



Korean Peninsula Nuclear Summitry:

The Time is Right

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Summary

Management of the nuclear security threats in Northeast Asia has reached a critical turning point. North Korea has demonstrated that it is able to deliver a nuclear payload to regional targets and probably to North America - a highly dangerous complication in an already volatile region. Efforts to contain North Korea's nuclear ambitions over the last three decades have failed. There is no good military option. There is no alternative now to a negotiated settlement, and despite past failures, there are reasons for optimism. North Korea's leader, Chairman Kim Jong Un has declared that his strategic ambitions have been realised and that it is now time to reap the rewards. Sanctions failed to thwart the North's nuclear program but combined with misdirection of resources and poor management have crippled the North Korean economy. Per capita incomes in the South are some 20 times greater than in the North making reunification along the lines of East and West Germany unthinkable. Reunification is now a distant long-term proposition, and regime change is expressly off the table. Denuclearisation cannot be achieved if pursued as a discrete goal. It is now time to negotiate a grand bargain. The key to this will be radical changes to the regional security framework involving security assurances from the US, China and Russia in return for an eventual 'denuclearisation' of the entire Korean Peninsula, the removal of other WMD threats and restraints on conventional weapon capabilities. To overcome ingrained

trust deficits there will need to be verification arrangements on an unprecedented scale. The security dimension will need to be accompanied by economic reforms and cooperation allowing the DPRK to move from the Juche doctrine of self-sufficient isolationism, to one of engagement with its prospering neighbours. While the key players will be the two Koreas, China, US, Russia and Japan, other regional stakeholders should be willing to contribute security, political and economic support to the process.

APLN and Korean Peninsula Nuclear Threats

1. Over the last 18 months the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) has focused increasingly on the management and elimination of nuclear threats in Northeast Asia. The issue was the focus of the APLN's annual regional outreach meeting and panel discussions at the Jeju (ROK) Forum on Peace and Security in May-June 2017, and at two meetings of our Northeast Asia members in June 2017 and March 2018. These meetings engaged policy, technical and political experts, and resulted in extensive reports bringing a uniquely Asia Pacific perspective to the issues.¹ In late 2017 APLN joined other expert groups in a capstone project involving several commissioned papers and a two-day workshop in Seoul resulting in a major report and recommendations on addressing the nuclear threats

¹ Full reports can be found at <http://a-pln.org/meetings/meetings/>

on the Korean Peninsula². Additionally, our publications program has dealt extensively with key aspects of the issues, predominantly by authors from the region.³

2. This work has provided a rigorous analytical basis for an increasing convergence of expert views on the way forward. This paper brings together those elements of convergence as a basis for policy advocacy by APLN Members and like-minded institutions. It also identifies recommendations for further research, outreach and advocacy, with a view to eventual agreement on the management of 'denuclearisation' and the ultimate elimination of nuclear threats on the Korean Peninsula.

The context of Northeast Asia Nuclear Threats

3. While the 1953 Armistice brought an end to the fighting on the Korean Peninsula, it did not lead to the envisaged comprehensive peace treaty, and did not resolve the issue of how Korea might be reunified. A peace treaty remains a basic demand of the DPRK. A unified Korea remains the in-principle demand of both North and South, though the ever-widening disparity in the social and economic circumstances of each side suggests that this goal is now more remote than ever. A critical provision of the Armistice Agreement banned both the North and South from importing new weapons: this provision was soon abrogated by both sides, each charging the other with violations. The race to arm has been on ever since, with ROK in time hosting US nuclear weapons and DPRK unsuccessfully seeking nuclear weapon assistance from its friends, the Soviet Union and China, before embarking on an indigenous program.

4. Other regional powers are directly impacted. Since the Korean War the US has assumed responsibility for the protection of South Korea, so has vital strategic and reputational interests at stake. The DPRK's northern neighbours, China, and to a lesser extent Russia, have important strategic interests: the former has been

taking a high-profile role in managing the evolving crisis, the latter seemingly waiting in the wings for an opportunity to bring its potentially very significant influence to bear. Japan and the two Koreas have a long and complex relationship with many unresolved historical issues from Japan's occupation of the Korean Peninsula and its exploitation of Korean 'comfort women', to the DPRK's abduction of Japanese citizens for espionage, in addition to unresolved territorial disputes.

