

Chinese Role in Solving The DPRK's Nuclear Program: A Korean Perspective

Shin Sang-Jin

Professor, Kwangwoon University, Korea

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1. Introduction

The countries concerned including the United States, China, and South Korea have promoted a peaceful settlement of the DPRK's second nuclear crisis through communication and dialogue; however, the nuclear issue presents the serious threat to peace and stability in East Asia because a confrontation between the US and the DPRK about abolition of the nuclear program and a security guarantee is not overcome. Since the DPRK admitted in October 2002 that they had a development program to produce HEU (Highly Enriched Uranium), US suspended its heavy oil shipment to the DPRK and seized its ships in international waters. Meanwhile, the DPRK pulled out from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and expelled IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) inspectors. Thus, the concern that North Korea will be the US' next military target following Iraq looms over.

Fortunately, South and North Korea, the United States, China, Japan, and Russia will rejoin the second round of six-party talks in Beijing in order to find the solution to the Korean nuclear issue starting February 25, six months after the first six-party talks in August 2003. China's active intercession has been a crucial factor in making the agreement to hold six-party talks as well as the tripartite and the first six-party dialogue possible. China has made an efforts to bring the US and the DPRK on the table by delivering the US' position to DPRK that it should give up its nuclear program whereas delivering DPRK's position to the US that the US should pay for the nuclear abandonment. The DPRK has sensed that the delay of a dialogue would be against its interest while the US needed to solve the issue peacefully as the next US presidential

election draws near.¹⁾

The second round of six-party talks has a meaning as a process to a peaceful solution of the Korean nuclear issue through dialogue. However, several dialogues cannot solve the nuclear problem perfectly since North Korea considers the nuclear weapon as a way to protect its regime whereas the US sets the goal for the national security to stop dangerous countries such as North Korea having weapons after September 11th terrorist attacks. Moreover, mutual distrust between the United States and the DPRK is the big impediment to the talks.

Such as the Korean proverb that a monk cannot shave his own head, there needs a mediation to solve the US-DPRK acute conflict about the nuclear issue. China has drawn international attention in the process since it has not only a great interest in the DPRK's nuclear crisis but also close contact channels. Thus, this article is to analyze and view China's understanding and policy about the DPRK nuclear issue, its position toward the US' policy on the issue, and the DPRK-China relationship concerning the nuclear issue and six-party talks.

2. China's Understanding And Policy of the DPRK Nuclear Program

A. Main Causes of the Nuclear Crisis

The DPRK and the US have accused each other of being the first to violate the Agreed Framework made in 1994. The DPRK asserted that the US has not fulfilled its commitment to provide two light water reactors and alternative energy, and the Bush administration threatened to bring it down by defining it as an 'axis of evil' and including it as a potential target for the US preemptive military strike.

The US, for its part, explained that it stopped fuel shipments and suspended the construction of the light water reactor because the DPRK developed long-range missiles and exported technology and raw materials for weapons of mass destruction, while the DPRK admits nuclear development program, producing enriched uranium. Hard-liners

¹⁾ Bush clarified in the 2004 President's annual State of Union address to Congress that the DPRK nuclear issue would be handled in peaceful and diplomatic means unlike the Iraqi problem.

of the Bush administration such as Secretary of Defense D. Rumsfeld advocates using force as well as economic sanctions against the DPRK since the country may provide terrorists with nuclear and chemical and biological weapons (CBW) and threaten not only its allies like South Korea and Japan but also its mainland. To that end, the US even considers change of Kim Jong-il regime.

China views that the current nuclear impasse was caused by the US security menace to the DPRK. China's scholars affiliated with the government doubt that North Korea does possess nuclear weapons or capability. Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin also clarified that he did not know about North Korea's covert nuclear weapons program when he visited the US after the nuclear crisis in October 2002. A scholar from the Party School of Communist China infers the reasons why the DPRK revealed the nuclear program to James Kelly, the US assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs as follows: First, the DPRK tries to make the US respond to the crisis by worrying it about the nuclear proliferation. Besides, the DPRK looks to a removal from a list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism, cancellation of the economic sanctions, and the non-aggression treaty in exchange for the nuclear freeze-up. Third, the DPRK uses its nuclear card in order to remove a security threat by changing military alliances among South Korea, the US, and Japan.²⁾

China views the first reason why the U.S. made an issue of the DPRK nuclear program as a part of interception in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction after September 11th terrorist attacks. China supports the US policy which deters the DPRK nuclear program. However, China is seriously concerned about the US intention to collapse the Kim's regime, justification of the stationing of army in East Asia, and deployment of TMD. China maintains that US tries to keep military predominance in East Asia by making use of the North Korean nuclear program and check China. Therefore, China has persuaded the DPRK to give up the nuclear program in order not to give the justification of the US military superiority in East Asia while cooperating with the US to resolve the problem peacefully. China, thus, believes that the US strategic consideration raised the DPRK nuclear issue as international security problem.

