

RESOLVING THE KOREAN QUESTION: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH OR MUDDLING THROUGH?

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The comprehensive approach toward the North, suggested in the Perry report, aims at gradually reaching the positive-sum solution of the triangular relationship among the U.S., the South and the North: the United States lifts economic sanctions and normalizes its relationship with North Korea; North Korea ceases to engage in the WMD program by being assured of its regime survival; and South Korea willingly accepts peaceful coexistence with the North. However, North Korea would prefer to adopt a "muddling-through" strategy rather than accepting the comprehensive proposal. In negotiations, North Korea would take "maximin strategy," which would slice the range of its concession as many as possible, while varying its negotiation lists. In order to avoid the situation in which North Korea will muddle through, the United States, Japan, and South Korea need to devise a strategy that can increase their bargaining power. While maintaining the two-path strategy, those three countries need to think seriously about the tasks ahead, and what they should do to make the comprehensive approach successful.

I. Arrival of the Perry Report

William Perry, U.S. policy coordinator on North Korea, submitted his report of policy recommendations to President Clinton and to the U.S. Congress on September 15, 1999. As a short-term measure to dispel the North's nuclear and missile threats, Perry pointed out that North Korea should suspend its missile test-firing while the United States eases economic sanctions on Pyongyang. As a mid-term goal, the report suggested that Washington draw the North's reliable guarantee that it would cease engaging in nuclear and missile development. Then, the United States should dismantle the Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula, which Perry set as a long-term goal, with the help of South and North Korea and Japan.

Under these three-stage goals, Perry suggested that Washington adopt a new North Korea policy with a "comprehensive and integrated" approach; maintain the Washington-Tokyo-Seoul TCOG (Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group); appoint an ambassador in charge of coordinating North Korea policy among U.S. government agencies; show bipartisan support for the comprehensive approach; and prepare for the contingency of the North's provocations.

In fact, Perry's visit to North Korea in May was a critical opportunity to gauge the possibilities for dismantling the Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula, since he proposed a "comprehensive approach" to North Korea. The joint proposal, devised by Seoul, Tokyo, and Washington, would require that North Korea cease both its nuclear and missile development program and the export thereof, in exchange for expanded economic and diplomatic benefits, such as the lifting of sanctions on North Korea, and a guarantee of the continued existence of the regime. After his visit, an affirmative response from North Korea was expected. Instead, a South-North naval engagement took place in June in the West Sea, and the North "threatened" to test-fire a long-range missile. By reaching the Berlin deal on September 12,¹ however,

the United States and North Korea took the first step toward negotiations over the comprehensive peace proposal, which provided Perry with a favorable environment to submit his final report to the U.S. Congress.

Now, it seems that the Clinton Administration has accepted most of Perry's recommendations. However, the Perry report has set the three goals that cannot be achieved without the genuine cooperation of North Korea. Thus, South Korea, the United States and Japan need to think seriously about the tasks ahead, and what they should do to make the comprehensive approach successful.

II. Vulnerable Triangle

With the arrival of the Perry report, South Korea's interest has been concentrated on how the expected progress in U.S.-North Korea relations will influence inter-Korean relations. This is the question about the inherent structure of the triangular relationship among the United States and South and North Korea.

During the Cold War, South Korea and the United States maintained a staunch alliance against North Korea's communist regime. Owing to the very nature of North Korea, neither ally had any reason to doubt the resolve of the other. But the demise of the Cold War era has enabled North Korea and the United States to explore a new relationship very different from the one that existed during the Cold War.

1 The Berlin deal was a mini-trade. The U.S. administration obtained from North Korea a promise that it will not test its new, long-range *Taepodong-II* missile. In exchange, the United States eased the economic sanctions that Washington had maintained against Pyongyang for nearly half a century. The important part of the deal is North Korea's willingness to forgo missile tests, which seemed imminent a few months ago. Even a temporary agreement not to test is thus a step forward, although much needs to be done to monitor the North's behavior and to reach even broader accords to reduce tensions.