5. The wider international community recognises the potentially global humanitarian, environmental and economic impacts of conflict on the Korean Peninsula as well as the consequences for the international regime for nuclear restraint centred on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Reflecting the gravity of the threat to international peace and security the DPRK's nuclear activities were referred by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the Security Council in 1993, and the Security Council has been engaged ever since including through the application of sanctions designed to curb DPRK nuclear and missile activity.

Nuclear North Asia

6. The nuclear age began in Asia, with the US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan like other scientifically advanced countries at the time, initiated nuclear research activities in the 1930s (including on uranium sourced from occupied Korea) and achieved an advanced understanding of the peaceful and non-peaceful potential of the atom. Japan's research effort continued during the Second World War but was not accorded the huge funding that would have been required for an attempt to develop a weapon⁴. After the Second World War North Asian countries, like those in Europe and elsewhere, were quick to conclude that nuclear arms could be powerful shapers of national security. In the wake of the 1962 Sino-Soviet split and the 1964 war with India, China tested its first nuclear weapon in 1964. Others in the region threatened to follow, but over time the international community sought ways to prevent further proliferation in East Asia: Japan, Taiwan

² See full report at <http://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-special-reports/gridlockworkshopsummary/>.

³ See <http://a-pln.org/briefings/briefings/>: specifically, Policy Briefings numbers 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, 35, 43 and 44; and most recently 50, 51, 52 and 53 which were linked to the APLN co-sponsored conference 'Nuclear-free Korean Peninsula: Strategies and Action Programs for the Moon

Jae-in Administration', Seoul December 2017. Particular attention is invited to PB 50, by APLN Co-Convenor Professor Chung-in Moon entitled, 'Can We Still Negotiate with North Korea? A South Korean Perspective' - an insiders reflection on the possibilities as seen in Seoul in the context of the new ROK Administration of President Moon Jae-in.

⁴ See <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/japanese-atomic-bomb-project>.

and Australia were eventually persuaded to abandon the nuclear weapon option in the face of US insistence and the extension of security guarantees including a nuclear umbrella. Similarly, South Korea, after an early decision to pursue nuclear weapons, was persuaded to stop, and in 1975 joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.⁵

7. However the DPRK was not to be dissuaded, and having been denied assistance from China and Russia it decided to proceed alone, borrowing and stealing what it could. Its achievements were consistently underestimated. In the late eighties the IAEA official responsible for inspections in North Korea denied that there was any reason to be suspicious of DPRK nuclear activity arguing that the IAEA's inspection activity under the facility specific (INFCIRC 66) agreement provided no basis for questioning the exclusively peaceful use at the Yongbyong nuclear research centre⁶. However in 1992 IAEA inspectors eventually determined that the DPRK had undertaken and had not reported reprocessing of spent fuel to separate plutonium. In a parallel and unprecedented step, the US provided a briefing to the IAEA Board making it very clear that DPRK had been deceiving the international community by reprocessing spent fuel and subsequently camouflaging the radioactive waste facility as a military site which it then claimed was out of bounds to inspectors⁷. Important lessons were learnt from this experience and similar discoveries in Iraq, and over the coming decade the IAEA's safeguards system underwent a radical strengthening – the focus broadened from 'classic' safeguards ensuring nuclear material was not diverted to non-peaceful use, to seeking to provide assurance that there was no clandestine, undeclared, nuclear activity.

8. The DPRK achievement of scaling up small scale reprocessing experiments into an operation capable of producing significant quantities of weapon grade plutonium surprised experts who familiar with the industrial processes previously adopted had assumed a more cautious and incremental path to a bomb-making capability. Experts were to be surprised again when Saddam Hussein's nuclear team used an enrichment process discarded by others as wasteful and therefore not worth using – another hard-learned lesson for the global verification community.

