

The Future of Six Party Talks: Options and Prospects

Kwang-Ho Chun

Chonbuk National University, Korea

khchun@jbnu.ac.kr

Abstract- Recent positive political developments in the Korean peninsula are getting more attention from many political, economic, and military options. The Six Party talk is obviously the one. The Six Party talks to achieve optimal supply chain that has taken place over the past decade have been the only real progress, making a diplomatic tool that has sought to stem nuclear proliferation within the Korean peninsula. However, considerable doubt exists as to how effective they have been and whether they remain a relevant means by which the issue can be solved. This paper looks at events that have transpired over the course of the talks for supply chain and contextualizes how beneficial they have been. It is critical of the parties involved for their individualistic attitudes towards the talks and places particular emphasis on China and the U.S in its assessment of the extent to which the parties are working towards the stated goals. Since the talks for achieving optimal supply chain stalled in 2009, relationships in and around the Korean Peninsula have become increasingly strained with Kim Jong Un assuming the role as North Korean leader, a series of attacks as well as weapons testing, it is now highly relevant that an assessment of diplomatic methods be made. The paper concludes that while the talks for supply chain offer potentially the fairest and swiftest resolution of the issues, the parties involved are exploring independent means of coercion before they will resume. Finally, with North Korean ties as strained as ever, it is set out that a return to diplomacy will unlikely herald a rapid change in the security and political environment.

Keyword - *Six-Party Talks, North Korea, China, US, Nuclear, supply chain.*

1. Introduction

The main aim of The Six-Party Talks for achieving supply chain is to end North Korea's nuclear program using a peaceful negotiation process. They were initiated in May 2003 after North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the parties involved include the United States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), China, Russia, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Japan. The Six-Party talks for managing supply chain have been the preferred formula of solving the nuclear Challenge but the future is

pesimistic since the forum does not seem as if it will achieve its goal. From a Chinese perspective specifically, the importance of the talks for supply chain seems to be falling as other diplomatic pressures, which from its unique position it is able to instigate, seem to have had greater impact on the regional environment. Although there was progress made after the fourth and fifth rounds of talks, recent external events have reversed it [12]. This document will critically analyze the future of Six-Party talk as well as the available options and prospects for the parties involved.

Recent positive political developments in Korean peninsula are getting more attention from many political, economic, and military options. The Six Party talk is obviously the one. But, the six party talk had very little progress was made from 2003 to 2007 even as the parties engaged in five rounds of intensive talks. The greatest achievement was experienced during the third phase of the fifth round after North Korea decided to close its nuclear plants. This would be followed by fuel aid to North Korea as well as a process of normalizing international relations with Japan and the U.S. However, in 2009, North Korea unsuccessfully launched a satellite and the president of the United Nations Security Council issued a strict statement condemning North Korea for going against the agreements. On 14 April 2009, after the presidential statement, North Korea made an angry response declaring that it would withdraw as a party to the Six-Party Talks as well as recommence its enrichment of nuclear materials so as to advance its nuclear deterrent. In addition, North Korea expelled from the country all of the foreign nuclear inspectors.

It is clear that since the Six-Party Talks for achieving optimal supply chain were initiated in 2003, there have been several problems which have limited progress. The negotiations have particularly been obstructed by diplomatic standoffs especially between North Korea and the U.S. The most significant of which was experienced when North Korea decided to stop the disablement process that had been agreed upon and reopened the Yongbyon nuclear facility. The Obama administration and the other four countries involved have consistently tried to bring North Korea back to the negotiation table to ensure that the talks do not disintegrate completely. The United Nations has also been actively involved

in trying to halt the missile and nuclear tests by North Korea to ensure that the talks for supply chain can bear fruit. The Council on Foreign Relations believes that regional partnerships between the Northeast Asian countries and the United States are the best vehicle to create stable relationships and peaceful negotiations regarding the future of the Korean peninsula [1].

2. The Framework

For the future of the Six-Party Talks to be put into perspective and be clearly understood, it is important to analyze the trends of the negotiations which lead to their commencement. The talks for gaining were initiated in 2003 after then U.S. President George W. Bush had reversed a policy of direct negotiation with Pyongyang, a policy endorsed by his predecessor, President Bill Clinton. In 2002, during President Bush's State of Union address, North Korea was included as part of the "Axis of Evil." And by October of the same year, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had said that North Korea was enriching its uranium program. The hard-line diplomatic strategy of the US that followed, repeatedly angered North Korea and became one of the first major negative influences on the existing negotiation process tasked at ensuring Pyongyang stops its enrichment programs. Moreover, Washington said that North Korea was violating the spirit of the 1994 Agreed Framework where the U.S. had promised to build two light-water reactors and provide fuel (oil) in exchange for Pyongyang halting its plutonium enrichment program. The factors which were significantly limiting the progress of the talks were mainly diplomatic, with the U.S. and North Korea taking opposing stands.