A new environment has emerged, in which the South Korea-U.S. relationship as well as inter-Korean relations are affected by the changing diplomacy between Pyongyang and Washington.

A delicate "triangular relationship" has emerged among North and South Korea and the United States as Washington has deeply involved itself in the North Korean nuclear question as part of its post-Cold War global strategy. To adapt to a new "game," one must develop fresh ways of thinking. To grasp the nature of these triangular relations and prognosticate their most likely outcome, it is important to understand the interrelationship between two sides of the triangle, namely U.S.-North Korean and inter-Korean relations, that is, the connection between U.S.-North Korean relations and inter-Korean relations.

U.S.-North Korea Relations

The U.S. policy toward the Korean peninsula in general and North Korea in particular is part of a larger framework of global strategic interests. In other words, the U.S. deals with North Korea in terms of maintaining the leadership role of the U.S. in the post-Cold War era. In order to protect its leadership as the sole superpower, the U.S. must prevent the spread of WMD (weapons of mass destruction) among the nations which do not possess them already.² Thus, the U.S. policy toward the North Korean nuclear problem and missile exporting is basically premised on this global strategic view. Under this global strategic consideration, as Table 1 shows, the U.S. has been implementing the engagement policy to the North.

In contrast with geopolitical interests of the United States, the primary task facing North Korea is to maintain its state system. The Kim Jong Il regime is much more concerned about system maintenance

2 The 1998 EASR has newly included the concept of "counter-proliferation", which means that the U.S. will consider military actions in addition to political and diplomatic approaches, in order to counter the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Table 1. U.S.-North Korea Policy Structure

	US policy to North Korea	North Korean Policy to US
Goal	Nonproliferation & Northeast Asian Order	System Survival
Objective	Engagement of North Korea	Normalizing Relations with US
Means	Food Assistance Lifting Economic Sanctions Diplomatic Normalization	Missile (test, export, develop) Geneva Agreement Inter-Korean Talks

than before since the economic situation has continued to be aggravated since the worst flood of 1995.³

Concrete policies must be implemented to maintain the North Korean socialist system. Thus, the North Korean authorities have been seeking, most of all, as improvement in relations with the U.S. in order to make the Kim Jong Il regime durable by resolving the current economic difficulties. For these objectives, North Korea has been observing the Geneva agreement by freezing its nuclear development program.

As shown in Table 1, the U.S. has various means to achieve its goals and objectives of the North Korea policy. Among others, providing food assistance to North Korea is regarded as a meaningful one. In

3 After the death of Kim Il Sung, and the rising economic difficulties, the Kim Jong Il regime has depended heavily upon the military as the only support for his regime. Guy Arrigoni, "Political and Economic Change in North and South Korea: Implications for Inter-Korean Conflict Resolution," CSIS-RIPS Conference on *Korean Peninsula Developments: Implications for Regime Stability*, Washington, D.C. (March 4-5, 1999); Yun Duk-min, "Political Dynamics of North Korea," *IFANS Review* vol.6, (Seoul: The Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security, December, 1998), pp.1-15. But some argue that, after years of severe decay, the North Korean economy may have at least stabilized. Unofficial farmers' markets are becoming more open and active. Truck traffic on North Korean roads has increased. Last year's total food production increased more than 11% from the year before by South Korean estimates. "Is North Korea's Free Fall Finally Ending?" *The Wall Street Journal* (May 28, 1999), A15.

addition, the policy means include easing and lifting of economic sanctions against North Korea, which may lead to diplomatic normalization in the end.

On the other hand, North Korea has made an effort to normalize relations with the U.S., which has what North Korea wants to have, while driving a wedge between the U.S. and South Korea. For North Korea, the primary means available is to utilize the WMD card and to observe or break the Geneva agreement. North Korea may think that it will be rewarded every time it threatens to test-fire missiles.

Since the Geneva agreement was made in 1994, North Korea has continued to show a businesslike attitude toward the U.S., while refusing to enter into a dialogue with Seoul. Thus, whether North Korea's acceptance of the inter-Korean dialogue is regarded as a key point that it can use to its advantage.

