

Peaceful Means: The Effects-based Approaches in Conflict Prevention and Management In North Korean Nuclear Issues¹

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The idea that “ a penny in conflict prevention and management is worth a pound in resolution” has at least three implications: first, peaceful means is effective in conflict prevention and management; second, conflict prevention and management is cost-effective in the economic sense. Third, it is diplomatically feasible. It is therefore politically favorable. In the case of North Korean nuclear issue, there are two approaches of resolution: the first one is by peaceful means, the second one is by military means. American threat of the military means was strongly opposed by all the major regional powers. Then how many peaceful means do we have? Are they effective? This paper studies the conflict prevention and management in the peninsula from the effective-based perspective.

What is effects-based conflict prevention and management?

Effects-based conflict prevention and management aims at generating effects favorable to the objective of preventing conflicts from emerging, resolving conflicts if they do emerge.

The end of Cold War witnesses the world transiting from a Bi-polar structure to a multi-polar one, and the evolution process to the multi-polarity makes it possible to prevent and manage conflict thereafter, and it has proved to be effective since the death related to interstate conflicts dropped by two thirds—from 660,000 in the 1980s to 220,000 in the 1990s.²

What are effects? What effects are preferred?

“Effects” refers to the full range of outcomes, events, or consequences that result from a particular action or set of actions. Specific actions produce specific (“direct”) effects, those effects produce other (“indirect”) effects, and this chain of cause and effect creates a mechanism through which objectives are achieved. An objective is an ultimate desired outcome of a set of effects. Objectives at one level may be seen as effects at another, higher level. Effects, however, comprise all of the results of a set of actions, whether desired or undesired, ultimate or intermediate, expected or unexpected.

Effects-based conflict prevention and management generates positive and negative effects. Positive effects are those that are conducive to the resolution of the conflicts while the negative effects are not. Positive effects are cost-effective in the economic sense, favorable in the security sense, feasible in the political sense. Positive effects are preferred.

What means can be used to prevent and manage conflicts?

Objectives can be achieved by managing the ends and means mechanism. If the means are not chosen correctly, it cannot achieve the end. As the old Chinese saying

¹ The views expressed in the paper are those of the author, do not represent the author’s organization.

² United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report 2002 (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2002),II

goes, “you can not catch anything if you fish in a tree (yuan mu qiu yu 缘木求鱼).” The means of achieving conflict prevention and management objectives include engagement (negotiation and talks, people-to-people exchange), trade, sanction, threat or actual use of force, etc. Among them, engagement, trade and sanction are peaceful means, while threat or use of force are military and violent means.

Peaceful Means is Effective in the Conflict Prevention And Management in North Korean Nuclear Issue

Before discussing the North Korean (DPRK) nuclear crisis resolution, I would prefer to discuss the causes of North Korea nuclear weapons development and assess concerned party's objectives first.

Why does DPRK develop nuclear capabilities?

North Korean develops nuclear capability mainly for three purposes. First, it is for energy's sake. It commenced research and development of nuclear capability with the help of former Soviet from the 1950's after the armistice. It does not have sufficient oil and coal but possesses abundant uranium resources. Nuclear power is an energy alternative.

Second, North Korea develops nuclear weapons for security's sake. North Korea has been under constant nuclear threat. During the Korean War, the United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles hinted at the possible use of nuclear weapons, should the peace talks in Panmunjom fail. In 1955, the Chairman of the U.S Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford announced a U.S. pledge to defend South Korea, if necessary, with nuclear weapons. In 1958, the U.S. introduced nuclear artillery shells and nuclear-tipped rockets into South Korea and later on also cruise missiles, land mines and anti-aircraft missiles with nuclear warheads.³ North Korea naturally turned to Soviet for nuclear protection. But the outcome of Cuban missile crisis in 1962 made North Korea aware that the dependence on the military alliance with the former Soviet for nuclear protection is not reliable. The breakdown of the Soviet and China alliance as well as the détente between China and America left North Korea in a difficult position. North Korea shifted from alliance to independence naturally and Juche idea has been prevailing ever since. Its research and development of nuclear capability aroused international vigilance and concern. North Korea initiated the peninsula denuclearization initiative and joined IAEA in 1974, signed NPT in 1985. The demise of Soviet Union enabled America to withdraw its tactical nuclear weapons overseas in 1991, and this in turn enabled DPRK and ROK to sign a joint statement on the Korean peninsula denuclearization in December the same year, and DPRK signed nuclear security safeguard accord with IAEA in January, 1992.