As a result of such pressures, North Korea declared in 2003 that it will not end its enrichment program until the U.S. had agreed to normalize relations and to hold bilateral talks for achieving supply chain. After Washington rejected these demands, North Korea removed itself from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), expelled inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and resumed its enrichment program.

This was a major setback to talks for supply chain and nations threw accusations at each other which further halted the negotiation process. In addition, tensions mounted significantly, and each nation was eager to see how the others would react. For instance, a North Korean fighter jet intercepted a U.S. spy plane over the Sea of Japan in 2003, while the U.S., China and North Korea held bilateral talks in April 2003 in Beijing. Such negotiations precluded the first

round of talks bringing other players – Japan, South Korea and Russia to participate in negotiations.

After several rounds of talks around of supply chain, a significant agreement was reached in September 2005, and North Korea decided to halt its nuclear enrichment program.

3. Stop-and-Go Negotiations

The Six-Party Talks are built on the back of the Helsinki Process which is the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act signed by NATO and Warsaw Pact countries dating back to 1975. The act sets out the values for the creation of strong international relations by placing emphases on non-intervention and sovereignty as a structure for long term improvements. These values are placed over the short-term needs of humanitarian issues such as human rights. By ensuring national security and encouraging engagement with the international community, the Helsinki process would work towards building a willingness to Change within the DPRK. Much like the sunshine policy initiated by South Korea's Kim Dae Jung (a policy which led to his receiving of the Nobel Peace Prize) this framework is in stark contrast to the current international position which seeks to pressure North Korea to a breaking point where it will involuntarily cooperate with the agenda of the international community. Since then, South Korean President Lee Myung Bak's abandonment of the Sunshine Policy, following a 2006 nuclear test by the North, international relations between not only the South and the North but between North and all other international actors have deteriorated significantly, and in part evidences the need for more diplomacy.

In September 2005, North Korea signed a pact, which said that it would stop its nuclear program, re-enter the NPT and permit monitors from IAEA to return. In addition, other members would provide North Korea with energy and food assistance. These agreements also paved the way for the normalization of North Korea's relations with the U.S and Japan and for the creation of a peaceful agreement within the Korean peninsula. In November 2005, the agreements collapsed after restrictions were placed on the Macao-based Delta Asia Financial Group by the United States Treasury Department. Washington accused it of fraud and of laundering North Korean funds to the tune of \$25 million. Close to fifty Pyongyang accounts held in the banks were frozen by the Macanese government. With negotiations having disintegrated, North Korea continued its provocative programs. In July 2006, it conducted missile tests and in October of the same year, it carried out nuclear tests leading China to put pressure on it to rejoin the

talks. A Denuclearization Plan was created by member countries during the sixth round of talks about supply chain in July 2007. This was a process seen by Washington as a means to reinstate the September 2005 statement. Moreover, North Korea was asked to halt its nuclear enrichment program in return for aid as well as the frozen Banco Delta Asia funds. An agreement was reached after negotiations which included bilateral talks between the U.S. and North Korea. These talks bore fruits and the negotiation process was once again on a positive track [19].

At this time, the future and prospects of the Six-Party Talk were bright and options for the parties involved also seemed numerous. For instance, the denuclearization program by July 2007 had gained momentum and North Korea had closed its main plutonium production facility at Yongbyon in return for diplomatic concessions and aid. 8,000 fuel rods were removed from the nuclear reactor at Yongbyon under the watchful eyes of American experts [19] and in May 2008, close to 18,000 pages of documents were handed to the U.S. by North Korea detailing how their nuclear programs were being implemented. After the Yongbyon nuclear plant cooling tower was imploded, the U.S. removed North Korea's restrictions from the Trading with the Enemy Act. In October, Pyongyang agreed to some verification processes and this led to the U.S. removing it from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. However, this process did not end without critics accusing the Bush administration of letting off North Korea before all measures were fulfilled. For instance, the critics say that North Korea failed on three fundamental accounts: failing to give details of uranium enrichment suspected in some regions; failure to address the proliferation activities by Pyongyang in other nations such as Libya and Syria; and failing to give details on nuclear weapons that has already been manufactured [19]. Although setbacks were experienced intermittently, all parties were in agreement that the objectives of the negotiations would be reached in an amicable manner. Although North Korea had agreed to most of the requirements set forth by the negotiations, some agreements took lengthy periods of time to be implemented. For instance, Pyongyang had still not accepted the verification procedure for its nuclear program even as the term of the Bush administration came to an end. However, all parties continued to avoid taking hard-line stances since they did not want to risk a collapse of the negotiations.