Inter-Korean Relations

As seen in Table 2, North Korea's top priority in its South Korea policy is regime survival, which means preventing the deepening economic deterioration from developing into a political threat to the Kim Jong Il regime. Communizing the whole Korean peninsula seems to be losing its feasibility for North Korea suffering from severe economic difficulties, including a massive starvation of the people. In order to achieve this goal, the North Korean regime has been trying to delink the South Korea-U.S. relations by driving a wedge between them. North Korea perceives the U.S. as the sole country who possesses the power to influence the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to North Korea as well as assuring its regime survival. Thus, North Korea feels the necessity of making South Korea, who is perceived to be a threat to the North Korean system, at odds with the U.S. by talking mainly to the U.S.

The policy means available to North Korea include conventional

Table 2. Policy Structure of Inter-Korean Relations

	North Korea's Policy to the South	South Korea's Policy to the North
Goal	Regime Survival	Unification
Objective	Delinking ROK-US Relations	Dismantling the Cold War Structure
Means	Conventional Forces Nuclear/Missiles US-North Korea Relations	ROK-US Combined Forces Economic Superiority Will to Improve Inter-Korean Relations

forces compounded by numerous provocative actions. The nuclear option that continues to worry the international community is another bargaining tool, together with the missile, which is the transportation vehicle of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the chemical weapons that have been listed in the Perry report can be included in North Korea's survival kit.

North Korea assumes that its most effective tool is the U.S.-North Korean relationship. The process of U.S.-North Korean discussion itself, regardless of its pace of development, can be regarded as vital for North Korea, mainly because it is a proof that the U.S. recognizes North Korea as a negotiating partner in various kinds of discussion at the global, regional, and peninsular levels.⁴

On the other hand, South Korea's ultimate goal in its North Korea policy is to reunify the peninsula by peaceful means, while the current economic hardship has discouraged optimistic projections and has led to the search for realistic ways to manage the division of the peninsula. Thus, the South Korean objective of its North Korea policy comprises dismantling the Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula, thereby

4 Concerning the U.S. policy toward the Korean peninsula at global, regional, and peninsular levels, see Sung-Han Kim, "US Policy toward the Korean Peninsula and ROK-US Relations," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol.IX, No.1, Summer 1997, pp.135-158.

making it possible for the two Koreas to coexist peacefully.

Then, the first means available to South Korea is the ROK-US combined forces working as a deterrent against North Korean miscalculation. The second one includes South Korea's economic capability, even if dwindled by the financial crisis. South Korea is the country that can still provide the economic and humanitarian assistance to North Korea suffering from starvation. South Korea's willingness to improve inter-Korean relations, despite North Korea's reluctance, can be regarded as another means, since the surrounding countries agree to inter-Korean talks and reconciliation.

From Vulnerable to Cooperative Triangle

Against this backdrop, the significance of the triangular relationship among the three is linked directly to the interrelationship between U.S.-North Korea and inter-Korean relations. The problem is whether the relationship between Pyongyang and Washington can be harmonized with the relationship between Pyongyang and Seoul, or whether one relationship will necessarily progress in a direction detrimental to the other. This begs the question of whether these triangular relations can develop into a "positive-sum" game.

Relations between North and South Korea can hardly escape becoming strained, because North Korea seeks to resolve its economic problems and conclude an exclusive peace agreement with the United States through advancing its relations with Washington. On the other hand, South Korea cannot accept progress in U.S.-North Korea relations to the detriment of inter-Korean relations. In particular, no South Korean government could survive the withdrawal of public support that would ensue when it failed to secure an appropriate voice in the implementation of the "comprehensive approach."

As a consequence, the primary question is whether the three parties can work toward an outcome that is not harmful to any one side of the

triangle, even though the outcome may not ensure that everyone's maximum interest will be met. In this sense, the comprehensive approach toward the North, suggested in the Perry report, aims at gradually removing the above-mentioned policy means that the U.S. and the two Koreas possess, thereby reaching the positive-sum solution: the United States lifts economic sanctions and normalizes its relationship with North Korea; North Korea ceases to engage in the WMD program by being assured of its regime survival; and South Korea willingly accepts peaceful coexistence with the North.⁵

III. Prospects of U.S.-North Korea and South-North Relations

Gradual Progress of U.S.-North Korean Relations

The relations between the U.S. and North Korea will progress by stages, depending on the stance of the three countries.