9. In 2009, shortly after the DPRK had detonated its second nuclear device, the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament convened a meeting in Beijing bringing together nuclear experts from Russia and China (the DPRK declined an invitation) which focused on the DPRK nuclear issue. Even then experts from Russia and China were inclined to play down the DPRK's technical achievements arguing that its weapons capability fell well short of a credible deterrent and questioning whether DPRK could ever master both a useable weapon and a viable delivery system.⁸

10. Since then the DPRK has conducted another four nuclear tests, the most recent, in September 2017, claimed by DPRK to have been thermonuclear (perhaps more correctly 'fusion enhanced').⁹ There are still questions about the number, reliability and deliverability of the DPRK's current stockpile of nuclear weapons. However it is now clear that it has deliverable nuclear weapons, and a demonstrated intercontinental missile capability to threaten not just Asia-Pacific, but mainland United States, constituting a 'nuclear deterrent' to US employment of military power against DPRK. This too is the view of the North Korean leadership: Kim Jon

⁵ South Korea's nuclear history is documented in APLN Policy Brief No.56 – see http://www.a-pln.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_No_56_-_South_Korea_and_Nuclear_Weapons:_Retrospect_and_Prospects.

⁶ DPRK became a party to the NPT in 1985, but an NPT safeguards agreement (INFCIRC / 252) only came into force in April 1992. Before that, in 1977, the country had concluded an INFCIRC/66 type Safeguards Agreement (INFCIRC/252) for two nuclear research facilities (the IRT research reactor and a critical assembly). DPRK 'suspended' its NPT membership for a period in 1993 and withdrew from the treaty in 2003 – though some dispute that the withdrawal is legal. For additional background on DPRK safeguards see the official IAEA account at [https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/dprk/fact-sheet-](https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/dprk/fact-sheet-on-dprk-nuclear-safeguards)

[on-dprk-nuclear-safeguards](https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/dprk/fact-sheet-on-dprk-nuclear-safeguards).

⁷ David Fischer's 'History of the International Atomic Energy Agency: The First Forty Years', IAEA, 1997 p289 ff provides a concise account of the IAEA's surprise as the extent of the DPRK's nuclear activity was uncovered.

⁸ See 'Eliminating Nuclear Threats: Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament', Canberra/Tokyo, 2009, p 278; the observations are the author's recollection of presentations and discussions at the meeting.

⁹ The Washington-based think tank, the Arms Control Association, maintains a comprehensive chronology of DPRK matters including nuclear tests and missile firings: see <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>.

Un's 2018 new year speech proclaimed: '... we attained our general orientation and strategic goal with success, and our Republic has at last come to possess a powerful and reliable war deterrent ... capable of thwarting and countering any nuclear threats from the United States, and they constitute a powerful deterrent that prevents it from starting an adventurous war'.¹⁰

We have been here before ...

11. The current renewal of exchanges between North and South Korea and between North Korea, China and the US needs to be set against the background of the several previous efforts to resolve nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula. Writing in an APLN Policy Brief in February 2017, the former UN Undersecretary for Disarmament Affairs Nobuyasu Abe neatly highlighted a key issue: 'One difficulty here is that there is always a temptation to try again a diplomatic solution to the problem. An analogy often made is that countries face Charlie Brown's dilemma: while disillusioned many times by the failure of negotiations with North Korea, there is always a temptation to run and kick the ball Lucy is holding. "This time it may be true!"'¹¹

12. To date all diplomatic initiatives have ended in failure. The 1994 Agreed Framework between the US and North Korea promised to end the DPRK nuclear program in return for the provision of two light water reactors mostly funded by Japan and South Korea, under supervision of the 'Korean Economic Development Organisation' (KEDO), with the Korean Power Company (KEPCO) the prime contractor. In August 2002 KEDO celebrated the 'pouring of the first concrete', at the power plant site near Sinpo on the North Korea's east coast.¹² But already the political framework for this project had crumbled and the project collapsed entirely later that year. The subsequent China-fostered 'Six-Party Talks', saw the 'sealing' of the North Korean plutonium producing research reactor, marked by the symbolic destruction of the reactor's cooling tower

in June 2008.¹³ But that process stalled in acrimony later that same year.¹⁴ So the question is why should it be different now?

