

## **A Role Definition and Implementation Strategies for the Four-Party Peace Talks**

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**A**lmost a year and a half has passed since the four-party peace talks were proposed to the DPRK at the ROK-US summit meeting on 16 April 1996. So far North Korea's response has been very cautious, much less positive than Washington and Seoul had expected. The delay seemed to be largely due to its lack of confidence about the talks. That is, Pyongyang was not sure whether its primary goal—guaranteeing regime survival through a strategic relationship with the United States, which they expected to achieve via bilateral talks—would be able to be attained through the four-party meeting, so it asked the United States for a detailed explanation of purpose of the proposal. Admitting the need for a clearer explanation, Seoul and Washington agreed to hold a joint briefing for Pyongyang, which was held in New York on 5 March 1997. This was the first significant step towards bringing the proposal into practice. The other important step was a preliminary four-party meeting held on 5 August.

## Why the Four-Party Peace Talks?

### ROK Counter Diplomacy

The DPRK has since 1994 launched a persistent and consistent campaign to nullify the current Korean Armistice Agreement. On 28 April 1994, North Korea proposed bilateral talks with the United States for the purpose of establishing a new peace system on the Korean peninsula. Apparently frustrated by the US refusal, on 22 February 1996, it presented a more developed three-point proposal for establishing a new peace mechanism on the peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, Pyongyang instigated a series of events to press the United States to accept its proposal. On 8 March the Panmunjom Mission of the Korean People's Army issued a memorandum reproaching the United States.<sup>2</sup> On 29 March, Vice Marshal Kwangjin Kim, first vice minister of the People's Armed Forces,

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1 The three-point proposal was as follows. First, a tentative agreement would be signed between the DPRK and the United States in order to deter armed conflict and danger of war on the Korean peninsula and maintain the state of armistice in a peaceful way. The agreement would include the management of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) and the Demilitarized Zone, the method of settling armed conflicts and accidents, the formation, duties and authority of a joint military body, the amendment and supplement of the agreement, and other issues on maintenance of security order. The agreement would replace the Armistice Agreement until a complete peace arrangement be concluded. Second, a DPRK-US joint military body would be organized and operated in Panmunjom replacing the Military Armistice Commission for the implementation of the tentative agreement and its supervision. Third, negotiations should be held at the appropriate level for discussing the conclusion of the tentative agreement and organization of the DPRK-US joint military body. *People's Korea*, 2 March 1996.

2 The KPA argued that "On 28 April 1994, the DPRK put forward an epochal proposal to replace the old armistice system with a new peace one. It installed the Panmunjom Mission of the KPA in accordance with the proposal . . . . The US has not yet shown any response to the DPRK's magnanimous proposal." The memorandum warned that "the US" must not mistake this offer for one begging for peace. The option does not belong to the United States alone. We will take a final and active measure to replace the old armistice system with a new device in case the United States wastes time by refusing to accede to our proposal for negotiation." *Pyongyang Times*, 16 March 1996.

declared that "The armistice on the Korean peninsula has reached its limit."<sup>3</sup> On 4 April the Panmunjom mission of the KPA announced that self-defensive measures would be taken immediately because the status of the DMZ could no longer be maintained.<sup>4</sup> Immediately after the announcement, the DPRK held a series of armed demonstrations in the highly sensitive joint security area within the buffer zone at the Panmunjom crossing point.<sup>5</sup>

The ROK long held the firm position that issues related to replacing the current armistice agreement with a new peace structure were matters purely between the two Koreas and thus should be resolved through North-South bilateral talks. With the exception of repeating this position in principle, Seoul had never been very active, anyway not enough to counter North Korea's aggressive campaign to nullify the armistice arrangement. The ROK-US summit meeting on April 16 last year was a turning point, at which Seoul affirmed its willingness to be more actively involved in resolving the armistice issue. In this respect, the four-party talks proposal can be regarded as counter diplomacy