When Obama was elected as the new U.S. president, Washington showed early signals that it was willing to engage Pyongyang in direct negotiations. However, analysts say that North Korea has on

several occasions been the culprit often going against the agreements of the Six-party talks for supply chain. For instance, in May 2009, Pyongyang went ahead with its multiple missile tests as well as nuclear tests. This resulted in the U.S. asking for a new United Nations Security Council Resolution which would impose tougher sanctions on North Korea. When the then President of South Korea Lee Myung-bak visited the U.S. in June, President Obama said that he was still willing to engage North Korea in negotiations [20]. However, he added that provocative and belligerent behavior that is threatening to other countries will be dealt with through serious and significant enforcement of sanctions. Such provocative behavior has continued and perhaps accelerated over the last few years, and as the U.S. and the international community have acted to step up pressure on Pyongyang it has become increasingly unlikely the stalled talks to achieve optimal supply chain will result in any progress for the foreseeable future.

4. Objectives of the Involved Parties

Each country in the Six-Party Talks has individual goals, but the ultimate goal of the talks can be generally said to be ensuring that the proliferation of nuclear weapons is curtailed [1]. For the U.S., the Six-Party Talks for managing supply chain are a means of showing to the world that the nuclear program of North Korea is an international problem and not just an issue that can be tackled by bilateral negotiations. While Washington is also concerned with the poor human rights record that is present in the communist state of North Korea, its major concerns are Pyongyang's nuclear enrichment program and a possible sale of nuclear technology and weapons to terrorist groups and hostile countries [1]. According to reports from Washington, all agreements from the Six-Party Talks must be implemented by North Korea and IAEA monitors must be allowed to carry out investigations in the country.

North Korea is considered a reclusive state by other parties and this is the main reason why the Six-Party Talks were initiated. In the case of North Korea, regime theory provides a strong assessment of international relations; describing how the actions of regimes have an influence on one another. With the actions of one state having long term impacts globally, it would be assumed that each state would cooperate to promote its own interests. With its actions being routinely described as a rogue or unpredictable by the international media, an understanding of how it has to come to fall outside of the scope of regime theory allows us to appreciate its

interactions. For North Korea, threatened the sovereignty and particularly the lack of international recognition for the authority of its ruling family, are the most significant and pressing issues. Without insurances from the international community there is no framework for the softening of its relations. On top of this, domestic pressures and an underdeveloped economy mean that the Pyongyang is heavily dependent on external powers. Without guarantees for North Korean sovereignty and with a need for aid to ensure internal security, North Korea is being forced to solicit its support through extortion. The only way it can do this is through the bolstering of its nuclear program and through the escalation of international tensions. Its nuclear enrichment program has not been received well and the United States has been the biggest opponent; calling for increased sanctions against the country. However, North Korea wants the U.S. to pledge a nonaggression security program taking into consideration that America has deployed over 25,000 troops in South Korea; to normalize its international relations with Washington; as well as the Six-Party countries to provide it with unrestricted access to economic aid. Moreover, Pyongyang also hopes that the two light-water reactors that were agreed upon in the 1994 Agreed Framework will be completed as soon as possible.

Another country that plays a significant role in the Six-Party Talks is South Korea, especially when it is considered that South and North Korea have been engaged in unresolved conflict. The ultimate objective of South Korea is to see that the Korean peninsula has been denuclearized and reunified. In addition, Seoul wants to ensure that there is no sudden change in political regime in Pyongyang [20]. This is because South Korea would have to bear a sudden influx of refugees across its borders, creating an economic burden and derogating internal security. China is also a significant player in the talks since Beijing and Pyongyang have been major trading partners and long-standing allies. Aside from historical ties with the Korean peninsula and ideological parallels, for China North Korea has served a buffer zone to U.S troops located in South Korea and, just like Seoul, Beijing fears that there would be a sudden rush of refugees across its borders if North Korea became destabilized therefore pushing it to be a key provider of food and energy assistance. With such factors impacting their relationship, the influence China holds has been repeatedly used to urge North Korea to return to the negotiating-table whenever the talks collapse. China has been slow when it comes to implementing tough UN sanctions against North Korea, though such a policy has been changing in response to North Korea's actions under