What is different now?

13. There is a growing view amongst APLN and other experts that the evolving geo-political circumstances in Northeast Asia now demand a negotiated settlement.

14. First, consider what is the best alternative to a negotiated settlement. One alternative would be to continue the main elements of the current geo-political trajectory: continued 'maximum pressure' through sanctions and military posture, on the one hand, and continued development and deployment of WMD threats by DPRK on the other. This option, amounting to 'sleepwalking into war in Northeast Asia'¹⁵, would ensure a growing WMD threat to the US as well as to South Korea and Japan, risk an eventual collapse of the North Korean state, with highly unpredictable consequences, and threaten a regional nuclear proliferation spiral. There is a growing convergence of expert opinion that this trajectory has outworn the utility it may have once had. A second option is use of force. There is broad agreement that the use of force would be catastrophic in terms of humanitarian impacts, the global economic repercussions and the continuing viability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. True, South Korea and US combined forces would be able to inflict massive conventional military damage on the North. In return, the proximity of Seoul to the North Korean border makes it hostage to the North's massive concentration of artillery and other conventional weapons. The population of Seoul and its surrounding areas is some 25 million – half the total population of South Korea. The major concentration of US forces is 65 kilometres south of Seoul and 100 kilometres from

¹⁰ A translation of the text can be found at <https://kcnawatch.co/newstream/284839/kim-jong-un-makes-new-year-address/>.

¹¹ http://a-pln.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_31_-_Japan's_“Charlie_Brown”_Dilemma_vis-à-vis_the_North_Korean_Nuclear_Crisis.

¹² http://www.kedo.org/news_detail.asp?NewsID=22.

¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-north/north-korea-blows-up-reactor-cooling-tower-idUSPEK29837520080627>.

¹⁴ See <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/6party-talks> for an excellent summary of the histories of the Agreed Framework and the Six-Party Talks.

¹⁵ Former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd used this expression in his advocacy of a diplomatic approach in http://a-pln.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_No_52_-_The_North_Korean_Nuclear_Problem.

the North Korean border. Added to this conventional threat is the potential for chemical and biological weapons use. North Korea has not joined the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and therefore, despite its denials, is assumed to maintain the capacity to deliver chemical weapons including by artillery and rockets on Seoul, as well as US military camps.¹⁶ While North Korea is a party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention there are concerns that it is also able to deploy such weapons. These concerns were heightened by the murder of Kim Jong Un's half-brother by a nerve agent at a Kuala Lumpur airport in February 2017.¹⁷ Now, looming over all this, is the capability of the North to threaten mainland US with nuclear attack. Could a pre-emptive US attack eliminate that threat with 100% assurance of success? - possibly not.

15. Second, the goal of Korean re-unification is now more distant than ever. In economic terms, estimated per capita GDP for North Koreans in 2015 was \$1700 compared to \$39,400 for South Koreans - over 20 times greater¹⁸. By comparison, the per capita GDP of West Germans at the time of re-unification in 1990 was just twice that of East Germans. South Koreans are not willing to sacrifice their hard-won prosperity for the sake of unification. China has no desire to see a unified Korea outside its sphere of influence; and Japan would have similar qualms. Equally from the perspective of the North Korean leadership, early re-unification would result in unacceptable regime change. Acceptance of these realities was reflected in President Moon Jae-In's June 2017 enunciation of his (and President Trump's) 'four nos' policy: two of the 'nos' being: 'We have no wish to see its [North Korea's] regime replaced or collapsed. And we have no plan to artificially accelerate reunification on the Korean Peninsula.'¹⁹