Three factors possibly affected North Korea's security vision after the end of the Cold War: one is the dissipation of the Soviet bloc, another is the Operation Desert Storm (ODS). The collapse of the Soviet Union and its bloc left North Korea further isolated, the ODS made it aware that its conventional troops could hardly safeguard its security if America launched an attack. Inspired by the widely reported comment by a top Indian military official in the aftermath of the Gulf War: “the lesson of Desert

³ Cited for Michael J. Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, A Case Study in Nonproliferation (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1997)

Storm is don't mess with the United States without nuclear weapons,"⁴ nuclear weapons is the bargaining chip of the poor, and encouraged by the Juche idea and military-first ideology, North Korea decided to go on with its nuclear development in order to bargain for a security assurance from America. Third, America's interference in the two Koreas' efforts of talks for the peninsula's future in the early 1990's made North Korea realize that there would be no peace without the normalization of relations with America. It resorted to the development of nuclear weapons in order to force America to the negotiation table. America's detection of North Korea's nuclear program incited the first crisis. In 1994, an Agreed Framework was signed between America and North Korea in Geneva. The first nuclear crisis was over.

Four factors possibly leads to the outburst of second nuclear crisis. First, the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in 1998 did not get heavy punishment from the international community. The number of border conflicts between them has been decreasing after the tests. Both sides show restraint in conflicts. Second, North Korea was alerted and irritated when U.S. President Bush categorized North Korea as a part of "the axis of the evil" in his State of the Union speech in January 2002, listed North Korea as a likely preemptive decapitation strike target in the National Security Strategy, and a likely nuclear strike target in its Nuclear Posture Review. Third, North Korea regime wanted to take advantage of the nuclear weapons program to transfer the public opinion focus on the difficulties that had been prevailing since the mid 1990's. The Death of the former leader and the economic malaise almost overwhelmed the Kim Jong-il regime. Its economy was near the brink of collapse. One of its top leaders fled to ROK. Approximately 300,000 North Korean economic refugees fled to China. It intended to use the nuclear card for economic compensation. Fourth, the Kim Jong-il regime turned to Military First ideology for the security of the regime. The hawkish attitude toward America and the development of nuclear weapons might help him consolidate his authority over the military and the public. Two more factors make the issue become complicated. First, the rapid decisive victory by America's allies in OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) shocked the North Korean leaders. Second, Libya gave up its nuclear weapons pursuit after OIF. The North Korea regime felt more threatened and isolated.

From the above description, we can see that security assurance and maintenance of the regime is the top concern of North Korea. With security assurance from the U.S., the regime would not be afraid of the U.S. military attack, and it would not keep one missile, as declared by Kim Jong-il during a meeting with a Russian envoy in August,2005.⁵ Energy concern is the second priority. North Korea would not give up the pursuit of the alternative energy resource at any cost. Normal relation with U.S. is the third priority. It will positively enable North Korea to overcome the barriers of foreign diplomacy with Japan and ROK, and open chances for trade. Economic compensation will suffice it to go on with its economic reform. The three demands were agreed to by America and were stipulated in the Agreed Framework in 1994. But in the second crisis, America refused to "reward the bad behavior" or allow North

⁴ Cited in Robert W. Chandler, *Tomorrow's War, Today's Decision* (McLean: AMCODA Press, 1996),P.149

⁵ Six Party talks Resumed, Gao Hao Rong,Can Kao Xiaoxi(Reference News),September 15,2005

Korea to “ retail the threat”, generate a variety of threats in order to gain a never-ending string of concessions or get paid twice for removing a single threat.⁶

What are America’s concerns?

