

Non-proliferation and Political Interests: Russia's Policy Dilemmas in the Six-party Talks

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This article is an effort to explain where and why the US and Russia agree or disagree on the North Korean nuclear issues and non-proliferation on the Korean Peninsula and identify the characteristics and causes of Russian non-proliferation policy toward Northeast Asia. In addition, this article will show how the Russian position is reflected in the six-party talks for the second North Korean nuclear crisis, and will clarify the significance and constraints of Russia's nuclear non-proliferation policy in the Northeast Asian context.

First, it analyzes Russia's general positions on nuclear non-proliferation in Northeast Asia and second, it attempts to explain why there has been a lack of consistency in Russia's position on North Korean nuclear issues as reflected in Russia's approach to the six-party talks for the second North Korean nuclear crisis.¹

Russia and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Model

US-Russian cooperation played the most important role in the formation of a non-proliferation regime. Both during and after the Cold War, US-Russian cooperation played a central role in non-proliferation not only at

¹ This is a revised and updated version of the paper read at the conference, "US-Russia: Regional Security Issues and Interests" (Washington, DC, April 24–26, 2006).

the global level but also at the regional level in Europe and Eurasia. However, despite all the successes and achievements of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the rising optimism about nuclear security is disappearing.² The weakening of US-Russia cooperation has made it difficult to maintain a multilateral basis for dealing with nuclear proliferation at the regional level since the late 1990s. The US strengthened its unilateral security policy based on its power rather than multilateral security cooperation, and in this situation, the US and Russia have been unable to reach an agreement on nuclear issues.³ As the initial optimism faded, the permanent members of the UN Security Council could not properly cope with Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, and failed to prevent the efforts of India, Pakistan, Iraq, and North Korea from developing WMD. In addition, they disagreed on policies toward Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, showing a lack of common interest and perception.⁴ Under such circumstances, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests and became de facto nuclear powers with intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Moreover, the danger of super-terrorism, coupled with the possible use of nuclear weapons by terrorist groups, increased. It turned out that Iran and North Korea had purchased nuclear technology and equipment, and their nuclear programs seriously challenged the international non-proliferation regime. Thus, it has become increasingly necessary to develop new forms of cooperation to face these challenges.⁵

Differences in perspectives between the US and Russia on the Iranian and North Korean nuclear problems are unmistakable. As a backdrop to understanding these differences, first, three models for the resolution of nuclear non-proliferation will be introduced. The main feature of the Ukrainian model can be characterized by active US-Russia cooperation and its diplomatic settlement of nuclear weapons diffusion. After the

² Alexei Arbatov, "Horizontal Proliferation: New Changes," *Russia in Global Politics* 4, no. 6 (2004).

³ Aleksei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin, eds., *Iadernoe sderzhivanie i nerasprostranenie* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 2005), 12–14; George Perkovich et al., *Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 9–10.

⁴ Philip Saunders, "New Approaches to Non-proliferation: Supplementing or Supplanting the Regime?" *The Non-proliferation Review* 8, no. 3 (2001): 128–130.

⁵ For example, see Perkovich et al., *Universal Compliance*.

collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine possessed 130 SS-19, 46 SS-24, approximately 3,000 strategic nuclear weapons, and 600 cruise missiles, which ranked Ukraine the 3rd nuclear power in the world. The US and Russia persuaded Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons through compensation, so the Ukrainian congress ratified the NPT in November 1994 based on the Lisbon Protocol. Its last nuclear warhead was finally transferred to Russia in June 1996, and the US compensated Ukraine for this process. It exemplifies a positive-sum game of nuclear non-proliferation with which the parties involved are satisfied.⁶

However, such a model could not be applied to other cases. Libya carried out anti-western policy based on its seventh-largest petroleum production in the world, and tried to develop nuclear weapons for the purpose of securing its position in Northern Africa and the Islamic world and preparing for a US attack and a war with Israel. In 1979, Libya imported a nuclear reactor from Russia for research purposes and maintained nuclear cooperation with Russia until 2002. In reaction to Libya's efforts to develop WMD, the US passed the "Iran and Libya Sanctions Act" in 1996 and imposed non-military sanctions by suspending Libya's foreign trade. Before this, the UN Security Council accused Libya of terrorism and passed Resolutions No. 731, 748 and 883 in 1992 and 1993, imposing non-military sanctions. These sanctions hugely damaged the Libyan economy; Libya finally ended the UN sanctions only after promising to compensate the victims' families of the 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 2003. Especially after the Bush Administration took office, the resolute US attitude on the war on terrorism and its classification of Libya as a target state for a preemptive nuclear strike on Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), and after 9 months of negotiations as well as contact with the British intelligence agency, Libya finally gave up its nuclear weapons program on December 19, 2003, right before the US attack on Iraq.⁷ In short, in this model, the US achieved its objective of non-proliferation by putting the pressure of non-military sanctions through the UN Security Council and increasing the threat of preemptive strike without any active objection from Russia.

⁶ Roman Popadiuk, *American-Ukrainian Nuclear Relations* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1996).

⁷ Shannon A. Kile, "Nuclear Arms Control and Non-proliferation," *SIPRI Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (2004), 617-619.

Finally, the Iraqi model is an example of using military means. Iraq neither developed nuclear weapons nor opposed to the end accepting UN or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigations. The UN Security Council had already passed Resolution No. 687 in 1991 and imposed economic sanctions on Iraq. United Nations Special Committee (UNSCOM) had also conducted 250 field investigations by December 1998 and removed 48 long-range missiles and 690 tons of materials for making chemical weapons. However, even after these investigations, economic sanctions were not lifted, so Iraq took a non-cooperative posture toward UNSCOM activities. UNSCOM withdrew its investigation team, and the US and the UK bombed suspected WMD facilities in Baghdad. Afterward, the Bush Administration announced its warning of preemptive strike on September 20, 2002 and gave an ultimatum on November 8, 2002. The UN Security Council supported the US with Resolution No. 1441, increasing the possibility of military action, and Iraq finally agreed to accept United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and IAEA investigations. However, these investigations found no evidence of Iraq's nuclear program. In spite of Saddam Hussein's appeal that there was no nuclear program in Iraq, the investigation team's request for a cautious reaction, and the objections of Russia and other UN Security Council members, the US invaded Iraq and completely removed any hint of Iraq's nuclear development. Similarly, the US attempt of non-proliferation through military action was viewed as a unilateral act.

