A Study on Multilateral Approaches to Resolve the North Korean Nuclear Maze

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Keywords: Multilateral Cooperative Security, Comprehensive Security, Three-Party Talks, Six-Party Talks, NEACD, U.S.'s offensive strategy

Abstract

This paper aims to present a desirable road map for the upcoming Six-Party Talks, which provide a multilateral forum for resolving the North Korean nuclear maze. For research purposes, this paper first analyzes the U.S. strategic position as it has become the most important variable in determining the characteristics of Six Party Talks. Then, based on this analysis, the paper evaluates the previous Three-Party Talks as well as the current Six-Party Talks and diagnoses the problems of those two multilateral approaches.

At the outcome of the evaluation and diagnosis, this paper concludes that the current Six-Party Talks can further evolve and develop into a better working model by enhancing its multilateral characteristics. To this end, the paper suggests that agendas for negotiation in the Six-Party Talks be perceived and approached in the dimension of comprehensive security. In particular, the paper presents a multilateral cooperative security mechanism as a model for this approach. Such a mechanism should have non-exclusive characteristics and adopt comprehensive security as a negotiation agenda. Although the NEACD (Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue) remains a not-so-effective non-government-level mechanism, its accumulated know-how in managing multilateral dialogues would prove useful in building a multilateral cooperative security framework in Northeast Asia.
I. Introduction: From Bilateral Format to Multilateral Approaches

Up until now, there has been a de facto principle that issues concerning the Korean Peninsula must be resolved by the directly concerned parties themselves. This was the case in the high-level talks and the historic summit meeting in June 2000 between South and North Korea. The 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework, too, observed the same principle. The Inter-Korean Basic Agreement and the 6.15 South-North Joint Declaration, however, ended as mere political gestures, as North Korea failed to fulfill the Agreement in the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Also, the promised return visit of North Korea's leader Kim Jong-II after the 2000 summit went unrealized. In 1994, on behalf of South Korea, the U.S. struck a deal with North Korea and forged the Geneva Agreed Framework, at the time when the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) was unable to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis. During the Clinton Administration, the Agreed Framework appeared to be successful in freezing the North's nuclear weapons program, but it is now effectively nullified, as Pyongyang acknowledged the existence of a secret HEU (Highly Enriched Uranium) program in October 2002. With these mixed successes and failures in mind, South Korea, the U.S. and Japan alike went one step further and sought solutions to the affairs of the Korean Peninsula, through a multilateral format rather than those previous individually-attempted bilateral negotiations.

The South Korean government, while actively engaged in consultation with the U.S., pushed forward with a new dialogue mechanism, the so-called 'Four-Party Talks,' in which the U.S. and China, who have direct and indirect responsibilities stemming from the Korean War, could participate. In April 1996, at the ROK-U.S. summit held in Cheju Island, the South Korean government drafted a joint proposal of 'Four-Party Talks' among South and North Korea, the United States, and China. Since the failure of reaching an agreement in Geneva shortly after the Armistice in 1953, the Four-Party Talks were the first attempt to include all major actors directly involved in the Korean War, and thereby establishing a peace process in the Korean Peninsula. However, the Four-Party Talks could materialize immediately because of a wide difference in opinion between both sides regarding the agenda for the talks. While both South Korea and the U.S. insisted on the need for implementing confidence building and tension reducing measures, North Korea demanded such disputable issues as the U.S. force withdrawal from Korea as well as a U.S.-DPRK Peace Treaty be on the agenda list at the Four-Party Talks. After a long tug of war, in December 1997, the first Four-Party Talks were held. Between December 1997 and August 1999, six meetings were held, yet they are now in effect terminated, as there had been little meaningful outcomes.

In October 2002, the second round of the North Korean nuclear crisis broke out as North Korea admitted the existence of a secret nuclear weapons program, through a uranium enrichment process, when James Kelly, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, visited Pyongyang. Since then, the U.S. has stuck to its basic position that while it is still willing to talk with North Korea, it will not negotiate with North Korea in a bilateral setting. And
based on this position, the U.S. has tried to promote multilateral dialogues. In particular, the U.S. tried to use China’s influence to apply pressure on North Korea. On April 23, 2003, the U.S. attained this objective. Multilateral dialogues began as the U.S. held a three-party meeting among the U.S., North Korea, and China in Beijing. Subsequently, after a series of summit meetings (ROK-U.S., U.S.-Japan, and U.S.-China), the U.S. went forward expanding the multilateral dialogues to include South Korea and Japan (Russia was also added later.) In the end, ‘Six-Party Talks for Solving the North Korean Nuclear Problem (simply, Six-Party Talks),’ in which six countries in the Northeast Asian region participated and provided a framework to solve the North Korean nuclear problem.

After a series of unsuccessful attempts at bilateral formats, the Four-Party Talks and the Three-Party Talks, the current Six-Party Talks are perhaps the last remaining option for a peaceful approach to the issue of the Korean Peninsula. This may be the case, since all regional countries largely share a sense of urgency, which is partly due to a lack of ideas, but largely due to an absence of better alternatives. To put it differently, this means that expectations surrounding the Six-Party Talks would be very high. Pessimistically speaking, however, if we are to assume that no peaceful solution remains, then the Six-Party Talks are bound to fail. Therefore, we would no longer be able to solely rely on peaceful means. In this respect, the Six-Party Talks are crucial not only because of the seriousness of the North Korean nuclear problem, but because they are indeed our last peaceful card to play.

The Six-Party Talks would play the role of a significant ‘litmus test’ for determining future circumstances on the Korean Peninsula and in the Northeast Asian region as a whole. There are two points for consideration. First, the Six-Party Talks are regarded as an important case by which we can examine the aggressive and assertive behavioral aspects of U.S. foreign policy in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. With respect to this case, there are two observations. On the one hand, a group of foreign policy analysts think that the U.S. policy toward North Korea has changed from the previous hard-line policy to a more or less moderate one, and as a result, the Six-Party Talks were pushed forward by U.S. initiative. The background of this logic is that the U.S. had no other options but one through dialogue because many even some of Bush's own cabinet members doubt the effectiveness of ‘tough measures’, such as preemptive strikes or a containment policy. Moreover, the fact that the U.S. opted to pursue dialogue with North Korea in a situation where no viable policy options are to be found, indicates that the U.S. is now in an inferior position relative to North Korea. Considering that this logic makes it possible for us to speculate on the prospect of the U.S.’ inevitable concession to the North’s brinkmanship, it thus becomes an important basis.