Kim Jong Un. The position of Russia in the Six-Party Talks for achieving supply chain enables it to reassert its influence in Northeast Asia and also address the issue of refugee flow. Moscow has also joined hands with China in restricting tough UN sanctions against North Korea. As with its successes in halting U.S. intervention in Syria, Russia may well look to place itself between the U.S. and North Korea – a position which would diminish the U.S. presence within the region. Russia has remained a key ally of North Korea since the outbreak of the Korean War and its involvement in diplomatic talks may increase in light of such developments.

When it comes to Japan, Tokyo is worried that North Korean missiles have the ability of reaching its borders - U.S. bases in the country are potentially high value targets for North Korea. In addition, the Six-Party Talks are a platform in which it can pressure North Korea to admit to the abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s [18]. The issue of spies is a divisive one between Japan and the U.S. - Tokyo opposes the U.S. decision to remove North Korea from the U.S. list of sponsors of terrorism as its abduction issue remains unresolved. On the other hand, Pyongyang has on several occasions demanded that Japan be excluded from the talks.

5. Obstacles to the talks of supply chain

The future successes of the Six-Party Talks around supply chain seem limited due to the obstacles which the parties are exposed to. Each party is coming to the negotiating table with individual demands which at times seem unrealistic given the requirements and desires of the other parties. The United States and North Korea are the major players in the talk, and both seem to hold broadly-speaking hardliner positions opposed by the other party. In addition, countries such as Japan and North Korea have issues which are not related to the core purpose of the talks and as such are weakening the effectiveness of negotiations. For example, Japan opposed the removal of North Korea from the list of terrorist supporters due to the argument that Pyongyang played a role in the abduction of Japanese citizens during the cold war. North Korea has also opposed on several occasions the inclusion of Japan in the negotiations arguing that the country has already taken an opposing position and has not come to negotiate [2].

What are the options and prospects of the talks around supply chain management when the negotiations are exposed to all these obstacles? Critics argue that the Six-Party Talks only have the capacity of managing temporarily the North Korean

nuclear problem. The future of the talks and the long run outcome depends mainly on the ability of the parties to solve the intrinsic challenges.

First, the major obstacle that needs to be tackled immediately is the unpredictable nature of the North Korean regime. Pyongyang has often shifted its position when it comes to bilateral talks. The U.S. finds North Korea's erraticism indicative of a lack of sincerity with regards to negotiations and also an indication of weakness as a result of its perceived desperation. According to Washington's former envoy to the talks Christopher Hill, North Korea understands that the United States has a hard time figuring out what motivates Pyongyang to behave so erratically and thus they want to continue acting the same in the foreseeable future [2]. The second stumbling block to the talks is the different approaches taken by the Six-Party countries. Scott Snyder, a senior fellow for the Council on Foreign Relations, said that the Six-Party nations and other regional efforts were unable to tackle the North Korean nuclear challenge since they preferred to place their immediate concerns and priorities ahead of the collective priority of disarmament of the nuclear program in North Korea. For instance, Japan and the U.S have called for strong sanctions against North Korea in answer to weapon testing, whereas China, Russia and South Korea have sought less stringent sanctions due to the belief that toppling of the regime would lead to the sudden influx of refugees. Third, the United States has rejected the bilateral negotiations on the belief that nuclear proliferation is a severe problem and because it has no desire to be the only party involved in dissolving any future crises on the peninsula. In addition, with international condemnation and pressures, the U.S. has to far less compromise its own position in any negotiation.

Washington had preferred a Six-Party Talk approach so that negotiations and compromises with the regime can be viewed as part of multilateral negotiations. However, North Korea demanded one-on-one talks with the United States as a precondition of freezing its nuclear program. Hill made a surprise visit to North Korea in June 2007 to push forward a deal agreed upon in February. This reversed the stance held by the United States on direct talks with North Korea. Another stumbling block to the talks is regime succession in North Korea. In May 2008, Kim Jong-II suffered a stroke and analysts argue that actions taken by North Korea have been influenced by domestic politics. The director of the CFR, Center for Preventive Action, Paul B. Stares said that diplomatic initiatives in the future can only be successful if the nuclear issue is tackled on the basis that "regime survival" is separate from national security. He adds

that Washington may find it necessary to put up measures that will assure the Kim family regime of its survival in the future [13].