²⁾ Chang Liangui, "North Korea's Nuclear Program Raises Conflicts," *World Affairs*, No. 24 (December 2002), p. 9.

B. China's Policy on the DPRK Nuclear Issue

China's basic policy goals can be condensed into denuclearization of Korean peninsula, peaceful resolution through dialogues, and settlement of the DPRK's reasonable security concerns.

Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula

China does not want the DPRK to give rise to disorder in the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia by developing the nuclear weapons since the major goal of China's foreign policy is to build up a favorable environment for its economic development. China set a national goal for building of an 'overall Xiaokang society' by 2020 in its 16th party congress in 2002 and decided to concentrate on construct the economy. Hence, as economic development takes command, China requires a stable international environment for expanding trade. China views the Korean Peninsula as the most important strategic buffer because the Korean Peninsula borders on itself over 1,300 kilometers and was used before as stepping stones for its marine enemies to invade the mainland.³⁾ Chinese leaders regard the Korean Peninsula as the 'buffer zone' to China's security. Thus, the core of China's policy toward Korean Peninsula is for maintenance of peace and stability, hoping the Korean issue not to have a negative influence on China's stability and development.

China is negative to the DPRK nuclear weapons development because the nuclear program could aggravate the DPRK-US relationship and provoke military buildup of regional countries including Japan. While the Clinton administration had considered bombing for Yongbun where the DPRK's nuclear plants are located, China would have faced the dilemmas if US bombed the DPRK in a restricted way; it is because China is obliged to support the DPRK according to the Sino-North Korean military alliance in 1961. In Japan, the public opinion of military buildup with the excuse for the DPRK threat can be revived.

³⁾ Zhu Tingchang, *China's peripheral Situation and Security Strategy* (Beijing: Shishichubanshe, 2002), pp. 35-36. Chen Fengjun, Wang Chuanjian, *Asian-Pacific Major Powers And Korean Peninsula* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002), pp. 31-32.

China believes that the DPRK's nuclear weapons development can be used as an excuse for US to build up the military strength in Asia by stationing within the area and building TMD system.⁴⁾ The DPRK's military menace has been a basis of the U.S. armed forces stationed in Korea and Japan; moreover, far-flying missile test in August 1998 became the main cause of US-Japan's decision for TMD joint research and development. China has evidently objected to the DPRK developing the nuclear because it sees the American forces in the area take aim at China. The main objective of US TMD system seems to make China helpless in the nuclear power.

While China-DPRK relationship is not as close as it was before, the DPRK's nuclear weapons could be the direct threat to China's national security. The DPRK can use the nuclear weapon as a means to assure various aids from China; what is worse, it can even drain out the nuclear warhead to anti-Chinese Groups like East Trukestan Separatist. China realizes that the DPRK nuclear weapons can provoke Japan to go nuclear and destroy China's monopolistic position as a nuclear power in East Asia.⁵⁾ In this regard, China consistently stresses the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and is against the DPRK's nuclear development.

Peaceful Settlement through Dialogue

China maintains that it is undesirable for the international society to put pressure on the DPRK in order to resolve the nuclear issue. China worries that the use of military power and pressure might push North Korea to take reckless actions that could further worsen the situation,⁶⁾ and emphasizes the need for peaceful resolution of the crisis. The occasion that the US takes military actions toward the DPRK can limit China's diplomatic role. In other words, China can face serious dilemmas to choose between the two, relation with the US or one with the DPRK. China seems to conclude that its burden to DPRK will increase even after the international society including the US

⁴⁾ On January 10, 2003, Chinese President Jiang Zemin expressed its stand that China did not approve the DPRK withdrawal from NPT over the telephone talks with US President Bush. China's position to oppose to the DPRK nuclear development can be seen in Chang Lintao, "North Korea's Nuclear Program Affects China-US Relations," <http://www.zaobao.com/special/korea/pages/korea231002.html>.