On the other hand, some observers believe that the U.S. still maintains its hard-line policy toward North Korea. They give particular attention to the fact that the Six-Party Talks were raised and insisted upon by the so-called ‘hawks’ in the Bush Administration. Therefore, they warn that the Six-Party Talks are merely a step to justify hard pressing North Korea later on. Since the U.S. policy toward North Korea is closely linked to the
‘military-industrial complex,’ it would be structurally difficult to solve the North Korean problem by compromise and concession. Perhaps, the only solution is for North Korea to openly abandon its nuclear weapons program and rely on the economic assistance from the U.S. and its allies.

Second, the Six-Party Talks marked the first case in which the government representatives from six countries in Northeast Asia gathered in one place to discuss solutions to pending regional issues. Lacking the historical experience in multilateralism, the Northeast Asian countries have preferred bilateral, individual, and close negotiation styles to multilateral, structural, and open ones. Taking this regional strategic culture1) into account, the Six-Party Talks can emerge as a new formula for solving inter-state problems in the region.

This paper has two research purposes. First, concerning the Six-Party Talks, the paper examines the following questions: what is U.S. policy on the North Korean nuclear problem? Was it really U.S. strategy to hold the Six-Party Talks? If so, was it because the U.S. was in such an inferior position that it had to think about the future ‘burden sharing?’ Or, if not, is the U.S. proceeding with its own plan of action (propose negotiation → negotiations end in a stalemate → seek other alternatives) with this hard-line policy in mind? This paper first analyzes the reasons behind the U.S. decision to hold multilateral negotiations. By studying the U.S. strategic options and their validity, the paper illustrates the background of U.S. strategy.

This has two important meanings. First, it is important because the background of the U.S.’ strategic decision governs the characteristics of the multilateral negotiations. That is to say, if the U.S. decision to hold the multilateral negotiation is a manifestation of U.S. superior power and diplomatic confidence, the Six-Party Talks, as a multilateral mechanism, could evolve into a Northeast Asian version of NATO(the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). The idea of containing North Korea would be at the core of such a mechanism. If this is not to be the case, it would be Northeast Asia’s OSCE(the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe). This means that a cooperative mechanism among six principal countries in the Northeast Asian region could be formed.

Second, with respect to the formulation of a multilateral international institution, the initiative held by hegemonic powers is the most important focal point. It is because the power structure is even more important in the formation of an international institution for security. This is due to the states susceptibility to security problems. In this respect, Robert Jervis points out that powerful countries’ determination is the most important factor in regime formulation as he discusses the conditions for security regime formulation.2) Hence,

1) Desmond Ball, “Strategic Culture in the Asia/Pacific Region,” Security Studies, Vol.3, No.1(Autumn 1993), p.55.
2) Robert Jervis, “Security Regimes,” Stephen D. Krasner(ed.), International Regimes(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p.176.

Jervis argues that superpowers prefer the surroundings for all countries to interact with each other in a regulated manner to the surroundings, in which all countries act individualistically.
examining the U.S. intentions and determination, (how the U.S. perceives the Six-Party Talks, how it will move this forward) is an important case study for forecasting the future path of the Six-Party Talks.

This paper provides a strategic analysis on the background of the U.S.’ decision to hold the multilateral talks, and based on the analysis, it also examines the question of “what kind of direction the Six-Party Talks should follow” as policy alternatives. The paper also studies the essence of the North Korean nuclear problem and presents a basic direction for its solution. This is not to say that the paper will merely review the results and the meaning of the first round of the Six-Party Talks. The paper tackles some even more important questions like, “what is a desirable direction for the Six-Party Talks, and is this possible or not?” by carefully studying the characteristics of the Six-Party Talks and the North Korean nuclear problem.

II. The U.S. Offensive Strategy and Its Effects

1. Preemptive Strikes

The U.S. has continued to imply the possible use of force against North Korea. The media has been theorizing a number of conceivable ‘scenarios’ that inevitably have serious consequences. In sum, those scenarios are two-fold.

First, the idea of a surgical strike against the North Korean nuclear facilities has not been completely ruled out and is still lingering in Washington. It is in fact believed to be prevailing among those ‘hawks’ in the Bush Administration. As the U.S. military technologies have become more sophisticated, a surgical strike has also become a feasible option. The notion of a surgical strike is to minimize collateral damage such as civilian casualties and to maximize the effect of eliminating threats. Although it is certainly a tempting tactical option, a few problems must be cleared beforehand in order to carry out a surgical strike. First of all, the U.S. must be absolutely sure that it has identified all the target locations of North Korea’s nuclear facilities, as well as its nuclear materials. However, this is virtually impossible. The exact locations of the North’s uranium enrichment facilities, in particular, are barely known to U.S. intelligence. Moreover, even if the U.S. were to identify and acquire all the target locations of the nuclear facilities, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to completely destroy all of them. To be sure, the U.S. might be able to destroy a few ‘known targets’ such as the nuclear complex at Youngbyeon. Nevertheless, as North Korea has long maintained war-readiness and constructed numerous hardened and underground facilities, many of the targets - perhaps, even known targets - could survive the U.S. attacks. Furthermore, the U.S. would stand morally accused, since many analyses suggest that the radioactive fallout produced by the bombing of the North Korean nuclear facilities would likely impact not only the Korean Peninsula but also China and Japan.3) Worse yet, the biggest problem is not the
U.S. capability to perform a surgical strike. It is the North's ability to retaliate, in which case Seoul and the rest of South Korea, as well as Japan would suffer horrendous damage. Although the U.S. could manage to minimize the destruction from the North's retaliation, enormous devastation would still befall Seoul and elsewhere. Therefore, the U.S. surgical strike is certainly not an attractive option for solving the North Korean nuclear problem.4)