6. Ways of tackling the policy puzzle

Despite the fact that talks of this nature have been held for over a decade, no significant results are yet to be experienced among all the party states. Unification and denuclearization of the Korean peninsular region are still distant and both the north and south are yet to resolve their inherent conflict. The U.S. held a hardliner position throughout most of the Bush regime, refusing to negotiate directly with North Korea. However, even after it began bilateral talks with Pyongyang, no tangible benefits have been felt and North Korea continues to enrich its nuclear programs and to test missiles. The United Nations Security Council has been vocal in condemning the nuclear program in North Korea. But it seems even its demands have fallen on deaf ears and the sanctions have been ineffective in derailing nuclear enrichment in the communist country [19]. Moreover, most experts feel that the erratic position taken by North Korea has been effective in ensuring that the Six-Party Talks of supply chain are not successful, in addition, China, Russia and South Korea are unable to call for stringent sanction measures due to the fear of instability in the region and a sudden influx of refugees. North Korea is in fact buying time and ensuring that the talks are derailed in the process. With time, there are hopes that the U.S. will reduce its stringent conditions or some of the parties in the talks will support the position it has taken [5]. Analysts believe that North Korea is now determined to ensure that the international community recognizes it as a nuclear weapons state instead of negotiating for the eradication of its nuclear enrichment program.

[9], Former U.S. Secretary of State, wrote in the Washington Post that diplomacy among the Six-Party Talks is now an issue of whether the objective is to eliminate or manage North Korea's nuclear program. He adds that any policy that fails to eliminate the nuclear ability of North Korea's military, will effectively consent to its continuation. In May 2009, North Korea removed itself from the Six-Party Talks but the Obama administration continued negotiations with the rest of the party members to show that it has not denounced denuclearization of Pyongyang.

According to a Congressional Research Service report in 2009, if the Obama administration decides to restore negotiation tracks with the Pyongyang, it would be an effective means of restoring strict bilateral negotiation terms between the U.S and North Korea. However, most experts are of the

opinion that although little results have been yielded through the multilateral approach, it still remains as the best means of negotiations. Charles Pritchard, a special envoy from 2001-2003 negotiating with North Korea says that bilateral (US-North Korea) negotiations worked the best and were effective in producing major results in a relatively short period of time [15]. However, very few experts believe that the intention of North Korea is to give up on its nuclear enrichment program [15].

For a very long period of time, North Korea has always wanted to be allowed by the international community to further its nuclear program. The country has already reached the status of industrialized nations and believes that it has the capacity of producing and managing effectively, nuclear power. As such, it does not intend to give up on a program that has been tested effectively by its experts. During the Bush administration, the deputy chief of the U.S. delegation to the Six-Party Talks, Victor Cha, wrote in the Washington Post that the talks do not have the capacity of attaining what Pyongyang or Washington wants [22]. Therefore, the main objective of the Six-Party Talks is to contain the threat of proliferation, manage the problem and ensure that the clock of the regime runs out. It is important to note then that at this stage it appears both parties are not eager for immediate resolution and feel that given more time the situation will become more favorable to them.

7. Chinese Perspective: Why Six-Party Talks around supply chain have not succeeded

Most international negotiations are faced with individual hurdles, but they are solved over a period of time. Why then have the talks failed to bear fruit after such a long period of time? Critics say that there are different perspectives relating to each party in the talks, which have made the Six-Party Talks around supply chain unsuccessful [27].

Some of the most common factors are attributed to the major players in the talks – the U.S., North Korea and China [25]. In addition, since a peaceful process was decided upon to end the Pyongyang nuclear program, most analysts believe that North Korea has failed to take actions because they do not expect military intervention. From a Chinese perspective, the talks have failed to bear fruit since Pyongyang considers its nuclear program as a shield from U.S. strategies of regime change. When Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Secretary of State, visited the East Asian region, a covert signal was sent to Beijing that it was time for other options to be considered to tackle the North Korean problem. Despite the fact that the Six-Party Talks are the most preferred

process of solving the nuclear issue with North Korea, the perception of the forum's ability to achieve its objectives remains pessimistic.

If Washington sees that Pyongyang has refused to act even after being given several options, Beijing may be forced use a "Plan B" option championed by the U.S., although it is not yet clear what the plan may entail. Analysts believe that the Six-Party Talks for achieving supply chain have been unsuccessful because North Korea is determined to ensure that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) remain as a countermeasure against any strategy which may be used by the United States to implement radical regime change. However, within the negotiating parties, there are several differences in priorities and goals and this is a major factor when it comes to putting pressure on North Korea. A peaceful means has already been agreed upon to denuclearize Pyongyang. However, to China, eradicating the nuclear program in North Korea is a secondary goal when compared with war avoidance.