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- 3 Criticizing South Korean military exercises, he said that "The question at this point is not whether a war will break out on the Korean peninsula but when it will break out." Arguing that Pyongyang's peace proposal to establish an institutional mechanism for preventing a war on the Korean peninsula has been turned down and that this shows a limit to the dialogue method, he warned that the KPA cannot but take proper countermeasures which "will include the steps to be taken in line with the present situation in which the status of the DMZ can no longer be kept." *Pyongyang Times*, 6 April 1996.
  - 4 The two measures were declared: (1) The KPA side would relinquish its duty, under the armistice agreement, concerning the maintenance and control of the MDL and the DMZ. (2) The KPA side would, as a follow-up step to the first measure, have its personnel and vehicles bear no distinctive insignia when they enter the joint security area of Panmunjom and the DMZ. *People's Korea*, 13 April 1996.
  - 5 Every night from 5 to 7 April increasing numbers of North Korean soldiers, up to 300, moved into the joint security area, setting up offensive positions with mortars before leaving. These movements violated the armistice agreement in which no more than 30 soldiers and 5 officers are allowed into the area at any time and only sidearms are permitted.

to deter the DPRK attempt to nullify the armistice agreement, and to prevent possible disagreements between Seoul and Washington over how to deal with North Korean strategy.<sup>6</sup>

### The United States' Motivations

According to a *New York Times* article the concept of the four-party talks was originally forwarded by the United States. At the beginning, President Kim was quite reluctant to support the idea but Washington pressed him by telling him that Mr. Clinton would visit South Korea only if Kim were to accept four-party talks.<sup>7</sup> Putting aside the truthfulness of the report, it illustrates that American intentions were at the minimum heavily reflected in the proposal; they will be a key element in the process of the four-party talks. It is thus meaningful to take a close look in this regard at the intentions and reasoning of the Clinton administration. The following six points deserve special attention.

First, to deal with the problems of the Korean peninsula the Clinton administration finds necessary a broader framework both in terms of participants and agenda. Although successful in halting North Korea's known nuclear weapons program, the Agreed Framework has neither reduced tensions nor advanced North-South reconciliation.

American observers in particular have worried that the absence of a larger strategy beyond the nuclear accord has allowed the DPRK to set the diplomatic agenda, which has fostered new levels of distrust in US-ROK relations.<sup>8</sup> The net result is that

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6 Jinhyun Paik, "The ROK's directions for implementing the four-party talks," from the proceedings of the International Seminar on the Four-Party Talks and Peace on the Korean Peninsula (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 1997), p. 83.

7 Nicholas Krostof, "How a stalled submarine sank North Korea's hopes," *New York Times*, 17 November 1996.

8 Robert Manning, "The US position and policy toward the four-party talks," from the proceedings of the International Seminar on the Four-Party Talks and Peace on the Korean Peninsula (Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 1997), p. 7.

"despite its success in addressing the nuclear problem, the Agreed Framework is likely to prove unsustainable unless it is embedded in a larger policy of North-South reconciliations."<sup>9</sup> Keeping in mind the need to transform the dynamics of diplomacy with the DPRK, the four-party talks proposal seeks to establish "a structure and process in which North-South reconciliation is a central element and of which the nuclear accord would be one element."<sup>10</sup>

James Steinberg, deputy National Security Council advisor, also asserted the view that four-party talks aiming at the establishment of a permanent peace are needed because the Agreed Framework is vulnerable to political pressures and regional tensions.<sup>11</sup> That is, there are worries now in the United States that without a confidence-building process that addresses the fundamental sources of tension on the Korean peninsula, the core element of the Agreed Framework will remain vulnerable to disruption.<sup>12</sup>

Second, by absorbing North-South Korean talks and the US-DPRK dialogues in a common framework, the United States may intend to avoid the ROK's criticism that the latter are making progress while the former lags behind, as well as to facilitate the improvement of Washington-Pyongyang relations under more benign circumstances.