Second, the strategy of 'leadership change' is widely shared among those hard-liners in the Bush Administration. The 'decapitation policy' during the recent Iraqi War is a good example of such a specific method of this strategy. If this kind of strategy were applied, instead of eliminating the nuclear weapons, the U.S. would aspire to remove the root of the problem - by overthrowing Kim Jong-II's regime, which may soon complete its development of nuclear weapons, and possibly in the future, threaten to use them. In other words, the U.S. plans to completely eradicate the North Korean problem through the leadership change strategy. At the State of the Union Address in 2002 and 2003, the U.S. President, George W. Bush accused the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-II of being the head of the axis of evil, and of oppressing and starving his own people. As President Bush deeply distrusts the North Korean regime and its leader Kim Jong-II, the U.S. does not completely rule out the leadership change scenario. As he openly stated, President Bush makes a clear distinction between the North Korean people and their regime. The U.S. Department of Defense secretly circulated a memorandum, which suggests that "the U.S., in conjunction with China, must put pressure on North Korea in order to oust the North Korean leadership." 5) According to a news article from the U.S. News and World Report6) on July 21, 2002, which became known as a 'scenario to collapse the North Korean regime,' the Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld ordered the further elaboration of the OPLAN 5030(Operations Plan). All these facts and news contribute to making the regime change scenario even more credible. According to the OPLAN 5030, the U.S. would continually irritate the North Korean forces, thus causing their military strength to wear out, and by those means, the exasperated North Korean military would attempt a military coup to overthrow the Kim Jong-II regime.7)

Above all, this kind of U.S. military option is faced with strong opposition from South Korea. The reason why the South Korean government continuously emphasizes a peaceful solution to the problem is simply that South Korea cannot risk a military conflict. As South Korea would be the most likely victim of another military conflict in the Korean Peninsula, the South Korean government not only differs in the basic perception of the North Korean

3) Leon V. Sigal, Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 76.
4) Phillip C. Saunders, "Military Option for Dealing with North Korea's Nuclear Program," source : http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/dprkmil.htm(Searched 03/08/05)
5) Donga Ilbo(April 21, 2003)
6) Bruce B. Auster and Kevin Whitelaw, "Pentagon comes up with a provocative plan to face down North Korea," US News and World Report(July 21, 2003)
7) http://globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oplan-5030.htm(Searched 03/12/10)
problem, but regards the solution to the North Korean problem as a matter of ‘life-and-death.’ The U.S. military strike scenario, in particular, is thus deemed very dangerous, since North Korea still maintains military alliances with China and Russia. Although some say that Russia has been admitted as a responsible member of the international community under U.S. leadership, and that China would unlikely intervene in another Korean War as it pursues its own pragmatic policy, it is virtually impossible to conceive both Russia and China supporting a unilateral U.S. decision to use military force against North Korea. To be sure, all the analyses above reflect the situation in North Korea only. Considering the U.S. is currently struggling to restore order in Iraq in the final stage of the Iraqi War, the validity and efficiency of such preemptive strikes (as the U.S.’ choice) are expected to be limited, at best.\(^8\)

2. Containment Policy

Soon after the IAEA inspectors were expelled from North Korea, on December 27, 2002, President Bush suggested a ‘tailored containment policy’ in response to the North Korean nuclear problem at the National Security Council meeting. As made public by the U.S. media reports in late 2002, the tailored containment policy meant that if North Korea refused to abandon its nuclear weapons program, the U.S. would take economic sanctions against North Korea through the U.N. Security Council. This policy intended to put international pressure on North Korea by requesting foreign countries to reduce or cut off trade with North Korea. This policy falls somewhere between both extremes: military attack and dialogue.\(^9\)

Later, the U.S. planned and pushed forward this kind of coercive diplomacy to pressure North Korea on a number of fronts. The U.S.-led containment policy includes adopting the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), cutting off the inflow of hard currency and reducing foreign aid. To begin with, it is worth reviewing what the PSI is.

The U.S.-tailored containment policy plan, which emerged as early as late 2002, had been buried for a while. On May 31, however, President Bush proposed the PSI in Poland. On June 12, at the Madrid summit meeting, he expressed his deep concern over the proliferation of WMD and WMD-related materials, and about the possibility of terrorists obtaining such deadly weapons. The leaders from 11 countries at the Madrid summit reached a consensus that it was imperative to take proactive measures to deny terrorists and terrorist-sponsoring countries access to WMD as well as their means of delivery, including missiles. And they also agreed to consider substantive measures. In December 2002, although the U.S.-supported Spanish navy succeeded in capturing a Cambodian vessel that was transporting North Korean-made ballistic missiles to Yemen on the high seas, it had to release the vessel as well as its cargo due to international law restrictions. This

\(^8\) William D. Hartung, “Prevention, Not Intervention-Curbing the New Nuclear Threat,” \textit{World Policy Journal} (Winter 2002/3), p.304.

\(^9\) “The Korean Crisis,” \textit{New York Times} (2002. 12. 26)
has materialized the containment policy to control the export and import of North Korea’s WMD. On July 9, at the second meeting in Australia, they agreed to initiate joint military exercises designed for interdicting the illegal trade of WMD. In September, the first such exercise took place on the Coral Sea, near the northeastern shore of Australia.

The PSI is to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime against WMD threats and to secure means of cutting off the international transfers of WMD and missiles, related equipment, materials and technologies by those concerned states. When applied to North Korea, the PSI would serve the US’ purposes of both economic and military ends. On the one hand, the PSI would cut off one of the major sources of hard currency for North Korea. On the other hand, it would seal off the transfer of North Korea’s missiles, nuclear weapons, and nuclear materials to third world countries. However, on the list of participating countries, the PSI is supported mostly by western countries, but it has failed to include even more important countries, such as China, Russia, and South Korea, whose roles in containing North Korea are expected to be substantial. Thus, at present, the PSI has a rather symbolic meaning that represents the US’ determination to contain WMD threats.

The next is a plan to cut off the inflow of hard currency. Currently, because there is little room for the US. to be directly involved in executing the plan, Japan plays a role in pressuring North Korea by economic means. The routes by which North Korea obtains hard currency are namely through money transfers from Chochongnyun, the pro-North Korean residents league in Japan; illegal transactions, such as counterfeiting foreign currency and smuggling narcotics; and the export of ballistic missiles. Among these routes, missile export is the primary concern for the PSI activities. Thus, denying missile export is the key to the success of the PSI. As part of this plan, Japan has begun to reinforce a series of ‘safety measures’, including immigration control, cargo inspection and passenger luggage check for the irregular North Korean liner, Mangyungbong. Japan is lawfully taking these measures within the boundaries of the existing law. This is perceived to be Japan’s intention to restrict the circulation of counterfeit money, narcotics, and cash flow.