The end of the Cold War freed America from threats of the previously opposing superpower and Warsaw Pact, and it has been cheerfully evolving from the Western leadership to the World leadership. However proliferation of WMD technology and terrorism shadows America’s security screen constantly. The track record of North Korean proliferation of nuclear and missile technology, terrorist attacks in Rangoon and the Blue House in Seoul, its human right malpractice, counterfeit money and drug traffic dealings are all against American values and visions.

The North Korean nuclear issue is both an NPT concern and counter-terrorism concern to America. America is afraid that the North Korea nuclear weapons program would generate direct and indirect negative effects. It would encourage Japan and ROK to develop their own nuclear weapons, trigger nuclear arms race in the region, proliferates missile and nuclear technology to other parts of the world (as it has done to Pakistan), even to terrorist groups, negatively affects America’s alliance policy, threatens its TMD program, disturbs peace and prosperity in the region, severely affects its national security and vital interests in the ripple manner.

DPRK’s demand of security assurance from America and normalization of bilateral ties in addition to economic compensation for failing to meet the Agreed Framework signed in 1994 were all turned down by America before the fourth round six-party talks. America demands “complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament” of nuclear weapon program.

In dealing with the peninsula crisis, America hopes that denuclearization on the peninsula can be achieved, maintain if not enhance alliance with Japan and ROK, maintain good partnership with China and Russia, turn the six-party talks into the northeast Asian security mechanism if possible in the future.

Finally it is worthwhile to point out that North Korean nuclear issue is but part of America’s global security concern. It has global interest.

What are China’s Concerns?

China’s top concern is there should be no use of military means in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea should give up its covert nuclear weapons program. The peninsula should be peaceful and stable. China is undergoing its comprehensive economic reform in a harmonious world order. It needs stable and peaceful environment, both internally and externally. Any negative development on the peninsula would affect China. As China rises, it is willing and able to take up greater responsibility in regional and global affairs. The financial crisis in 1997 witnessed China’s contribution to the financial and political stability in the Southeast Asian region. In return, the stable and peaceful situation there is conducive to China’s growth. In this way mutual trust is built, mutual benefit is achieved, win-win become a reality, and non-zero-sum a fact. The region is getting increasingly harmonious with China’s rise.

⁶ Cited in Morth I. Abramowitz and James T. Laney, Meeting the North Korean Nuclear Challenge, The Council on Foreign Relations, Inc, P.24

What are ROK's Concern?

It does not like to see a war break out on the peninsula. It insists on denuclearization of the military use, not denuclearization of the civilian use. It hopes to help North Korea with its economic reform, and build reconciliation. In the development, ROK insists on the leading and dominating role in resolving the North Korea nuclear issues. It does not oppose the North's development of civilian nuclear capability and offers to provide the North with energy supply. In the process, ROK hopes to shape North Korean's favorable perception to it, and build incremental trust with the aim of eventual unification of the peninsula.

What are Japan's Concerns?

Japan's top concern is there should be denuclearization on the peninsula. Japan is afraid North Korea is likely to threaten Japan by marriage of missiles with nuclear warheads when driven to the corner. If North Korea go on with its nuclear weapons programs, Japan would develop its own nuclear bombs.

What are Russia's Concerns?

Russia does prefer to denuclearization on the peninsula. It insists that North Korea should undergo economic reform.

