

No Good Choices – The Implications of a Nuclear North Korea  
Testimony to the  
U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee  
Subcommittees on Asia and the Pacific  
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by  
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I want to thank the Chairman and members of the subcommittees for the honor of appearing before you today to discuss the urgent and serious issue of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula. It is a great privilege to provide any insight or information I can to Congress, the heart of our great American democracy. And yet I am sorry to say that the security of America is increasingly threatened by the long-standing and continuing nuclear crisis in North Korea and that America is not prepared to deal with the full implications of that threat. The failure of American efforts – stemming from both democratic and republican administrations – has allowed North Korea to consolidate its nuclear capabilities and has increased the risk that nuclear weapons will be used against the United States, its allies and its interests worldwide. As a result, nuclear weapons could become the currency of power in East Asia and elsewhere, to the detriment of American interests.

That being said, it would be irresponsible to assume that the worst case about Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities is the most likely case. The United States cannot be certain that North Korea *has* nuclear weapons or even that it can *produce* nuclear weapons. Our policies should be based on facts, not assumptions. But, in the end, US policy must fully test the proposition that North Korea would be willing to verifiably trade all of its nuclear capabilities away for some as yet undetermined set of incentives/disincentives, regardless of North Korea's actual nuclear capabilities. This

has never been done. I repeat, the US has no conclusive way of knowing if North Korea would be willing to eliminate its nuclear capabilities as part of a diplomatic settlement. We have pieces of information and partial evidence that can help us predict, but no conclusive answers. Diplomatic efforts, as many knowledgeable analysts have predicted, may well fail and I am personally skeptical that North Korea will trade away its nuclear program, in current circumstances. But the sincere and public attempt to pursue this path by the United States is an absolute pre-requisite if we are to gain the support we need from states in the region and around the world to deal with the consequences of a “no” from the North. In addition, a true diplomatic attempt is also a first step to taking those measures needed to protect ourselves and our allies, to reinforce deterrence on the peninsula, to prevent North Korea’s capabilities from spreading to others, and to prevent North Korea’s proliferation from becoming a “how-to guide” for others such as Iran. It appears, at least from press reports, that the administration is trying to move too quickly to the next step in the process – coercive steps against the North -- without laying the adequate ground work by truly exhausting diplomatic avenues. We must never forget that within South Korea and even China, the leaders must manage their own internal political processes and especially in South Korea, demonstrating our bone fide efforts to pursue a diplomatic solution is a critical step to gaining support for stronger measures that may become necessary.

My testimony today will touch on two main themes. The first is to assess what we know and do not know about North Korea’s nuclear capabilities. Much has been said in public about the nature of the North Korean nuclear threat, but closer examination suggests our information is not quite as conclusive as some would believe. While currently holding no clearances, I worked at the Department of Energy during the 1990s, served as the US Government on-site monitor at North Korea’s nuclear facilities in 1995 and 1996, and tracked North Korea closely for 15 years - experiences which give me at least a basic capability to assess what we do and do not know. The second theme is in many ways more important as it touches not on the narrow issue of North Korea’s nuclear status, but to the larger role of the US in East Asia. Current US policy toward the North is based on a set of assumptions about how our partners in the region see us and our objectives, and

where their key interests lie. On almost all counts, the assumptions of the current administration in the region are appear questionable and put American interests in long-term jeopardy.

### **Nature of the Threat**

In assessing the nuclear capabilities of North Korea, policy makers and analysts are bombarded with a lot of soft information and speculation, but very few facts. I have previously referred to North Korea as an intelligence black hole. Thus, I find it useful to divide information into categories of what we “know”, what is “reasonable” to believe, and what we cannot know for sure.

The bottom line is that North Korea may, as they themselves now claim, possess enough nuclear material to produce nuclear weapons. It is reasonable to assume that given the capabilities of North Korea’s facilities and the amount of time they have spent on nuclear pursuits that they have enough technical skill and material to produce at least a basic nuclear device. Those responsible for our national security cannot assume otherwise. Yet despite our best efforts to uncover the truth, very little is known with certainty about North Korea’s nuclear capabilities. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld got it right when he said on February 10<sup>th</sup> that “I don’t want to confirm that [North Korea has nuclear weapons] because I just can’t do that.”