These reinforced restriction measures against the Chochongnyun’s activities as well as other North Korean vessels’ entry into ports in Japan have had withering effects on North Korea’s export of narcotics and circulation of counterfeit money. North Korea is believed to export 400-500 million dollars worth of narcotics annually (opium: the third largest producer in the world, heroin: the sixth largest). Including the Bongsooho incident (on April 27, the Australian navy captured a North Korean cargo vessel transporting the current price

10 “Background Briefing by a Senior DFAT Official - Proliferation Security Initiative to be held in Brisbane 9-10 July,” www.dfat.gov.au/media/transcripts/2003/030708_security_briefing(Searched 03/07/10)
11 The name of this exercise was ‘Pacific Protector.’
12 Tae Hyo Kim, “Review on the Effectiveness of ‘Further Measures’ in Nuclear Deterrence,” IFANS, Weekly Analytical Paper on Major International Issues (August 14, 2003)
13 ibid., p.2.
of 50 million dollars worth of heroin), there have been at least five large-scale drug-related international incidents, in which North Korea was deeply involved since 2000. Lastly, that the U.S. cut off the supply of heavy fuel oil to North Korea is an example of reducing foreign aid. Previously, the U.S. had supplied 500 thousand tons of heavy fuel oil to North Korea annually, but since last December, it now pursues to put more pressure on North Korea in the field of energy by suspending the heavy fuel oil supply.

However, in order to be effective, it is essential that South Korea and China, who are still aiding North Korea, discontinue their aid to the North, although, both countries are not particularly enthusiastic to do so. China has made it clear that it would not put active and intense pressure on North Korea, which could trigger a collapse of the North Korean regime. North Korea also retorted that “economic sanction means war,” when referring to the U.S. containment policy. As a result, the already mounting tension on the Korean Peninsula has become even greater.

The U.S. containment policy is expected to be somewhat effective to the extent that it would prevent North Korea from transferring its WMD and it would also shut off the routes for North Korea to gain economic profits through the sales of weapons. Nevertheless, the containment policy would not be as effective in confirming North Korean nuclear suspicions as much as the U.S. would like due to the following limitations. First, although the containment policy can discourage North Korea’s nuclear ambitions and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it cannot completely clear North Korea from nuclear suspicion.

Second, if the North Korean nuclear program is in progress anyhow, time becomes another variable that must be considered. Time is not on the U.S. side, if it is merely to wait for North Korea to cease its existence by solely depending on the containment policy. Moreover, North Korea would heighten the tension by threatening that its nuclear program has progressed.

Third, as mentioned earlier, for the containment policy to be effective, South Korea and China must be cooperative in the implementation of such a policy. However, as both countries tend to be either half-heartedly cooperative or opposed to the policy, this would limit the effectiveness of the policy.

After all, the U.S.-tailored containment policy at best can be a part of the ‘hunting North Korea policy’ that aims at bringing North Korea to the negotiation table and gaining substantial negotiation results. Considering the current situation, the containment policy has exhibited its effectiveness to some extent. This is to be the case if we are to consider the fact that North Korea has agreed to multilateral dialogue, and the Six-Party Talks have been arranged.

14) ibid., pp.5-6.
15) William D. Hartung, Op. cit., p.304.
16) Gary Samore, “The Korean Nuclear Crisis,” Survival, Vol.45, No.1(Spring 2003), pp.20-1.
III. Multilateral Negotiations for Solving the North Korean Nuclear Maze

1. Three-Party Talks

On June 6, 2001, as a result of the five-month long overall reexamination of the U.S.-North Korea policy, President Bush presented a new set of negotiation agendas that included improved execution of the Geneva Agreed Framework, suspension of missile development and export, and reduction of conventional weapons. And he also mentioned that the U.S. would be willing to help the impoverished North Korean people, ease sanctions, and take other political steps to improve relations if North Korea responded positively and took appropriate measures.17 This new policy direction in fact came to the surface in the process of the 2000 U.S. presidential election, when presidential candidate Bush’s policy staff criticized the Clinton Administration’s North Korea policy. President Bush made clear that the U.S. would adhere to the new principle of taking initiative in negotiation and paying for taking action, not for just coming forward to negotiate.18

In any case, it appeared to be a new turning point, since the U.S. clearly changed its attitude that it would not refuse dialogue with North Korea. This was considered a significant departure from the previous U.S. attitude of applying silent pressure on North Korea, as it had completely stopped all dialogue and negotiation with the North. However, North Korea responded that the U.S.’ unilateral agenda setting was the expression of hostility and of an intention to disarm North Korea, and therefore, it had no interest in discussing subjects that infringed upon its sovereignty. As a result, the U.S.-DPRK talks have been discontinued since the Bush Administration took office.

The deadlock situation between the U.S. and North Korea became further aggravated due to the tragic terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In the next year, the situation between the two countries intensified as President Bush, through his State of the Union Address, included North Korea as one of the “axis of evil” countries.19

The emotional tension between the two countries was mounting, while no conversation was taking place. In this situation, in April 2002, the South Korean government sent Lim Dong-won as a special envoy to North Korea in an effort to persuade Kim Jong-Il to have a dialogue with the U.S. and confirmed the North’s intention to talk. After many twists and turns, on October 25, 2002, James Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State, as the U.S. special envoy, visited North Korea. It had been about 20 months since the end of the Clinton Administration. Many hoped the U.S.-DPRK relations would enter a new phase of dialogue through Mr. Kelly’s visit to Pyongyang.