⁵⁾ In October 2002, US President Bush asked Chinese President Jiang Zemin to participate in deterring the DPRK to develop its nuclear weapons saying the justification to obstruct Japanese armament can be lost by the DPRK nuclear weapons development.

⁶⁾ "Zhang Chiyue's Answer to the Mid-East Peace Talks and Beijing-Tianjin Travel Issue."

invokes economic and political sanctions against the DPRK. China takes peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue through dialogue as corresponding to China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula.

China objects to bring the issue before the United Nations Security Council. While China regards US and North Korea as the major countries involved in the DPRK nuclear issue, it says that the submission of the issue to the UN Security Council for resolution will complicate the situation. Although China voted for the International Atomic Energy Agency Board's resolution to report North Korea's breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to the United Nations Security Council, it has maintained its opinion that the DPRK problem should be resolved, unlike the Iraqi one, after consultations among the countries concerned. The reason why China sticks to this position is to solve the crisis in the direction corresponding to its national interest under its arbitration while not irritating the DPRK.

China's preference to peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue was consolidated after March 2003 when the US attacked Iraq. China acknowledges that the DPRK as a designated country of the 'axis of evil', with Iraq and Iran in President Bush's annual State of the Union Message to Congress on January 2002 would be the potential target for US preemptive military strike next to Iraq; it feels keenly the need for peaceful resolution of the crisis.⁷⁾

If the U.S. is allowed to resolve the problem with economic pressure or military means, the Northeast Asian situation around the Korean peninsula could grow worse and cause the obstruction of China's economic development and social stability. As shown in tripartite talks and the first six-party talks, China has exercised its influence over the DPRK and has played an important role in enhancing the relationship with US by arbitrating the different views between the two countries; thus, peaceful resolution of the crisis through talks would favor China in being recognized as a responsible power. Thus, China has hoped the continuance of KEDO (Korean Energy Development Organization) consortium and has taken a negative attitude toward US suspension of heavy oil delivery to the DPRK.

China presses the DPRK not to aggravate the situation and to attend the talks. China

⁷⁾ "The Impact of Iraqi War to China," *China Review* (2003. 5), p. 33.

cut off the crude oil pipeline to the DPRK for three days claiming technical problems and dispatched vice premier Qian Qichen, deputy foreign minister Wang Yi and director-general of the Asian affairs bureau, Fu Ying to persuade Kim Jong-il to attend multilateral talks when the DPRK insisted on one-to-one talks with the U.S. when it was ready to attack Iraq and the DPRK did not engage in talks. The DPRK could not ignore China's request since it depends on China for almost the whole quantity of the crude oil. China's pressure was a decisive factor in North Korea's participation in the tripartite talks with the US and China.

Settlement of the DPRK's Security Concerns

China judged that the DPRK used its nuclear card because of US military threat and pressure of a regime change; it maintained that a fundamental settlement of the nuclear problem could be brought only by 'settlement of the DPRK's security concern.'⁸⁾ The reason why China maintains US should consider the DPRK's claim for security assurance is because China sees US tries to justify post in East Asia and disrupt the North Korean regime.⁹⁾ China views that it is 'reasonable' to ask the US security assurances in return for the DPRK abandoning the nuclear development program. Therefore, China agrees to the DPRK's claim for simultaneous actions of both the US and the DPRK. That is to say, whereas the DPRK gives up the nuclear development, in return, the US should remove the DPRK from its list of countries sponsoring international terrorist activities, lift its political, economic, and military sanctions and the blockade imposed on the country, and provide it with the supply of heavy oil and electricity.

China would not remain idle about the demise of the DPRK regime by the US under color of the nuclear issue since it recognizes the DPRK as 'buffer zone' for its security. The collapse of socialist system in North Korea may result in massive North Korean

⁸⁾ Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao said that the denuclearization and settlement of the security concerns are the pivotal point in settling the nuclear crisis. Liu Jianchao, "The Preliminary Works for Six-Party Talks to Solve North Korea's Nuclear Issue have Progress," <http://www.chinanews.com.cn/n/2003-12-02/26/376212.html>; Sun Cheng, "The Second Round of the DPRK's Nuclear Crisis," *International Studies*, No. 3 (2003), P. 19; Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao also presented his position that the DPRK concerns on just and rational security assurance should be settled. "Chinese premier Wen Jiabao and U.S. president Bush had a meeting: Bush disagreed Taiwan's Independence," *People's Daily*, December 10, 2003.