Third, by inviting China to help resolve the problems on the Korean peninsula, the United States may seek tradeoffs with Taiwan and Hong Kong issues. That is, not just unilaterally acknowledging the Chinese role in Korean affairs, Washington

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9 Ibid., p. 8.

10 Ibid., p. 3.

11 Remarks by James Steinberg, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, on 9 June 1997.

12 United States Institute of Peace, "A Coming Crisis on the Korean Peninsula? the Food Crisis, Economic Decline, and Political Considerations," August 1997, p. 1.

also wants Beijing's recognition of its own role in settling Taiwan and Hong Kong issues. The United States and China may come to agree that the idea of "one state, two systems" instituted in Hong Kong be applied to the Korean peninsula for a considerable period of time.

Fourth, the United States seeks to block the North Korean demand for a bilateral peace agreement and to have Pyongyang change its foreign policies towards or at least favorable to Washington's terms. Possibly, the US could instigate policy struggles within the North Korean decision-making elites with the purpose of accelerating such policy changes.

Fifth, by interlocking inter-Korean dialogue within the four-party talks framework, the United States may want to control the content and speed of the bilateral talks when the talks resume. In the early 1990s, it was the nuclear issue that provided the United States with such a leverage; the Americans used the nuclear issue effectively to control the progress of North-South Korean talks. According to Mitchell Reiss who worked for the National Security Council during the Bush administration, Washington insisted that inter-Korean nuclear inspection should be carried out before moving on to other matters and put tremendous pressure on Seoul to abandon its summit plan with Pyongyang.<sup>13</sup> Since other issues such as chemical weapons or missiles will have much less influence than the nuclear one, Washington could well decide to create a more comprehensive policy framework encompassing the North-South Korean relations.

Finally, regarding the peninsula as a buffer zone between China on the one hand and the United States and Japan on the other, the US may want to use the four-party talks as a forum to come to terms with China on details about maintaining the Korean status quo. Washington and Beijing also may want to

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13 Mitchell Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), p. 240.

agree on how to absorb repercussions caused by a North Korean collapse or by reunification. They both would want to avoid confrontation between each other. The four-party talks would thus become a regular channel to discuss the Korean problems between China and the US.

### **Role Definition: a Space Launch Vehicle**

Since the four-party talks proposal was put forward last year, there has been much debate, both within each party and among the parties, regarding various details. For example, questions have been frequently raised such as what should be the purpose and agenda of the talks and what roles be given to the United States and China. Such debates were largely due to the uncertainties and ambiguities inherent in the proposal.

Looking into the joint announcement made by Presidents Kim Young Sam and Bill Clinton on 16 April 1996, it can be easily found that the proposal is incomplete at least in the following aspects.<sup>14</sup> First, the purpose and negotiating agenda of the talks were unclear. Second, key terms and concepts used in the announcement such as "a permanent peace agreement", "a permanent peace arrangement" and "a wide range of tension reduction measures" were too vague. Their meanings and requisites were not clarified. Third, rights and responsibilities of the participating states were not defined either.

Much of this is believed to have been clarified at the joint briefing and the preliminarily meeting as well as through various bilateral consultations. At least, with respect to the purpose of the four-party talks and the role of the United States and China, the four countries seem to have reached a consensus. In short, the four-party talks to aim at inducing direct talks between the two Koreas in the short term and establishing a stable peace

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14 Seongwhun Cheon, "The four-party peace meeting proposal: a challenge and an opportunity for Korean peace and unification," *Korea and World Affairs*, Summer 1996, pp. 172-174.

regime on the peninsula in the long term. The major players of the talks will be the two Koreas. And the roles of Washington and Beijing will be limited and supplementary, to create a favorable environment for and facilitating the improvement of inter-Korean relations.

