

**The UN and Non-Governmental Roles
in Keeping on the Track the Negotiation and Implementation of the
Agreements
toward Peace and Denuclearization in Northeast Asia**

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Introduction

After taking office in May 2017, Moon Jae-in, President of the ROK (Republic of Korea), called to Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) State Committee, to participate in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games and to resume inter-Korean dialogues, first in Berlin in July and again in New York in September. Kim Jong-un responded to it in his 2018 New Year's address. Since then, the international community has been witnessing dramatic changes on the Korean Peninsula, including a very much positive result of the inter-Korean Summit on April 27, 2018 and ongoing diligent efforts for a historic US-DPRK Summit.

At this stage of the evolution of the efforts for peace and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and beyond, it will be meaningful to consider in detail about some critical issues that may come up in the near future after a bilateral summit reaches any agreements. The process of negotiations for acceptable measures and their implementation that follow the summit agreements would not be straight-forward but possibly take a winding course. This paper discusses on the roles of the UN and non-governmental players in keeping on the track such negotiation and implementation processes.

Consolidation of Clear Common Goals through Multilateralization

As for the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, the April 27 Panmunjom Declaration describes that two Koreas "confirmed the common goal of realizing, through complete denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula." But it is not a sole goal but one of four component goals, with three others such as non-aggression agreement, mutual phased disarmament and pursuit of a peace treaty to end Korean War, for a larger goal to "establish a permanent and solid peace regime on the Korean Peninsula."

Any possible agreements on common goals that could be reached at the US-DPRK summit will also come out in similar form of a set of agreements. They will hopefully include a CVI Denuclearization of the

Korean Peninsula on one hand and a properly warranted security assurance on the other hand.

When bilateral agreements at the highest level are reached, a reasonable next step will be to make those common goals more solid and firm through multilateralization. Given recent close contacts among heads of several nations concerned, a six party State Heads Joint Declaration would be a good possibility. It could be organized to take place, for instance, at the 2018 ARF to be held in Singapore in early August this summer. All the six states are members of ARF and the Singapore may be the venue of the coming US-DPRK summit as well.

Prolonged Time Necessary for a Success

The process to materialize the common goals will take time, involving further negotiations for intermediate agreements for measures and their implementation. However, it should not matter once the shared common goals are credible and solid.

There are two major reasons why the process will necessitate considerable time span. One relates to the DPRK's constant contention on the root cause of its embarking the development of nuclear deterrence for self-defense. The DPRK has been showing remarkably consistent position, saying, as is quoted from the statement of its UN Ambassador last October, "Its possession of H-bomb and ICBM is a part of self-defensive measures to put a definite end to the nuclear threats and hostile policy of the U.S. and safeguard its sovereignty, right to existence and development." This logic continues unchanged starting from the DPRK's statement prior to the first underground nuclear test in October 2006 to the recent remarks by Kim Jong-un. This means the DPRK will be ready to discard its nuclear deterrence measures only when it is 100 % confident on the end of such root cause. The verifiable credibility of the US security assurance will be essential for the DPRK's CVID.

The other reason relates to the deeply-rooted mutual distrust among nations concerned. Regarding the relationship between the DPRK and the US, Robert Gallucci, the US chief negotiator of the hard-woven 1994 Agreed Framework, reflects his negotiations with his North Korean counterpart Kang Sok-gu, DPRK Vice Foreign Minister, saying, "Kang Sok-gu told me he didn't trust the United States, and I of course told him that we didn't trust the DPRK."¹ Such distrust has historical roots and is not exceptional between some of other two countries in the region.

Under these circumstances, a CVID process has also to be a step by step trust building process, which will take considerable time to be successful.

A phased approach with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action" adopted in the 2005 Joint Statement is worth revisiting and is revised according to the past lessons.

Supporting, Monitoring and Mediating Roles

It will be important to craft ways and schemes for keeping on the track the negotiations and implementations to materialize the common goals.

UN Roles The roles to be played by the UN are obvious in this respect as was illustrated by Moon Jae-in, who asked Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General, for his and UN's support of the Panmunjom Declaration in May² just after the Inter-Korean Summit. Reportedly, Secretary General Guterres "promised to designate a U.N. disarmament official to work with the South Korean government" to support the peace settlement of the Korean Peninsula.³ The UN can strengthen the foundation of the agreed common goals through resolutions for support adopted in the General Assembly and/or in the Security Council. Such resolutions could even establish a committee to monitor and act, if necessary and appropriate, to sustain the progress toward the common goals.

In addition to such roles to influence and organize member states, the UN has a unique capacity to connect governmental efforts with non-governmental potentiality. It can provide opportunities to establish non-governmental groups, including expert groups, to support the governmental process. The RECNA suggests in its 2015 report⁴ that regional states establish and support an independent expert group, which will monitor and mediate, if necessary, to minimize negative influences upon the diplomatic process exerted by unrelated international incidents and domestic political shifts or conflicts. Such expert group could also be established within the framework of the UN.

Civil Society Roles The roles played by civil society, including parliamentarians, journalists, academics and expert communities, are substantial in sustaining the progress. One of their key roles is to keep the public receiving timely and unbiased information.

Given substantial division in the public opinions in the US, the ROK and Japan regarding the way how the peace process should be designed, the Governments of these countries will be exposed to domestic pressures in different directions. Influential civil society groups, such as the association of nuclear-free local authorities, religious groups for peace, parliamentarians network for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and physician groups have already considerable experiences in the peace and

denuclearization process in Northeast Asia. Their expertise should attract more attention than ever in the current diplomatic opportunities in the region.

The below are just a few examples for their past activities.

A “Joint Statement by Parliamentarians of Japan and the Republic of Korea on Denuclearization of Northeast Asia” was issued in May 2010 and was endorsed by ninety-three cross-party parliamentarians from the two countries as of July 2011. They stated “Security based on nuclear deterrence will not bring real peace to the region. Rather, it will perpetuate insecurity rooted in arms races of distrust and never-ending confrontation,” and argued for a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia.

An international organization Mayors for Peace, headed by Mayor of Hiroshima, and a national organization National Council of Japan Nuclear Free Local Authorities, headed by Mayor of Nagasaki, as well as 546 individual mayors in Japan as of 2017, endorsed the ‘Statement of Support for a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone’, saying “it is an urgent and timely initiative both for strengthening the global tide toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World and for achieving regional stability and peace in Northeast Asia.”

In addition, people of faith in Japan has initiated their call for Japan to act toward a nuclear-free Northeast Asia.

These examples illustrate potential roles to be played by civil society in coming period of negotiations and implementation to achieve the agreed common goals. Their role will be especially important in their capacity to provide unbiased reliable information to the ordinal public, which will be effective for mediation among different public opinions and political forces.

¹ Robert Gallucci, An ACA Press Conference, “Progress and Challenges In Denuclearizing North Korea,” *Arms Control Today*, May 2002

² Yonhap, “President Moon requests U.N. role in building peace with North Korea,” May 1, 2018

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2018/05/01/0301000000AEN20180501006251315.html>

³ Jennie Oh, “U.N. chief agrees to participate in Korea peace efforts,” *UPI*, May 1, 2018 https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2018/05/01/UN-chief-agrees-to-participate-in-Korea-peace-efforts/2631525160950/

⁴ Satoshi HIROSE, Keiko NAKAMURA, Tatsujiro SUZUKI and Hiromichi UMEBAYASHI, “Proposal: A Comprehensive Approach to a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone,” March 2015.

http://www.recna.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/recna/bd/files/Proposal_E.pdf