⁹⁾ Shi Zehua, "The Developments of the DPRK's Nuclear Crisis," *Outlook*, No. 2 (2003.1.13), p. 16.

refugee flight into China's northeastern area. One of the reasons why China changed the border guards to the People's Liberation Army in the summer 2003 seemed to block the spreading of the DPRK's disorder. There are already an estimated 50,000 North Koreans roaming in China. China desires the DPRK to overcome the economic difficulties and international isolation and to enjoy the political and social stability.

Although the DPRK has been an economic and political burden to China, China is still taking a serious view of the DPRK. By keeping the ties with the DPRK, China can secure a strategically advantageous position in relations not only with the ROK but also with the US and Japan. As long as China is believed to possess much influence over the DPRK, it can enhance the value to South Korea, Japan, and the US. North Korea also has taken advantage of the relations with China in relations with South Korea as well as one with the US. As an example, Kim Jong-il visited China in 2000, just two weeks before his historical summit meeting and had a talk with Jiang Zemin in Beijing on the day when President Bush took an office in February 2001. Kim Jong-il intended to make a display of China's support. Both China and the DPRK try to keep the cooperative relationship with each other; thus, China has strived for settlement the DPRK's security concerns and improved the relations with US and South Korea through the close contact.

3. Six-Party Talks and China's Role

A. China's Stance to Six-Party Talks

China has taken up the position that the main players in the DPRK nuclear issue are the DPRK and the US; it claimed the necessity of the direct bilateral talks or a one-on-one dialogue between the two during the multilateral talks.¹⁰⁾ China has continued to mediate to hold the tripartite talks and six-party talks by understanding that the multi-party talks were inevitable when the US objected to direct bilateral talks for which the DPRK claimed. China considered a second trilateral dialogue, to follow the one that was held in April 2003, and inclusive multilateral one; China assumed the direct communication between the US and the DPRK within the multilateral framework as a

¹⁰⁾ Zhu Feng, "DPRK's Nuclear Crisis After Six Party Talks: Problems and Prospects," *Contemporary International Relations*, No. 9 (2003. 9), p. 10.

compromised form and held the first six-party talks which the DPRK, Russia, and Japan preferred. Bilateral talks North Korea insisted was infeasible because of the US strong objection whereas five-party talks which the US preferred could be one-sided favorable to the US, which could frustrate the DPRK's participation and further excessively consolidate Japan's role in the Korean peninsula problems. China seemed to conclude that six-party talks including Russia would be rather beneficial.¹¹⁾

While believing the US' objectives to stick to six-party talks is to isolate the DPRK in international community and claim for share of responsibility and keep its initiative in East Asia, China concludes six-party talks has the following rationalities. First, China believes that reasonable and balanced results can be made since China, South Korea, and Russia have the similar positions about the DPRK nuclear crisis. In other words, six-party talks will not work only in the way to isolate the DPRK on the contrary to US expectation. Second, the DPRK nuclear problem is not only the problem between North Korea and US but also the problem related to peace and prosperity of Northeast Asia; thus, the interests of the central countries in Northeast Asia should be reflected.¹²⁾

China has kept the dialogue momentum through six-party talks while setting the solution to the nuclear problem as a goal of Northeast Asian policy and took a serious view on the results, not a form of negotiation. Considering the situation that the second six-party talks held six months after the first talks, China is taking up a positive attitude on establishment of a regular working group. Wang Guangya, Chinese ambassador to UN, disclosed the fact that it gauged the probability to establish the 'informal mechanism' constituted by working-level expert group to other five countries in order to narrow the different views during the period when six-party talks were not held.

B. China's Role as a Mediator

After tripartite talks in April 2003, the US and the DPRK did not agree on the form of negotiations and did not restart the negotiation for four months. It caused two countries to continue the conflicts. South Korea and China as the most serious potential victims of

¹¹⁾ After the tripartite meeting, China had a secret desire for the four-party dialogue adding only South Korea by excluding Japan and Russia.