The US and Russia currently disagree on exactly how to resolve the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues. Especially regarding the North Korean nuclear issue, the US favors the Libyan model, while China favors the Ukrainian model. China appears to believe that the Ukrainian model might persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear program by providing a multilateral security guarantee as well as economic compensation. But Russia seems to have some ambivalence towards these two models.⁸

⁸ John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-party Talks," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2005): 84–85.

North Korean Nuclear Problem and Russian Interests in Northeast Asia

Although the US and Russia agree with the goal of non-proliferation as a general principle, they disagree on dealing with specific cases. After President Putin took office, significant changes have been made in Russia's national security strategy, based on the reevaluation of various factors such as the expansion of NATO, ABM, MD, and terrorism.⁹ Russia pursued a series of security and foreign policies to seek a new strategic balance in the US-led world order and tried to strengthen its benefits and causes.¹⁰

So, what is Russia pursuing between North Korea and the US? In fact, Russia seems to have good reason to support Iran's position.¹¹ However, North Korea does not appear to bring as much economic benefit to Russia as Iran does. If so, why would Russia support North Korea's position?

Russia's interest in North Korea and Asia-Pacific has been consistent since the Soviet period. Various multilateral formulas have been proposed by the Russians since the late 1960s. For instance, the Soviet Union proposed the "Asian Collective Security System." Mikhail Gorbachev, in a similar vein, also proposed various multilateral formulas, such as the "Comprehensive International Security System," an Asian version of the "Helsinki Conference," and the "All Asia Forum." After the collapse of the Soviet Union, President Boris Yeltsin also proposed the establishment of a multilateral negotiation and regional risk-management system for

⁹ Cf. Celeste A. Wallander, "Wary of the West: Russian Security Policy at the Millennium," *Arms Control Today* 30, no. 2 (2000), <http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/march00/cwmr00.htm> (accessed August 21, 2004); Mark Kramer, "What is Driving Russia's New Strategic Concept?" *PONARS Policy Memo* 103 (2001), <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ponars/POLICY%20MEMOS/Kramer103.htm> (accessed July 21, 2005); Nikolai Sokov, "Russia's New National Security Concept: The Nuclear Angle," *Global Beat*, January 19, 2000, <http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/nuclear/CNS0100.html> (accessed July 21, 2005); Stephen J. Blank, *Threats to Russian Security: The View from Moscow* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2000).

¹⁰ The Russian and Eurasian Program of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *An Agenda for Renewal: U.S.-Russian Relations* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2000); "U.S.-Russian Relations: A Turning Point?" *Russia Watch: Analysis and Commentary* 5 (2001): 1, 4–8.

¹¹ Vladimir A. Orlov and Alexander Vinnikov, "The Great Guessing Game: Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Issue," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2005).

Northeast Asia when he visited Korea in November 1992. In March 1994 during the first North Korean nuclear crisis, Russia, emphasizing its position as a member of Northeast Asia, proposed the eight-party talks, which included participants from North and South Korea, Russia, the US, China, Japan, the IAEA and the UN Secretary General. Russia also proposed ten-party talks (North and South Korea, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Japan, the UN Secretary General, and the IAEA Secretary General) for the Korean Peninsula that would include general and working-level meetings.¹² Most recently, regarding the second North Korean nuclear crisis, Aleksandr Losiukov, deputy minister of the Russian Foreign Ministry, proposed six-party talks in October 2002 in order to create an environment for the resolution of the issue.¹³ Thus, Russia has shown a consistent position on the Northeast Asian multilateral security system.

However, the rise of China and the subsequent change in the balance of power, the most important change in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era, is posing a great challenge for Russia. Because the US will cautiously pursue policies to balance against the rising challenger, China is also very cautious in responding to this. In fact, the Bush Administration does not consider Russia a serious enemy at this point. Assuming there will be no major war for hegemonic change in Eurasia for at least a generation, they conclude that the potential threat referred to as the “hydraulic pressure of geopolitics” is moving toward East Asia.¹⁴ Especially because there are conflicting interests of major powers in this region, the US believes that it has a special stake in maintaining its regional hegemony. Furthermore, serious militarization is taking place in the region.¹⁵ In light of these geopolitical changes, Russia felt a need to

¹² Such a proposal shows that the working-group meeting after the second round of the six-party talks has been raised by Russia. For Russia’s proposals for a multilateral security system on the Korean Peninsula, see: Valentin Moiseev, “On the Korean Settlement” *International Affairs* (Moscow) 43, no. 3 (1997).

¹³ Vladimir Kutakhov, “Russia Offers Six-party Discussion Format in Northeast Asia,” ITAR-TASS, October 1, 2002.

¹⁴ PARK Kunyoung, “Bush Administration’s East Asia Policy,” *State Strategy* 7, no. 4 (2001).

¹⁵ Combined military expenditures of the East Asian nations reached \$165 billion at the beginning of the twenty-first century, twice as much as in 1990. The Asian share of military purchases from US military producers rose from 10 percent to 25 percent of US arms exports.

increase its weakening influence and renew its presence in Northeast Asia. In fact, Russia assesses that its influence in this region, as in Europe, diminished after NATO's expansion. After all, Northeast Asia is searching for a new balance of power due to the rise of China, and this circumstance makes it difficult for regional powers to decisively choose their policies.

In addition, the issue of nuclear proliferation is very important in Northeast Asia. Setting aside two North Korean nuclear crises, the two largest major nuclear powers, the US and Russia, are deeply involved in this region, and China has recently been trying to raise its nuclear capability. This condition may make vertical nuclear proliferation more serious in this region. Moreover, Japan and South Korea possess the capability to produce nuclear armaments and have a special interest in North Korea's nuclear program. Thus, if North Korea becomes a nuclear power, Northeast Asia is more likely to experience serious vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation.¹⁶ This situation will not only cause instability on Russia's eastern border but also place on Russia the extra burden of adapting itself to the new competition for nuclear weapons.