The four-party talks can be compared to a space launch vehicle. The main part of the ship is equivalent to the North-South Korean talks. China and the United States are likened to rocket boosters and fuel. The booster stage helps the key component of the launch vehicle to be launched from the ground, and is jettisoned at a certain altitude before the main part is placed on an orbit. Likewise, the American and Chinese roles are to create an environment to help the two Koreas reopen bilateral dialogue. When the inter-Korean talks are on track, American and Chinese involvement should automatically cease.

Keeping in mind the nature of the four-party talks and the roles of the parties, the ROK and the United States will have to agree on the following principles as foundation for the talks.

First, with North Korea continuing its "pro-US/anti-South Korea" policy approach, the talks should be a supplementary device to induce the North to restart the inter-Korean dialogue in various areas including the establishment of a peace regime. The meeting would provide a constructive environment under which the two Koreas would take the lead. The other participating states should publicly support this principle.

Second, the principle should be firmly maintained that problems on the Korean peninsula be solved by Koreans themselves. This principle of resolving inter-Korean affairs by the two Koreas should be given top priority in the whole process of the talks.

### **The 4 and Two 2s Formula**

Despite loopholes and ambiguities inherent in the proposal, the four-party peace meeting can be utilized as a proper opportunity to enhance peace and stability and facilitate unification on



the Korean peninsula. For that purpose, this paper proposes a "4 and two 2s" formula<sup>15</sup> as an operating strategy of the four-party talks proposal. The ROK and the United States are recommended to run the four-party meeting according to the strategies envisaged in a 4 and two 2s formula. The formula is believed to be a structure under which the purpose of the four-party proposal can be effectively accomplished and the stability of the Korean peninsula efficiently guaranteed.

The four-party talks should be arranged according to two separate levels: first, Northeast Asia and second, the Korean peninsula. At the former level, the four parties should focus primarily on general issues relevant to Northeast Asia and minimally on inter-Korean problems. At the latter level, the negotiating agenda and implementing responsibilities would be bifurcated between the inter-Korean and the US-DPRK negotiating channels.

The essence of the 4 and two 2s formula is to divide the agenda and the negotiating parties so as to meet security needs of both the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia. The "4" means that the four parties will meet to discuss broader issues of the Northeast Asian region rather than the specifics of the Korean peninsula. The "two 2s" indicates that two different tracks of negotiations would be managed to deal with issues related with the Korean peninsula: a track between Seoul and Pyongyang, and one between Pyongyang and Washington.

### **Panmunjom Declaration**

Two routes are available for founding peace and stability on the Korean peninsula: an inward spiral route and an outward spiral one. With the former, multilateral parties would get together regionally or internationally to discuss reducing tension and

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15 The formula originally appeared in Seongwhun Cheon, "The four-party peace meeting proposal: a challenge and an opportunity for Korean peace and unification," *Korea and World Affairs*, Summer 1996, pp. 175-182.

enhancing peace, and this will have positive influences on inter-Korean relations. For example, treaties such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) were negotiated multilaterally and later the two Koreas acceded to them. Such international non-proliferation efforts have had positive spillover effects on the Korean peninsula.

With the latter, an agreement signed by North and South Korea would extend to broader areas, and improved relations between the two Koreas would contribute to stability in other regions. For instance, the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula signed by Pyongyang and Seoul in December 1991 could develop into a treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia.

The four-party peace meeting is seen as an approach based on an inward spiral route. Keeping this in mind, the meeting is recommended to focus mainly on issues concerning all four parties and create a favorable environment for direct inter-Korean talks. The primary agenda for the meeting, therefore, should consist of those issues commonly applicable to all parties in the region. On a secondary basis, the Korean problems need be mentioned in principle only.

*Primary Agenda: Northeast Asian Issues*

Considering that there currently does not exist any official regional security framework in Northeast Asia, it is conceivable that the four-party peace talks might become the starting point for a regional multilateral security dialogue. For this purpose, the meeting should deal with a broad agenda related to regional peace and security in general. At an appropriate stage of the meeting, the four parties could invite Japan, Russia and Mongolia to join the regional peace-building process.