¹²⁾ Zhu Feng, *op.cit.* p. 14; Piao Jiani, "Beijing Six Party Talks and the Prospects of the DPRK's Nuclear Issue," *Contemporary Asia Pacific*, No. 10 (2003. 10), p. 46.

the DPRK nuclear crisis, were trying to narrow the differences between the US and North Korea with continuing efforts to a peaceful settlement through dialogue.

During the process of six-party talks, China and South Korea had persuaded the DPRK to accept the multi-lateral talk formula and to avoid any actions that might aggravate the situation. Meanwhile, they also had tried to have US to recognize the necessity of a security guarantee.

China as a mediator between the US and the DPRK, continues its efforts to solve the DPRK nuclear crisis and to maintain the influence to the DPRK and to strengthen the relationship with the US. China tries to win the position of responsible power status by achieving six-party talks. China begins by persuading the DPRK to accept multi-lateral talk by its influence over the DPRK. Dai Bingguo visited the DPRK for communicating positions of the US and the ROK on July 12, right after the summit talk between China and the ROK. He also persuaded Kim Jong-il not to make the situation worse and accept the multi-lateral talk quickly. He pressured Kim by expressing the opinions that it is hard for China to help the DPRK if it is attacked by the US because of the nuclear development. He also promised to give 10,000 tons of diesel oil freely. By doing it, China wants to give the message of potentials of economic compensation for the DPRK in return for accepting multi-lateral talk and maintains the power of influence on the DPRK.

After that, Dai Bingguo has called on US (July 18-21) and addressed the stance of the DPRK. He has proposed US to open five-party talks which the US expects, several days after tripartite talks which the DPRK expects. On July 25, the Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered formally the results of Dai Bingguo's visit to the US to the DPRK ambassador to China in Beijing, Choi Su-hun and urged the DPRK to accept multi-lateral talks. However, the DPRK judged China's proposal for multi-lateral talks to be unfavorable to it. So the DPRK ambassador to Russia Park Ue-chun announced the acceptance of six-party talks through Russian Vice Foreign Minister Fedotov (July 31). The DPRK estimated that China sympathized with US who wanted abandonment of the DPRK nuclear program and tried to get the initiative of six-party talks by lessening the power of China through participation of Russia.

Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Pyongyang and discussed opening period, subjects, and composition of delegations for six-party talks. Even though the six-party

talks was not China's intention, China tried to open the six-party talks in Beijing expressing that the form of talks was not important.

China's diplomatic efforts for six-party talks were made not only to the DPRK but also to every related nations including the US. China has emphasized on diplomatic resolution by multi-lateral talks through a telephone call between Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and his US counterpart Colin Powell(7.15) and that between President Hu Jintao and President Bush(7.30).

China has coordinated the US and the DPRK by notifying the US opinions of dismantle of nuclear program and multi-lateral talks to the DPRK and its opinions of a security guarantee and bilateral talks concurrently. China tried to make the US and the DPRK accept the talks by expressing to the US that the DPRK had an intention to resolve the problem by talks and to the DPRK that the US prepared a plan to resolve with DPRK. China also expressed that the US would not take an action that might provoke the DPRK such as Proliferation Strategic Initiative (PSI) because it understood that the DPRK's direct intention of developing the nuclear program was to deter the threat of the US who defined the DPRK as an 'axis of evil.'

China has urged the ROK to have an important role for achieving multi-lateral talks because the ROK had an alliance with US and improved relationship with the DPRK after the summit meeting between Kim Dae-Jung and Kim Jong-il. China has emphasized on the ROK's efforts for persuading the US to accept the discussion of a security guarantee before DPRK's complete and irreversible withdrawal of nuclear program and bi-lateral talks. In May, the Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on ROK right before President Roh's US visit and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing also visited ROK on the day (August 13-14) when the talks among the US, Japan, and Korea were held in Washington. The fact that Chinese working-level officials who were in charge of the nuclear crisis visited the ROK before the nuclear discussion between the US and the ROK showed Chinese' hope that the ROK should change the US' stands.

