

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE, NORTH KOREA AND REGIONAL SECURITY**

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This edited series of essays draws in part from discussions and papers presented at a Workshop on North Korea and Regional Security held April 15-16, 2008 in Seoul. Other papers were solicited to fill substantive gaps in coverage. The content begins with a brief overview of our discussions. This is followed by an explanation of why America's North Korea nuclear policy failed and a suggested new approach. Next is a sampling of perspectives on the Six Party Talks (6PT) by scholars in some of the countries involved. The focus then turns to the critical questions regarding a multilateral security cooperation mechanism in Northeast Asia—its design, its institutional precedents and lessons learned, and a potential application in the maritime sphere. The editor wishes to thank Mel Gurtov and Peter Van Ness for the invitation to edit this issue and their encouragement while undertaking this task, as well as the individual authors for their contributions.

The following is a brief summary of the contents. Gregory Moore explains why America's North Korea nuclear policy has been a failure. Instead of achieving its goal of preventing North Korea from possessing and proliferating nuclear weapons, it has had the opposite effect. This failure was a result of the Bush administration's blanket rejection of the previous administration's approach to North Korea, the tendency to ignore the advice of "experts," neoconservative influence on foreign policy, and divisions within the administration resulting in an inconsistent approach. Moore suggests a bold initiative in which the

United States guarantees North Korea's security, proposes a peace agreement, and establishes full diplomatic recognition if North Korea guarantees not to attack South Korea, not to proliferate weapons of mass destruction or the means to produce them, and not develop more nuclear weapons.

According to Chu Shulong and Lin Xinzhu, China views the 6PT as a major part of its foreign policy and thus for China the success of the talks is paramount. However, China believes the outcome is uncertain because North Korea will most likely want to keep its nuclear weapons to maintain its regime security. China hopes that North Korea will follow the Chinese example of regime security through economic strength. China supports a multilateral security arrangement for Northeast Asia.

Georgy Toloraya argues that Russia has had a consistent policy of promoting a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, opposing resolution of the nuclear issue through pressure or sanctions, supporting a multilateral process and solution, promoting adherence to the rules of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and expanding mutually beneficial economic cooperation. North Korea has been generally positive about Russia's suggestions. However, the United States has not welcomed Russia's participation in the process and has only belatedly and reluctantly recognized its positive role. Russia hopes the 6PT will gradually evolve into a multiparty security and cooperation system that will include a peaceful North Korea. This would be facilitated by international economic assistance to the North and institutionalization of the 6PT. Successful Russia-U.S. cooperation here may have much wider positive implications.

Chung-in Moon provides special insight into the role of the South Korean government under Roh Moo Hyun in the 6PT. It suggested innovative ideas by often defying the American position to break impasses, and it facilitated the overall process of negotiation through proactive diplomacy. Moon describes the Roh government's initial perception of, and reactions to, U.S. policy evolution, explains its position on contentious issues such as the terms of engagement (sequential vs. simultaneous) and exchange (e.g., scope and method of denuclearization and reciprocal measures), and analyzes its role in facilitating the implementation of the joint statements that link the 6PT to a peace regime for Korea and a Northeast Asian regional security and

peace mechanism.

The three concluding chapters are based on the premise that the current 6PT provide an opportunity to build new and unprecedented multilateral arrangements to enhance strategic stability and security in Northeast Asia. The first chapter in this section by Peter Van Ness explores the linkage between historical reconciliation and cooperative security over the past several years and presents ideas regarding the possible components of such a multilateral security institution in Northeast Asia.

The second chapter by Kim Sung-han examines the preconditions for a Northeast Asian peace and security mechanism. It should be based on realism and historical institutionalism, he writes, and should reflect great-power balance. In this context the role of the United States as the balancer between China and Japan should be emphasized. In addition, the North Korean nuclear problem should enter a stage of nuclear dismantlement in which the 6PT and a peace forum may produce a synergistic effect to realize denuclearization and establish a permanent peace regime on the Korean peninsula. Kim believes U.S.-led bilateral alliances should be encouraged to develop into a comprehensive alliance that deals with traditional as well as non-traditional security challenges that tend to be addressed through the multilateral format. If the concerns of third parties can be alleviated, bilateralism and multilateralism may become more compatible, thereby contributing to the establishment of a Northeast Asian peace and security mechanism.

In the final chapter, Mark J. Valencia proposes that a regional security mechanism in Northeast Asia should focus first on maritime security. His rationale includes the region's geography, competing maritime and island claims, the resultant maritime military buildup and changing priorities, increasing frequency of dangerous maritime incidents, and the existence of a foundation for maritime conflict avoidance and resource sharing. Valencia concludes that the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea could serve as a model for a similar Declaration for Northeast Asian Seas that may ultimately include guidelines for military activities in other countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZs).