



**Third Pugwash Workshop on
East Asian Security**
Beijing, China, 13-16 April 2004

Workshop Report
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The Third Pugwash Workshop on East Asian Security was held in Beijing at the Daiyoutai Hotel, 13-16 April, 2004, as a follow-up to the First Pugwash Workshop held in Seoul, South Korea, in April 2001 and the Second in March 2002 in Beijing. More than 30 participants from the US, Japan, Russia, Italy, Germany, China, and North and South Korea actively took part in the workshop. As last time this third workshop was exceptionally well organized and hosted by the Chinese Pugwash Group and the Chinese Peoples' Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPD).



The meeting was not only timely but urgent due to the long impasse over the North Korean nuclear issue. Active participation of all parties concerned including North and South Korea made the workshop a useful forum in building confidence and fostering mutual understanding.

Shortly after the workshop, the North Korean leader, Chairman Kim Jong Il, only two weeks after a visit by U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney, paid a surprise visit to China raising high hopes for an early negotiated solution to the nuclear problem. He conferred with the Chinese leaders and expressed his willingness to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis and committed North Korea to the third round of the six-party talks. Now it is certain that the third round of the six-party talk will be held by June this year to find a negotiated solution to the problem.

Washington and Pyongyang have both assured the Chinese leadership that they hope to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis peacefully with the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapons free Korean peninsula. If the two sides work together and press on with six-party talks, there is much hope for a peaceful end to the 19-month-old standoff.

The overall theme of this workshop was how to end the Cold War between the US and North Korea, and to create a new security framework of dialogue in order to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully.

Situation on the Korean Peninsula

The first session dealt with the situation on the Korean peninsula assessing some positive and negative developments.

On the positive side, it was reported that private as well as official contacts and visits between North and South Korea increased since the June 2000 summit between Chairman Kim Jong Il and President Kim Dae Jung. The current government is actively following this policy of rapprochement and reconciliation. In spite of the current nuclear crisis, these contacts are expanding cooperation between the two Koreas. More people in South Korea feel confident that the nuclear issue can be resolved peacefully through dialogue and engagement with North Korea. Many new communications spurred up in spite of the crisis and direct dialogues even on sensitive issues established, even as the US continues to reject broad engagement with North Korea. But an increasing number of young South Koreans regard the US as greater threat than North Korea and view the US military presence in South Korea as the root cause of tension and instability in Korea.

On the negative side, the frequent US-South Korean military exercises were mentioned as a security threat by North Korean participants. They argued that these exercises not only increase tension but also greatly damage the North Korean economy. The recent relocation plan of the US bases in South Korea to outside of North Korean artillery range was interpreted as a US plan to

attack North Korea. It was pointed out that as anti-US sentiment is growing in South Korea and inter-Korean relations are improving, major adjustment in the US-South Korean military alliance is needed.

Another problem mentioned was the construction of a dam by North Korea near the border to generate electricity that has caused much environmental damages as well as economic losses in South Korea. In response to the dam, South Korea constructed a dam to prevent any damages which might be caused by an accident. Participants from North and South Korea agreed that there must be better communication and mutual exchanges of information to prevent such problems in the future. A South Korean participant mentioned that the money could be used better to help the North Korean people instead of wasting it on precautionary measures.

On the nuclear crisis

The second session was devoted to the on-going nuclear crisis in Korea. Although the first nuclear crisis could be averted by diplomatic efforts between the US and North Korea, hostility and mutual distrust between the Korean War enemies still persist. After the Geneva Framework Agreement in 1994, North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear facilities and to remain in the NPT regime. The US started to supply heavy oil to North Korea as compensation for the loss of energy. The two light water reactors (LWR) under financial commitments of South Korea, Japan and the EU which were to replace the North Korean reactors started later than expected. The Clinton administration, however, failed in fulfilling the Geneva Agreed Framework with North Korea, especially the lifting of sanctions and normalisation of relations. U.S. President Clinton envisioned visiting North Korea near the end of his term of office in order to strike a deal on the nuclear and missile issues with North Korea. Due to the circumstances, however, he left office without settling these security issues with North Korea.



Some Chinese, North and South Korean participants

For his successor President Bush the agreement reached under Clinton was not acceptable. The Bush administration branded North Korea as a member of the "axis of evil" in early 2002 and even rejected bilateral talks. The US regarded North Korea as a candidate for a pre-emptive military strike which intensified North Korea's distrust of the US. The new North Korean policy under President Bush was isolation, sanction and regime change.

The second nuclear crisis erupted in October 2002 when the US charged that North Korea was working on a clandestine uranium enrichment program (HEU) for nuclear weapons which it allegedly admitted during the special envoy James Kelly's visit to North Korea. North Korea rebuffed this allegation and insisted that it had never admitted to the US allegation that it had such HEU program nor that it pursued such program. North Korea states that it had only assured that it is entitled to acquire even more powerful weapons to defend itself against the US hostility. The US stopped delivery of heavy oil to North Korea, as North Korea had allegedly violated the 1994 Geneva Framework Agreement by having the HEU program, and demanded immediate stop of the clandestine nuclear activities. North Korea responded by restarting its reactor which had been frozen since 1994 and asked the IAEA inspectors to leave the country. In addition, it declared on January 10, 2003 that it is leaving the NPT effective from the next day.