Russia's Northeast Asia policy cannot but be influenced by its various geostrategic interests, such as relations with major powers such as the US, China and Japan, its complex calculations regarding the two Koreas, as well as by its own political and economic factors. All these make Russia's Northeast Asian policy extremely complex.¹⁷

In the "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" released in June 2000, President Putin stated clearly that Russia's Korea policy would focus on guaranteeing Russia's equal participation in Korean issues and maintaining balanced relations with both North and South Korea.¹⁸ This policy intended to focus on economic cooperation with South Korea, while focusing on political and security cooperation with North Korea.

¹⁶ For nuclear armament and capability of Northeast Asian countries, see Aleksei Arbatov and Vasili Mikheev, eds., *Iadernoe rasprostranenie v Severo-Vostochnoi Azii* (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 2005).

¹⁷ Vasily Mikheev, "Multilateral Approaches to Peace Building in Northeast Asia: Cooperation-Security Strategy," in YOON Youngo, ed., *Six Party Non-governmental Dialogue in Northeast Asia*, The KAIS International Conference Series, no. 15 (Seoul: Korean Association of International Studies, 2005).

¹⁸ "Kontseptsiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 (August, 2000).

Putin attempted to regain Russia's strategic position on the Korean Peninsula by restoring rather than by harming Russian-North Korean relations. In short, Putin's Korea policy was based on a pragmatic policy line to overcome Russia's dilemma by pursuing the "causal benefit" of expanding its political role on the Korean Peninsula and the "practical benefit" of securing economic benefit by strengthening political and security ties with North Korea on the basis of the "New Russia-North Korea Friendship Treaty" while increasing economic cooperation with South Korea.

What does Putin hope to achieve through this equidistant foreign policy on the Korean Peninsula?

First, the central issue in East Asia for Russia is to ensure its position and restore its influence on the Korean Peninsula. Because Russia shares its Eastern border with the Korean Peninsula, the Korean Peninsula has always been included in Russia's national interest; therefore, Russia is determined to play a central role in resolving the Korean issue.¹⁹ Russia's national interest in the Korean Peninsula can be clearly defined by Korea's significance as a strategic point in Northeast Asia, i.e., a geostrategic gate connecting the continent and the ocean.²⁰ In order to restore its influence and build a geopolitical context (favorable for Russia) in Northeast Asia, Putin needed strong diplomatic efforts to build an influential position on the Korean Peninsula. Russian strategists such as Aleksei Voznenskii commented on the geopolitical significance of the Korean Peninsula: "The situation on the Korean Peninsula is not only a simple political problem, but an important coordinate to decide the flow of international security, politics, diplomacy, and economics in the Asian-pacific region in the future. Therefore, states that are not involved in the Korean issue will be excluded from East Asian affairs."²¹ In other words, Russia's failure to be involved in Korean Peninsula issues would mean relinquishing its influence on the entire Asia-Pacific region. So it is very

¹⁹ Vadim Tkachenko, "North-South Summit and Russia-North Korea Relations," *KIEP Global Economic Review* 3, no. 7 (2000).

²⁰ SHIN Beomshik, "Politika Rossii v otnoshenii Koreiskogo poluostrova vo vremia 2-ogo prezidentskogo pravleniia Vladimira Putina i ee znachenie dla Respubliki Korei," *Zhurnal slavianovedeniia* (Seoul) 19, no. 2 (2004): 675-710.

²¹ *Daehan Maeil Daily*, February 19, 2001.

natural that Russia regards diplomacy related to the Korean Peninsula as a “center nerve” of Russia’s Northeast Asia strategy.

Thus, Russia’s key security interest in the Korean Peninsula is to form a peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula, which could help Russia focus its own domestic reform. Russia’s security goal on the Korean Peninsula can be summarized as preventing direct military conflicts between the two Koreas or military conflicts caused by the intervention of a third party. The former is to remove the security cost produced by the military instability on the Korean Peninsula, and the latter is to prevent a domino effect in the Northeast Asian arms race that may seriously destabilize Russia’s Far East security.

Second, Putin’s political interest in the Korean Peninsula is to be involved in moderating Korean issues and, if possible, Northeast Asia’s balance of power and consequently in strengthening Russia’s geopolitical position according to its national interest.

Third, Putin’s Russia sets four economic goals in the peninsula.²² The first goal is to make the Korean Peninsula a bridgehead into the Asia-Pacific economy. As a Eurasian country, Russia seeks a balanced development of eastern territories beyond the Urals and influence in Asia. By increasing cooperation with South Korea, which has a significant geopolitical position in the region, Russia is attempting to enlarge its field of activity into ASEAN, APEC, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and to strengthen its position in the Asia-Pacific region by joining ASEM.²³ The second goal is to open markets for Russia’s competitive products such as energy resources, high-tech weapons, and nuclear technology. The third goal is to develop an economic partnership for the development of Russia’s economic “desert,” Siberia and the Russian Far East. From the standpoint of national development strategy in the twenty-first century, Russia is actively pursuing projects to develop the large oil and gas resources in Siberia and the Far East. Given the geopolitical competition with Japan and China, Russia regards South Korea as an important source of capital and technology for the exploitation of resources; economic revitalization

²² Georgii Toloraia, “Rossiia-Respublika Koreia: posle sammita v Seule,” *Problemy Dal’nego Vostoka*, no. 2 (2001): 14–19.

²³ Alexandre Mansourov, “Russian Policy towards East Asia under President Putin,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 15, no. 1 (2001): 42–71.

in this area is encouraging South Korea's large-scale economic cooperation and investment.²⁴ The fourth goal is to extend the final destination of the Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR), the Eurasian land-bridge of transportation, to the South. Russia has recently emphasized the connection of the Trans-Siberian Railway and Trans-Korean Railway (TKR). Russia once stated, "We are willing to invest more than one billion dollars in the TSR-TKR connection project," and made diplomatic efforts to persuade the two Koreas to connect the main course of TKR to TSR along the east coast line.²⁵

In fact, Putin's new equidistant diplomacy, provided by the normalization of Russia-North Korean relations, has helped Russia to recover its geopolitical position on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea is an important geopolitical leverage for Russia to control the situation on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. In the future, Russia may demand greater reward from South Korea by using Russian-North Korean relations, and if the reward does not meet its expectations, Russia may use diplomatic resources that South Korea does not want to see. This option may include sales of high-tech weapons and military support for North Korea. However, Russia has more diverse and important political and economic interests with the South than with the North, and is less likely to provoke the South. If Russia inevitably has to give military support to the North, it is more likely to limit that support to defensive weapons, considering strategic stability on the Korean Peninsula, and even in this case, it will demand hard currency based on its history of reciprocity.²⁶

²⁴ IV Baikal'skii Ekonomicheskii Forum, "Reziime doklada Soveta Federatsii Federal'nogo Sobraniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 'Strategiia razvitiia Rossii v ATR v 21-om veke' (po itogam Baikal'skogo ekonomicheskogo foruma)," <http://www.forum.baikal.ru/about/strateg.htm> (accessed December 5, 2004).