The objectives and top concerns of the concerned parties can therefore be categorized as follows. (See table 1)

Objectives and concerns	America	North Korea	ROK	Japan	Russia	China
Peace and stability of the peninsula	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors
Regime Change of North Korea	Favors	Strongly opposes	Strongly Opposes	Opposes	Strongly Opposes	Strongly Opposes
Denuclearization	Favors	Accepts	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors

Table 1 Objectives of the Major Regional Players

It is easy to see that all the major regional players unanimously agree that peace and stability on the peninsula is preferred. They differ substantially over "the North Korea regime change" option. ROK, China and Russia strongly oppose the option. First, they believe the causes of the crisis are complicated. Neither side of the Agreed Framework fully executed the stipulations in the agreement. Second, the overthrow of the legitimate Kim's regime would not resolve the issues but leave the country in chaos, like the present Iraq. The contiguous countries will be suffering. The regional stability and peace will be disrupted.

Japan opposes the option. The refugee flood and other indirect negative effects are not in Japan's interest. America favors the option as it believes that the crisis was caused by Kim's regime. President George W. Bush, during his re-election campaign in 2004, described the regime as "the outpost of tyranny", the North Korea

leader Kim Jong-Il as a tyranny.⁷ America’s disaffection for North Korean regime is obvious. However, the regime change in Iraq does not prove effective since American casualties go up incessantly after the war. The indirect negative effects of regime change are not manageable.

All the major regional players accept denuclearization (By denuclearization, I mean the status free of nuclear weapons). Denuclearization is both an end and a means. It is an end because all the major regional players agree that the peninsula be denuclearized. It is a means because it is the condition of peace and stability on the peninsula. There is no peace without denuclearization on the peninsula.

It is therefore easy to see that peace and stability on the peninsula is preferred, denuclearization is favored while regime change is opposed.

What means do we have?

North Korea nuclear crisis occurred as a security issue at first, but spilled over to the fields of politics, diplomacy, economy and culture in the process, and negatively affects the northeast Asia and even Asia-Pacific security and stability.

Peaceful means and military means are both useful in achieving the peninsula denuclearization, but it is the peaceful means that is preferred. Among the peaceful means to achieve peace and stability on the peninsula, engagement and trade should be encouraged and the option of “no action” should be avoided. Major regional players disagree on the options of sanction and use of force. Only Japan and U.S. accept sanction as one option, and in practice Japan has stopped the remittance to North Korean by the Koreans in Japan. China, ROK and Russia strongly oppose the option of “ use of force” while Japan opposes it. See table 2.

Options of means	America	NORTH KOREA	China	Russia	Japan	ROK
Trade	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors
Engagement(negotiation and talks)	Favors	Accepts	Favors	Favors	Favors	Favors
Sanction	Favors	Strongly opposes	Opposes	Opposes	Accepts	Opposes
Use of force	Favors	Strongly Opposes	Strongly Opposes	Strongly Opposes	Opposes	Strongly Opposes

Table 2 Options of the Major Regional Players in the North Korea’s Nuclear Issues

“No Action” is opposed

Literally there is no sense of urgency if the option of “no action” is taken. Both sides have patience. However this is not the case in the North Korean nuclear issue, the status quo is that the conflict has occurred since North Korea has withdrawn from NPT and begun HEU processing. Some states fear that status quo means that we should live together with its nuclear weapons development and potentially possible

⁷ President Bush’s Inaugural Address, *Washington Post*, January 21,2005

proliferation.⁸

The true status quo in the Korean peninsula is that the conflict can escalate and get out of control, and conflict management will be impossible. First, Korean peninsula is the place where Cold War security structure is kept. America, Japan and ROK are military allies, while North Korea has close ties with Russia and China. America meets some problems with Japan and ROK after the Cold War, the friendship between North Korea and Russia, the inheritor of former Soviet Union is not as solid as it was during the Cold War, the ties between North Korea and China is not so good as it was in the 1950's. However, the essential security structure is there. Second, it is also the place that both sides are in de jure war status, as treaty of armistice not the treaty of peace is in effect. The peace and stability on the peninsula is fragile.