The government of South Korea would like to dismantle the Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula, through reconciliation and cooperation with the North, by turning the zero-sum relationship between the U.S.-North and the South-North dimensions into a positive sum game. The key is whether Seoul can bear the North's efforts to drive a wedge between the U.S. and South Korea without losing its patience.

5 Since the issue of U.S. forces in Korea is likely to arise sometime during the process of establishing a peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula, and since debate will center on the original *raison d'être* once the threat from North Korea disappears, South Korea and the United States need to begin discussing how to deal with the issue of revising the Korea-U.S. alliance and the future role of U.S. forces in Korea. They should consider converting the Korea-U.S. alliance into a "regional alliance" so that they can continue to contribute to regional stability. Concerning this issue, see Sung-Han Kim, "U.S. Military Presence in a Unified Korea," *IFANS Review*, Vol.7 No.1 July 1999.

The Clinton administration is usually supportive of the comprehensive approach of the South Korean government, but it faces critics from Congress. Before the Perry report came out, critics in the Congress had made the following points: first, the Clinton administration should conduct a zero-based review of its North Korea policy; second, the administration must get serious about theater and national missile defense and make it a top priority; third, Pyongyang must understand that they will not be rewarded for bellicose or provocative actions.⁶

In addition, the North Korea Advisory Group of the U.S. Congress⁷ submitted its report to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on November 3, 1999 that contained the assessments on the North Korean situation. According to the report, 1) There is significant evidence that undeclared nuclear weapons development activity continues in North Korea; 2) North Korea has built an advantage in long-range artillery, short-range ballistic missiles, and special operation forces; 3) North Korea is a greater threat to international stability in Asia and in the Middle East; 4) U.S. food and fuel assistance is not adequately monitored; and 5) North Korea has the worst human rights record of any government in the world.

In fact, the "comprehensive approach", devised by Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo, is in accord with the above points suggested by U.S. Congress. William Perry has reviewed the U.S. policy toward North Korea for more than eight months, and the comprehensive proposal ensures stopping the proliferation of WMD by stating that the U.S., Japan, and South Korea would provide North Korea with political and economic support only in exchange for a halt in the development of nuclear weapons and missiles. As to the missile issue, it can hardly be

6 Benjamin Gilman, "Put North Korea on Notice," *Defense News*, September 21-27, 1998.

7 The Speaker's North Korea Advisory Group consists of nine members all of whom are Republicans: Benjamin Gilman (NY: Chairman); Doug Bereuter (NE); Sonny Callahan (AL); Christopher Cox (CA); Tillie Fowler (GA); Porter Goss (FL); Joe Knowlton (MI); Floyd Spence (SC); and Curt Weldon (PA).

said that the comprehensive proposal is compensation for North Korea's provocative acts, because North Korea has not joined the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) and thus it is not "legally" bound by the international regime. Rather, the comprehensive approach is a "political" approach aimed at inducing North Korea to stop the missile program since it could threaten the regional stability. Above all, the Republican Party seems to only try to put the North Korean issue on the Campaign 2000 agenda rather than suggesting policy alternatives, which could thus be a political burden for the Clinton Administration.

North Korea may think that it would be more advantageous to focus on the negotiations with the U.S. than to negotiate with the U.S., South Korea, and Japan concurrently. North Korea's ability to maintain its system despite the severe economic difficulties is based on its revolutionary ideology to "liberate" the South, and thus the North's acceptance of peaceful co-existence with South Korea could cause a serious internal instability. Consequently, it would prefer to adopt a "muddling-through" strategy rather than accepting the comprehensive proposal. Specifically, without clearly expressing its attitude toward the joint proposal, it would certainly give priority to negotiating issues of less priority such as curbing the test-firing and the export of missiles than abandoning the missile development itself. In negotiations, North Korea would take the "maximin strategy," which would slice the range of its concessions as many as possible, while varying its negotiation lists. Thus it would gradually improve relations with the U.S. by tiding over the ups and downs.

