

**President Bush's Unilateralism verse  
Kim Jong Il's Brinkmanship**

**by**

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A North Korean diplomat and I recently reminisced over lunch about the first US-North Korea nuclear crisis of 1993-94. We had worked closely together during the negotiations that led to the US-DPRK Agreed Framework that had ended the crisis, and then collaborated on the accord's implementation between 1994 and 1997. At the time, I was the North Korean Affairs officer at the Department of State and he was assigned to the DPRK Mission to the United Nations in New York. Now, eight years after the agreement's signing, we again exchanged friendly greetings and shook hands. Our voices expressed pleasure at meeting again, but our broad smiles masked a shared concern about our two nations' still troubled relations and the impending second nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. His eyes mirrored the concern within him about the uncertain future path our governments.

Calmly he said, "De ja vu! Here we go again." "Yes," I agreed, "our two nations unfortunately seem headed back to confrontation and mistrust because of the nuclear issue." We exchanged memories of our efforts in 1993 and 1994 to prevent war and to promote a diplomatic resolution of the first nuclear crisis. Our efforts, we affirmed to each other, had contributed to the Agreed Framework. Neither of us believed the agreement had been rendered void, at least not yet. In fact, he emphasized that his government does not consider it "nullified." It would have been futile to argue with him about the past. At a time of impending crisis, my prior experience as a diplomat had taught me to seek common ground rather than widen the gap by challenging his perception. Instead, we agreed it was now imperative that our two governments to work via diplomatic channels to find a peaceful and durable solution to the impending new crisis. Otherwise, we knew without uttering the words, a second Korean War would become a concrete possibility in the months ahead.

The current crisis has its genesis in U.S. Department of State Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly's visit to Pyongyang on October 1-3, 2002. Many in Washington, Seoul, Tokyo, Beijing and Pyongyang had hoped the visit would set the stage for a diplomatic breakthrough in the long stalled US-DPRK dialogue. Since June 2001, Secretary of State Powell had repeatedly and publicly assured North Korea and the international community that the United States stood ready, any time and any where without preconditions, to resume dialogue with Pyongyang. Actually, however, there were preconditions. First Pyongyang was to demonstrate its earnestness by taking concrete steps to address Washington's concerns regarding the nuclear, missile, conventional forces reduction and humanitarian issues. Finally, in April 2002, the Department of State let journalists know that a diplomatic delegation was about to travel to Pyongyang. But then nothing happened. Again, at the end of June, preparations were underway to resume the US-DPRK dialogue in Pyongyang. Then the second naval clash in the West Sea occurred at the end of June. North Korea's navy sank a South Korea vessel, killing several South Korean sailors. Again, the State Department delegation postponed its departure for Pyongyang.

Tensions subsided when North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in July extended olive branches to Seoul, Tokyo and Washington. His apology to Seoul for the June West Sea incident surprised everyone. A second surprise followed at the end of July when he offered to reopen North-South dialogue, to address Japan's claims that North Korea had abducted several Japanese citizens, and invited Washington to send a delegation to Pyongyang. Expectations soared that there would be

rapid progress toward reconciliation and resolution of long outstanding issues. Seoul and Tokyo responded by resuming their dialogue with Pyongyang, but Washington deferred.

In Washington, three factions had formed regarding policy toward North Korea. One group urged dialogue and negotiation with Pyongyang, a second preferred dialogue but without negotiation, and a third faction argued for a return to containment without any dialogue or negotiation. The State Department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs advocated negotiation, but the Under Secretary for International Security Affairs, John Bolton, firmly opposed this. The Department of Defense was similarly divided, but the generals at the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) opposed both dialogue and negotiation. They advocated an end to engagement and a return to containment. All the while, the reasons for this bureaucratic squabbling remained shielded from public view. By August, President Bush had fled Washington's oppressive summer heat and humidity for his Texas ranch. Preoccupied with the forthcoming mid-term Congressional elections and Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction, his Administration's North Korea policy advisers continued to argue among themselves.