17) “Statement by the President,” (June 11, 2001) http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/2001/06/20010611-4.htm (Searched 03/11/10)
18) Richard L. Armitage, “A Comprehensive Approach to North Korea,” Strategic Forum, No.159 (March 1999)
19) “The President’s State of the Union Address,” (January 29, 2002) http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html (Searched 03/12/20)
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However, the U.S. special envoy’s visit, though realized through painstaking efforts, resulted in a further worsening of the U.S.-DPRK relations, due to the fact that North Korea acknowledged the existence of a secret nuclear weapons program through uranium enrichment. As a result, the two countries’ relationship changed from the previous ‘emotional confrontation without dialogue’ to an ‘actual showdown with extreme mutual distrust.’ As it was preparing for a war against Iraq, the U.S. put off an intensive problem-solving effort for the North Korean nuclear issue. However, regarding this situation as a good opportunity, North Korea further complicated matters and sought ‘brinkmanship’ to gain U.S. concessions. The two countries’ positions collided as the North insisted on a ‘prior guarantee of regime security and economic aids through bilateral talks’ and the U.S., too, refused to bend its principle of ‘prior abandonment of nuclear program and multilateral talks.’ At the meeting with Mr. Kelly, North Korea proposed concluding a non-aggression treaty between the U.S. and the DPRK. Mr. Kelly answered the proposal with the U.S. principle of ‘nuclear abandonment first and negotiation talks later.’ Provoked by this, North Korea hinted that it was prepared to take tougher countermeasures. The U.S., however, did not step back at all. On November 12, the U.S. decided to suspend its heavy fuel oil supply to North Korea, and on December 11, it went on to capture a cargo vessel transporting North Korean-made ballistic missiles.

When North Korea announced its deviation from nuclear moratorium on December 12 and removed the seals on the surveillance cameras and the radiochemistry laboratory on December 22, the U.S. came up with a tailored containment policy toward North Korea on December 27. Finally, as North Korea expelled the IAEA inspectors on December 31, the nuclear safeguard system became completely useless. On January 14, 2003, the U.S. steadily increased the level of response by declaring the Geneva Agreed Framework null and void.

It is noteworthy that China played an important role in easing the tension and facilitating dialogue in this deadlock situation. China sent a high-level special envoy to North Korea and made it clear that it would not endorse the North’s brinkmanship strategy. Moreover, China promised North Korea that it would make an effort to get the U.S. security guarantee pledge. At last, China succeeded in holding the Three-Party Talks in Beijing, by coaxing and wheeling North Korea into coming to the negotiation table. China has continued to support North Korea in order to maintain its influence in the Korean Peninsula. As international aid was decreasing, China’s support became essential for the North to survive. As a result, China’s influence over North Korea substantially increased.20 With this background, China was able to press North Korea into accepting a multilateral dialogue.

At the 16th National People’s Congress, China set up the ‘construction of a well-being society’ as a basic objective for the national development master plan. As a more specific goal, China aimed to raise the GDP to four times bigger than that of 2000, maintain the annual economic growth rate at around 7%, and increase the per capita GDP to 3,000 US dollars over the next two decades. An important variable in such an ambitious economic

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20) Mel Gurtov, “Common Security in North Korea : Quest for a New Paradigm in Inter-Korean Relations,” KNDU Review Vol.7, No.1(June 2002), pp.25-26.
development plan is ‘how to maintain friendly relations with the neighboring countries’, particularly the U.S. As China recognizes that any trouble between the U.S. and China would be crucial to its economic development plan, it has tried to maintain a cooperative mechanism with the U.S. toward the North Korean nuclear problem.\(^1\) Actually, in March last year, Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Prime Minister, highlighted the issue of maintaining and developing stable cooperative relations with the U.S. at the 10th National People’s Congress.

Although the Three-Party Talks continued for three days from April 23 to 25 amid feelings of anticipation and anxiety, they ended without even setting a later meeting schedule. In the process of the Three-Party Talks, North Korea demanded a regime security guarantee, a non-aggression treaty, economic assistance, and ultimately normalization of U.S.-DPRK relations as well as a Japan-DPRK relationship. When the U.S. rejected the North’s demands, North Korea did not hesitate to speak of its possession of nuclear weapons, among other threatening remarks.\(^2\) The U.S. made it clear that it was willing to take a ‘bold approach,’ in which the U.S. would guarantee the North’s regime security and provide aid packages for economic reconstruction only when the North dismantled their nuclear weapons program in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. In the end, the Three-Party Talks facilitated by China’s mediation finished without satisfying anyone. It was satisfactory only to the extent that the U.S. and North Korea could ‘confirm’ their respective positions.

2. The First Round of the Six-Party Talks

For North Korea, a new breakthrough was necessary, for although it presented a ‘new and bold’ proposal at the Three-Party Talks in Beijing, the U.S. showed no reaction. Moreover, on May 15, at the ROK-U.S. summit, President Roh Moo-hyun, who ostensibly inherited the ‘sunshine policy’ from the previous administration, agreed with President Bush that both countries may need to take ‘further steps’ if the North Korean nuclear issue escalates. This point was spelled out in the joint statement at the summit. Subsequently, on May 23, at the U.S.-Japan summit, the term ‘tougher measures’ appeared. This put more pressure on North Korea. In response, on June 1, North Korea, through China, delivered the U.S. a message of willingness to have bilateral talks between the U.S. and the DPRK within a multilateral framework. As China delivered this message to the U.S., a new window of opportunity was opened to solve the North Korean nuclear problem.

The background of the Six-Party Talks was two-fold. First, it can be said that North Korea finally realized that its brinkmanship tactics were no longer effective, as it finally understood the U.S.’ firm stance and watched the U.S.’ powerful military strength. It was a breathtaking case not only to North Korea, but to the international community as well.

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\(^1\) Sheldon W. Simon, “Alternative Vision of Security in Northeast Asia,” *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Vol.15, No.3(Fall 1996), pp.83-85.

\(^2\) www.mofat.go.kr(Searched 03/07/10)
that the U.S. captured Baghdad in only three weeks since the outbreak of the Iraqi War and declared the end of the war - more precisely, the end of 'major combat operations' - on May 1. To North Korea, the live video scenes that showed the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's statue being toppled and desecrated by the cheering Iraqi people was surely a huge impact. Moreover, the U.S. military might proved to be unbelievably strong, as it successfully overthrew the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which was once called a 'grave of superpowers.' These U.S. military successes necessitated a readjustment of the previous concept of war fighting. Second, even the trusted South Korean government, too, aligned itself with the U.S. in dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem. Coupled with China's cooperation with the U.S., North Korea was completely surrounded. This situation made it possible for North Korea to realize the limitations of its strategy of 'giving up as little as possible and getting as much as possible in return.'23) The situation also forced North Korea to take action to secure practical gains through dialogue. Since the U.S. was concerned with the possibility of Russia's enhanced influence in the Korean Peninsula, it initially wanted to exclude Russia from multilateral negotiations. It was well expected that Russia could restore its influence over North Korea and the Korean Peninsula as a whole, if it were to provide electricity and fuel oil to North Korea in the short-term and construct railroad, oil and gas pipeline connections in the Korean Peninsula. However, from North Korea's point of view, it would be able to take advantage of Russia's participation in the multilateral talks to avoid one-sided pressure, as it expected to form a parallel composition of the southern triangle of South Korea, the U.S., and Japan with a northern triangle of North Korea, China, and Russia.