In particular, the core element of U.S. sanctions to North Korea comprises prohibiting trade, investment, and assistance, which is stipulated "in a multi-layered way" in the TWEA (Trading With the Enemy Act), various acts on international terrorism,⁸ and regulations against the

8 They include Arms Control Act, Foreign Assistance Act (1961), Trade Act (1974), Bretton Woods Agreements Act Amendments (1978), Export Administration Act

Communist countries.⁹ Thus, for instance, even if North Korea is removed by the State Department from the list of terrorist countries, its actual implementation would not be possible. Other related restrictions and sanctions are also stipulated in the TWEA, revision of which requires congressional approval. The Republican-controlled Congress would not willingly agree on these highly political and legal matters as Campaign 2000 approaches.

The question of whether restrictions on North Korea will be relaxed by revising the laws depends on the attitude of the North toward the joint proposal. In addition, the role of Perry's successor, who can heal the rift between the Administration and Congress, is pivotal. In the short term, Congress will likely take steps such as unfreezing North Korea's assets in the U.S. and granting partial permission for financial transactions between the U.S. and North Korea, which can be realized through executive discretion. Considering the structural limitations on the drastic lifting of sanctions on North Korea, the U.S. administration would take gradual steps by reciprocating the progress in the missile talks, inter-Korean relations, and four-party talks.

Limited Improvement of Inter-Korean Relations?

With North Korea's cooperation, the overall scenario for terminating the Cold War structure on the Korean peninsula will proceed as shown in Table 3. The process of dismantling the Cold War structure or creating a peace system on the Korean peninsula involves three phases: 1) maintenance of the armistice system; 2) implementation of the *North-South Basic Agreement*; and 3) conclusion of a new peace mechanism by turning the existing armistice system into the perma-

(1979), Foreign Operations, Export Financing & Related Programs Appropriations Act (1991), etc.

9 They include Trade Act (1974), Foreign Assistance Act (1961), International Security and Development Cooperation Act (1981), Ex-Im Bank Act (1945, 1986), etc.

Table 3. Process of Dismantling the Cold War Structure on the Korean Peninsula

First Stage (maintaining the armistice system)	Observance of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement and the reoperation of the supervisory commission; the comprehensive approach of the US, Japan and South Korea; continuing the 4-party peace talks and South-North talks; maintaining the US/Japan's high-level talks with the North
Second Stage (fulfillment of the South-North Basic Agreement)	Operation of the subcommittees and commissions under the Basic Agreement; implementing confidence-building measures between the two Koreas; solution of the missile issues; comprehensive assistance to the North (including North Korea's joining in the international financial system); lifting the sanctions of the US against the North; opening the liaison office; and acceleration of normalization talks between the US and North Korea, and between Japan and North Korea
Third Stage (turning the existing armistice system into permanent peace system)	Consolidation of inter-Korean confidence; North Korea's joining the BWC and CWC; special inspection in Yongbyon; normalization of US/Japan-North Korea relations; realization of the Northeast Asia Security Dialogue (NEASED); signing the peace agreement between the two Koreas endorsed by the international community; and solving the issue of the status of US armed forces in Korea

nent peace system.

The first step toward establishing a viable peace regime on the Korean peninsula should involve the maintenance of the armistice system. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring a state of peace through the normalization of the truce system and stabilization of the respective military sectors. The existing truce system should be retained until the two Koreas reach a new peace treaty to replace the current armistice agreement.

In the second phase, emphasis should be placed on laying the groundwork for a peace system based on the *North-South Basic Agreement*. Various subcommittees and joint commissions envisioned in the Basic Agreement should be instituted, while detailed programs are prepared and undertaken to build confidence in politics and the military.