In February 2009, concerns were raised by Beijing on the most effective process of solving the dispute and this is because the matter seems to be affecting directly its national security. First, Pyongyang said that any other process apart from negotiated agreement may escalate tensions to a point where nations are provoked into war. Beijing took these comments very seriously because if war erupts, it would have disastrous effects on China. Therefore, prevention of war is a matter that must be guarded at all costs on the part of Beijing. Preventions of war by China may contravene the priority of the U.S. of ensuring that the Korean peninsula is denuclearized at all costs [3].

Although this does not explicitly outline that the U.S. may use war when negotiations fail, there may be some implications that it may be used to ensure that Korean peninsula is free of nuclear weapons. At the moment, military intervention is not an option for Washington, but this may be considered eventually if it seems that the multilateral actions are not going anywhere. The sequence of future events will have a significant impact on the Six-Party Talks mechanism and its long-term outcome.

However, this will have an indirect benefit to Pyongyang since during this time North Korea is able to enrich its nuclear program and weaponize its atomic materials in any way it wants. In addition, emphasis on non-military interventions implies that Beijing will support the security concerns of Pyongyang as the only means of finding an amicable and viable solution. Suggesting that Beijing supports the written form of security guarantees by Washington as a necessary means of the Six-Party Talks to achieve its goals. In addition, security

guarantees by Washington as well as a promise for compensation may facilitate Pyongyang's removal of nuclear facilities via an interim freezing phase, a process that has been initiated previously albeit to an unsuccessful conclusion.

8. U.S. strategy towards North Korea

While there are several strategies proposed by party members on the most efficient ways of solving the Pyongyang deadlock, they tend to differ greatly. For instance, the United States and Japan support tough sanctioning of North Korea, while the rest of the party members support less intensive measures. For a long period, the U.S. had rejected North Korea's proposal of a bilateral approach to the negotiation, but Washington has in-part reversed its stand so as to solve the nuclear problem. Meanwhile, Pyongyang has not honored agreements and its nuclear enrichment program, as well as its testing of missiles, is still ongoing. A peaceful process was agreed upon in the Six-Party Talks for managing supply chain but tangible fruits are yet to be experienced and the future does not seem so bright [25], [26].

This leads analysts to question the effectiveness of the forum and the process being used to solve the Pyongyang issue. Some say that the objectives of party members are centered on individual priorities and not on the collective goal of solving the nuclear problem.

The strategy of the U.S. seems unpredictable because it is one of the most influential parties in the talks. What will happen if the U.S. decides to use military intervention to ensure that the Korean peninsula is denuclearized? Analysts believe that the use of power cannot be sanctioned by the other party members (aside perhaps Japan) due to intrinsic issues. However, it is evident that either elimination or management of North Korea's nuclear program must be decided in the near future [21]. Therefore, the U.S. may develop specific objectives for North Korea which may not necessarily be endorsed by Six-Party members.

A peaceful negotiation process in the long-run may be at odds with Washington's objectives in North Korea. This is because according to the U.S., maximization of pressure is the only solution that will bring North Korea to a sensible assessment of the plight that it is in, both locally and internationally. There has to be a military threat that will have to be considered inevitable in the future. It is impossible to totally rule out a pre-emptive strike. The U.S. military has been involved in Iraq for a number of years demonstrating perhaps Washington's ability to tolerate divisive stall tactics employed by North Korea. In addition, the U.S. needs some time to

develop its strategy if it is to engage North Korea aggressively [16]. Therefore, for now, the Six-Party Talks remain the best solution of dealing with Pyongyang's nuclear problem.

However, the situation will have to change in the future if the peaceful negotiation fails to be successful. In Iraq, the situation has already come under relative control, and there is a high possibility that the Six-Party Talks can convince the U.S. to start considering other options that will put pressure on Pyongyang. The security of North Korea does not concern the United States since the aim of Washington is to ensure that South Korea is not exposed to the powers of tyrants [18]. For a very long period, South Korea has been one of America's closest allies and more than 25,000 troops of the U.S. military are deployed in the country [6]. This is one way of ensuring that any tactics employed by Pyongyang do not succeed in the Korean peninsula. Although North Korea wants to be recognized as a nuclear state, both the Six-Party states and the international community are not prepared to allow a situation that may lead to nuclear proliferation.