²⁵ SHIN Beomshik, "Politika Rossii v otnoshenii Koreiskogo poluostrova." Besides, there are other economic policy goals such as the redemption of the North Korean bond, the promotion of North-South-Russian triangular cooperation to repair North Korean industrial facilities (that the Soviet Union had built), the construction of a natural gas pipeline that goes all the way across the Korean Peninsula and South Korea's participation in the free economic zone project for foreign companies in Russia's Far East.

²⁶ Putin's security cooperation with North Korea focuses more on the "political security cooperation" for deterring US hegemonic behaviors and strengthening its geostrategic position on the Korean Peninsula than "military security cooperation" for providing high-tech weapons. For example, when Kim Jongil visited Russia, Russia agreed with North Korea regarding observance of ABM, opposition to MD, North Korea's insistence on the

Here, we can see a facet of Russia's dilemma in Northeast Asia. In short, Russia is apparently pursuing an equidistant policy toward the two Koreas based on the separation of economy and politics, but in reality, it cannot help but maintain its Southern bias based on realistic calculations of national interest. Russia needs to cooperate with South Korea for its national projects, such as energy development in Siberia and Far East, the connection of TKR and TSR, its access to the Korean weaponry market monopolized by the US, and its entry into world economic organizations, soliciting South Korea's security interest in the six-party talks and multilateral security system in this region.

Thus, Russia may face numerous and complex difficulties in Northeast Asia in the event of military tension caused by the North Korean nuclear crisis. Russia's worries primarily begin with the fact that unlike Iraq, North Korea shares a 19-kilometer border with Russia and is directly and structurally affected by the stability of Northeast Asia. First of all, a nuclear North Korea may threaten the strategic stability of Northeast Asia and Russia's Far East security by sparking a chain reaction of nuclear armament by potential semi-nuclear powers such as Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, and by providing an excuse for the development of a US MD system and the rearmament of Japan. In short, Russia cannot but worry about a potential arms race in its own backyard, a change of the regional security order, and unstable relations in this region.

Furthermore, Russia has strategic concerns about a military conflict on the Korean Peninsula that it can neither ignore nor in which it can fail to become involved. Unless Russia gives up North Korea, it will inevitably have to deal with deterioration of relations with the US, but North Korean refugees in the Far East will also be politically troubling for Russia.²⁷ If the US conducts surgical strikes on the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, radioactive fallout could be a potential disaster for the region. In the economic sphere, conflicts on the Korean Peninsula will hurt two of Russia's most important national projects of energy development in West Siberia and the Far East as well as the TSR-TKR connection.

withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and emphasis on the peaceful purpose of North Korea's missile development, but there was no military agreement on sales of high-tech weapons. Russia's reluctance regarding military security cooperation with North Korea is due to the North's inability to pay and Russia's intention not to provoke the South.

²⁷ Goergii Bulychev, "Koreiskaia politika Rossii: popytka skhematizatsii," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, 2000, no. 2.

In conclusion, as Losiukov, the vice minister of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once stated, “A military conflict on the Korean Peninsula is not conducive to Russia’s national interest.”²⁸ Military conflicts on the Korean Peninsula due to the North Korean nuclear crisis are a worse-case scenario for Russia. Russia currently regards stability on its borders as the central issue of its foreign policy in East Asia in order to secure its domestic dynamics, such as the consolidation of democracy, the development of a market economy and political and social stabilization. Since Russia is seeking a peaceful regional environment, the North Korean nuclear issue is one of the focal points of its foreign policy. Russia cannot sit back as a passive spectator regarding the North Korean nuclear issue because it needs to eliminate the security cost caused by military instability on the Korean Peninsula, recover its national pride hurt by being left out of the four-party talks during the Yeltsin era, and balance against US hegemonic behavior in the region.²⁹ This explains why Russia was the first nation that proposed being an active moderator when the second Yongbyon crisis might invite a possible US preemptive military strike against the North.

Dilemma and Role of Russia in the Six-party Talks

Russia’s reaction to the second North Korean nuclear crisis was to secure its national interest, but Russia also had other dilemmas. In fact, after the Putin Administration took office, Russia’s North Korea policy became more active than before. However, Russia’s gains have been marginal thus far. For instance, Putin visited North Korea during the missile crisis and spoke about the North Korean position to his Western counterparts at the G8 Summit in Okinawa, and this was a clear shift of Russia’s foreign policy in Northeast Asia toward a more active role. Since then, Russia has supported North Korea’s position on the nuclear issue, despite surrounding countries’ suspicion of the North’s nuclear program. When US Special Envoy Kelly announced in October 2002 that North Korea had admitted to developing a nuclear program, Russia maintained a neutral

²⁸ *ITAR-TASS*, January 19, 2003.

²⁹ Georgii Bulychev and Aleksandr Vorontsov, “Voina kompromissov: Rossiia nachinaet mirit’ SSha i KNDR,” *Kommersant*, January 16, 2003, also available at <http://north-korea.narod.ru/vorontsov.htm>.

position, demanding that the US provide “hard evidence” and that North Korea explain US suspicion. However, after North Korea admitted its development of nuclear weapons in the three-party talks in Beijing, Russia’s efforts based on such reservation were pursued in vain, resulting in a diplomatic crisis. Putin had persuaded the West to believe that North Korea could be a trustworthy partner and keep its international agreements, and had worked on a framework to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue since 2000, but the North’s unveiling of its nuclear program put Russia in an awkward position. Critics in Russia asserted that the North Korean pronouncement made President Putin’s foreign policy regarding the North useless, and increased the international community’s distrust of Russia. A report published by the “Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives” argued that if North Korea does not give up its nuclear program, Russia should participate in international sanctions against North Korea for the sake of its reputation.³⁰ Similarly, Russia’s reaction to North Korea, which rendered useless Russia’s attempt to strengthen its position in Northeast Asia using North Korean leverage, has a flip side, and at this point, Russia’s first dilemma in choosing between hard reaction and soft reaction can be understood.