North and South Korean participants engaged in serious discussions

North Korea demanded direct bilateral talks to resolve the issue but the US insisted on complete dismantlement of clandestine nuclear activities before any talk could begin. The Korean peninsula was again focal point of an international crisis and military tension increased. North Korea seriously believed that the US would strike even before the invasion of Iraq. With the escalation of military tension between the US and North Korea, China called on the US and North Korea for direct negotiations to resolve the issue.

The Six-party talks and their prospects

In April 2003 China succeeded in bringing the two conflict parties together and the first round of the three-party talk was held in Beijing. The US and North Korea, however, came to Beijing expecting the other side would make a compromise first and refused to negotiate directly, but they agreed to engage in multilateral talks. The US stressed its position that North Korea must first destroy all its clandestine nuclear activities before any negotiation could start. North Korea insisted that the US must stop its hostile policy toward North Korea and sign a peace treaty to end the long hostility.

From May 2003 North Korea somewhat softened its hard-line attitude towards the US and agreed to join a multilateral forum including all parties in the region. China hosted the first six-

party talk in Beijing in August 2003 where the US, China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Russia attended. Although this first round of multilateral forum failed to reach any settlement, it was a success as they agreed to meet again. The US and North Korea failed to negotiate directly during the meeting.

After intense diplomatic efforts by China supported by South Korea and Russia, the second round of the six-party talk finally took place in Beijing in February 2004 and brought some concrete results. North Korea proposed to freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear facilities in return for the security guarantee that the US must promise not to attack and to deliver some economic compensation for its energy losses. South Korea proposed to offer economic assistances in response to the nuclear freeze which was supported by China and Russia. All parties agreed to continue the dialogue process and to have the third round of the talk before June 2004. In addition, they agreed to have some working group meetings prior to the talk in order to narrow some differences on how to end the stand-off. These working group meetings are expected to clarify complex technical issues such as HEU and CVID.

Although there is still a long way to go until a negotiated solution to the nuclear issue can be found, all parties agreed that there is no other alternative to the multilateral forum in resolving the nuclear problem peacefully.

The key to success of the multi-lateral approach very much depends on the US stance that North Korea should completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantle all its nuclear activities before any negotiation can start. North Korea should show more flexibility in its demands for immediate stop of hostile policy and signing of a peace treaty by the US. It should also consider and accept security guarantees offered by other countries in the region. Even one US participant admitted that CVID has been the US policy under President Bush towards North Korea from the beginning and this leaves little room for diplomatic negotiations. North Korean participants demanded the US to make a bold switchover in its stance and take a trustworthy practical action, as North Korea has already proposed to freeze and dismantle all its nuclear activities even including the peaceful use of nuclear technology, in order to ultimately sustain the Korean peninsula as nuclear-weapons free.

In search of sustainable peace and stability

The third session was devoted to the prospect of sustainable peace and stability in North East Asia. All agreed that a peaceful resolution of the nuclear crisis and the ending of hostile relations

between the US and North Korea are the keys to sustainable peace and stability in the region. In addition to great expectations of the six-party talk process, there was a serious discussion on the applicability of the Libyan model to North Korea. It was mentioned that 9 months long secret and direct negotiations between Libya and GB as well as the US were the key to success in the Libyan case. A South Korean participant urged that the US should negotiate directly with North Korea, and South Korea should play a mediator role in order to strike a deal similar to the Libyan case. But the North Korean participants rejected this approach because the situation in Korea is different and the model is not applicable, as the US must end its hostile policy towards North Korea and sign a peace treaty replacing the armistice agreement. North Koreans stressed that the Korean War was still not over and needs to be terminated first peacefully.



A Chinese treat after the workshop

The two US participants who are experienced in dealing with North Korea for many years told the North Koreans that there were many missed opportunities in the past. According to them, North Korea missed these windows of opportunities, mainly due to its inflexibility and misunderstanding. They urged North Korea not to wait until the change of administration in the US but to be prepared for the next window of opportunity.

In the final session there was an open discussion on the feasibility of the six-party talks as a new security framework for the region. Although the benefits of such an institution in the region were mentioned, however, due to the uncertainty of the multilateral dialogue process and the military tension on the Korean peninsula, it was clear that it is still premature to talk about such a security

mechanism in the region. In the meantime, neutral institutions such as Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs could and should continue to provide a forum for informal dialogues among experts and policy makers to build confidence and to improve the security environment. All in all, the workshop was a success as many renowned experts from all countries concerned got together and shared background information as well as different perspective on various issues. It was clear that there are different perceptions on threat and security interest, especially on the nuclear issue; therefore, such dialogue is much needed in order to better understand each other's position. The workshop certainly contributed much in building confidence and in understanding the complex issues affecting regional security and stability. Immediately after the workshop, Secretary General of Pugwash, Prof. Paolo Cotta-Ramusino, and Pugwash Council member, Dr. Mark B. M. Suh, visited North Korea in order to seek further dialogue with North Korean authorities and to discuss about future Pugwash activities in the region. The Fourth Pugwash Workshop on East Asian Security was agreed to be held in Pyongyang in the near future.