The U.S. has played a significant role in East Asia in ensuring peace and stability in the region. The UN Security Council has also kept a watchful eye and has ensured that international agreements are respected by all countries. The U.S. government has been at the forefront of ensuring that weapons of mass destruction do not get into the hands of terrorist groups or hostile states. During the Bush administration, a written security agreement with North Korea was ideologically unacceptable and politically risky. The current Obama administration has softened its stand and it has called on North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program through a peaceful process. The U.S. had already promised enough compensation to North Korea in return for dismantling of Pyongyang's nuclear activities.

After the failure of the agreed framework, the U.S. learned a lesson that even when peace negotiations are on the right track, they may encounter stumbling blocks at any given time and disintegrate. Therefore, it is only logical for the U.S. to demand a complete, irreversible and verifiable dismantling of the nuclear program without a provisional phase of breezing [4]. Analysts say that the U.S. government is actually seeking for the application of the Libyan model to the nuclear enrichment program in North Korea. According to John Bolton, a former U.S. envoy, Libya was not compensated by the U.S. after it ended its weapons of mass destruction program [24].

However, it was allowed to rejoin the international community and this is enough compensation. Therefore, Pyongyang has placed a very high price for it to end its nuclear enrichment program, this

form of extortion should not be accepted in the Six-Party Talks around supply chain. The current North Korean administration accused its predecessor of corruption that led to Pyongyang finalizing the Agreed Framework. Beijing has not said any word concerning the Libyan model, but analysts say that China does not think that it can become applicable in the North Korean situation.

To start with North Korea seems not particularly care whether or not it is returned to the international community. Its primary goal is ensuring that the current regime is sustained, it is interesting to note the subsequent collapse of the Libyan regime, whether or not it was influenced by changes in international policies. In addition, Libya is a major exporter of oil and it can therefore use these revenues to sustain itself, in fact, it needs access to the international marketplace to sell those resources. On the other hand, North Korea still depends on aid and compensation. Analysts say that Kim Jong-Il cannot benefit from the Libyan model. This is the main reason why Chinese analysts argue that it is almost impossible for Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear enrichment program without enough compensation [23].

9. Washington vs. Beijing: Six-Party Talks to Achieve Optimal Supply Chain

It is quite evident from all the parties in the talks that there exists consensus in a desire to end the negotiation process peacefully. The objectives of individual parties tend to differ, but the fundamental goal of the talks is to eradicate the nuclear program in Pyongyang. Washington and Beijing have played significant roles in pressurizing North Korea to participate in the talks and eradicate enrichment of nuclear power [17]. However, from the objectives of the two nations, critics argue that the U.S. is calling for tougher measures while China is advocating for a smooth way of dealing with the problem. Irrespective of the differences in goals between the U.S. and China, analysts believe that the Six-Party Talks have a significant impact on the future of the Korean peninsula. If the issue of regime change in North Korea is the only unshakeable policy of the U.S., after a period of time, China will eventually change its stand.

Pyongyang is already becoming a liability to China and that the long-term strategy of Beijing is for North Korea reunify with South Korea. In 2013, there has been a clear shift in China's policy towards North Korea, with the North continuing to disobey U.N. sanctions, China's patience appears to have run thin. China took a key role in drafting the most recent sanctions and their impact of officials in North

Korea, shows a far less tolerant Chinese policy. However, China's immediate goal remains to ensure that North Korea is preserved and stable. Sources from China say that this is a means of ensuring that the nuclear problem is resolved through a peaceful process. In another twist, just like the way Washington is using the Beijing to pressurize Pyongyang, North Korea may be used by China against the U.S. For example, Beijing has been able to maintain a cordial relationship with the U.S. due to the presence of Pyongyang. Beijing has been able to extract support from the U.S. for its Taiwan policy through actions on the North Korean issue. Therefore, at the moment, North Korea can be maintained and this is worth the amount of huge economic aid that China gives to North Korea.