However, Russia’s official reaction focused on North Korea’s intention and capability of its nuclear program. And in this situation, Russia overcame the first phase of its dilemma, redefining its role as the “honest broker.” That is because Russia recognized through its communication channel with the North that the purpose of the North Korean nuclear program was not to secure nuclear deterrence but to pursue a “regime protection function.”³¹

³⁰ *Rossia i mir: 2003* (Moscow: Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives and The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), 2002), http://www.psifoundation.ru/en/publications/russia-003/excerpts_from_the_report.html; see also <http://www.psifoundation.ru/publications/russia2002/index.html>.

³¹ In the earlier stages, nuclear weapons were considered by North Korean rulers as an additional factor in the regional military balance on the Korean Peninsula. Now, after regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq have been overthrown by the US and the Western coalition through the use of military means, nuclear weapons are starting to be perceived as a “last-resort guarantee” for the preservation of North Korean regime in a global correlation of forces. See Alexander Nikitin, “The Changing Priorities of Russian Foreign Policy and New Mechanisms for Security in Eurasia,” The First KPSA-RPSA/MGIMO Joint Annual Conference Proceedings *Korean-Russian Cooperation for Peace and Prosperity in Northeast Asia* (Seoul: IFANS, Nov. 30–Dec. 1, 2005).

So Russia dispatched Deputy Minister Losiukov to Pyongyang as a special envoy in January 2003, where he listened to the North's opinion and proposed a "package deal" as an amicable solution to the unresolved issues. This was Russia's first response to the North Korean nuclear issue as an active moderator that listened to Kim Jongil and other high-ranking officials and delivered the North's position to South Korea, the US, China and Japan. In this process, Russia presented both a "package deal" and a "collective security assurance" plan. The "package deal" included 1) that both the US and North Korea observe the North-South Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the Agreed Framework of Geneva, 2) that the US and North Korea resume bilateral and multilateral talks and provide security assurance for the North through these talks, and 3) that the US and other countries resume humanitarian and economic support to the North. Since a US-North Korean non-aggression pact is actually impossible to achieve, a "collective security assurance" can be understood as a compromise.³²

Russia's official position on this issue became clear when Foreign Minister Sergei Ivanov met with Canadian Maurice Strong, top UN envoy for North Korea, in March 2003. Ivanov emphasized that Russia's proposal for the "package deal" is the only solution to the crisis and insisted that the international community maintain a "cautious and balanced approach." Emphasis was put on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through North Korea's observation of the NPT and acceptance of the IAEA's inspections, and on peaceful political-diplomatic resolution of the crisis through direct US-North Korean talks rather than on a military approach.³³ There are two implications for this argument. First, Russia agreed with North Korea's position that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved between the US and North Korea. However, Russia made an official announcement that it "objected to North Korea possessing nuclear weapons, and at the same time, to the US's military pressures on North Korea."³⁴ This Russian position shows Russia's second dilemma on the issue. Although Russia does not want nuclear

³² *Izvestiia*, January 20, 2003.

³³ "O vizite v Moskve Spetsial'nogo poslannika General'nogo Sekretaria OON po KNDR M. Stronga," Press Release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, no. 546-06-03-2003 (March 6, 2003).

³⁴ *Vremia novostei*, January 20, 2003.

proliferation on the Korean Peninsula, it must moderate negotiations and advocate the North's concerns, and cannot therefore merely follow a US initiative on economic and/or military sanctions.³⁵

Russia's proposal implies that it has already acknowledged, through a steady line of communication with the North, that North Korea developed its nuclear program to counter a security threat from the US, and also believes that bilateral talks should come before security assurance from the US. Therefore, Russia urged direct US-North Korean dialogues along with China, contrary to its previous policy. While Russia complained strongly when it was excluded from the previous four-party talks, it accepted that the Beijing three-party talks on April 23–25, 2003, would not include Russia, and understood that the Beijing talks were direct US-North Korean dialogues mediated by China. However, Russia insisted that bilateral talks between the US and North Korea or the three-party talks were insufficient to build a fundamental solution to the issue. They argued that the talks should develop into six-party talks that would include other regional powers, such as Russia, Japan and South Korea.

After the US rejected direct talks with North Korea, the North expressed on May 25, 2003, that it might accept a US proposal for multilateral talks. After July 23, it officially informed the other countries of its acceptance of the talks. In particular, on August 1, 2003, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced in detail the North Korean position on multilateral talks after consulting with North Korea's Ambassador to Russia Park Euichun. Along with China, Russia played a very critical role in persuading North Korea to accept the multilateral talks.³⁶ China and Russia succeeded in persuading North Korea to understand that the US would not accept the non-aggression pact and that North Korea needed the multilateral framework to guarantee the North Korean regime's survival through mutual compromise and agreement. In this process, Russia appeared to succeed in carrying out its role as a moderator, overcoming the second aspect of its dilemma.

Russia's third dilemma is that North Korea proposed to include Russia in the crisis solution process. It was not the US, but North Korea that insisted on including Russia in the six-party talks. The US tried to

³⁵ On this difference, see Alexander Zhebin, "The Bush Doctrine and Russia: A Great Discord," *Asian Perspective* 27, no. 4 (2003): 147–181.

³⁶ *New York Times*, April 12, 2003.

isolate Russia from the North Korean nuclear issue. Just as the US excluded Russia from the four-party talks in 1994, the US left out Russia and tried to expand the three-party talks into a five-party talks that included North and South Korea, US, China, and Japan.³⁷ Of course, the US opened the possibility of including Russia, but it depended on whether Russia was willing to agree with the US preference, namely the Libyan model of denuclearization. Although South Korea did not object to Russia's exclusion, North Korea wanted Russia to be involved in the multilateral process. Because of Russia's active efforts as a moderator, North Korea insisted on Russia's joining the talks, and the US accepted it.