However, we cannot totally dismiss the possibility that North Korea is undertaking the greatest nuclear bluff in history. US Intelligence cannot confirm that North Korea possesses enough nuclear material for even one nuclear bomb. I would be surprised if this was the case, but it cannot be ruled out. Moreover, as North Korea has a major incentive to exaggerate its capabilities, we have to take all of their statements with a grain of salt.

## **Plutonium Production and Stocks**

### **What we “know”**

North Korea has produced and separated an unknown amount of plutonium. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors were allowed to take samples of North Korea's declared plutonium inventory of 62 grams in the early 1990s, and the agency believes that more than that amount was produced prior to 1992. North Korea now claims it possesses at least 25-30 kilograms of plutonium -- enough for several weapons - - extracted from 8000 spent fuel rods removed from its 5MW reactor in 1994 and previously frozen under IAEA inspection until 2003.

### **What is “reasonable” to believe?**

US intelligence stated repeatedly throughout the 1990s that it believed North Korea had enough plutonium to produce 1 or maybe 2 nuclear weapons. Since 2002, North Korea may have been able to process the plutonium from 8000 spent fuel rods and could now have enough plutonium to produce perhaps 10 nuclear weapons, depending on how much plutonium was in the fuel and how much material North Korea requires for each device. This, however, is a worst-case scenario based on what is known about the technical capabilities of North Korea's nuclear facilities and cannot be publicly confirmed. Any official responsible for the security of the United States must plan for the possibility that North Korea does possess a nuclear device, and perhaps several such devices.

### **What we don't know**

It is not publicly known with any certainty if North Korea possesses a nuclear weapon or if it has actually produced enough plutonium to build a weapon. Not enough conclusive evidence has been collected to discount the possibility that North Korea's nuclear program is anything but a Trojan horse. If North Korea does possess nuclear weapons or large stocks of plutonium, the location of these assets is unknown.

### **Conclusion**

National security officials must assume that North Korea has a basic nuclear weapon arsenal, but should be open to the possibility that it has none at all. North Korea has been

very effective at hiding information about its nuclear activities from both the United States and the IAEA, keeping alive the possibility that its capabilities are less advanced than it would like others to believe.

### **Highly Enriched Uranium Production Capabilities**

In the summer of 2002, US intelligence concluded that North Korea was actively pursuing the production of uranium for use in nuclear weapons. Unclassified materials sent to Congress stated that the intelligence community had “recently learned that the North is constructing a plant that could produce enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year when fully operational – which could be as soon as mid-decade.”

### **What we “know”**

It is known that North Korea transacted business with the nuclear black market operation run by A.Q. Khan out of Pakistan and that it sought to import large amounts of specialized uranium enrichment equipment (known as centrifuges). North Korean officials reportedly acknowledged pursuing a uranium program during bilateral meetings with US officials in Pyongyang in October 2002, but have publicly denied it ever since. North Korea has large deposits of uranium ore, but would need to perfect a number of highly sophisticated and demanding operations to produce weapon-usable uranium. US intelligence has not publicly identified any uranium enrichment facilities in North Korea.

### **What is “Reasonable” to believe?**

It is reasonable to believe that North Korea has a uranium enrichment program. North Korea has sold missiles to Pakistan and A.Q. Khan is alleged to have taken almost a dozen trips to North Korea in the 1990s. However, there is great skepticism in the technical community whether North Korea can perfect the uranium enrichment process (highly demanding for a technically backward but industrious state) and North Korea may still be many years away from being able to produce weapons uranium, if such an effort is actually underway.

### **What we don't know**

We don't know if North Korea is really building a uranium capability, and if so, where it is. It is possible that North Korea received specialized equipment for uranium as part of the A.Q. Khan network, but then transshipped them to another recipient such as Iran or Libya. We also don't have any public confirmation about whether North Korea continues to receive outside technical assistance in its pursuit of a uranium enrichment capability.

### **Weapons production**

#### **What we know**

Very little is known about weapon production activities in North Korea. North Korea has a highly developed conventional weapons and high explosives production capability and is a leading exporter of basic military equipment (rifles, mortars, landmines, etc). This experience with explosives and manufacturing would be helpful in producing a first generation nuclear weapon.