Before the DPRK's announcement of acceptance of six-party talks, China remained passive on the participations of Russia and Japan. However, China made diplomatic efforts to those two countries. Chinese Foreign Ministry's director-general of the Asian Affairs Bureau, Fu Ying visited Japan and Japanese director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Yabunaka visited China before Dai

Bingguo's visit to the DPRK. China delivered the standpoints of China and DPRK about multi-lateral talks to Japan by working-level talks. China has induced participation of Japan by emphasizing on the importance of contents, not a form of the talks.¹³⁾ During the Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko's visit to China(8.6), China and Japan confirmed disagreement of the DPRK's NPT secession and its development of nuclear program and agreed on opening multi-lateral talks. For removing barriers of the talks, China also notified that the kidnaping issue should not be introduced in six-party talks because it was the problem between Japan and the DPRK.¹⁴⁾

Russia, not participated in tripartite talks, took an active diplomatic initiative to the US, China, and the South and North Korea in order not to be excluded from the multi-lateral talks. Especially, Russia confirmed that it and China shared the same opinions about the abandonment of the DPRK nuclear program, diplomatic and political resolution of the issue, and settlement of the DPRK security concerns and tuned their positions about multi-lateral talks during Dai Bingguo's visit to Russia(7.2-4). When Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Losyukov visited China (8.11), he said that the US should provide the DPRK with a security assurance but Russia and China could not support the DPRK by military power if war occurs. It urged the US and the DPRK to show their sincerities for the multi-lateral talks.

In a word, China tried to consolidate its influential position as a mediator by passing on North Korea's stance to the US, Japan and the ROK and then delivering their responses and stances to the DPRK. China tries to won the global leadership in the international society by achieving multi-lateral talks which would be important for maintaining peace in the Korean Peninsula and improved the relations with the US and the ROK by expressing disagreement of the DPRK's nuclear program.¹⁵⁾

4. Continuance of six-party talks and China's Role

¹³⁾ At that time, the DPRK extensively opposed to five-party talks the U.S. and Japan claimed while baring Japan from the multilateral talks.

¹⁴⁾ Chinese stance was delivered formally to Japan by Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing who visited Japan on August 10, 2003.

¹⁵⁾ Shi Yinhong, "Six Party Talks for the North Korea's Nuclear Crisis and China's Diplomacy," *China Review*, No. 10 (2003), p. 32; "China: The Excellent Technique for Solving the North Korea's Nuclear Issue," *Outlook*, No. 44 (November 2003), p. 52.

A mechanism to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis through dialogue has been established thanks to the first six-party talks. On the last day of the first talks, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi announced a six-point consensus of the host country regarding the nuclear-free Korean peninsula and peaceful resolution through the talks. However, the binding consensus could not be made due to the conflicts between the US and the DPRK.

Since then, it took half a year to restart the second round of six-party talks. This is due to the fact that while the DPRK claimed the principle of simultaneous actions that its announcement of freezing the nuclear program and the US' declaration of abolishing its hostile policy towards the North should be carried out simultaneously, making its nuclear inspection, abolition, security guarantee, and the normalization of the US-DPRK relations followed by a phased basis, the US asserted the North with the dismantlement of the nuclear weapons program in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in the first place.

Hoping for a peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue, China made its aggressive diplomatic efforts to reopen the six-way talks. Although Japan and Russia joined in the six-way talks, China highly appraised the six-way talks held in Beijing as a framework for multilateral talks where it was believed to play an active role in coordinating the differences between the DPRK and the US.

Lu Zhongwei, the head of Chinese Institute for Contemporary International Relations, an affiliated organization of China's State Council, rated the six-party talks as 'Beijing 6' by comparing with 'Shanghai 5'.¹⁶⁾ When the DPRK claimed exclusion of Japan from the six-party talks in October 2003, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhang Qiyue emphasized that the six-party talks should be continued by saying that we hope “the form of the six-party talks to be observed and the North Korean nuclear issue to be solved peacefully through the talks”.

The DPRK accepted China's demand for resuming the six-way talks with Chairman of Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Wu Bangguo's visit to North Korea, as a momentum. During the discussions with Wu on October 30, 2003,

¹⁶⁾ A statement in the workshop of KINU, 2003.11.12.

Kim Jong-il agreed to resume the second six-party talks and accept an invitation to visit China. In return, China promised to provide the North with 200 million Yuan without compensation as economic aid in order to induce the DPRK's participation towards the talks. During the talks, the DPRK stressed the followings that the principle of simultaneous actions should be abided by, written security assurance by the US be made, and humanitarian aid be resumed.