Meanwhile, Pyongyang's positive and constructive overtures to Seoul and Tokyo in August and September, especially Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's summit with Kim Jong Il, compelled Bush to decide how to deal with North Korea. At the beginning of October, State Department Assistant Secretary Kelly was dispatched to Pyongyang to engage his North Korean counterparts on outstanding bilateral issues. Accompanying him were Lt. General Dunn of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Ambassador Jack Pritchard, U.S. representative to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), David Straub, State Department Office of Korean Affairs Director, Michael Green, National Security Council Staff, and an interpreter. Kelly's foremost objective was to obtain North Korea's reaction to evidence that it had initiated a second, clandestine nuclear weapons program. In Kelly's first meeting, DPRK Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Gye-Kwan rejected the U.S. claims. The next day, however, DPRK First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and North Korea's chief negotiator during the US-DPRK Agreed Framework negotiations, while reading from a prepared statement confirmed that North Korea had in fact initiated a highly enriched uranium (HEU) program for the purpose of producing material of nuclear weapons. Stunned and apparently frustrated, Kelly and his delegation promptly ended the dialogue and departed Pyongyang.

Official silence followed Kelly's departure from Pyongyang. The silence persisted during his stops to brief counterparts in Seoul and Tokyo. Pyongyang, however, claimed in an authoritative Foreign Ministry statement that Kelly had acted in an "arrogant and high handed manner." In Washington, the story finally broke into the press on October 16 when *USA Today* reporter Barbara Slavin gained the first insight into what had happened in Pyongyang. A Bush Administration official, speaking off the record, alleged that North Korea had confirmed that it had committed a "material breach" of the Agreed Framework. Meanwhile, the Bush Administration consulted its allies in Seoul and Tokyo about how to handle the press leak. They concurred that Washington should issue an official statement.

That evening, the White House briefed a small group of reporters from *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *L.A. Times* and *Chicago Tribune* about the story. At the same

time, the State Department spokesman issued a statement in which he said during Kelly's visit, "North Korean officials acknowledged that they have ... a program" to produce enriched uranium (HEU) for nuclear weapons and that they "considered the Agreed Framework nullified." The spokesman also termed North Korea's clandestine action "a serious violation" of the US-DPRK Agreed Framework of 1994, the 1970 Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which North Korea signed in 1985, and the 1992 South-North Korea Declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The statement concluded with a call for a "peaceful resolution of this situation." Later, Secretary of State Powell was quoted as having said, "When we have an agreement between two parties (the U.S. and North Korea) and one says it's nullified, then it looks like it's nullified."

The news shocked, frustrated and disappointed the international community. Once again, concerned nations, particularly South Korea and Japan, confront the possibility of war on the Korean Peninsula to halt North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal. North Korea could take any nuclear weapons it might produce, match them to its ballistic missiles and threaten to attack both South Korea and Japan. Pyongyang could also attempt to export its new, high technology weapons of mass destruction to tense regions like the Middle East. The Japanese people understandably remain focused on resolution of the abducted Japanese citizen's issue. Pyongyang must eventually respond sincerely and compassionately to the Japanese people's concerns. But the gravity and potential consequences of North Korea's new nuclear threat demands attention now.

Ever since confusion over exactly what Kang told Kelly has intensified confusion and mistrust among all the concerned parties. Unfortunately, Kelly's delegation did not obtain a copy of the statement Kang Sok-ju had read. North Korea now refuses to release the statement. Kelly, speaking recently to reporters in Washington, said he had a transcript of the exchange in Pyongyang, but he would not make it public.

**The New Crisis:** Since the middle of October, tensions have steadily intensified in Northeast Asia. The hope that Prime Minister Koizumi excited with his visit to North Korea has turned to anger and frustration. Washington's early October desire to resume dialogue with Pyongyang similarly has turned to anger and frustration. Seoul clings to a waning hope that "sunshine" diplomacy will overcome this new crisis.

On October 26, Presidents Bush and Kim Dae-jung plus Prime Minister Koizumi met for a brief summit after the Los Cabos, Mexico meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC). In their subsequent joint statement, they "called upon North Korea to dismantle this (HEU) program in a prompt and verifiable manner and to come into full compliance with all its international commitments in conformity with North Korea's recent commitment in the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration." They also agreed that "South-North dialogue and the opening of Japan-DPRK normalization talks can serve as important channels to call upon the North to respond quickly and convincingly to the international communities' demands for a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. On November 9, diplomats from the three allies convened a meeting of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TICOG) in Tokyo and released a statement with similar wording.

Leading members and organizations of the international community have moved swiftly to condemn North Korea's breach of its previous promises and called for a prompt, peaceful resolution of the situation. China's previous President Jiang Xemin during his October 25 summit in Texas with President Bush concurred with the international community's desire to see the Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons. On November 14, the executive board of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development organization (KEDO) met in New York. The Board, which includes representatives from the United States, the Republic of Korea, Japan and the European Union, issued a strongly worded statement. They agreed that North Korea's HEU program "threatens regional and international security and undermines the international non-proliferation regime based on the NPT." The board demanded that "North Korea must promptly eliminate its nuclear weapons program in a visible and verifiable manner." To underscore their displeasure with Pyongyang, KEDO announced the suspension of heavy fuel oil deliveries beginning in December 2002.

These developments recall those of ten years ago. In the fall of 1992, Seoul, Tokyo and Washington shared expectations of continuing reconciliation with North Korea. In September, 1992, the North and South Korean prime ministers met in Pyongyang. In New York, the Department of State sent me, then the North Korean affairs officer, to meet North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam. I also had dinner with his subordinates, including now Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Gye Kwan. In Tokyo, plans were being made for another round of Japan-North Korea normalization talks. But then North Korea refused to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Pyongyang had admitted publicly to producing a small amount of plutonium, but the IAEA had evidence that it had produced much more. The first Korean nuclear crisis began quietly that fall on the eve of the South Korean presidential election. By May 1994, a second Korean War had become a real possibility. Fortunately, the October 21, 1994 signing of the US-DPRK Agreed Framework defused the crisis and froze North Korea's nuclear program. (For a detailed discussion of the first Korean nuclear crisis and an unofficial view of the negotiations that produced the Agreed Framework, see the author's book, *Kita chosen – beikokumusho tantokan no koshomiroku* published by *Chuo koron shinsha* in Tokyo in 2000.)

Now, in the fall of 2002, we seem headed toward a second Korean nuclear crisis on the eve of another South Korean election. Without the Agreed Framework, North Korea is not obligated to host IAEA inspections. In 1993, Pyongyang pulled out of the IAEA and threatened to leave the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It remained in the NPT and continued to cooperate with the IAEA only because of the Agreed Framework. Now that both Pyongyang and Washington consider the accord "nullified," North Korea could at anytime tell the IAEA to go home. It could also announce its withdrawal from the NPT. Either step would greatly intensify US-North Korean hostility and tensions in Northeast Asia. Unless the impasse is resolved diplomatically through negotiations, war again will loom as a deadly possibility in Northeast Asia.

**The Agreed Framework - the Old Solution:** Obviously, the 1994 Agreed Framework failed to halt North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Actually, the agreement did not fail. Instead, the governments responsible for the agreement failed to implement it effectively. Also, Washington and Pyongyang had very different reasons for signing the agreement. Washington's foremost priority beginning with the former Bush Administration through the recent Clinton Administration and until the current Bush Administration has been to

disarm North Korea of its weapons of mass destruction. For Washington, its main reasons for signing the Agreed Framework were to:

- preserve the integrity of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT),
- prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in Northeast Asia, and
- prevent North Korea from developing an arsenal of nuclear armed ballistic missiles.

North Korea had very different priorities. Its foremost goal is survival. Pyongyang's leaders see their fate tied either to having weapons of mass destruction to defend their domain from the United States or to make peace with Washington and normalization diplomatic and commercial relations. US-North Korea normalization, they believe, would enable them to re-vitalization North Korea's economy and get them the resources to sustain their military might. In other words, Pyongyang had no intention to disarm. Instead, it saw the Agreed Framework as an exchange. Pyongyang would give up its nuclear ambitions in exchange for peace with the United States and access to the international market. (For an assessment of the Agreed Framework's implementation, see the author's forthcoming book to be published in Tokyo by Chuo koron shinsha and, now being translated into Japanese under the title, *Beyond Negotiation – Implementation of the Agreed Framework*.)

Initially, the Agreed Framework achieved impressive results. North Korea froze its nuclear weapons development program and allowed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections of its nuclear facilities at the Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center. North Korea produced its first plutonium there in a small nuclear reactor provided by the former Soviet Union. Operation of this small, IRT reactor began in 1965. The Soviet Union previously supplied the enriched uranium fuel for the reactor. A second, much larger nuclear reactor began operation in 1985. North Korea has claimed that it designed and built this 5 megawatt reactor without foreign assistance. The larger reactor used uranium fuel. Once the fuel's energy had been consumed in the reactor, the fuel was replaced with new fuel. The old fuel could then be chemically reprocessed to yield plutonium, the core ingredient of a nuclear bomb. In May 1994, North Korea removed the old fuel from its large reactor and threatened to reprocess it. The United States opposed this and warned Pyongyang to stop or face United Nations imposed economic sanctions. North Korea countered that it would consider sanctions an act of war. But in June, 1994, North Korea backed down, opening the way for the Agreed Framework..

North Korea made several other important promises under the Agreed Framework. It promised not to extract the plutonium from the 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods it had removed from the 5 megawatt reactor in May 1994. Instead, it would allow the United States to put this fuel in long term storage at Yongbyon. Ever since, video cameras have monitored the stored fuel and each day IAEA inspectors visit the facility to change the film and to check the condition of the stored fuel. If this stored fuel's plutonium was extracted, it could make about eight nuclear weapons.

At the same time, North Korea stopped construction of its two larger 50 and 200 megawatt nuclear reactors. It claimed these reactors were to produce electricity. The United States decided to prevent their completion so these reactors would not become new sources of plutonium. In exchange for North Korea's agreement, the United States organized an international consortium, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to build two new light water

(LWR) nuclear power plants in North Korea. South Korea and Japan agreed to fund most of the construction costs. Additionally, the United States agreed to pay the cost of annually providing North Korea with 500,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil. The purpose of this oil is to generate an amount of electricity and steam equal to the amount North Korea's incomplete nuclear reactors would have produced had they been built. Later, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, New Zealand, and the European Union began making small contributions to KEDO.

**Broken Promises:** But neither North Korea nor the United States has kept all of their promises. Under the Agreed Framework, Pyongyang promised to cooperate fully with the IAEA's efforts to determine how much plutonium North Korea produced before signing the Agreed Framework. If Pyongyang continued to hide this from the world, later it could assemble this hidden plutonium into nuclear bombs. The United States intelligence community still believes that North Korea has enough old plutonium to make one or two nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the IAEA has not been able to gather the data it needs to determine the approximate amount of plutonium North Korea may possess. North Korea in recent years has claimed it would eventually cooperate with the IAEA. But the Agreed Framework does not require North Korea's cooperation until construction of the two new nuclear reactors is almost complete. At the current pace of construction, reaching this level of construction will take another three or four years.

The Bush Administration, however, has ignored the terms of the Agreed Framework regarding when North Korea was to begin cooperation with the IAEA. Instead, for the past eighteen months, the Bush Administration has insisted that North Korea begin now to reveal to the IAEA how much plutonium it previously produced. North Korea repeatedly responded that the Bush Administration's position is not consistent with the Agreed. In this regard, North Korea is correct. Paragraph six of the agreement's previously confidential appendix reads,

When a significant portion of the LWR project is completed, as described in the Agreed Framework, the DPRK will come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement (INFIRC/403), including permitting the IAEA access to additional sites and information the IAEA may deem necessary to verify the accuracy and completeness of the DPRK's initial (1992) report on all nuclear material in the DPRK.

North Korea has not kept several of its pledges. Specifically, its acquisition of uranium enrichment equipment broke the promises referred to in paragraph two of the Agreed Framework reads,

Both sides reaffirmed the importance of attaining the objectives contained in the August 12, 1994 Agreed Statement between the U.S. and the DPRK and upholding the principles of the June 11, 1993 Joint Statement of the U.S. and the DPRK to achieve peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.