Table 1  Comparison of the Nuclear Solution
(drawn from the keynote speeches at the first round of the Six Party Talks)

| Measures                          | North Korea (4 steps)                                                                 | The U.S. (3 steps)                                                                 | South Korea (3 steps)          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Announcing Nuclear Dismantle      | Supply of Food (1)                                                                    |                                                                                   | Security Guarantee             |
| Returning to NPT                  |                                                                                      | Supply of Food, Assisting Nuclear Dismantle                                      | Supply of Food and Energy      |
| Freezing Nuclear Facilities       | Non-aggression Treaty, Pay for the Energy Loss (2)                                    |                                                                                   |                                |
| Nuclear Inspection                |                                                                                      | Research on Energy Demand, Removal from the List of Terrorist                    | Written Guarantee of Security  |
| Nuclear Dismantle Process to Begin|                                                                                      | Discerning Concerning Issues                                                      |                                |
| Nuclear Dismantle Process to Complete| Completion of LWR Construction (4)                                                   |                                                                                   |                                |
| Verification                      |                                                                                      |                                                                                   |                                |
| WMD                               | Diplomatic Relations with the U.S. and Japan (3)                                      |                                                                                   |                                |

* (): The steps of North Korea's proposal

23) Gary Samore, Op.cit., p.22.
As expected, the painstakingly achieved first round of the Six Party-Talks ended without producing concrete results. Similar to the previous Three-Party Talks, it was a place where participating countries recognized their respective positions and intentions. Since there was a significant gap between the U.S. and the DPRK positions with respect to a solution for the nuclear problem, the multilateral negotiation attempt closed the curtain on the North’s strong antagonistic opposition.

3. Lessons from the Multilateral Negotiation

There are two major reasons why the U.S. prefers multilateral dialogues. First, the U.S. thinks that it is essential to encourage the regional actors, who would face the greatest consequences from the North’s becoming a nuclear state, to play a bigger role. The North Korean nuclear problem, by itself, does not equate with the U.S. problem. As the nuclear problem poses the most serious security threats to the regional countries, they must take more responsibility in helping bring safe closure to the problem. Basically, the U.S. does not intend to bear the burden of the nuclear problem alone. Rather, it seeks to cooperate with the regional actors to share responsibility. Moreover, as the U.S. presidential election is fast approaching, and as a new order in the Middle East is yet to be established in the aftermath of the Iraqi War, the U.S. simply cannot afford another tension-building scenario on the Korean Peninsula. Deep down, the U.S. wants to seek a solution by promoting the regional actors to play constructive roles in the multilateral talks.

Second, the multilateral framework would be more effective than a bilateral one, as it is expected to provide safer circumstances for the U.S. to accept the North’s demands. With respect to the North’s demands for a non-aggression pledge and recognizing the domestic legal restrictions, the U.S. considered a common security guarantee endorsed by all participating countries in the multilateral negotiations. As a result, the U.S. came to realize the need for a multilateral negotiation framework instead of a bilateral one.

Thus, the Six-Party Talks were exactly what the U.S. wanted. Although the U.S. initially intended to include five countries only (the members of the Three-Party Talks, plus South Korea and Japan) in the multilateral negotiation, because of Russia’s strong request, it accepted the inclusion of Russia.

Although neither the Three-Party Talks nor the Six-Party Talks could draw specific conclusions nor constitute a friendly atmosphere, they at least built a cornerstone for problem solving. This meant, in other words, that those multilateral talks provided North Korea with opportunities to share a clear understanding of what the nuclear program really means and to confirm the fact that all neighboring countries, regardless of their respective solutions, were commonly opposed to its nuclear program.

North Korea regards the nuclear problem as crucial leverage, namely, a ‘lifeline’ to its security. That is, North Korea tries to solve a variety of security threatening conditions by its nuclear program. North Korea argues that various security threats are caused by the U.S.’ ‘hostile policy.’ Granted that North Korea has reasons to be suspect of U.S. intention,
considering the North’s nuclear development as a result of the U.S.’ hostile policy, is both invalid and misleading, simply because there is no difference in the time frame to establish causal links. For example, North Korea’s HEU program is believed to have begun in 1998. However, this was during the Clinton Administration era when the U.S.-DPRK relations enjoyed the most amicable period in history. Furthermore, North Korea has a number of security-threatening internal problems as well, let alone the external threats from the U.S. North Korea’s chronic problems such as poverty, mass famine, shortage of hard currency, and lack of energy resources, to name but a few, constitute a comprehensive internal security threat. This kind of contradiction appeared to be unmistakably clear when considering what North Korea was seeking at the Six-Party Talks.

What makes the solution to the nuclear problem so difficult? The answer can be found if we try to understand the North’s perception behind its nuclear development. If we are to judge whether its nuclear development were for negotiation purposes or to fulfill the North’s desire to actually become a nuclear state, the solution would quite simply be either very easy or very difficult. This kind of approach makes it difficult, if not impossible, for us to grasp the true nature of the problem. The fundamental questions should be: “why does North Korea try to use its nuclear program as a bargaining chip, and why does it strive to become a nuclear power?” These two questions in fact originate from only one perception. Placing the nuclear card on the negotiation table, North Korea wants to solve such a complex security threat from in and out of the country by making a comprehensive deal with powerful countries like the U.S. But, if North Korea judges that such a deal is not possible, it might easily decide to become a nuclear power, so that it can have the capability to cope with external threats on its own. This may be the secret intention of North Korea. Therefore, this provides several valuable leads to help solve the North Korean nuclear problem. We need to start from this point.