North Korea's poor economic performance leaves the country in a rather disadvantaged position. International food and energy donation has been dwindling in recent years. Previously, North Korea is in need of about one million tons of cereal in aid from the international community every year. In 2004, however, it seems to have only managed with 540,000 tons.⁹ Its economic reform program is not going as planned, partly due to the Juche idea and its isolation from the outside world. The military first ideology aims at building a strong defense capability in order to safeguard its security. The appropriation of about 23 to 33 percent of the North Korean GDP to the military exerts indirect negative effects on the country's economic development.¹⁰ It is urgent for North Korea to get security assurance before economic reform. Otherwise things can go astray, and affects the regional and global security.

“Use of Force” is opposed

“Use of force” is the option that America reserves and it has threatened many times to use force if North Korea did not abandon its clandestine nuclear weapons program. Americans believe that they have right to strike before it is certain to be struck. However, no major regional players favor the option. Nobody doubts American capability of military strike, the doubt is about its capability in achieving its ultimate objectives.

If attacked, however precise the bombing is, whatever the targets are, nuclear or conventional, North Korea retains the ability to retaliate by striking US troops deployed in ROK and Japan, attack ROK and Japan, and even Alaska and Hawaii with missiles. A local war is inevitable.

China, ROK, Russia and Japan all oppose military means in eliminating the North Korean nuclear threat. First, geographically contiguous, the four major regional players will inevitably suffer from the armed conflicts. Refugee flood, environmental degradation, nuclear fallout, etc. will affect the region negatively. Second, the perception of North Korea nuclear threat varies. ROK people do not believe that North Korea can use nuclear weapons against them though they believe the threat is high. Neither China nor Russia perceives the threat high. Japan keeps vigilance on the

⁸ Richard N. Haass, Regime Change and Its Limits, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005, P.76

⁹ Cited from Ingolf Kiesow, A Perspective From Pyongyang Through Foreign Glasses, *Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in Northeast Asia*, edited by Nicklas Swannstrom, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, Uppsala University, Sweden, 2005, P.204

¹⁰ *ibid*, P.193

potential threat and perceives the threat high, but does not favor the use of force.(see table 3) Japan is afraid that a military strike by America would invite North Korea to retaliate by launching missiles against Japan. Third, threat or use of force is the quickest means of achieving the ends if used appropriately. But it can leave indirect negative effects for a long time. Israel’s air attack in 1981 succeeded in removing the Iraqi nuclear facilities directly and positively, but it also generates some unintended negative effects. It augments the hatred between the two countries. Israel was attacked by Iraq’s scuds in Operation Desert Storm ten years later. Consequently the use of force often generates indirect and negative effects that can hardly be managed by the armed force itself. Occupation of Iraq and the Iraqi nation building after Operation Iraqi Freedom is too thorny to be tackled by the allied force that carried out the “shock and awe” rapid decisive operation in spring 2003. Saddam’s regime was overthrown but the conflicts remain.

	China	Russia	Japan	ROK
Risk	Low	Very Low	High	High
Damage	Low	Very Low	High	High
Fear	Low	Very Low	High	High

Table 3 Perception on NORTH KOREA’s Nuclear Threat

The two countries on the Korean Peninsula will suffer the most if conflicts occur. Survival of the regime and national security are the top concern of the North Korean leaders. That is why it builds so large an armed force. The size of North Korea army is over one million, it has the largest artillery and special forces in the world, one third of its population are reserves,70 percent of its troops deployed near the border with the South. The Military-First ideology prevails at the cost of economic development and people’s welfare, and inputs strong sense of loyalty to Kim’s regime. “The only way of averting a war is to increase one’s own just self-defense means, ” one North Korea media suggests. During one of the talks in Beijing, one North Korean official emphasized the need for a “powerful physical deterrent force.”¹¹ On the other hand, South Korea has more than 600,000 troops, and hosts about 37,000 American troops. Once either side opened fire, the casualties and destruction will be unexpectedly high. In 1993, one U.S. military research paper report estimated that U.S. and South Korean forces would suffer 300,000 to 500,000 casualties in addition to hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties in the first 90days in case of a conflict with North Korea¹². In 1994, the then President ROK Kim telephoned President Clinton and said he would not accept a second war on the peninsula in his life.¹³ President Roh said even talks about military action is unacceptable.¹⁴