From this perspective, it is meaningful to remember the Helsinki Final Act. On 1 August 1975, the thirty-five countries

(every European country except Albania at that time) signed, in Helsinki, the "Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe." By concluding the Final Act, the participating states reaffirmed "their objective of promoting better relations among themselves and ensuring conditions in which their people can live in true and lasting peace free from any threat to or attempt against their security."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the Final Act was considered a significant milestone set by the proponents of detente on what they viewed to be the road to the long-term relaxation of tensions between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.<sup>17</sup>

The provisions of the Final Act were organized under three headings, termed "baskets." Basket I, dealing with European security issues, included a declaration of principles guiding relations among participating states. A second part of Basket I set out provisions for military confidence-building measures. Basket II contained provisions on economic, scientific, technological and environmental cooperation. Basket III dealt with humanitarian, cultural and educational cooperation.

The Helsinki and its follow-up meetings are unique in many respects.<sup>18</sup> The thirty-five states technically participated on an equal footing and agreements were genuinely based on consensus among all participants. The list of subjects was vast and made it possible for participating states to touch on just about any subject of interest to Europe.

#### *Secondary Agenda: Inter-Korean Problems*

The utmost important agendum of the four-party meeting concerning inter-Korean problems is that the meeting officially recognize the political and legal status of the Agreement on

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16 The Helsinki Final Act, Article 9.

17 Richard Schifter, "The conference on security and cooperation in Europe: ancient history or new opportunities," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1993, p. 122.

18 John Maresca, *To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1973-1975*, p. 211.

Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation (the Basic Agreement) signed by North and South Korea in December 1991. The meeting would affirm that the Basic Agreement is the fundamental framework for establishing a peace regime on the Korean peninsula. That is, the ROK, the United States and China should hold a common position at the meeting that the successful implementation of the Basic Agreement would mean a complete establishment of a peace regime in the inter-Korean dimension. Such an approval will create an auspicious environment for direct and sincere North-South Korean talks and will also provide, in advance, international justification of what is to be agreed and carried out based on the Basic Agreement in the future.

It is proposed that the primary purpose of the four-party talks be to produce an agreement among the four countries similar to the Final Act. That is, a Northeast Asian version of the Final Act would be the major outcome of the meeting. A similar proposal was made by Professor Janghie Lee of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.<sup>19</sup> Professor Lee enumerated ideas that could be contained in a "Northeast Asian declaration" including recognition of the Basic Agreement as the underlying framework for solving Korean issues. The 4 and two 2s formula goes further in that it provides a package of concrete measures to implement the four-party proposal successfully. In particular, it carefully classifies two levels and two tracks of negotiations and separates their corresponding agenda. It also emphasizes that at the four-party meeting, the inter-Korean problem is dealt with in principle only, at most attaining an international guarantee of the legitimacy of the Basic Agreement as the fundamental framework to resolve Korean problems.

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19 Janghie Lee, "Legal and institutional tasks and implementing directions of the four-party meeting," presented at a seminar held by the Asian Social Research Institute in Seoul on 5 June 1996.

*Panmunjom as a Signing Ceremony Location*

It is recommended that the four parties, at least at the later stage of the meetings, get together at Panmunjom, the symbol of the Korean division. It would have a highly political and positive value for the four parties to sign the points mentioned above as a "Panmunjom declaration."

A Panmunjom declaration that contains broad regional issues and inter-Korean ones in principle only would be an appropriate device that could meet North Korea's demand on its regime assurance. But it would be one step short of the cross recognition implying complete normalization of the US-DPRK and Japan-DPRK relations, so it could be easily accepted by South Korea who is concerned about the development in the two relationships.