IV. In Search of a Solution through Multilateralism

1. Desirable Types of Security Cooperation

The previously analyzed Three-Party Talks and Six-Party Talks cannot easily be considered as true multilateral approaches. In the Three-Party Talks, China could not play a meaningful role in solving the nuclear problem, since it simply provided the place for the talks and presided at the talks. Also, the Six-Party Talks were no more than a mere extension of the bilateral negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea. Although this kind of framework was produced by the differences in both the U.S. and North Korea’s respective positions, a truly meaningful multilateral negotiation was not materialized,

24) Phillip C. Saunders, “Assessing North Korea’s Nuclear Intentions,” http://cns.miis.edu/research/korea/nucint.htm (Searched 03/10/10)
nevertheless. As mentioned before, the opening of the Six-Party Talks was driven by U.S. initiatives. Taking this into account, the characteristics of the Six-Party Talks can be seen as a Guided Dialogue Cooperation, led by the hegemonic countries.25)

〈Table 2〉 Dosch’s Types of Cooperation

| Degree of formal/informal Institutionalization | Hierarchical | Egalitarian |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| High                                         | Hegemonic Cooperation | Concert-type Cooperation |
| Low                                          | Guided Dialogue Cooperation | Open Dialogue Cooperation |

That is, the degree of institutionalization in the Guided Dialogue is lower than in the Hegemonic Cooperation, where the hegemonic countries are thoroughly taking the initiatives, whereby their benefits and strategies are the only reasons for its existence. However, it could be considered that cooperation is still led by the union of the hegemonic countries and of some countries satisfying the strategic needs of those hegemonic countries.

Yet, the Six-Party Talks, which have more or less similar characteristics to the Guided Dialogue, would only serve to increase the number of participants. The benefits of an increased possibility of cooperation from such an increased number of participants would not be possible.26) Thus, a desirable model of cooperation in solving the problems can only be made by changing the currently Guided Dialogue-style Six-Party Talks into the Concert-type Cooperation type for an increased possibility of cooperation, burden sharing and collaborative management.

Such a model should create a realistic framework, in which all participating countries

25) Jom Dosch, “Multilateralism and North Korea, Lessons of European Experiences,” presented paper for The Conference on North Korea, Multilateralism and the Future of the Peninsula (November 20-21, 2003)

26) The number of actors is an important topic for discussion in analyzing the possibility of interstate cooperation. There is a consensus that the possibility of cooperation appears to be higher in multilateral relations, rather than bilateral ones. The question is, however, what the appropriate number of actors is. With respect to this question, many analysts differ in their opinion.

Russell Hardin, Collective Action (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), Chap.3; Miles Kahler, “Multilateralism with Small and Large Numbers,” International Organization, Vol.46, No.3 (Summer 1992), pp.681-708. Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (New York: Schocken, 1968), p.35; Michael Taylor, The Possibility of Cooperation (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.12; Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, “Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions,” in Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf(eds.) The Global Agenda - Issues and Perspectives (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), pp.225-230.
can negotiate on an equal basis through formal institutionalization\(^{27}\) as a government-level cooperative mechanism.

2. Comprehensive Security

During the Cold War era, the most basic governing principles for conflict prevention between the ideological blocks were mostly centered on the concepts of deterrence, containment, and nuclear stability. Yet, in the post-Cold War era, the concept of international security evolved to seek mutual reassurance and comprehensive security, which could deal with traditional military threats as well as non-traditional ones.

The concept of security in the post-Cold War era emphasizes the importance of low politics that focuses on the deepening of mutual interdependence and the expansion of economic relations. Based on this change in focus, departing from the old narrowly defined concept, the concept of security has expanded to center on a multi-dimensional comprehensive security concept that includes a variety of security issues in politics, diplomacy, the military, economics, and the environment\(^{28}\). From this perspective, security is regarded as a most important national objective itself, rather than as a means to achieve national objectives. Moreover, in the modern world, new types of threats are emerging as it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate between foreign and domestic threats\(^{29}\).

For example, environmental issues, drug problems, and terrorist threats are obviously endangering the security of a country, but they prove to be very difficult for one country to deal with alone. Since those newly arising security problems are basically trans-boundary in their characteristics, they cannot be effectively countered by the unilateral action of a single country. This kind of new security environment necessitates cooperation among many countries. Thus, in this respect, comprehensive security makes perfect sense because comprehensive security, as a concept, includes a wide variety of security-related matters.

Setting the components of comprehensive security aside, its major focus also becomes an important subject for discussion. That is, in the post-Cold War security environment, although it is important to manage foreign threats, it is equally important to conduct a thorough reexamination of threat factors in the domestic arena.

As interdependence deepens among countries, the very meaning of a state (= country) as an independent, single unilateral actor has become weakened. Under this circumstance, the domestic threat factors of a state could spread to affect the security of other countries. That is, a country's economic, social and cultural problems could influence other regional

\(^{27}\) Institutionalization generally refers to the process, in which an institution is built and its members learn the norms and rules of the institution. G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Order," *International Organization*, Vol.52, No.4(1988), p.948.

\(^{28}\) Joseph J. Romm, *Defining National Security: The Nonmilitary Aspects*(New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), p.7.

\(^{29}\) David A. Baldwin, "Security Studies and the End of the Cold War," *World Politics*, No.48(October 1995), pp.126-129.
countries and could therefore cause instability. In this sense, the previous security concepts primarily based on military readiness to protect people and to preserve territorial integrity would not suffice for coping with these new threats from different dimensions. Moreover, the question of how to control a state’s domestic threat factors that have international implications emerges as an important issue. Therefore, comprehensive security can be suggested as a useful conceptual tool to promote cooperation among states to preserve peace and stability in this volatile security environment.

As Ernst B. Hass argues that cooperation can be made possible by linking various issues in negotiation, the comprehensive security concept could play a role in increasing the chances of success in bringing regional countries together to cooperatively improve the security not only in their countries but also in the region as a whole. If this is to be realized, diffuse reciprocity must appear in the process of promoting comprehensive security. This diffuse reciprocity is a definition based on pragmatic perspectives, which emphasizes the benefits that an actor can expect from various long-term issues.

3. Multilateral Cooperative Security

Regarding how to approach and solve security-related problems, there are in general two methods. One method is to maintain peace and security by either strengthening the military or forming military alliances. Another is to reduce threat factors by developing foreign relations based on mutual trust and minimizing damage should a war break out.

The former method relies upon traditional security concepts that emphasize the balance of power and collective security as a means to avoiding security problems. The balance of power system helped create a policy orientation that depends on either collective security alliances or bilateral ones. The international institutions such as the League of Nations and the United Nations have sought to achieve collective security as a solution to international security problems.