In fact, after the US decided to participate in the five-party talks, China sent Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo to Pyongyang and urged Kim Jongil to accept the five-party talks. However, Kim Jongil rejected the five-party talks and insisted on holding six-party talks. Although Russia disapproved of North Korea's nuclear program, North Korea believed that Russia would support its position and lobby the US on its behalf. Furthermore, Kim Jongil called Putin in July 2003 and asked Russia to join and host the six-party talks. Putin agreed to join the six-party talks, but refused to host the talks because of the continuing Chinese efforts to mediate between the US and North Korea.³⁸ By including Russia in the process, North Korea expected Russia to check the US hard-line policy, and support North Korea's position. However, Russia did not wish to take the hosting role because Russia's in-between position was limited by its previously described dilemma. Instead, Russia has supported China's role as host of the six-party talks.

Russia's goal was to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear program by relaying the North's position, providing partial support for the North and urging the US to cooperate. Of course, this goal resulted from Russia's complex calculation of its position. Russia's position can be summarized as follows. First, Russia has a right to participate in the process of resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis as a regional power. Russia made its position clear by strengthening its geopolitical and geo-economic positions. Second, Russia made clear its objection to the

³⁷ *Segyeilbo*, June 14, 2003.

³⁸ ITO Tadashi, "Rokkakoku kyougi no butaiura Kim sousyoki 'Rosia de kaisai' yousei Putin daitouryou 'kenmohororo' kyohi" [PRC Source Cited on Putin Rejecting Kim Jongil's Request to Host Talks in Russia], *Sankei Shimbun*, September 9, 2003.

proliferation of WMD, including nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. North Korean proliferation would harm the stability of the Korean Peninsula and stimulate an arms race that could include the rearmament of Japan, threatening Russia's security in its Far East. Third, Russia made clear its strong support for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue through dialogue. The outbreak of conflict on the Korean Peninsula would not only threaten Russia's security but also damage its national strategy of developing the Far East and Siberia. Consequently, in order to accomplish Russia's national strategy, peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis and stability on the Korean Peninsula are necessary for the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, regional economic cooperation, and securing Russia's position as a regional power by connecting East Asia and Eurasia.

Russia's achievements through the four rounds of the six-party talks can be summarized as follows:

First of all, as mentioned before, the rapid development of Russian-North Korean relations after 2000 appeared to have enabled the six-party talks to occur. However, the six-party talks did not result directly from the restored relations between Russia and North Korea, but from Russia's positive image as an impartial moderator and its increased influence on the North. Although Putin's friendship with Kim Jongil may have been important, Russia's "persuasive power" became more influential than its "coercive power" over North Korea.

Second, Russia's role as an "honest broker" should be recognized. Russia hopes that its role as a moderator and its "package deal" proposal will play a critical role in the comprehensive and gradual resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis. In particular, Russia succeeded in relaying the North's position to other countries and persuading them of its merit.

Third, Russia prevented the rapid acceleration of tensions and helped avoid a conflict between the US and North Korea. After the US disclosure of the North's nuclear program in October 2002, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov stated that no conclusion should be given without hard evidence. Russian Nuclear Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumiantsev also denied North Korea's capability of developing nuclear weapons.³⁹ While

³⁹ On the North's nuclear development capabilities, see: Larry A. Niksch, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, IB91141, June 9, 2003; Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics of the North

prospects for the second round of talks seemed uncertain in October 2003, high-ranking Russian military officers stated that North Korea was trying to develop nuclear weapons but did not yet possess them.⁴⁰ Russia's behavior can be understood as an attempt to check US efforts to drive North Korea into a corner. Russia's buffering role regarding the North's nuclear program gave other countries more time to respond discreetly to this issue, but it may also have negatively impacted on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula by giving more time for the North to continue proliferation.

Fourth, Russia has played the role of safety net for sudden changes or military conflict that may result from a second North Korean nuclear crisis, especially after the current Bush Administration upset North Korea with the statement of "ending the tyranny," which hurt the six-party talks. As a result, North Korea officially announced its possession of nuclear weapons and refused to participate in the talks. Such statements that imply regime change may worsen the North's perception of the US.⁴¹ Russia continued to object to such negative statements, although it acknowledges that changing the domestic regime is necessary for the ultimate resolution of the Korean Peninsula problem. If North Korea cannot change and join the international community, a crisis may recur and threaten Russia's national security once again. However, Russia prefers a gradual transformation over a sudden change through military means by helping the North cooperate with other nations, recover its economy and obtain multilateral security assurances. Even if North Korea starts a minor military conflict or the regime collapses, a large number of refugees may

Korean Nuclear Programs," *The Nonproliferation Review* 2, no. 3 (1995): 25–38; S. A. Letun, "The North's Capability of Developing Nuclear Weapons: Russian Perspectives and Prospects," paper presented at ROK-Russia Defence Forum "North Korean Nuclear Issue and Northeast Asian Security", co-hosted by the Korean Institute Defense Analyse (KIDA) and Russia Academy of Military Science, KIDA, Seoul, November 11, 2003.

⁴⁰ Even with regard to the North's announcement of nuclear possession in 2005, Konstantin Kosachev stated that it cannot be verified, and Russian scholars believe that North Korea's announcement is designed to get as much from the US as possible. According to the author's interview with Russia's Korean and military experts, North Korea does not possess nuclear weapons. This is one of the most important differences between the US and Russia.

⁴¹ PAIK Haksoon, "What is the Goal of the US Policy toward North Korea: Nonproliferation or Regime Change?", http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security/0530A_Paik.html (accessed May 8, 2005).

flood across the border, and Russia will have to deal with the consequences, leading to serious instability in this region. As a result, Russia agrees with South Korea in favoring a gradual change in North Korea.

Russia's achievements did not entirely result from its opposition to the US as noted above. The US and Russia must cooperate with each other in regards to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, although this cooperation is far from comprehensive. Russia's daily newspaper *Izvestiia* reported before the first round meetings a possible Russian preemptive strike against North Korean nuclear facilities.⁴² According to the report, many strategists argued that if Russia catches signs of an attack from North Korea or if there is a possibility of North Korea waging a nuclear war against the US and South Korea, Russia may need to perform a preemptive military strike against North Korea through its Pacific fleet, because the North's use of nuclear weapons on the South may result in serious pollution and damage in the Far East. This can be interpreted as Russia's warning to the North regarding its possible renunciation of the six-party talks and nuclear tests.