When the results of political¹⁰ and military¹¹ confidence-building, and exchanges and cooperation have become tangible between the two Koreas due to the successful efforts of the first two phases, then further measures should be promoted in the third phase to convert the truce system into a peace system, to have the United States and China endorse an inter-Korean peace treaty based on the four-party talks, and to secure the United Nations' acknowledgement of this accord with the participation of Russia and Japan.

But Table 3 represents only wishful thinking, a goal that cannot be achieved without genuine cooperation of North Korea. As Table 3 shows, to realize each step, relations between the two Koreas must improve, as negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea go well in progress.

10 A political prerequisite for the creation of a peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula involves an atmosphere of "political confidence-building." Confidence-building in the political realm between the two Koreas refers to a situation in which North Korea renounces any intention to engineer a subversive revolution in South Korea and agrees to abide by the spirit of the North-South Basic Agreement, while South Korea promotes an environment in which North Korea is convinced that the South has no intention to achieve unification through absorption of the North. Since military confrontation on the Korean peninsula reflects underlying political antagonism, military confidence-building will more easily follow suit once trust is developed in political relations.

11 The priority focus for promoting confidence building in military relations involves prohibition of the development, possession and use of weapons of mass destruction. If either North or South Korea possesses or attempts to develop nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, this would shatter the political goal of peaceful coexistence and constitute a fundamental obstacle to the development of inter-Korean relations.

The South-North naval engagement in the West Sea and the detainment of a tourist at Mt. Kumgang in June indicate, however, that Seoul's North Korea policy could be changed from a principle of flexible reciprocity to the one of firm reciprocity. This means that negotiations between two Koreas would become much more difficult, causing North Korea to cling further to the hope for normalization of relations with the U.S. The end result is a perplexing situation for South Korea, who hardly condones it though it has stated that it would not hinder progress between the U.S. and North Korea.

As the U.S. presidential elections near, North Korea will attempt to gain the lifting of sanctions and food assistance while making the minimum concessions possible, such as stopping the test-firing of Taepodong II and negotiating missile exports. At the same time, with regard to relations with South Korea, it would pursue the barest minimum in improvement, just enough to assure the U.S. of its willingness to cooperate.

North Korea will take concessive steps only in the field of the reunion of separated families and the re-implementation of the Supervisory Commission of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement, but would hesitate to embark on the second stage of fulfilling the inter-Korean *Basic Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Exchange and Cooperation*, signed on December 13, 1991. For North Korea, whether to enter into the second stage depends upon the progress of its negotiations with the United States.

Against this backdrop, relations between two Koreas would proceed in a limited manner. North Korea would continue to drive a wedge between the South and the U.S. and to discuss the problems of the Korean peninsula only with the U.S. Then, it would allow limited improvement in its relations with South Korea, only when its relations with the U.S. come to a standstill.

On the other hand, it is expected that the North would show good faith on the issue of the reunion of separated families. This would serve

to demonstrate its benevolence without recognizing the legitimacy of the South Korean government.

The most plausible process for improvement of relations between two Koreas is that Pyongyang would adopt its own methods of "separation of politics from economics," which aims to negotiate political-security issues only with Washington, while pursuing gradual economic cooperation with Seoul. It would try to gain from Seoul's engagement policy as much as possible, while making minimum concessions to keep the policy alive.

IV. Tasks Ahead

Now, the bargaining process, which is based on the comprehensive approach, is expected to be started to establish a durable peace system. In order to avoid the situation in which North Korea will muddle through, however, the United States, Japan, and South Korea need to devise a strategy that can increase their bargaining power. While maintaining the two-path strategy (cooperation and coercion), as enumerated in the Perry report, those three countries need to think seriously about the tasks ahead, and what they should do to make the comprehensive approach successful.

Bipartisan Support in the U.S.

Bipartisan support of the United States should be established. The Clinton Administration should shore up congressional support in carrying out the comprehensive approach, so that the support would play a great role in the progress of U.S.-North Korean relations. None of the actions announced by President Clinton on September 18 to ease sanctions against North Korea require Congressional approval, although the next step - lifting sanctions imposed by legislation - would require

approval.