16. A third factor, following from the above, is the state of the North Korean economy. Experts are divided about the effectiveness of sanctions

in altering political behaviour. Some argue that it is the sanctions that have forced the North to the table, but clearly they failed in their prime objective of preventing the nuclear and missile breakout, and they appear not to have significantly inconvenienced the leadership. Pyongyang has withstood sanctions for decades, with the broad mass of the population suffering as a result. Nevertheless, there has recently been a modest kick in the growth rate, said to be currently 4% p.a., that has produced an economic bubble in Pyongyang, bringing modern benefits to the inner circles of the regime. But the country's infrastructure is decrepit and there has been little improvement in the standards of living of the great mass of the population and there are renewed reports of food shortages. At the same time, the 'hermit kingdom' is becoming increasingly exposed to the outside world, through interactions across the border with an ever more prosperous China, and through the slow but inevitable penetration of IT. Imposed isolation is no longer an option. The leadership is therefore under enormous pressure to improve the economy. Kim Jong Un's 2018 new year speech urged '... a turn should be brought about this year in improving the people's standard of living'. In April 2018 Kim Jong Un told a meeting of the ruling party Central Committee that the Korean people had 'worked hard with their belt tightened to acquire a powerful treasured [nuclear] sword for defending peace was successfully concluded ...' and that now it was time to allow future generations to 'enjoy the most dignified and happiest life in the world ...'. Easing what Chairman Kim refers to as 'vicious sanctions' would be a good start, as would the resumption of economic cooperation with the South.

17. Finally, there is an alignment of favourable domestic political circumstances in the key capitals. We have a far from perfect understanding of the ambitions of the DPRK leadership, but we have no choice but to assume it is neither suicidal nor otherwise deranged. Now seven years

¹⁶See <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/north-korea/chemical/> for more background.

¹⁷ See <http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/north-korea/biological/>, and <https://www.belfer-center.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/NK%20Bioweapons%20final.pdf> for more background.

¹⁸ [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/)

[factbook/](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/).

¹⁹ See <https://www.csis.org/analysis/global-leaders-forum-his-excellency-moon-jae-president-republic-korea>. The other two commitments were not to pursue 'hostile policies' against North Korea and to having 'no intention to attack North Korea'.

into his reign, Chairman Kim is looking forward to moving beyond the 'Cold War relic of longstanding division and confrontation.'²⁰ He assumes his WMD capabilities have given him a strong negotiating hand, is keen to turn his focus to economic development, and would welcome the boost to his domestic and international standing of marking the 70th Anniversary of the DPRK (and ROK) with a formal end to the Korean War. Critically, in Seoul, President Moon has followed in the steps of liberal predecessors in staking his political future on engagement rather than confrontation. President Trump seems uniquely able to work outside established parameters, needs a foreign policy win and is possibly able to carry Congress – necessary to deliver on US commitments over time. President Xi's position has never been stronger, and China has every interest in reaching a settlement so long as its key underlying strategic interests are met: reducing regional tensions, and in parallel reducing the US strategic footprint. Russian experts argue that Moscow has been happy to allow China to lead on the North Korean issue as it leads in managing Iran. While not a first order priority for Moscow, any easing of pressures on Russia in Northeast Asia, including a wind back of the forward US presence, would be welcome. Also Russia's far east ambitions would benefit from the potential economic opening of North Korea and there is already talk of improving rail and road links in the narrow border linking Russia and North Korea.²¹ Of the six key players, Japan is least comfortable, concerned that a settlement could result in a weakening of its strategic position, while being expected to assume a large proportion of the costs (as it did with the KEDO project): but a settlement involving denuclearisation is also ultimately an imperative for Japan.

Elements of a Grand Bargain

18. Northeast Asian security issues including their nuclear dimensions, are rooted in national

narratives and historical security and ideological conflicts. In North Korea's case, its search for security over the last 70 years, based increasingly on self-reliance, a necessity made a virtue, has been hugely costly. Previous attempts at settling the nuclear issue were rather narrowly focused - nuclear restraint for energy relief in the forms of delivery of fuel and construction of nuclear power plants. Many experts now argue that denuclearisation will require a much more comprehensive settlement. Indeed, while the boundaries of any negotiation process are still far from clear, success will require radical changes to the geo-political parameters which have prevailed in Northeast Asia for the last 70 years – changes to security doctrines and force deployments, and major economic transformations. Also, because of past non-compliance and cheating, agreements will need unprecedentedly large and intrusive verification regimes.²²

19. There are two potentially conflicting drivers for a broader settlement. First, the Panmunjeon Declaration has resurrected the range of bilateral activities envisaged in previous agreements, amongst them steps to replace the Armistice with a formal end to the Korean War, measures for reducing border tensions, reactivation of official lines of communication, addressing humanitarian issues, and resuming work on joint economic projects including the rail corridor to China.

20. A second, and more challenging agenda is suggested by the Trump Administration's abdication of its role in the Iran deal because of the failure of the deal to address other 'malign' behaviours, from selling arms and supporting terrorism, to domestic corruption and human rights abuses.²³ Of course, there are big differences between Iran and North Korea, and for the latter, the US has already narrowed its ambitions by excluding regime change. The US nevertheless can be expected to push on issues beyond the nuclear and missile agenda.

21. The deal will not be a package, rather as President Trump now acknowledges, a process.

²⁰ See the Panmunjeon Declaration at <http://www.korea.net/Government/Briefing-Room/Press-Releases/view?articleId=3354&pageIndex=1&gov=>.

²¹ <https://www.nknews.org/2018/03/north-korea-russia-to-push-ahead-with-new-bridge-on-tumen-river/>.

²² Questions of baseline information about the North's nuclear program and its scale will mean that even enhanced safeguards may never provide absolute certainty that 'denuclearisation' has been achieved. Hence most probably a

judgement will need to be made based on a degree of certainty from the verification regime but also taking into account wider progress on implementing a "grand bargain". This further underlines the importance of not seeing denuclearisation as an isolated goal but as part of progress on a broader mosaic of engagement.

²³ The full list is at <https://translations.state.gov/2018/05/21/secretary-of-state-mike-pompeo-after-the-deal-a-new-iran-strategy/>.

Negotiations will have 'procedural' and 'substantive' elements, both of huge consequence. The procedural issues involve a complex matrix of issues and sequencing: what needs to be delivered up front; what can be left to later; what step-by-step trade-offs can be agreed over time; what carrots and what sticks. The process will take many years if not decades for full evolution of the new landscape and will involve a reorienting of the global political landscape not seen since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Little prior consideration has been given to how this process will be managed over time. Negotiations will involve a very wide range of officials and will place huge pressures on the DPRK bureaucracy. Proliferation concerns will require great attention to security of information and materials which in turn will conflict with expectations of transparency. The role of international agencies, in particular the Security Council and the IAEA will be vital but complex and sensitive, and will need to overcome their own trust deficits. Different issues will require a mix and match of states and agency players within a yet to be defined overarching framework. The dynamics of the negotiations should also involve the identification of issues capable of producing early results for strengthened foundations for tackling the harder issues. A very bumpy road is assured, a constant source of encouragement for the prophets of failure!

22. On the substance, we can be reasonably confident that the scope of negotiations will at least include the following:

Security:

- Building security bridges between North and South as outlined in the Panmunjeom Declaration, including giving effect to previous agreements, improved official communications, ending of 'hostile acts' on the border;
- A formal end to the Korean War replacing the Armistice;
- Security assurances to both Koreas from the nuclear powers, ranging perhaps initially from negative assurances and moving in time to positive security assurances - with balancing undertakings to Japan if needed;
- Removing the trip wires of nuclear war: US bases in South Korea (and beyond?); instead possible stationing of multinational Security Council mandated garrisons in both North and South;
- These measures will all entail plurilateral legal monitoring and management mechanisms probably backed by the Security Council.