In addition, Russia carried out a large-scale military exercise in August 18–27, 2003, for the first time in 15 years. One of the main purposes of this military exercise that was performed under a state of emergency in the Russia Far East was to gauge the ability to absorb an influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees in case of war.⁴³ South Korea and Japan also participated in the rescue exercises and other multipurpose exercises, including the TU-160. Through this, Russia made clear its importance as a Northeast Asian military power, sending a signal warning against the North's provocation and America's use of force.⁴⁴ This was a strong expression of Russia's position regarding the Korean issue and its significant effort to show its capability as a great power.

Fifth, Russia had worked like a coupling device in the six-party talks by continuously insisting on a multilateral approach to the security of

⁴² Oleg Zhunusov and Elena Shesternina, "If There Is a War Tomorrow, Vladivostok will be Involved in Two to Three Hours' Time," *Izvestiia*, August 1, 2003.

⁴³ Oleg Zhunusov, and Dmitrii Litovkin, "This Is Legend: A State of Emergency Has Been Introduced," *Izvestiia*, August 22, 2003.

⁴⁴ JOO Seungho, "Russiay bukhaekmunje 6jahoedam jeonryak [*Russian Strategy for Six-party Talks on North Korean Nuclear Crisis*]," *Kookbang Yeongoo* 47, no. 1 (2004): 95–96.

Northeast Asia. In fact, multilateralism has not easily been realized in Northeast Asia. Strictly speaking, the six-party talks cannot be labeled as a “multilateralist” framework.⁴⁵ However, it was more of a multilateral experiment, with Russia playing the role of a coupling device by repeatedly urging other countries to resolve their difficulties step by step. Russia’s position on the creation of a Northeast Asian multilateral security organization took shape as a common interest among regional powers at the joint statement of the fourth round of the six-party talks.

Thus, Russia’s plans are to strengthen its position as a regional power along with China in the six-party talks, and actively pursue a stable balance of power in the region. In this sense, Russia seems sure that it will play an important role in the long-term regional stability. Even at the height of the North Korean nuclear issue, Russia continued to argue for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, for North Korea’s observance of the Agreed Framework, against a US preemptive strike on the North and for the peaceful resolution of the crisis through dialogue. If Russia is excluded from the Korean issue, it could be very detrimental to any multilateral effort. It is quite controversial but thought-provoking to consider Vadim Tkachenko’s statement that “one of the most important reasons for the collapse of the Agreed Framework was that Russia was excluded from the process.”⁴⁶

An Assessment of the Russian Role in the Six-party Talks

The most important variable that determines Russia’s non-proliferation policy is its relations with the US. Russia acknowledged that its US policy right after the Cold War was biased and changed its foreign policy strategy. Such a change made Russia pursue a new strategic balance with regard to its relations with the US. This is the basic factor that defines Russia’s non-proliferation policy. In order to pursue a new balance of power, Russia shows balancing and band-wagoning simultaneously, and this made Russia favor a multilateral approach to overcome its power disadvantage. Such factors differentiate Russia’s position from that of the

⁴⁵ Cf. John Gerald Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (1992): 561–598.

⁴⁶ Vadim Tkachenko, “Osnovnye elementy rossiiskoi politiki v Koree,” in *Vneshniaia politika Rossii v CVA* (Seoul: The Hankook University for Foreign Studies Press, 2002), 13.

US regarding vertical and horizontal proliferation problems. Thus, Russia's policy toward the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, Russia's regional policy cannot be defined in simplistic terms in Northeast Asia where a new power dynamic is forming. The rise of China and America's new Northeast Asia strategy presents Russia with a great challenge and opportunity. Because Russia's place in the region is unstable, it is trying to use the North Korean issue to strengthen its position as a regional power.

Secondly, Russia wants to develop the Far East and Siberia to position itself as an Asian power with projects of transportation and energy development. Such non-nuclear issues greatly affect Russia's approach toward the Korean Peninsula, so Russia's Northeast Asia strategy is pursued within the context of both military-political factors and economic factors, leading to a nexus between nuclear and non-nuclear issues.

Thirdly, through this position, Russia found itself caught in a dilemma due to the second North Korean nuclear crisis. Russia agrees with the US in its objection to the proliferation of WMD, including nuclear weapons, but it refuses to acquiesce to a hard-line policy toward North Korea because it is afraid of losing a means to maximize its interest in Northeast Asia. Because Russia believes that the weakening of the NPT and horizontal proliferation is mainly due to the US, Russia is cooperating with the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula but objects to America's one-sided hard-line policy.

Fourthly, Russia may be in the dilemma of losing the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue or denuclearization if the six-party talks drag on, resulting in a situation that is favorable to neither the US nor North Korea. Thus, Russia needs to create a consensus to make a compromise between the US and North Korea with China and South Korea. In particular, Russia believes that North Korea does not yet have nuclear weapons, so it supports the North's position and is cautiously attempting to regain its influence on the Korean Peninsula.

This explains why Russia's response regarding the second North Korean nuclear crisis from the start differed from that of the US. While the first Bush Administration tried to use the Libyan model, North Korea favored the Ukrainian model that China supported. In this process, Russia

supported the Chinese position and tried to strengthen its influence in Northeast Asia.

The Bush Administration tried to form the “5 against 1” structure to pursue the UN Security Council sanctions following the Libyan model without much success for the following reasons. First of all, China and Russia did not accept the US hard-line policy, and South Korea could not give up its engagement policy toward the North implemented since the Kim Daejung Administration. The US’s “5 against 1” structure did not succeed. Had the US formed the structure and obtained UN sanctions, it might have pursued the Iraqi model that shifts from economic sanctions to military sanctions. Of course, if the six-party talks collapse and North Korea conducts nuclear tests, the US plan may be realized. In case of nuclear tests by the North, not only South Korea’s position but also Russia’s place as an opportunistic moderator will be greatly weakened, and China will have some difficulty in supporting the North. However, because North Korea is not likely to give up the six-party talks and cross the “red line” that China does not support, it is less likely to be the North’s policy option.