However, the humbling of the White House over the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) augurs poorly for President Clinton's being able to secure any crowning foreign policy achievement in the last year of his term. Indeed, the defeat was so severe that some Administration and Congressional officials wondered if it would prematurely cripple President Clinton's authority on foreign affairs. The highly partisan atmosphere in Congress had much to do with the defeat, but so did the White House's failure to fight with more determination. The White House needed to start working at least a year ago to help lawmakers understand the intricacies of the test ban treaty. Thus, President Clinton should continue to pay attention to the North Korean issue to prevent it from falling victim to another partisan struggle.

Synergy Effect of Three Channels

The goals and strategies of the comprehensive approach should be pursued on three levels - the South-North and the U.S.-North Korea high-level talks and the four-party talks - so that a "synergistic effect" may be achieved among the three channels. North Korea would target the United States as its counterpart in order to reap the most, while making the least concessions, rather than to negotiate with all three countries, i.e., the U.S., Japan, and South Korea, simultaneously. The government of South Korea would like to dismantle the Cold War structure on the peninsula through the reconciliation and cooperation with the North, by turning the zero-sum relationship between the U.S.-North and the South-North dimensions into the positive sum game. The key is whether Seoul can bear the North's efforts to drive a wedge between the U.S. and South Korea without losing its patience. It is thus strategically recommended that the South Korean government avoid showing its impatience to improve the relations with the North, while the U.S. and Japan continue to remind North Korea of the importance

of inter-Korean talks.

Welcome China and Russia

South Korea, the United States, and Japan should welcome China and Russia in helping to work out problems on the Korean peninsula, while maintaining the tripartite policy coordination as the central mechanism to ensure a united front. In particular, Beijing finds itself in a rather unique position with respect to the Korean question. China has studiously cultivated good relations with the two Koreas on both the military level as well as the political level. While the recent movement of Russia and China toward the North is closely related with their strained relations with the United States, their new approach toward the North could play a positive role in North Korea's reform and openness, and in diluting its hostile attitude toward South Korea. Thus, it is recommended that South Korea, the United States, and Japan take advantage of the strategic cooperation between China and Russia in gaining North Korea's cooperation. Such help could remove barriers to the comprehensive approach.

Multilateral Institutionalization

If the comprehensive approach is implemented, it would contribute to creating a favorable environment for multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia. The Korean government introduced the "Republic of Korea's Paper on Northeast Asia Security Cooperation" at the ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials Meeting (ARF-SOM) in Bangkok on 23-25 May 1994. According to the report, multilateral security cooperation in Northeast Asia, as a form of preventive diplomacy, should be pursued on the basis of the following principles: 1) respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; 2) non-aggression and no threat or use of force; 3) non-intervention in internal affairs; 4) peaceful

settlement of disputes; 5) peaceful coexistence; and 6) democracy and respect for human dignity. This idea has not materialized due to North Korea's refusal. From now, as the North's talks with the U.S. and Japan for diplomatic normalization progress, the North would become less worried that the other participating countries are ganging up against North Korea.

In discussing the launching of a track one multilateral security dialogue in Northeast Asia, however, there should be a clear understanding about the distinction between the Four-Party Talks and the Northeast Asia multilateral security dialogue, which is also referred to as the six-nation dialogue in today's context. The confusion exists largely due to the tendency to identify the security of the Korean Peninsula with that of Northeast Asia.

The Four-Party Talks have a specific aim of negotiating a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula by replacing the armistice with a peace treaty. The four countries share a common understanding that there should be no change or variation to the current framework of the talks. In other words, the Four-Party Talks will not be transformed into a four plus two or two plus four mechanism, as suggested at times by Japan and Russia. While the Korean Peninsula will be discussed in the Northeast Asia multilateral security dialogue, it will not be the sole or central issue of discussion. The multilateral dialogue in Northeast Asia will deal with a broad range of issues related to regional security including traditional political and military issues as well as non-traditional trans-border security threats.¹²

12 Kim Eun-seok, "Multilateral Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia: A South Korean Perspective," *IFANS Review*, Vol.7, No.1, July 1999, pp.54-5.