#### **What is "reasonable" to believe?**

It is reasonable to assume that North Korea has the ability to produce a basic nuclear device, along the lines of those produced by the United States in the 1940s. It is also possible that North Korea gained access to more advanced nuclear designs through the A.Q. Khan network, which provided weapon designs to Libya and possibly Iran. US intelligence believes that North Korea is capable of producing a small enough nuclear device to put on a short and possibly a medium range ballistic missile (in range of Japan) but the extent of North Korea's ability to miniaturize a nuclear device for a long-range missile is in doubt. A recent South Korean intelligence assessment stated that delivery by aircraft was more likely and technically feasible than delivery by missile. The US has yet to publicly authenticate its most recent assessment that North Korea might be able to deliver a nuclear sized payload by ballistic missile to the United States via the Taepo-Dong 2 missile.

### **What we don't know**

It is unknown if North Korea has produced actual nuclear weapons and, if so, how many. It is also not known if North Korea can produce small enough nuclear devices to place them on missiles for delivery or if the warheads are reliable enough to work if delivered by missile system.

The bottom line is that North Korea's nuclear capabilities remain in question and public statements by US officials, or by North Korean officials, should be consumed with a healthy dose of skepticism. A prime example is the recent press reporting that North Korea may have shipped uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) to Libya. Such a transaction may have taken place. There is not enough publicly available information, however, to conclude that such a transfer actually took place or indeed that North Korea is even able to produce the material in question. However, the reports that this determination was made on the basis of technical work done at the US laboratories and is not the result of an intelligence community wide assessment raises red flags in the minds of many concerned about the lessons learned from the run up to the war with Iraq. To be sure, North Korea may have the ability to produce UF<sub>6</sub> and could have exported this material to Libya, with clear and serious implications for their willingness to engage in other, more dangerous transfers. But the certainty with which people speak about the case does not appear supported by what is known publicly and the public's faith in information the intelligence community uses to increase its certainty has, at the very least, been shaken.

A brief discussion of this issue was posted to the Carnegie Endowment's Webpage [www.proliferationnews.org](http://www.proliferationnews.org) in early February. It states:

**“Not So Fast**

US officials recently briefed Chinese and South Korean officials on information they maintain proves North Korea shipped uranium hexafluoride to Libya. The material is a precursor for nuclear weapons production. The new claims are based on two pieces of evidence uncovered by US laboratory experts, most likely at Oak Ridge National Laboratory where Libya's nuclear equipment is being studied. The first is that the isotopic composition of the uranium may reveal a North Korean source. The second is

that the uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) containers from Libya revealed traces of plutonium identical to those previously found in North Korea. An examination of publicly available information, however, suggests the evidence is far from conclusive.

### **1. Uranium composition**

Uranium is made up of several different isotopes, including Uranium-235 (used in nuclear weapons at high levels of enrichment), Uranium-238, and Uranium-234, which is very rare. Reports indicate that US experts compared the U-234 percentages in the Libyan material against known samples of uranium from around the world. As the US does not have samples of uranium from North Korea, the experts concluded that the sample must have come from North Korea by process of elimination.

This raises the possibility, however, that the Libyan material comes from another uranium mine for which the US has no sample or record, or that the uranium ore was exported from North Korea, converted to UF<sub>6</sub> in another country, and then shipped to Libya. Pakistan has large-scale UF<sub>6</sub> conversion capabilities and was at the heart of the A.Q. Khan supply network. Recent press reports indicate that several canisters of UF<sub>6</sub> are believed to be missing from the A.Q. Khan laboratories in Pakistan, a charge Pakistani officials have denied. In addition, technical experts have confirmed that U-234 content can vary greatly even within the same mine or even within the same sample of ore, raising the possibility that the uranium sample does come from a known source.

### **2. Plutonium Traces**

According to media sources, the UF<sub>6</sub> shipping containers moved from Libya to the United States revealed samples of plutonium that match those previously taken in North Korea. This suggests some link between North Korea and Libya (possibly through an intermediary country such as Pakistan) but could be the result of cross-contamination between the canisters and other equipment. UF<sub>6</sub> containers are routinely packaged for transport in larger over packs and shipping crates, many of which can be used for a variety of functions. Although the circumstantial link cannot be ruled out, the plutonium samples would not in themselves provide a conclusive link that the uranium contained in



them was produced or, indeed, was ever in North Korea. One possible alternative explanation is that the canisters were sent from somewhere else to North Korea and then transshipped to Libya.

Pyongyang is known with certainty to have a plutonium production capability and may possess enough separated plutonium to produce a small arsenal of nuclear weapons. North Korea's Foreign Ministry claimed on February 10 that the government has already produced nuclear weapons. Less information is known about their alleged uranium enrichment program. US government officials have yet to publicly identify any uranium enrichment sites in North Korea, and it is not known with certainty that North Korea can produce uranium hexafluoride. It is possible that North Korea can produce limited amounts of UF<sub>6</sub>, and the evidence of North Korea's previous attempts to purchase uranium enrichment technology through the A.Q. Khan supply network seems credible. However, the link between Libya and North Korea appears tenuous, based on what is publicly known.

If the information is not fully supported by the US intelligence community and is not as conclusive as US officials appear to be asserting to Chinese and other officials, it risks further damaging US credibility with key countries in the Far East. China has been openly skeptical of the US claims that North Korea has an enrichment program. Should these links between North Korea and Libya prove false, it may be hard to reestablish China's confidence in US diplomatic and intelligence efforts.”

### **Is there a Path Forward?**

The title of this hearing captures the key question for all of us. We all want the same thing – a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. Yet regardless of North Korea's current or projected nuclear capabilities, what is needed is a concrete set of recommendations for how the United States and its partners in the region can best bring about the end to North Korea's nuclear capabilities. In this, there are no easy answers and no silver bullets. The suggestions I will make today are also contained in a forthcoming policy document authored with my colleagues at the Carnegie Endowment

for International Peace named *Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security*. This report is the result of an intensive, international 18-month effort to develop a new effective nonproliferation policy that can gain broad international support. The main conclusions from this report on North Korea inform my testimony and, and this brief section is attached as an appendix to my formal statement.

Before I continue, however, a word about the past. The past cannot be undone and, as they say, there is plenty of blame to go around. Yet for all of the criticism levied at the Clinton administration and the 1994 Agreed Framework – one thing is clear to me. President Clinton, despite the unpopularity of the move within Congress and even within the security community, was willing to make tough decisions and do what was necessary to freeze North Korea's nuclear program and protect the United States from the inherent threat posed by the acquisition of nuclear weapons by North Korea. He put the national interest above his political interests or personal ideology. Within his time in office, he was successful. Whatever plutonium North Korea has today was acquired either before he was elected or since the Bush administration took office.

Moreover, the past four years are littered with missed opportunities for the Bush administration to take the same leadership and make the hard decisions – either for real engagement or real coercion – to reverse North Korea's nuclear program. For the first few years, internal disputes and ideological positions prevented the US from adopting any consistent policy and officials deliberately downplayed the nature of the developments in North Korea. We are now living with the consequences. We cannot make up for this lost time, but neither can we ignore the implications of our past and current policies for how our future efforts will be judged in the region.

The Bush administration is now apparently prepared to actively test the willingness of North Korea to negotiate away its nuclear program, even though they expect North Korea to balk at the opportunity. I believe the administration is now prepared to offer Pyongyang a concrete set of long-term incentives in exchange for the total and monitored elimination of its nuclear capabilities, providing more specifics to flesh out the proposal

tables last June at the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the 6 party talks. In this, they should be supported. The question is whether this effort comes too late.

I do not believe it does. We still have an opportunity to succeed, but it will require the US and its partners to work more closely together and to be more flexible in their positions. North Korea's February 10<sup>th</sup> declaration that it has nuclear weapons also contained a clear statement that it was prepared to engage in negotiations with the United States to achieve a non-nuclear Korean peninsula. The Foreign Ministry stated that "[T]he DPRK's principled stand to solve the issue through dialogue and negotiations and its ultimate goal to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula remain unchanged." It is possible that the statement was designed simply to raise the price North Korea could charge China for Pyongyang's attendance at the six party talks. Now is the time to find out.

