponding measures.

With such the grounds for continuing the 6-party talks can be built. Under no circumstance can North Korea freely and without compensation freeze its nuclear activity. North Korea has, through various channels, informed other participants in the 6-party talks of such proposals.

Should the US wish for peaceful coexistence with North Korea there is no reason it cannot accept our simultaneous package deal. The prospects for the 6-party talks wholly depend on whether the measures for the first stage of implementation we propose can be agreed upon.

At present the international community is demanding that the 6-party talks on the nuclear issue surrounding the Korean peninsula be resumed expeditiously. Expectations for the 6-party talks on the part of the international community are great. Therefore, the participants in the 6-party talks must express in no uncertain terms their views on the nuclear question.

On December 9 the DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesperson reiterated the Republic’s position with respect to the 6-party talks for resolving the nuclear question surrounding the Korean peninsula. This position remains unchanged today.

That is, implementing the package deal based on simultaneous action is the life of any resolution to the nuclear question and the heart of any agreement. This is the unvarying position of the DPRK government in approaching the 6-party talks.

We have specifically proposed measures for the first stage of simultaneous action. At present world opinion is positively disposed toward our proposal. Furthermore, world opinion expects that the US administration respond favorably to this proposal.

On the contrary, US leaders are reacting negatively to it. They are saying that “[We] expect complete dismantling instead of nuclear freeze,” and that “North Korea has put forth a new precondition for resuming the 6-party talks.”

Our proposal for the measures for the first stage of the simultaneous package deal is not a mere pledge that ends in “word versus word.” It embodies our intent to take action toward the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, which each participant in the talks wishes for. Such intent on our part is no simple wish.

Under present circumstances, that North Korea has, as the first steps, proposed that it would henceforth freeze its nuclear activity by no longer manufacturing, testing, transferring nuclear weapons, and even freezing its peaceful nuclear energy industry, is another bold concession.

But the US administration is considering these concessions as “conditional.” It is clear that such an assessment means that the US, in essence, is pursuing not the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula but rather an ulterior goal.

If the problem is to be resolved real action rather than words must be carried out. If the US is interested in resolving the nuclear question then it must accept North Korea’s proposal for implementing the first steps.

That our Republic today has had no choice but to develop a nuclear deterrent despite wishing for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is entirely due to the US nuclear threat. Economically and in all aspects our Republic lies in difficult conditions. In spite of such difficulties our Republic is paying a great price in coping with the US nuclear threat that grows by day.

The Bush administration has, upon coming to office, willfully delayed the implementation of the Agreed Framework and in the end abrogated it entirely. As a result, our Republic has suffered great power loss and considerable economic damage.

The US is doggedly resisting taking measures corresponding to freeze on nuclear activity, and is characterizing such measures as “rewards.” Well, we have a question for the US.

Is it or is it not true that it is the US who labeled us “axis of evil” and included us in the target of preemptive nuclear strike?

Is it or is it not, in view of reason, the proper step, that the US, as the main cause of and aggressor in this nuclear threat, take measures corresponding to our freeze on nuclear activity?

North Korea did not, in presenting its proposal for the implementation of the first steps, make demands for corresponding measures solely on the US. We made the same demands to all parties with interests tied to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The US speaks as if “written security guarantee” is akin to an effective measure in terms of implementation corresponding to our nuclear freeze. But it is only a public pledge that can break down at any point. The credibility of any public pledge can only be proven by real action.

The fact that the US to us is a hostile state, the fact that the US maintains in our region the forward deployment of invasive military forces and nuclear weapons, and the fact that reinforcements of forces and military exercises opposed to us continue to this day, all are ample proof that we cannot dismantle our nuclear activity overnight.

If the US has the right to insist on the “complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling of North Korea’s nuclear program,” then we have the right to demand a complete, verifiable, and irreversible security guarantee. If the US continues to pressure us to take the first action then the 6-party talks can only end up an empty forum that does more harm than good.

If the US has stepped back from the position of “unilateral nuclear dismantlement” then it must not make unilateral demands in resolving the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. And no matter what the expression it must start within the framework of the simultaneous package deal.

That the US leader has, while opposing North Korea’s proposal for nuclear freeze, said that the US wants “complete nuclear dismantlement,” is logically unsound and is little more than a stubborn demand. If the US accepts in full our simultaneous package settlement proposal we would be willing to comply with complete nuclear dismantlement as per US demands.

At present, from what we have gathered through various channels, in the US proposal there is not a single reference to the simultaneous package deal, and the US is essentially unwilling to step outside the framework of “unilateral nuclear dismantlement.” Such facts prove that the US, while pretending to be interested in seeking the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and a peaceful solution to the nuclear question, is unchanging whatsoever in its pressing demand for “unilateral nuclear dismantlement.”

US actions and words instill in our military and people nothing but doubt with respect to “written security guarantee.” That is, the US appears to be seeking an ulterior goal while intentionally delaying resolving the question at hand.

Taking time is not necessarily ultimately unfavorable to us. Thanks to the US delay tactic we will buy time to proceed further down the path to reinforcing our nuclear deterrent. Such could be the result that the delay tactic will beget. (END)