

Workshop on Denuclearization of Northeast Asia and the World

Session 2

A Comprehensive Agreement on Peace and Security in Northeast Asia
September 15, 2014, Tokyo

“An Observation about the Up-dated Agreement
Mitsuru Kurosawa, Professor, Osaka Jogakuin University

The up-dated version of Mr. Halperin’s paper submitted at this workshop includes some new ideas based on the original paper of December 2011. The new version incorporates some changes and additions in both parts of the process to the agreement and the content of the agreement.

The Content of the Agreement

The Comprehensive Agreement on Peace and Security in Northeast Asia consists of six elements. There is no change to this fundamental structure of the agreement. Among the six elements, 1) Termination of the state of war, 3) Mutual declaration of no hostile intent, 4) Provision of assistance for nuclear and other energy and 6) Nuclear weapons free zone have no change or substantially no change.

Regarding 2) Creation of a permanent council on security, it becomes clear that the council would deal with future security problems, as the phrase in the old version that “the treaty should leave open the question of whether it might also become a forum to deal with future security problems in the region”, has been changed to “to provide a forum to deal with future security problems.”

It seems to me a very good improvement because a permanent council should deal with future security issues “permanently” as a fundamental organization in this area to deal with security issues.

Regarding 5) Termination of sanctions, the phrase “based on its nuclear programs as long as it fully adhered to the treaty” is deleted, and the reference to the U.S. special cases on sanctions is also deleted. These

deletions do not change the content but make it clearer.

The Elements of the NWFZ

The part of the elements of the NWFZ is almost the same as the original version except the following two deletions and one new paragraph.

First, in paragraph 2, the expression, “DPRK to re-join the NPT” is deleted. Second, all of paragraph 3 about “the precise territorial scope of the non-nuclear commitment” is deleted. These deletions do not change the contents.

At the end of the paper, a new paragraph stating, “One possible approach to them would be through Mongolia which has declared itself to be a nuclear weapons free zone and which has good relations with the DPRK. In fact it might make sense to include Mongolia in the proposed Treaty,” is added.

I quite agree with this opinion as it is a good and reasonable idea to include Mongolia in the process for establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in Northeast Asia. The opposition that Mongolia is not contiguous to other states makes no sense and has no reasonable or logical foundation.

The Process to the Agreement

The most spectacular new development in the new version is the recommendation that Japan should take a leading role in getting the talks underway and Japan should propose a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Northeast Asia.

He proposes that Japan should tie economic assistance within the solution of the abduction issue and with the resumption of the Six Party Talks. It may be a good idea for Japan to go on with the negotiations on the abduction issue taking the Six Party Talks into account.

He proposes the Japanese initiative for a NWFZ in NEA for the following three reasons.

- 1) This proposal would make de-nuclearization more acceptable to

the DPRK as it would involve treaty commitment by ROK and Japan to not develop nuclear weapons, as well as a treaty commitment from the five NWSs not to threaten the DPRK with nuclear weapons.

- 2) This proposal would increase China's interest in securing an agreement considering it has long held concerns that Japan and/or the ROK would develop nuclear weapons.
- 3) A commitment by Japan to participate in a NWFZ would benefit the country by helping to cope with the Asian response to various actions of the Japanese Government in the security field including the assertion of the collective self-defense, the expansion of Japan's security role, the revival of Japan's nationalism, and Japanese nuclear weapons capability.

I also highly recommend the Japanese Government to play a more active role for establishing a NWFZ in NEA.

Although he mentions that the first step in the process must be to find a way to bring the U.S. and the DPRK to the negotiating table, and recommends a new approach which takes account of where we are today and the fundamental interests of the two sides, his conclusion is that this gap still needs to be closed. However, there is no mention how to close this gap.

I personally believe that the key player in the security issue in Northeast Asia in general, and in the North Korean nuclear issue in particular is the United States. He characterizes U.S. attitude as a policy of strategic patience but it seems to me a policy of just wait and see and no action. Under the last two administrations, the Clinton and Bush Administrations, they kept a policy of just wait and see and no action, and at the end of the administrations, they started active negotiations with the DPRK resulting in getting nothing and losing something such as delisting the DPRK with no reward from the DPRK.

I hope the Obama Administration will not repeat this pattern of behavior, but engage in this issue earlier and more seriously.