For any US policy to work, we must demonstrate in the clearest possible way that the US is serious about pursuing a diplomatic solution. If North Korea refuses to accept the six party format, the US should be prepared to announce that it would meet anytime, anywhere with North Korean officials empowered to make real progress on the nuclear issue. The Bush administration is right to keep other key players involved, but is wrong to reject any deviation from the 6 party formula. China, South Korea and Japan would all support such a move as long as we maintained open channels to all three countries. Any final agreement, on the slim chance that one can be reached, could be completed in a multilateral format and endorsed by the six parties or even the UN Security Council. North Korea could accept the serious proposal, with Chinese and South Korean encouragement, and if so the US will have the opportunity to lay out a detailed, reasonable proposal to the North. However, North Korea could well refuse and the question of North Korea's willingness to negotiate will be resolved. We should be prepared for either response. Today, we are prepared for neither.

If North Korea says yes to negotiations and the outlines of an agreement, the United States should work to make fast progress. Washington should be prepared to engage in continuous negotiations at a high level and to include both near-term and longer term

economic and security incentives to the North directly, and through our allies. These should include, as the President has said, security guarantees to North Korea. But this administration must demonstrate that US officials are serious when they say that they have no higher priority than preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Avoiding bad precedents, not rewarding bad behavior, and never paying blackmail – as unpleasant as they are – should be secondary principles to preventing nuclear proliferation and protecting the country. Bad precedents cannot destroy a city or kill millions. Nuclear weapons can.

There is much work to be done to negotiate a verifiable agreement. Once the basic parameters are set, the US should be prepared to endorse certain temporary incentives for North Korea to adopt a full freeze on their nuclear program and, as they have offered to do, place all of the plutonium recovered from spent fuel in the past few years back under inspection. Thus, we would freeze the clock and stop losing ground while negotiations proceed. North Korea must be made to understand that any final agreement must include a complete accounting and elimination of any uranium enrichment equipment and materials they may possess or have acquired, but that this can be accomplished in a way that does not require a public admission of guilt by North Korea. Such a process is similar to most US out-of-court settlements with polluters and corporate criminals who are punished without publicly accepting blame. This model should be seen as a way to escape the standoff over uranium enrichment in which the US and North Korea find themselves.

Despite several years of effort the US is still not sure how it would move to implement a comprehensive agreement with North Korea. While much work has been done on verification, little preparation has been made for how to secure and dismantle North Korea's capabilities. Exactly how North Korea's facilities would be dismantled, by whom and under what kind of monitoring remains to be worked out. It is also not clear what role China, South Korea and Japan might play in Cooperative Threat Reduction-style efforts in North Korea such as reactor dismantling, spent fuel and nuclear waste removal and disposal, etc. Much more work on these critical issues, including learning

the lessons from Russia, Iraq and Libya, needs to be done and I am pleased to note that some useful work is being carried out as part of a joint project between the Carnegie Endowment and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

But, as I believe is likely, North Korea may refuse a serious and concerted US offer to resolve the standoff through negotiations. Here again, the US is not prepared for this answer. How will the US engage in coercive measures if they are not supported by one of our closest allies in the region – South Korea? Today, most South Koreans blame the US for the crisis and most would resist any US attempt to increase troop levels in the South or to deploy additional missile defenses, anti-artillery radar, and other equipment needed to reinforce stability and deterrence in the face of a nuclear North Korea. How can we prevent North Korea from trying to export some of its nuclear capabilities? How would we react if the North resumed testing of ballistic missiles or conducted a nuclear weapons test? While an important tool, the Proliferation Security Initiative is not a panacea. A broad, legal basis for action can only be established through the UN Security Council, a forum in which North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT has never been brought up by the United States. Yet none of these steps will be possible unless we demonstrate that other options have been exhausted.

### **Broader Issues**

The state of North Korea's nuclear capabilities is an important issue for American security and for the security of US friends and allies in East Asia and beyond. Yet, despite the number of years the North's nuclear program has been a concern and the amount of time US officials and experts have invested on the issue, America appears to be fundamentally misjudging the dynamics in key regional states. Managing nuclear diplomacy toward North Korea has always been a complicated dance with multiple partners. There has rarely been a moment when all of the major actors are on the same page, or have pursued a common approach toward the North.