The June 11, 1993 US-DPRK Joint Statement commit both sides to support the 1992 North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. When Seoul and Pyongyang signed this declaration on January 20, 1992, they promised:

- not to test, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons.
- to use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes, and
- not to possess facilities for nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment.

Early in October, North Korean First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Sok-ju shocked and disappointed the international community when he confirmed to United States Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly that Pyongyang had obtain equipment to enrich uranium for the purpose of producing nuclear weapons. Kang Sok-ju was North Korea's chief negotiator during the 1993-94 US-DPRK negotiations that led to the Agreed Framework. His statement to Mr. Kelly confirmed suspicions long held by some in the United States government that North Korea would attempt to secretly resume its nuclear weapons program.

**Old Options for the New Problem:** Now our first priority must be to resolve this second Korean nuclear crisis before it escalates to war. Our options today are the same was in 1993. We could appease North Korea, confront it militarily or engage it in negotiations. Appeasement is unacceptable. The result would be a nuclear armed North Korea which could then threaten nuclear war unless the international community conceded to its future demands. This is not acceptable to any nation.

War might eventually prove necessary to halt North Korea's desire for a nuclear arsenal. The United States and its allies would certainly be victorious. But war would inflict terrible suffering on the Korean and Japanese people. It would also severely disrupt economic activity throughout East Asia. Even more fearful would be the risk of nuclear confrontation between the United States and China, not to mention Russia. Obviously, a negotiated settlement must be the preferred option.

Both Pyongyang and Washington claim they want peace, not war. Yet both cling to similarly failed strategies that have accented coercion over negotiation. Pyongyang persists in trying to compel the United States to initiate negotiations by threatening to resume its nuclear weapons program. Washington at the same time is trying to force Pyongyang to submit to the threat of economic and diplomatic isolation unless it gives up its nuclear weapons program. Neither side trusts the other. Both claim the other side must take the first step to break the diplomatic impasse. Their coercive strategies so far have only increased the tension and risk of war on the Korean Peninsula.

**Diplomatic Dancing:** Paradoxically, both sides have been negotiating indirectly via their official statements and comments to the mass media. Initially On October 15, Pyongyang's government controlled Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) claimed Assistant Secretary Kelly had "behaved as if he were an 'inspector' during his visit to Pyongyang" in early October. He was accused on having been "extremely high-handed and arrogant." The same day, Pyongyang's main



daily newspaper the *Nodong shinmun* commented, “If the U.S. foreign policy makers persistently pursue the hard-line and hostile policy toward the DPRK, relations will never improve.”

Once tempers in Pyongyang had cooled a bit, North Korea’s Foreign Ministry issued an authoritative statement on October 25. After the usual preamble of accusations aimed at Pyongyang’s foe, the spokesman claimed, “... that the DPRK was entitled to possess not only nuclear weapons but any type of weapon more powerful than that so as to defend its sovereignty ... from the ever-growing U.S. nuclear threat.” “Nevertheless,” the Foreign Ministry spokesman continued, the DPRK, with greatest magnanimity, clarified that it was ready to seek a negotiated settlement of this issue on the following three conditions: firstly, if the U.S. recognizes the DPRK’s sovereignty, secondly, if it assures the DPRK of non-aggression and thirdly, if the U.S. does not hinder the economic development of the DPRK (i.e. no new economic sanctions). “

North Korea’s Mission to the United Nations followed up with additional clarification of Pyongyang’s position regarding negotiations. First the mission issued a press release that was quoted in part in the October 26 issue of the *New York Times*. But the headline *New York Times* read: North Korea Demands U.S. Agree to Non-aggression Pact” (see page A8). Not only was the headline misleading, the word “nonaggression” was misspelled. No such “pact” had been demanded, but it was too late. Secretary Powell during an October 28 roundtable discussion with journalists said, “And so the North Korean regime has put out another statement this past Friday which demands a treaty of some kind with the United States before they will do anything about this (HEU nuclear issue). Well, that’s unacceptable.” On November 10 DPRK Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Han Song-ryul, speaking on instructions from Pyongyang, made clear in his interview with the *New York Times* that his government is prepared to negotiate.