Yet, in the post-Cold War era, departing from the old approach to security problems through confrontation, new attempts emerged to shape international relations through cooperation and coordination. They have set a new trend in the field of security. Particularly, in Europe, the trend was apparent as a new aspect of security cooperation was facilitated with the establishment of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

30) Ernst B. Hass, “Why Collaborate? Issue-Linkage and International Regimes,” World Politics, Vol.32, No.3(April 1980), pp.362-374.
31) Robert O. Keohane, “Reciprocity in International Relations,” International Organization, No.40(Winter 1986), pp.1-27.
32) Muthiah Alagappa, “Rethinking Security : A Critical Review and Appraisal of the Debate,” Alagappa(ed.) Asian Security Practice - Material and Ideational Influence(Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp.51-57.
33) Ashton B. Carter, William J. Perry and John D. Steinbruner, “A New Concept of Cooperative Security,” Brookings Occasional Papers(Washington D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1992), p.8.
The most notable in this new trend is the concept of multilateral cooperative security. This concept, as a preventive security problem solution, aims at removing security threats and destabilizing factors through dialogue and cooperation on security issues among more than three countries.34)

In the context of institutionalism, multilateralism gives a special emphasis on reciprocity among the participating countries. That is, the principles of multilateralism are based upon the notion that inter-state relations are not formed unilaterally, but built on the basis of organic interactions, which mean one country's acts have a chain reaction effect on those of the others. Therefore, the concept of multilateralism excludes the types of multilateral cooperation purposefully organized to contain or confront a certain country.

The primary difference between the 'multilateral cooperative security' and other types of multilateral security cooperation, such as collective security and collective self-defense alliances is in the belief of the former. The advocates of multilateral cooperative security believe that if we are to recognize potential adversaries as responsible members and bring them in the multilateral cooperative security framework, the efficiency of such a framework can be further increased. Thus, different from collective security, multilateral cooperative security stresses the necessity of potential adversaries' participation, since it intends to reduce the likelihood of disputes and misunderstandings by building mutual trust through dialogue and negotiations among its member states, rather than deterring a war through military build-ups. In this sense, David Dewitt points out that cooperative security does not presuppose strategic international relations based on a zero-sum game style world-view, and thus, with regard to memberships, it is essential to win potential adversaries over without restriction.35)

V. Conclusion

In earlier chapters, this paper examined the U.S. offensive policy in dealing with the North Korean nuclear problem. Regardless of its effectiveness and feasibility, the U.S. policy, without a doubt, still proves to be a useful card for putting pressure on North Korea. Nevertheless, this offensive strategy alone is insufficient. Because of this limitation, the U.S. chose to hold the Six-Party Talks. However, this does not mean that the Six-Party Talks are the only solution to the exclusion of all other political means. The U.S. military option or tailored containment, and negotiation strategies are not executed separately, but rather they are considered and executed simultaneously. As a result, valuable outcomes and important lessons can be drawn.

34) Inbae Lee, "A Study on the Interaction between a Institution and Actors," The Korean Journal of International Relations, Vol.41, No.2(2001), pp.98-101.
35) David Dewitt, "Common, Comprehensive and Cooperative Security," The Pacific Review, Vol.7, No.1(1994), pp.7-8.
The reason why the U.S. put forward the Six-Party Talks is not because all other policy options are infeasible, but because doing so would enhance the chances of success in negotiation and compromise. To describe the current situation, the U.S. has put pressure on North Korea through the containment policy, and the policy in turn has forced North Korea to accept the Six-Party Talks, which are more appeasing to North Korea. Thus, it is unwise for South Korea to openly oppose U.S. policy options and refuse to cooperate. Rather, South Korea needs to tacitly approve those policy options from the viewpoint that they are based on the U.S. position, and make use of them as leverage to persuade North Korea, in order to prevent such hard-line policies from materializing.

This paper suggested two frameworks for thinking about the North Korean nuclear problem. First, the North Korean nuclear problem should not be regarded as confined to conventional security issues. It should be perceived and approached in the dimension of comprehensive security. The cause of the problem originates not from simple security reasons, but from external as well as internal security threats, created by the North Korean system’s overall inefficiency and failure due to such things as economic hardship, food shortage, and the like. In this sense, it is imperative to perceive the North Korean problem based on this background. Thus, negotiations and solutions would necessitate a continuous, incremental management process, rather than a one-time approach.

Second, to solve security problems, a cooperative approach rather than a confrontational one would be necessary. However, completely excluding a confrontational approach would paradoxically reduce the possibility of a cooperative approach succeeding. Thus, it would not be a prudent policy consideration. Gradual replacement would be much more desirable.

Lastly, the paper presents a multilateral cooperative security mechanism as an alternative in accordance with the above-mentioned two principles of problem solving. In regard to security issues, it is necessary to review and discuss the North Korean nuclear problem in terms of a comprehensive security concept. The ultimate solution to the nuclear problem cannot be attained by simply a one-time negotiation among the six participating countries. Rather, it is an issue that requires a long-term approach. In this sense, it becomes even more important to construct an enduring multilateral cooperative security mechanism.

At present, it is inappropriate to be either optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the Six-Party Talks. And, therefore, the idea that the nature of the Six-Party Talks should be upgraded to a multilateral cooperative security mechanism is perhaps too early to suggest. However, as pointed out earlier, the fundamental cause of the North Korean nuclear problem and its prescription are not confined to the traditional concept of security. Therefore, it would be helpful for us to learn the lessons of experience from other multilateral security frameworks. In this regard, the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) makes a very good example. Though non-governmental in its characteristics, the NEACD is already in place. It consists of the same participating countries as the current Six-Party Talks. (From 1993 until last August, there have been 14 meetings, thus far.)

In October 2002, at the 13th meeting in Moscow, as North Korea newly joined, the NEACD members expanded to include six countries in the Northeast Asia region.
Therefore, for the Six-Party Talks to progress toward a multilateral cooperative security mechanism, they now need to add only the managerial aspects of the NEACD, since they already consist of governmental level representatives. Similarly, as the NEACD has been managed during the last seven years and has accumulated know-how, upgrading the NEACD to a government-level conference mechanism has to be considered.
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