**Dual Track Approach**

One major task of the four-party meeting will be to harmonize the US-DPRK talks with inter-Korean dialogue. South Korea has expressed its worries that the former might bypass the latter. The United States has been in a dilemma to meet North Korea's demand for direct talks yet simultaneously to allay South Korean concerns. The four-party proposal was presented as a practical solution to this dilemma.

For a successful implementation of the meeting, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between the US-DPRK talks and the North-South Korean dialogue. To this end, this paper proposes that the United States and South Korea bifurcate the agenda and the implementing responsibilities of the two negotiating channels.

Concerns have been raised that such bifurcation would result in US-DPRK negotiations' making progress while inter-Korean talks bog down. However, there are reasons why the US-DPRK channel must be incorporated in the peace-building process. First, the agenda of the ongoing US-DPRK talks are related with

establishing a stable peace system on the peninsula. Second, even if the four parties do get together, in practice it is the importance of the inter-Korean and US-DPRK talks that will be emphasized since it is these relationships that have more problems than do the other bilaterals. Third, it is virtually impossible that detailed bilateral issues between Seoul and Pyongyang or Washington and Pyongyang can be handled by all four parties. Fourth, North Korea's insistence upon direct US-DPRK dialogue in the peace building process cannot be blindly ignored. Fifth, the ongoing US-DPRK negotiation can be checked within the four-party talks framework and its negotiating agenda properly limited so as to eliminate concerns about any imbalance between the two negotiating tracks.

With all this in mind, the agenda of US-DPRK negotiations should be separated from those of the inter-Korean talks. Furthermore, between the US and the ROK Washington would take full responsibility for implementation of the former and Seoul the latter.

Without bifurcation of both agenda and responsibility, there is a risk that the whole process of two-track negotiations would become mixed up. First, the same agendum might be simultaneously tabled at the two talks and the outcomes of the negotiations be different. Second, it is highly possible that the principle of resolving Korean affairs by Koreans themselves might be violated. Third, responsibilities of one party could be transferred to the other, as occurred in the case of the light-water reactor project. The United States arranged and signed the Agreed Framework but South Korea bears most of the project expenses, an outcome criticized heavily by the South Korean public.

#### *Bifurcation of Agenda*

The following is a recommended agenda for the US-DPRK talks: (1) control of North Korea's missile export, and *only* export (2) exhumation and repatriation of remains of American service-

men killed during the Korean War, (3) aid, and relaxation of sanctions in the economic sphere, and (4) improvement of bilateral relations in the political, social and cultural—but not military—areas.

On the other hand, there should exist certain items prohibited for the US-DPRK talks. First, the development and deployment of North Korean missiles should not be discussed between the US and DPRK; this is an important agenda for inter-Korean military talks. Second, on 20 May United Nations Command officials at Panmunjom passed two million dollars to North Korea in return for its efforts to recover the remains of American soldiers.<sup>20</sup> Such a thing should not be repeated. Frequent meetings between the US soldiers (even under the title of the UNC) and North Korean military personnel might give the international society as well as the DPRK the false image that the US-DPRK military contact is essential and South Korea can be excluded in resolving military affairs on the Korean peninsula. Third, in this context, the current US-DPRK talks on missiles and remains should definitely not be expanded to form a joint security forum between the two sides' militaries.

The agenda list to be discussed at the inter-Korean talks should be as follows: (1) five measures to be carried out by the Joint Military Commission (JMC) as already agreed in Article 12 of the Basic Agreement,<sup>21</sup> (2) North Korea's missile development and joining of the MTCR, (3) those measures North Korea presented in its tentative agreement proposal,<sup>22</sup> (4) exchanges of military personnel, (5) seminars on military doctrines of the two sides, (6) open skies agreement, and (7) resolution of suspicions about

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20 *Korea Herald*, 21 May 1996.

21 The five measures are (1) mutual notification and control of major military movements and exercises, (2) peaceful uses of the DMZ, (3) exchanges of military personnel and information, (4) phased reduction in armaments including the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and attack capabilities and (5) verification.