## **The US-ROK Alliance**

Within the small community of experts who work on the US-ROK alliance, there are two main perceptions. The first, found mostly among current government officials and more senior experts who engage with the traditional power centers in Seoul, is that the relationship between the US and South Korea is stable and that South Korea and the United States have identical security interests. This in turn leads these experts to believe that in the worst case, the United States and South Korea will be able to stand together in confronting North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and that, should worse come to worse, that Seoul will endorse a series of coercive steps, including those that increase the risk of conflict with the North.

The second perception is found among analysts and experts who engage with the 386 generation of political leaders and experts in South Korea (those currently in their 30s, graduated university in the 80s and born in the 60s) who now form the core of the Uri-Dong party of President Roh Moo-hyun. These experts, who closely track public attitudes among the younger generation in South Korea, are concerned about the overall view of the United States and of the growing frustration within this stratum of society. The emerging generation in Korea feels they owe less to the United States than their parents do, and increasingly view North Koreans as their brethren, not their enemy. Moreover, it is not clear to many 386ers that the US has the best security and political interests of South Korea at heart. The treatment of former President Kim Dae Jung by Washington in 2001, the redeployment of US troops from Korea to Iraq, and the blunt manner in which large-scale troop reductions were handled last year reinforce this perception.

Moreover, members of this new generation are less likely to risk conflict with the North on ideological grounds. On a basic level, I think it is understandable that people in the South was to preserve stability and to pursue engagement with their countrymen to the North, and to avoid those policies – often put forward by the United States – that might put those two goals at risk. This is sometimes thought of as anti-Americanism, a perception I do not share. In fact, the sentiments sometimes expressed as “anti-

American” are just as often expressions of frustration with the slow pace of economic reform, a resistance to adopt traditional Korean cultural obligations, and a natural desire to peace, stability and prosperity. There are clearly anti-American elements in South Korea, but the reality is more complicated than it seems.

Thus, to an increasing degree, US policy toward North Korea is based on the flawed assumption that the US-ROK alliance will prove solid enough for the United States to pursue a credible policy of coercion and, if necessary, offensive military actions against North Korea. Based on my admittedly limited experience with South Korean politics, I believe that moves by the United States to tighten pressure on the North – absent overt provocation by the Pyongyang -- will result in an unraveling of the US-ROK alliance. As a consequence, some in South Korea may also begin to reassess their nuclear options. The only way this can be avoided is if the US can demonstrate that it has truly exhausted diplomatic efforts with North Korea, including the possibility of multilateral and bilateral talks, and the offering of explicit incentives to the North to abandon its nuclear efforts. We must understand and be sensitive to the political dynamics that the Uri-dong and President Roh must deal with to ensure that our alliance can withstand the threat posed by North Korea.

### **US-China**

The Bush administration appears to believe that US and Chinese interests in North Korea are identical – namely keeping North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons. President Bush’s commitment to the 6-party diplomatic process has been publicly justified on the need to keep China engaged, and to use their perceived leverage over North Korea. US officials have stated their belief that China alone has the leverage required to force North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Yet, this only captures part of the picture from China’s perspective. As a Chinese colleague recently reminded me, China has two main goals in Korea. The first goal is to keep the peninsula non-nuclear, and the second goal is to preserve stability and prevent a collapse of the regime in Pyongyang. He asked why China - now that the first goal appears lost – should throw away the second. Thus, at

least in some parts of the Chinese leadership, there is a real disconnect between Chinese and US goals.

The concern that stems from this disconnect is that over the long run, convinced that China possesses the leverage needed to bring North Korea to heel, US officials will wonder why China has chosen not to use its leverage. Convinced their strategy is right, some American officials may increasingly view China as a scapegoat for the failure of US policy. This, in turn, can reignite some longstanding concerns about China and its role in the region among some of the more conservative personalities within the administration.