None of this should be difficult for Washington to accept. After all, North Korea is asking only that the Bush Administration reaffirm the commitments the Clinton Administration made in the June 11, 1993 US-DPRK Joint Statement:

- assurances against the threat and use of force, including nuclear weapons;
- peace and security in a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, including impartial application of full scope safeguards, mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty, and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; ...

I helped draft it during discussions with North Korean diplomats while we sipped orange juice in a small bagel shop on East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan. Some of the language was taken directly from the United Nations Charter. The only difference now is that North Korea wants these commitments formalized in a “legally” binding diplomatic accord.

President Bush took a concrete step toward negotiations in his November 15 statement. He affirmed that the United States and its allies “are united in our desire for a peaceful resolution” of the current impasse. After confirming that “the United States has no intention of invading North Korea,” he recalls that in June 2001, Washington “offered to pursue a comprehensive dialogue with North Korea.” But now Pyongyang’s “covert nuclear weapons program” blocks the way, Bush continues, to “significantly improved” relations. He concludes that “the only option ... is for North

Korea to completely and visibly eliminate its nuclear weapons program. This demand is entirely consist with the promises Pyongyang made in the 1992 South-North Declaration on the De-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the 1994 US-DPRK Agreed Framework.

**Diplomacy Now, Military Action Later?** Demanding that North Korea discard its uranium enrichment program is neither a foreign policy nor a strategy. Foremost it is a preferred position of one clique inside the Bush Administration. Meanwhile, the squabbling continues within the Administration over how best to deal with North Korea. President Bush appears to be moving away from his preference for unilateral military action toward multilateral diplomacy with decisive military action held in reserve for possible eventual use. Four key factors may account for this:

- Bush now has broad support in both Houses of the U.S. Congress. He now can afford to risk some conservative Congressmen while appealing to the broader spectrum of Republicans with a slightly more moderate and patient approach toward Pyongyang, at least initially.
- Bush's current priority is Iraq, not Pyongyang. He does not wish to over extend the U.S. military's capability by having it deal simultaneously with two wars, one in the Middle East and the other in Northeast Asia... Bush may hope that by confronting, and if necessary defeating Iraq, North Korea will back down without insisting on concessions.
- Bush does not wish to alienate China or Russia, at least not until he is confident that a broad and firm international coalition supports his stance toward North Korea.
- Nor does bush wish to alienate his allies in Seoul and Tokyo. At the recent APEC Summit in Mexico, and again at the early November TCOG meeting in Tokyo, Bush rather reluctantly refrained from insisting upon the inclusion in these meetings' trilateral statements a call for strident economic sanctions on North Korea. Instead, he settled for their support in having KEDO suspend its heavy fuel oil shipments to North Korea effective in December 2002.

Washington could be expected to intensify its pressure on Pyongyang beginning early next year, but by then it has not begun to dismantle its HEU equipment. South Korea is preoccupied with its election of a new president in December. Once elected, he will need some time to organize his new government prior to addressing the North Korean situation. Japan is similarly preoccupied with resolution of the North Korean abduction issue. Additionally, both capitals prefer that there be ample time to focus diplomatic pressure on Pyongyang. These considerations coincide with Washington's current focus on Iraq. But next February, the new Republican controlled U.S. Congress can be expected to begin pressing the White House for action on the North Korean issue. Seoul will be ready to move on the issue. Also by then, diplomats will have had ample time to convince Pyongyang to junk its HEU program. If it has not done so by then, the Bush Administration is certain to review its options, including military action.

Now is the time for cool headed, quiet diplomacy. All the concerned parties must remain engaged with North Korea. Washington, Seoul, Tokyo, Beijing and Moscow, *et. al.* would do well to support the IAEA's efforts to inspect North Korea's nuclear program. Pyongyang should allow IAEA inspectors to see its new uranium enrichment equipment and place it under IAEA seal pending eventual destruction. The TICOG group could team up with Beijing, Moscow and Tokyo to declare that no single or team of nations would initiate an armed, first strike against either Korea so long as both are making substantive progress toward a transparent, nuclear free Korean

Peninsula. Washington should then engage Pyongyang in negotiations without preconditions, as the Bush Administration has long avowed.