So, was the Ukrainian model that China and North Korea pursued and Russia supported successful and useful in reality? Of course, there are several limitations in applying the Ukrainian model to the North Korean case. The number of nations that are involved in the issue was different. While the US and Russia were involved in the Ukrainian issue, there are six nations with different positions in the North Korean issue. Furthermore, while the US and Russia cooperated to persuade Ukraine together, the US, China and Russia do not agree completely on this issue. Because even if Russia and the US in cooperation on nuclear reduction and control in the European context could (and did) negotiate bilaterally between Washington and Moscow, regional arrangements in Northeast Asia could only be comprehensive if China with its nuclear and naval capabilities took part.⁴⁷

In addition, they have different understandings of this nuclear crisis. While the US regards North Korea’s violation of the Agreed Framework as a global issue related to the spread of terrorism, China emphasizes North Korea’s perception of security, ascribes some responsibility to the US, and argues for the need for a Northeast Asian security system. Russia

⁴⁷ Nikitin, “The Changing Priorities of Russian Foreign Policy.”

plays a mediating role with South Korea that tries to harmonize two different positions. As a result, the six nations' position has shifted to the "2:2:2" framework.

This change appears to have had some influence on the second Bush Administration. President Bush's mention of "Mr. Kim" and Secretary of State Rice's comment of "sovereign state" showed the beginnings of the change. Afterward, North Korea returned to the six-party talks and resumed negotiations in July 2005.

Especially when the US refused to accept North Korea's peaceful use of nuclear energy and made it difficult to achieve joint agreement of "word for word"⁴⁸ at the fourth round of the talks in September 2005, Russia and China supported North Korea and persuaded the US that South Korea also supported this compromise and cooperated to persuade the US, creating the formation of "3:1:2" or "4:2" and overcoming another sticky patch in the talks.

This complex mechanism of the six-party talks shows that the Ukrainian model has some limitations in direct application to the Korean case. Nonetheless, there is always the possibility of a grand deal in which the US and North Korea will give and take more than expected.⁴⁹ What North Korea demands in return for the dismantlement of its nuclear program is assurance of regime and military security, abandonment of hostile US policy and the conclusion of a peace treaty, its removal from the list of states sponsoring terrorism, economic support, normalization of US-North Korean relations, and so on. Its give-and-takes are not impossible, but what matters in the six-party talks is how to reach a compromise. Russia is trying to shift the approach of the talks from the Libyan model favored by the US to the Ukrainian model as a compromise. If Russia's goal were achieved, a new model of denuclearization might be produced in which the moderator, not the parties concerned, leads.

However, the six-party talks were caught at a stalemate right after the "Joint Statement" on September 19, 2005. After freezing North Korean accounts at Banco Delta Asia, the pressure of US financial sanctions had

⁴⁸ The Joint Statement at the fourth round of talks on September 16, 2005 can be evaluated as the agreement of "word for word" for the next agreement of "action for action."

⁴⁹ For the possibility of such grand deal, see Michael O'Hanlon and Mike Mochizuki, *Crisis on the Korean Peninsula: How to Deal with a Nuclear North Korea* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), chap. 3.

been increasing. Against this measure, North Korea resisted opening a new round of six-party talks, officially pronounced its possession of nuclear weaponry on February 10, 2006. And the notion that the six-party talks are no longer useful for resolving the second North Korean nuclear problem was widely spreading, especially in the US. Furthermore, North Korea's test-fire of long-range missiles in July 5, 2006 seems to have given the US an excuse for its higher level of pressure. Thus, the United States increased its financial sanctions, and North Korea ventured on with a nuclear test on October 9, 2006, as a sign of crossing the "expected" red line. On the initiative of the United States and Japan, the UN Security Council passed Resolution No.1718 on October 14, 2006, which involves nonmilitary sanctions.

This move initially made the prospects for the resumption of the six-party talks very dim. And Russia's weakening advantage as a moderator seemed to disappear completely, and Russia seemed to have no other choice but to join the US's Libyan model position in strengthening the global non-proliferation system. However, Russia once again moved quickly, as it did at the first stage of the second North Korean nuclear crisis, dispatching Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Aleksandr Alekseev to North Korea. After his visit to Pyongyang, he stressed that possibilities still exist for political resolution, and that Russia strongly opposed military sanctions. Owing to the strong opposition from Russia, along with China, the application of military means was excluded from the UN resolution. But Russia cannot help taking part in nonmilitary sanctions toward North Korea. This kind of "dualistic" position still seems to continue without serious changes. As the Russian special envoy had predicted, North Korea agreed to return to the six-party talks on October 31, 2006.

Real serious change occurred after the United States elections on December 7, 2006. Finding a breach through a high-level contact at Berlin on January 17-19, 2007, the United States and North Korea seemed to reach a consensus on a peaceful settlement of the nuclear crisis through dialogue. The six-party talks have resumed, and the participating six countries agreed to a Joint Statement on February 13, 2007. Due to the changes of the United States' and North Korea's position, an early harvest may be able to be reaped but it will be fraught with difficulties. However, in spite of the significant changes of the situation after the nuclear test and 2/13 Joint Statement, a long and tiresome tug-of-war between the United

States and North Korea seems to be in line. Thus, Russia can play its role of “honest broker” as long as North Korea does not cross the “real” red line, even though we cannot be convinced of its boundary, for example, transferring nuclear technology and materials to terrorist groups or other rogue states. If the guess is right that the US government abandoned the Libyan model of nuclear settlement or that the US government aim of crisis management policy is not at denuclearization of Korean Peninsula but at nuclear non-proliferation, the other participant states in the six-party talks, including Russia, are required to play a more active role. To fulfill the Beijing agreement on February 13, 2007, Russia should provide to North Korea energy resources or economic aid worth at least \$100 million. Among Russian experts there exists some opposition to joining the implementation of the Beijing deals.⁵⁰ If Russia wants to get out of its policy dilemma rising from its intermediate position, Russia as a responsible member of international community should take a more active and constructive role in settling this nuclear problem. Especially, Russia’s active participation in the compensation program for North Korea can make the six-party talks process a more elaborated version of the Ukraine model of nuclear crisis settlement, for it has promising instruments of economic cooperation with North Korea such projects like railway linkage, gas and oil pipeline construction, electric power grid construction and port development project etc.

⁵⁰ Alexander V. Vorontsov, “North Korea Nuclear Problem Resolution Prospects after the Joint Statement on February 13, 2007: Russia’s view,” International Conference hosted by Korean Association of International Studies on *North Korea’s Strategic Choice after Nuclear Test and February 13 Agreement, and the Future of the Korean Peninsula* (Seoul: Korea Press Center, April 16, 2007).