

Seeking the Best or the Second Best: Lessons Learned from Six Party Talks

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Introduction

- The North Korea nuclear nonproliferation issue is on the right track.
- It is still too early to conclude that denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula will be achieved in near term. All parties still need to keep vigilant on any possible setbacks.
- Iran nonproliferation remains stalemate
- Both Iranian and North Korean nonproliferation issues have serious regional implication
- Some lessons could be learned from the six party talks, and may be applied to similar nonproliferation issues

Lessons Learned

- 1. Regional issue should be addressed at a regional level
- 2. Make first thing first, format second
- 3. A mediator is useful
- 4. Address the state of concern's reasonable security concern
- 5. Transform rather than change regime
- 6. Do it step by step
- 7. Treat the state of concern equal: Rhetoric Matters
- 8. Don't mend the fence after losing sheep

1. Regional issue should be addressed at a regional level

- A platform involving all parties concerned in a regional level is important
- A solution coming out of the multilateral platform could last longer. Multilateral platform could nurture and build up trust gradually.
- Multilateral platform is a place to gather pressure for both parties with confrontational attitude or policy, rather than a place to gather pressure in favor of one side
- Bilateral talks could be developed within the multilateral framework
- First agree to disagree, and then agree what can be agreed.
- Shortfalls: less effective because of different priority among different parties, and maybe time consuming

2. Make first thing first, format second

- Nuclear Proliferation is the most urgent, make it the first priority
- Format, procedure should not be more important than the solution of the proliferation
Rigid insistence on a particular format or conditions will not help
- Give diplomacy a chance, any format could be tried, whether it is multilateral, bilateral, trilateral
- All channels should be explored, whether New York Channel or Berlin approach , official or unofficial, public or secret
- Direct talks between the United States and the DPRK could take place within the context of multilateral talks.

3. A mediator is useful

- Faithfully convey messages to both parties without formal diplomatic relationship
- Bridge or narrow the gap of those confrontational policies
- Facilitate bilateral talks under the context of multilateral talks to make real progress
- Do the job behind the scene to overcome mutual mistrust, and for the sake of face saving
- But, do not force the mediator to choose sides

4. Address the reasonable security concern

- North has legitimate security concerns stemming from its historical conflict with the United States.
- Regime survival is the first thing V.S. regime change
- Libya model, without assurance of no regime change, there won't be progress
- Negotiation is a matter of giving and taking, carrot and stick. When it is going to get rid of North Korea "absolute weapon", it is necessary to make North Korea relaxed. Security guarantee and prospect of developing bilateral diplomatic relations are good incentive.

5. Transform rather than change regime

- Regime change is a problematic approach to address nonproliferation concern
- Regime change will create more problems than what it intends to solve. Regional implication
- Regime Transformation may be a better approach to solve those proliferation issues
- Convince the isolated countries to conduct economic reform, and get involved in international community
- For years China has actively encouraged North Korea to adopt Chinese-style market reforms
 - Delegations from North Korea: King's visit
 - Delegations to North Korea

These efforts are not very successful without cooperation from other parties

6. Do it step by step

- North Korea nuclear, missile, conventional forces, humanitarian concern, seek the second best
- Lessons of Clinton Administration: Nuclear first, later on missiles
- June 2001 and April 2002 policy review: broad agenda and faster solution
- Later on, Complete, Verifiable, Irreversible Dismantlement
- In addition, any reward is conditional on performance of North Korea, such unrealistic
- Without trust, or confidence, North Korea will keep holding dear of its bomb
- Disabling is something between freezing and dismantlement, also a process to build mutual trust

7. Treat the state of concern equal: Rhetoric Matters

- Talks will be valuable only when all parties are sincere.
- Unfriendly rhetoric during the process may be used as excuse to escape from the talk
- Label No. 1, Axis of evil, January 29, 2002, President Bush
- Label No.2, outpost of tyranny, January 2005, Secretary Rice
- Label No.3, criminal regime, December 2005, US Ambassador to South Korea Alexander Vershbow
- Rogue State, pygmy/spoilt child/dictator

8. Don't mend the fence after losing sheep

- Starting from late 2002 to the end of President Bush's first term, there is no progress
 - IAEA was kicked out, North Korea pulled out of NPT in January of 2003, North Korea processed the 8000 fuel rods
- The Joint Statement of September 2005 and the financial sanction
 - North Korea tested seven missiles in July of 2006, North Korea tested its first nuclear device in October 2006
- Now, after February 13 and the latest talk, all back to the starting point
- Time wasted, Opportunities lost, Damage to nonproliferation done.
- Why not to do it as early as possible, the earlier the better

■ Thanks You!