**Obstacles to a Peaceful Resolution:** Arrogance and mutual mistrust, however, are obstructing the start of negotiations. Pyongyang's breach of the Agreed Framework destroyed the feeble mutual trust developed between Pyongyang and Washington since the Agreed Framework's signing. Pyongyang's secret acquisition of uranium enrichment equipment during the past two years, possibly from Pakistan, has strengthened the hand of hardliners in Washington who oppose the resumption of any negotiations with North Korea. Pyongyang's leadership must recognize that building a nuclear weapons arsenal and trying to coerce nations into negotiating with it are dangerous and self-defeating strategies. Pyongyang must also recognize that the most effective way to earn enduring respect for its sovereignty is to act in accordance with international standards of conduct, which include cooperating fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Unfortunately, North Korea's official statements continue to ignore these facts. Instead, they emphasize North Korea's "sovereign" right to possess nuclear weapons. Such remarks form formidable obstacles to the opening of negotiations.

North Korea's military probably believes its own propaganda. The North Korean People's Army's claims a legacy of invincibility that it traces to its claims of having defeated two of the world's superpowers in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Japan and the United States. Of course, this is more imagined than real. The trilateral forces of the United States, South Korea and Japan could rapidly overwhelm North Korea. In the process, however, North Korea's million man army, and arsenal of long range artillery and ballistic missiles could wreck havoc on Seoul and some of Japan's major cities. North Korea's military. Pyongyang might hope that this would compel Washington to seek a negotiated end to the confrontation.

At the same time, the Bush Administration persists in rejecting the need to negotiate. Some of its most influential officials believe North Korea can be compelled to surrender its weapons of mass destruction without negotiations and compensation. No nation in history has voluntarily disarmed itself. Today, the Bush Administration sends billions of dollars in aid to the former Soviet Union and some of its former Republics in exchange for their continuing cooperation with nuclear disarmament programs.

Many in Washington also believe that Kim Jong Il will concede to Washington's demands because Kim's first goal is the survival of his regime. Faced with a choice between war and defeat or giving up his nuclear weapons program, some key Bush Administration officials are convinced that Kim Jong Il will surrender in order to save his regime. Most likely this is only wishful thinking. Submission to Washington could end rather than perpetuate the Kim Jong Il regime. Kim's power depends on his continued faithfulness to his father's legacy and the loyalty of the regime's foremost supporters, its army generals. Giving up their nuclear weapons development program and ballistic missiles without compensation would discredit Kim Jong Il in the eyes of his army and people. His generals could be expected to dismiss him as their "Great Leader."

This latter possibility raises a very sensitive issue: What is the Bush Administration's goal regarding North Korea? Is President Bush concerned primarily with disarming North Korea of its nuclear weapons? Or is the Bush Administration intent upon also toppling the Kim Jong Il regime? At this point, the extent of the Bush Administration's goals remains unclear. Official statements consistently and convincingly assert that the United States seeks to peacefully disarm North Korea of its weapons of mass destruction. But President Bush's personal views, as recorded in the recent book *Bush at War*, also convincingly indicate that he may have a second goal - ending the Kim Jong Il regime. The ambiguity of these goals, whether intentional or not on the part of President Bush, will only delay the start of US-DPRK negotiations. If in fact negotiations begin, this ambiguity of Bush's official policy versus his personal preferences could eventually prevent a negotiated settlement of the current Korean nuclear crisis.

The Agreed Framework did not fail. It is a lifeless document. The governments responsible for it failed to implement it effectively and truthfully. When the agreement was being negotiated, the goals were clear. All sides wanted to pursue a durable, nuclear free peace for the Korean Peninsula. Now, however, the goals are more ambiguous and less compatible. This will complicate reaching a peaceful resolution. Nevertheless, just like a decade ago, failure to achieve a negotiated settlement would lead to a second Korean War. In the end, the price of war would far exceed the cost of any concessions that might be needed to resolve the current impasse using diplomacy and negotiations.