Presently America is not in an easy situation. There is a growing anti-Americanism in ROK. Polls show that the trend has been growing in the past several years. South Korea demanded that America should consult it before any

¹¹ *ibid*,P.21

¹² Cited from Ingolf Kiesow, A Perspective From Pyongyang Through Foreign Glasses, *Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in Northeast Asia*, edited by Nicklas Swanstrom, Central Aisa-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, Uppsala University, Sweden, 2005, P.192

¹³ Aspects of North Korea Nuclear Crisis(ChaoXian He Wei Ji Tou Shi), Beijing, JunShi Yi Wen Press, 2003,P.159

¹⁴ Roh Trying to Mend Fences With US, Oct.25 ,2005 visit <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>.

preemptive attack, and the latter agreed to this request. The Japanese affection toward the American troops in Japan is declining too. America's relation with the Old Europe was strained in the Operation Iraqi Freedom. America's troops get trapped in Iraq and there are already discussions about the analogies between Vietnamese war and the present Iraq.¹⁵ The outburst of Iran's nuclear crisis is more challenging. Apart from IAEA, there is not a mechanism like Six Party talks available. It is doubtful that America can get a credible allied force if it resorts to military means against North Korea in the present situation. None of its objectives, namely achieving denuclearization, maintaining alliance and building security mechanism in Northeast Asia will be achieved by use of force.

Sanction is optional

Sanction is intended as a punishment against North Korea as it breaks the Agreed Framework and NPT. Needless to say, this is an asymmetric option. It aims at incrementally building up pressure on the North Korean regime and forcing it to give up its covert nuclear weapons program. But there is no punishment against America though it also fails to observe its obligations stipulated in the Agreed Framework. Among the major regional players, only Japan and America accept the option.

As a matter of fact, North Korea has been through difficult times ever since its independence. Isolation, economic malaise, and fears of U.S. attack never overwhelmed the country. "Pressure and isolation have never been successful with Communist countries,"¹⁶ Kim Dae-Jung is quoted as saying. Roh Moo-Hyun does not support sanctions, either.

Japan accepts sanctions after the outburst of second crisis. Tokyo tried to warm up with North Korea, but reportedly felt irritated at the North Korea's launch of missiles and the abductees story. It has slowed the flow of remittance by North Korea immigrants in Japan to North Korea. It has also imposed an inspection regime on North Korean ships docking in Japanese ports, discouraging illegal activities by their crews and further slowing the flow of hard currency to the North. In a word, Japan opposes preemptive attack on Korean nuclear facilities, but agrees to ratchet up the pressure on North Korea when required.

China has been encouraging North Korea to open up to the outside world and reform its economy by inviting Kim Jong-Il to visit enterprises in Beijing and Shanghai. China's economy reform has been successful thanks to its opening up to the outside world. It is now the largest donor of food and oil to the North Korea, and shelters a large number of North Korea "economic refugees". China hopes that it can help North Korea with its expertise in economic development. North Korea's economic recovery and revitalization will ease China's burden of donation, and positively enable North Korea to get integrated with the regional economic development mainstream. China opposes sanctions.

Russia does not support sanctions. On April 11,2003, two days after Russia helped block forceful action by the United Nations, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov said, "we will oppose this approach (sanctions) as long as our

¹⁵ Foreign Affairs 10/11,2005, Washington, U.S.

¹⁶ Cited in Morth I. Abramowitz and James T. Laney, Meeting the North Korean Nuclear Challenge, The Council on Foreign Relations,Inc,P.25

North Korean colleagues maintain common sense.” Russia is opposed to sanctions against North Korea, and many Russians blame the United States for the crisis.