North Korea stands to lose heavily if it severs its ties with China and this implies that it often bows to pressure from Beijing. Over the last two years, newfound North Korean aggression seems to have gone heavily against the will of the its ally, if North Korea now believes its nuclear deterrent to be sufficient, it may be looking to heighten tensions and instigate a new round of diplomacy on its own terms. China is of the opinion that if the U.S. provides enough compensation and provides a written security guarantee; Pyongyang will eventually budge, even if it would be reluctant. Generally, Kim Jong-Un is not looking to severe relations with the United States nor does he desperately need nuclear weapons. The most important thing for him is finance that will enable him to reform the national economy and thus ensure the survival of his regime. Since cash and security are the most urgent needs of Pyongyang, Chinese analysts are wondering whether Washington really wants the nuclear problem to be resolved [10]. In addition, the Six-Party member states know that what can most quickly dismantle the repressive Kim regime is internal pressure and instability and not external threats, although sanctions will go some way towards exacerbating the former.

10. Conclusion

Is the U.S. willing to provide economic aid and security guarantees being demanded by North Korea? Most analysts think that Washington is reluctant and it is not possible for it to concede to the requests. Given, the domestic financial concerns in the U.S. it is unlikely that even if this were to provide a real and even cost effective solution that it would be approved by the U.S. House and/or Senate. However, it is impossible for Pyongyang to dismantle the nuclear program if it fails to get what it has demanded. Under such conditions, it seems that nothing much will be

gained even when North Korea participates actively in the negotiations [10]. Asking Kim's regime to dismantle the nuclear program without providing proper compensation will not bear any fruits. Analysts believe that the talks will drag for a very lengthy period and not much will be achieved. When the Six-Party Talks become unsuccessful, then China will be exposed to other forms challenges. First, the U.S will demand that Beijing reduces the amount of aid and compensations it gives to North Korea [14].

Moreover, China is slowing being pushed into a position where it must back UN Security Council and support heavy sanctioning. Therefore, Beijing will be at crossroads – whether to support international demands or ensure regional stability and wellbeing of North Korea. Between the United States and China, priority differences are hitherto hidden due to the common goal that they are after. However, if the Six-Party Talks collapse, these differences will eventually come out in the open. In addition, when the peaceful negotiations fail to bear fruits, Washington will be bound to embark on another course of action.

Therefore, a new initiative by the U.S. will definitely put to a test the smooth and cordial Sino-U.S. relations. North Korea has made several backtracking promises to China and this may be the main reason why that relation between the two countries is not as close as in the past. Analysts believe that Kim's regime could be intentionally causing a wedge between Washington and Beijing relations. The future of the Six-Party Talks is not very bright since it seems that member states are too concerned with their individual priorities. If the talks fail, each party is bound to incur a certain amount of loss [11]. Moreover, there will be increased tension since each party will not be sure what other options will be taken.

There seems at this stage, no impetus for the Six-Party talks to restart and if there were to do so it is doubtful how much impact they would have. This is because it is evident that North Korea continues to refuse to budge on its policy. Such a continued stall is best demonstrated by the fact that the talks around supply chain have dragged on for a very long period of time and yet very few tangible results have been experienced.

What options exist for Beijing in the event that the peaceful negotiation process collapses? First, there will be huge pressure from the United States to cut economic aid to North Korea. This may be a difficult course of action for Beijing to take since it would accelerate the decline in influence that it has on Pyongyang. In addition, freezing aid may cause North Korea to experience economic collapse leading to the collapse of the regime and subsequent regional instability [8]. Policy advisors are of the opinion that China entered too deep into a crisis that mainly was a concern of the United States. In Northeast Asia, Japan already has nuclear weapons and it is, therefore, a major player [7]. As its interests shift the benefits that China receives from the U.S. will determine the amount of pressure it will put on North Korea, and will likely have the strongest impact on the regional situation. While talks seem to have failed beyond recovery at this stage, there exists a capacity for players such as Russia to reassert their roles. With China's diminishing importance for North Korea as it appears to be using the issue to further its own goals with the U.S. there is a strong possibility that North Korea will look to Russia for support. Russian successes in Syria will mean that not only will it be possible for it to restart stalled negotiations, but that it may well be looking for a way to reduce U.S. global dominance. However the situation unfolds, the eventual disarmament of the North Korean Nuclear program will come with profound changes, these changes will either secure the Kim regimes place at the international negotiating table, or come about as a result of the regimes removal.

The ultimate aim of the talks is the ending of North Korea's nuclear program, however, for North Korea the dismantling of the nuclear program is not a desire by itself, only when its other security concerns are addressed can it fulfil this goal of the talks, the nuclear program is not so much a direct nuclear deterrent as it is a bargaining tool and one of very few they have. The problem here lies that other countries are unwilling to satisfy all the other security needs of North Korea until their own private needs are met, throughout the region these are diverse, complicated and seemingly impossible to settle simultaneously.

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