Chinese officials have played a positive role in orchestrating the 6-party talks and in ensuring North Korea's past participation in those talks, yet China continues to see its role as a mediator between the United States and North Korea, whereas Washington wants to ensure that China is a protagonist supporting US goals and applying its leverage on North Korea to abandon its nuclear activities. For its part, however, China has not conditioned its efforts with North Korea on the continuation of the 6 party talks, and in fact China has consistently counseled the US to engage directly with North Korea. President Bush and his administration deserve credit for the positive trends in the US-PRC relationship and more should be done to reinforce these developments. But we must have better communication, listen more effectively, and keep the DPRK from driving a wedge between our two countries.

### **US-Japan**

Here, too, the Bush administration deserves great credit for the strong condition of the US-Japanese alliance. Almost all of my Japanese colleagues have expressed their belief that the alliance is stronger today than at any time in recent memory. Moreover, due to the unpleasant kidnapping issue with North Korea, Japanese public sentiment has turned strongly against engagement with North Korea and is now more closely in tune with American policy. The central question is whether this emotional political issue will sustain anti-North Korean sentiment over the long-term, or if the risk of conflict in the



region increases, whether Japanese concerns about instability and the military and economic consequences of military action will force the Japanese public to modify its position vis a vis the United States and North Korea.

### **Conclusions**

It may be too late to keep North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons and we may, despite any and all efforts, be unable to roll back whatever nuclear capabilities North Korea has acquired. History may well look back at our failed efforts with North Korea as the turning point when the nuclear dam burst and nuclear weapons became widespread and commonplace in the arsenals of scores of countries. If such a future were to come to pass despite our best efforts, it would be horrific and hard to live with. But knowing that we have not done our best and pursued all avenues available to us makes such a future even harder to face. This is true not just because of the implications for North Korea, but because it will lay bare the fallacy that the top priority of the administration is to prevent the spread and use of these weapons. All recent presidents have used the words to demonstrate that they understand the unique threat posed by these weapons. Finding out that we have not meant what we have said will reduce the credibility of the United States worldwide at the very time that its conventional capabilities are increasingly challenged by emerging nuclear arsenals in various states.

Most immediately, we must be concerned that Iran is taking its cues from the North Korea playbook. I am increasingly concerned that Iran has now learned that its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons can be successful is pursued not in leaps and bounds, but step by small step. Here again, I believe our efforts do not reflect the seriousness of the issue or take advantage of the opportunities that are available. But in North Korea, this has and continues clearly to be the case.

Thank you.

## Appendix

### **Excerpt from *Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security*,**

#### **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2005**

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Northeast

North Korea (formally, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK) has an active nuclear weapons program and likely possesses enough nuclear material for up to nine nuclear weapons. U.S. troops, allies in the region, and strategic interests are directly threatened by North Korea's growing nuclear capability, pursued in violation of Pyongyang's commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other agreements. Acceptance of a North Korean nuclear weapons capability is inconsistent with vital U.S. national security interests. Given North Korea's economic strains, it is conceivable that Pyongyang might sell nuclear materials or weapons to other states or terrorist groups, taking a regional threat to the global level. In such a scenario, U.S. policy makers could face the truly appalling choice between acquiescing in North Korea's transfer of its weapons technology or fighting a full-fledged war on the Korean peninsula.

Even if North Korea does not make nuclear exports, its nuclear status is untenable. A failure to resolve the North Korean nuclear threat would undermine the cause of nuclear nonproliferation and make it far more likely that South Korea and Japan would reconsider their own nuclear status.

The United States and its partners in dialogue with North Korea must move more aggressively to determine whether and under what conditions North Korea is willing to relinquish its nuclear capabilities. Finding Pyongyang's bottom line will allow the United

States and its allies either to negotiate a verifiable end to North Korea's nuclear program or to build a consensus on responding to the threat posed by North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons. The status quo is rapidly becoming a permanent crisis that threatens to undermine U.S. influence in the region and weaken the regional commitment to nonproliferation.

The creation of a six-party negotiating mechanism was a positive development, but it has not yet produced tangible results. While the talks have enabled the United States to more closely engage China on the issue of North Korea's nuclear future, it remains unclear how far Beijing can or is willing to go in pressuring North Korea to abandon its program. China may not have an interest in a nuclear North Korea on its border, but it is also averse to regime collapse or a war between the United States and North Korea that could result in U.S. troops being placed on the Chinese border. All in all, China may find the status quo tolerable, and the United States cannot assume that China will be able or willing to deliver North Korea's consent or compliance with a denuclearization agreement. Moreover, some in China may prefer keeping the North Korean nuclear issue—a threat to U.S. interests—alive as a counterweight to U.S. interests in Taiwan, an overriding Chinese concern.