I personally believe that with the joint declaration publicized, and arrangement of the resolution in effect, if North Korea repeatedly used the nuclear weapons program for economic compensation and repeats the brinkmanship diplomacy, economic sanctions could be optional even to China and Russia.

Trade is favored

The pursuit of economic interest is the essence of international relations. It is interesting to note that trade relations are usually established before diplomatic ties. In the case of northeast Asia, ROK, Japan and America do not have diplomatic ties with North Korea, but they all have trade relations with the country though the trade volume is negligible.

Trade is an effective way of conflict prevention and management in the North Korea nuclear issue. The direct effects are that North Korea can gain hard currency by foreign trade. The indirect effects is trade can help North Korea open up to the outside world and reform its economic system, eventually relieve it out of the current economic malaise and get integrated with the world economic community.

China understands North Korea’s desire for normal bilateral ties with America and economic compensation. North Korea does not have normal diplomatic relations with ROK, Japan or America. Any major economic breakthroughs will depend on its foreign trade. But it has slim trade volume with the three countries. The trade volume between Japan and North Korea is about \$280 million. This volume amounts to 20 percent of China’s and 50 percent of ROK’s trade with the North Korea.¹⁷ During Kim Dae-jung’s presidency, Sunshine Policy enabled the peninsula to increase trade and tourism. Roh’s administration endorses the Policy of Peace and Prosperity, and made efforts to build the railway linking the two Koreas and builds special economic zones near the DMZ area in order to combine the South’s capital, expertise with the North’s labor. Russia offers to build a direct railway linking North Korea with Euro-Asia continent, running through North Korea to ROK in an effort to boost trade with the peninsula.

Trade can be a stabilizer in international relations. The ongoing trend of international relations is economic globalization and political multi-polarity. Northeast Asia is not only one of the most dynamic economic development regions but also the most instable region in the world. The trade volume among the six party member states is pleasantly remarkable. China is ROK’s largest trade partner. Japan and America are the two of the largest trade partners of China. Russia is getting an increasingly large share of China’s market. Trade between America and Japan amounts to a substantial share of the world’s trade total. Trade is mutually beneficial. Japan helped China with its economic reform by providing privileged loans in the 1980’s and 1990’s. In return, China helped Japan get out of the decade of economic malaise. In practice, trade conflicts usually occur as a bilateral phenomenon, can be

¹⁷ Cited from Hiroshi Kimura, *Conflict Prevention and Management in Northeast Asia: A Japanese Perspective*, *Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in Northeast Asia*, edited by Nicklas Swanstrom, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Silk Road Studies Program, Uppsala University, Sweden, 2005, P.225

resolved by bilateral talks, and taken to WTO if not solved by bilateral talks, but never resort to use of force. As it is known, the political ties among the northeast countries are very fragile due to the diversity of culture, religion and historical legacy. It is trade that keeps the different states interlinked. As the economic globalization shrinks the world into a small village, the interdependence and interaction is getting more noteworthy. "Politically cold and economic hot" is the right description of the present situation in the region.

Engagement is preferred

Engagement is the preferred approach and favored by all the major regional players. It is the best effects-based means that can keep all the major regional players united in pursuing stability and peace on the peninsula and persuade North Korea to completely abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Converging different venues into one: six party talks

There are different venues for engagement. Bilateral talks were held between the United States and North Korea. Trilateral talks were held among the United States, North Korea and China. Four party talks and six party talks were also held. Talks are conducive to eliminate skepticism, reduce miscalculation and build confidence. Talks at the table are better than bullets in the field.

North Korea-America bilateral talks were effective in resolving the first crisis when the two sides signed the Geneva Agreed Framework in 1994. But North Korea's insistence on direct bilateral talks with America and the latter's resistance to do so has been one of the main barriers in resolving the second crisis. America insists that all regional powers should act together in resolving the issue since the North Korean nuclear weapons program affects the security of all states in the region, and potentially other regions of the world (by proliferation).