Since then, China appointed Ning Fukui as Ambassador in charge of the nuclear issue, and promoted in earnest resuming the six-nation talks by organizing the Office commissioned to deal with the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula. At the beginning of November 2000, Dai Bingguo and Wang Yi visited the ROK, Japan, and the US to convey the results of Wu Bangguo's visit to the DPRK, having discussion regarding the dismantlement of the nuclear program. Agreed to hold the talks in December, China consulted with Kim Yong Il, who led the DPRK delegations to the six-party talks concerning the contents of a joint statement when he visited China on November 22. However, the U.S. and China's diplomatic efforts to resume the second talks continued until February 2004, while the ROK, the US, and Japan adhered to their stances that the wording for strongly demanding the nuclear facilities to be inspected and dismantled should be included in the statement along with failing to reveal any concrete economic aid towards the North. An atmosphere for reopening the talks was created on December 18, 2003, when US Secretary of the State showed its intention to accept the principle of simultaneous actions, and the North showed the possibility of complete abandonment of the nuclear program. During Wang Yi's visit to the North in the end of December 2003, Kang Sok Ju declared to participate in the new round of the six-way talks in early 2004, and the DPRK announced that it agreed to hold the second round of the six-party talks from February 25, confirming to the date of minister-level meeting between South and North Korea.

Although the six-party talks were reopened by the DPRK's announcement, it would be unattainable without continued diplomatic efforts of related countries including China. China promised economic aid to the DPRK pressurizing it at the same time in order to induce the DPRK to the talks. Shen Jilu of Chinese Academy of Social Science urged to stop the nuclear program by using the pressure of abolition of China-DPRK military alliance Treaty, such claim by research institution of Chinese would be accepted as a pressure to the DPRK. It would be difficult for Kim Jong-il to ignore China's demand of reopening of the six-party talks being anxious to see Hussein being

arrested by the U.S. army.

The DPRK earlier this month accepted multilateral format to discuss the nuclear issue which was believed different from its previous stance that the nuclear issue can only be talked between the United States and the DPRK.

5. Conclusion

During the process to resolve the nuclear standoff, China and North Korea has kept close contacts with each other. The Working-level meetings between the two countries were frequently held to discuss the issue, while Chinese high-level officials such as Wu Bangguo and Quin Quichen persuaded Kim Jong-il to resolve the crisis through direct dialogue. Thus, China has played a leading part not to deteriorate the situation and to persuade North Korea to participate in the multilateral talks that the US wants.

Although North Korea has expressed dissatisfaction with China that seems to support the US' stance of opposing the North Korean nuclear development, it has continued remaining close contacts and consultations with China in the process of resolving the nuclear problem by believing China is necessary for its survival. The DPRK informed China on details of the DPRK-US talks after Kelly's visit in October 2002, reporting in advance its withdrawal from NPT in January 2003.¹⁹⁾ Nevertheless, China's role remained to be limited in leading the North to give up its program. China had to persuade its counterpart for long to the table of the multilateral dialogue. And, the North told the US delegate that it possessed the nuclear by leaving the Chinese delegate out during the tripartite talks; the DPRK informed Russia first on the proposal of resuming the six-party talks after having agreed to hold one more tripartite talks and then the five-party talks during Dai Bingguo's visit to the US in July 2003. China, thus, desires to hold working-level meetings of the six-party talks in order to continue the dialogue momentum.

The reason that China was not able to fully influence the North to halt its nuclear program was not because it did not have the power over the North. China has been very

¹⁹⁾ Choe Jin Su, ambassador of the DPRK in Beijing reported the fact the DPRK admitted having HEU program during Kelly's visit and the DPRK called Wu Donghe, Chinese Ambassador to Pyongyang to withdrawal from NPT one day before.

cautious in giving pressure towards the DPRK because it concludes such pressure could worsen the Sino-DPRK relations and have negative effects over the stability of the North Korean regime; further, it has doubts the US policy towards the nuclear crisis. Trade with China takes up 30 percent in the total North Korea's international trade, whereas China's food supply to the North amounts to around 1/6 of its total food imports. Since the US suspended heavy oil delivery to the North in December 2002, the North has imported most of oil from China, as the North's only military ally.

In conclusion, China's more active role to scrap the North Korean nuclear ambitions should be encouraged. To that end, the Sino-US relations and the Sino-Korean including the North and South should be remained amicably, whereas the DPRK's policy change should be pursued rather than regime change.

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