A new U.S. policy designed to achieve positive results in East Asia must follow a new course. First, it is essential that the United States and its allies develop an international consensus through the UN Security Council that North Korea's actions are a threat to international peace and security and that North Korea's attempt to withdraw from an agreement it has violated is unacceptable. Once this is done, it may prove more feasible for the United States to test the will of North Korea to fully, verifiably, and irreversibly

dismantle all its nuclear weapon capabilities in exchange for a fundamentally different relationship with the United States, including diplomatic relations and peaceful reconstruction assistance. This will involve real negotiations with North Korea, although these could take place in the broad context of the six-party talks.

Regardless of the forum, the United States should pursue rapid and ongoing negotiations with North Korea led by a presidentially appointed envoy. This person must be fully committed to the negotiations, prepared and empowered to make serious progress, and meet with North Korean counterparts of sufficient rank to make progress. However, for any talks—bilateral or six-party—to succeed, the United States must also work steadily to enhance its alliances with South Korea and Japan so as to broaden support for U.S. security objectives in the region, including the absence of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the United States must prepare itself and its closest allies for the possibility that North Korea will not abandon its nuclear capabilities. Preparations can best be made by reinforcing diplomatic and military capabilities in the region to enhance deterrence and stability on the Korean peninsula and reduce incentives for other countries to follow North Korea's nuclear lead. A key part of avoiding a crisis during this period, however, is for the United States to lay down clear "red lines" and make clear *at a minimum* that any attempt by North Korea to export nuclear materials or weapons will be considered a threat to international peace and security.

The regional security consequences of an ongoing North Korean nuclear weapon capability are dire. So too are the implications of allowing North Korea's violations of the international treaty regime to go unpunished. By violating and then attempting to

withdraw from the NPT, North Korea has undermined the fundamental premise of the regime—that the international community is prepared to hold countries to their commitments. In keeping with the UN Security Council’s presidential statement of January 1992, which declared the proliferation of nuclear weapons a threat to international peace and security, Security Council members have a responsibility to respond to North Korea’s actions. Yet even now, the Security Council has yet to respond to North Korea’s violations and withdrawal as reported to the council by the IAEA. If a negotiated settlement cannot be reached after a determined good-faith effort, then the United States must work with its allies to obtain a Security Council resolution that North Korea’s violations are a threat to international peace and security and that its withdrawal from the NPT was invalid. The United States must then prepare for the consequences, including the possibility of sanctions, an embargo, and even military conflict.

### **Summary of Policy Recommendations**

- **Determine whether and under what conditions North Korea is willing to relinquish its nuclear capabilities.**
- **Develop an international consensus through the UN Security Council that North Korea’s actions are a threat to international peace and security and that North Korea’s attempt to withdraw from an agreement it has violated is unacceptable.**
- **Fully test the will of North Korea to verifiably implement the irreversible dismantlement of all nuclear weapon capabilities in exchange for a**

**fundamentally different relationship with the United States and other countries, including diplomatic relations and reconstruction assistance.**

- **Further enhance U.S. alliances with South Korea and Japan to broaden support for U.S. security objectives in the region, including the absence of nuclear weapons.**
- **End the state of permanent crisis by pursuing rapid and ongoing negotiations with North Korea led by a presidentially appointed envoy. This person must be fully authorized to negotiate, prepared and empowered to make serious progress, and in a position to meet with North Korean counterparts of sufficient rank to conduct substantive negotiations.**
- **Prepare for the possibility that North Korea is unwilling to abandon its nuclear capabilities by reinforcing the diplomatic and military capabilities in the region with a view to enhancing deterrence and stability on the Korean peninsula and reducing incentives for other countries to follow North Korea's nuclear lead.**
- **Make clear that any attempt by North Korea to export weapon-usable nuclear materials or weapons will be considered a threat to international peace and security as defined by the UN Charter.**