China tried its utmost to reduce tension and facilitate peaceful talks when the North Korea nuclear crisis occurred. There was some misunderstanding about China's role. Some country criticized that China is more a host than a participant. ROK, Russia and Japan all complained when they were left out of the trilateral talks in Beijing. Russia and Japan were not happy when they were left out of the four party talks. So far the six party talks is preferred since all the regional powers participate in the efforts. All the major regional players are stakeholders. All players take up the responsibility of safeguarding the regional security. None of them will be winners if conflicts break out on the peninsula.

The outcome of the first three rounds of six party talks is not satisfactory. Critical reports and comments are abundant in media. Skepticism prevails about the effectiveness of the six party talks mechanism. But none of the parties give up the effort. As a matter of fact, the convening of the talks itself is a success, given the fact that during the first three rounds of six party talks, the distrust between American delegates and North Korean delegates was overwhelming. North Korea withdrew from the mechanism in February 2005, but accepted the six party talks venue thanks to the efforts by China, ROK and Russia and returned to the talks in September.

Since consensus is reached on the objectives of peace, stability and denuclearization, and most of the players oppose military means, all try their utmost

efforts in preventing conflicts from arising. Six party talks is the right venue for them to sit together, maximize the common while minimizing the different, and look for the effective final solutions.

Participating in the six party talks enables all the major regional players to shoulder the responsibility for the regional security. Among the parties, there are three member states of the United Nations Security Council, namely, America, Russian and China. If the passage of a UN Security Council resolution was required on the North Korean nuclear issue, their consensus was needed beforehand. Otherwise, it would fail.

The Fourth Round Six Party Talks Reaped Pleasant Fruits

The fourth round of six party talks was concluded with remarkable success. The prevention and management of North Korea nuclear weapons crisis is set on the peaceful route. During the fourth round, North Korea pledged to abandon its nuclear weapons program, while America agreed to normalize its relationship with North Korea. Both sides made substantial compromise. America agreed to peaceful coexistence with North Korea, and did not have the intention to attack North Korea with conventional or nuclear weapons, did not insist on North Korea's abandonment of its nuclear development for peaceful purpose. North Korea pledged to renounce its nuclear weapons program (including the current stockpile and nuclear program), return to NPT mechanism and accept IAEA inspection. ROK pledged to provide North Korea with 2million kilowatts energy. The verbal pledge paves the way for the following-on schedule of North Korea's abandonment of its nuclear weapons program and America's implementation of its assurance.

The fourth round six party talks proves that it is the effective venue for conflict prevention and management of North Korean nuclear issue. The six parties signed the first Joint Statement. China actively exerted its influence by mediating among the parties, hosting and participating in the talks.

American President George W. Bush pledged times during his recent Asian visit that America would seek to jointly resolve the North Korean nuclear weapons crisis through peaceful means with the regional partners. America would fulfill its commitments. But it also requested that The North Korea would follow the agreement with the South and comply with the regulations set in NPT.

The first phase of the fifth round talks ended with little progress. North Korea hopes America will compensate its abandonment of nuclear weapons program first, especially provide it with light water reactors. They believe America will not attack them when the LWR are in operation. America insists that North Korea give up its covert nuclear program before America provides the economic compensation and normalizes the bilateral ties. The view on the course of action is contradicting. Who moves first is the problem. Politics is an art of compromise. The Cuban crisis was solved when Soviet withdrew its missiles form Cuba while America reduced its missiles in Turkey as a result of painstaking talks. It is believed that the North Korea nuclear crisis will eventually be solved by talks, with the mediation and participation by other parties as long as the six-party talks mechanism is there.

Conclusion

The effects-based conflict prevention and management focus on the peaceful means. In the North Korean nuclear weapons crisis, trade is favored, and engagement is preferred while sanction is optional because they can generate positive effects that are conducive to the resolution.