22 See footnote 1.

North Korea's nuclear activities before May 1992, including the IAEA's special inspection problem.

In particular, it is emphasized that US forces in South Korea should be dealt with only in the inter-Korean military talks. There is a view that some reduction of US forces on the peninsula should be concluded in a US-DPRK peace treaty.<sup>23</sup> Such a view seems to support the North Korean position to isolate South Korea from the process of building a new peace regime. The United States and South Korea need to reach the consensus that reduction of US forces is an important element of South Korea's negotiating strategy at the JMC.

In relation to that, Seoul and Washington should collaborate to reinforce the ROK's negotiating position vis-a-vis the DPRK. Although it was argued that the four-party talks were proposed in order to realize direct inter-Korean talks, setting the negotiating table does not necessarily mean success for the talks. It is important that South Korea and the United States devise the measures to nullify the North Korean argument that the South US is a puppet and thus that talks with Seoul are meaningless.

In this respect wartime operational control of forces, which is now possessed by the US forces, is recommended to be returned to South Korea as soon as possible. Unless the ROK military can exercise full operational control, the DPRK will not respect the ROK and will regard North-South Korean security talks much less important than talks with the United States.

#### *Bifurcation of Implementing Responsibilities*

It is also essential to separate responsibilities of implementing the outcome of the two talks. This aims at preventing another light-water reactor problem from occurring. The South Korean

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23 For example, see Hoseok Han, *A Way to Replace the Armistice Condition with the Peace One on the Korean Peninsula*, Institute of Peace and Unification in America, 1996. Publications of the institute can be accessed through the web at [www.pond.com/~frndlycl/ckr/han.htm](http://www.pond.com/~frndlycl/ckr/han.htm), or E-mail <frndlycl@pond.com>.



government will not forget easily the harsh domestic criticism it received in the course of settling the light-water reactor issue.

North Korea is certain to demand compensation for any restriction upon its missile exports to the Middle East. The United States or the countries in that region such as Israel and Saudi Arabia will have to pay such expenses. Considering that almost half of South Korea is already within the range of North Korean heavy artillery and that Seoul is vulnerable to a surprise air strike, the North's long-range missile threat to the South is marginal.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Seoul should be immune from reimbursing Pyongyang in relation to missile exports.

### **The 4 and Two 2s Formula Four-Party Talks Format**

#### **Panmunjom Declaration**

(four-party meeting for Northeast Asian version of the Helsinki Final Act)

- primary: Northeast Asian issues
- secondary: inter-Korean problems

#### **Dual Track Approach**

(inter-Korean and US-DPRK negotiating tracks)

- agenda bifurcation
- responsibilities bifurcation

### **Concluding Remarks**

The four-party talks proposal has accumulated a certain degree of momentum and there exists a high probability that the

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<sup>24</sup> For the issue of missile development on the Korean peninsula, see Seongwhun Cheon, "MTCR and the ROK's Security" presented at a seminar organized by Korea Research Institute for Strategy on 21 May 1997, in Seoul.

first round of talks will be held this year. But the prospects of the talks are still uncertain. Nobody is sure they will be fruitful.

The proposal was a desperate countermeasure to encourage North Korea to take part in the direct inter-Korean dialogue. Therefore, the view should be commonly shared among the ROK, the United States and China that the four-party meeting is supplementary in nature. The meeting cannot be a panacea for settling security issues on the Korean peninsula.

A government's policy is heavily dependent upon the circumstances under which the policy is brought out. Therefore, if the circumstances change, previous policy becomes subject to modification. Furthermore, the four-party talks are compared to a space launch vehicle with the roles of the United States and China likened to rocket boosters to help launch North-South Korean dialogue to a certain level. By and large, this means that if inter-Korean talks do become activated in the future, the role of the four-party meeting will have to be reduced.