Denuclearisation:

- The DPRK has made a symbolic down-payment with the closure of its nuclear weapon test site: a positive step though unverified by international experts and of limited value given the relative ease with which the North could create new test sites out of its extensive underground military facilities;
- A new freeze on the operation of its plutonium producing reactor and its enrichment facilities: over time this could become an agreed restraint on both Koreas to forgo enrichment and reprocessing while preserving the option of nuclear power generation;
- A freeze on weapon production, dismantling existing warheads, and secure storage of dismantled warheads pending arrangements for destruction and recycling;
- Given the legacy of distrust, verification North and South will pose unprecedented challenges engaging the Security Council with support from the IAEA (and possibly CTBTO), NWS oversight of dismantlement to minimise the threat of leakage of proliferation sensitive information, and strong bilateral elements for mutual reassurance (possibly also involving Japan)²⁴;
- The North's scientific community will have a major role in the denuclearisation process, but will also need assistance in re-training (the 1991 US Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme, a hugely innovative and successful counter proliferation intervention in the former Soviet Union, offers lessons²⁵);
- Over time North Korea would accept the NPT and related international nuclear undertakings on safeguards, safety and security;
- The denuclearisation process could be capped by the conclusion of a legally binding Northeast Asian nuclear weapon free zone arrangement guaranteed by the NWS.

²⁴ Former US Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz points out that the old Russian adage of "trust, but verify" has for Iran and DPRK given way to the new imperative, "don't trust, and verify, verify, verify."

²⁵ See further background on the DPRK nuclear program

and the applicability of Cooperative Threat Reduction models see:

http://a-pln.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_35_DPRK_Current_Status_of_the_Development_of_Nuclear_Weapons; and <http://www.nti.org/news-room/news/celebrating-20-years-nunn-lugar-program/>.

Missile restraint:

- Freeze on all missile testing (note North Korea in May made a little noticed but important commitment to provide advanced warning to the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organisation of future missile tests in a bid to have its air corridors opened for wider international aviation use²⁶);
- Restraint on the permissible range paralleling limitations already accepted by the South (with arrangements for Japan also to accept voluntary constraints);
- Withdrawal of US anti-missile systems from ROK;
- Provisions to allow both North and South to pursue legitimate space programs;
- Backed by inspections regimes and adherence to existing international instruments for managing missile technology.

Other WMD, conventional arms, confidence building measures and proliferation:

- North and South will need to be assured against the deployment of chemical and biological weapons on the peninsula, requiring as a minimum adherence to international bans on these weapons, but possibly needing additional transparency measures²⁷;
- Confidence building measures such as those pioneered by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, for example the 'open skies' arrangement, might support the Panmunjeom promise of disarmament in a phased fashion;
- The North and South should join in adhering to best practice proliferation standards, including the Arms Trade Treaty on conventional weapons.

Economic cooperation:

- In the longer term, reduced regional tensions should allow both North and South to slow defence spending;
- The North will seek early relief from sanctions, including the opening of investment opportunities;
- The Panmunjeom promise of renewing of bilateral economic collaboration will need to be supplemented by other opportunities for partnerships;

- The North's energy needs could again become a focal point of collaboration (though this issue was not mentioned in the Panmunjeom Declaration);
- The development of a nuclear power industry in the North would help utilise the nuclear workforce; but since the Fukushima disaster, attitudes in the South and Japan – the former backers of KEDO – have changed²⁸;
- There are several other areas of the economic infrastructure in dire need: transport including links to China and Russia; the mining industry and agriculture.

Humanitarian and human rights Issues:

- The two Koreas will need to see progress on family reunions and other humanitarian issues (as will outstanding humanitarian issues between the North and Japan);
- Over time it will be expected that the North will be more open to external humanitarian and human rights scrutiny and partnerships.

Recommendations

23. Many experts have argued that the Six Party Talks should be revived as the necessary framework for any broad settlement of nuclear security issues on the Korean Peninsula, but after ten years of such calls, including from its initiator China, this now looks unlikely. The shape of any new negotiating framework will be one of the threshold issues of the current round of summitry. While the negotiations will necessarily involve as a minimum the two Koreas, US, China and Russia as well as Japan, others in the region and beyond have vital interests in a successful outcome and should be looking to support with process. That support would of course be calibrated depending on the progress in negotiations and the capacities of individual countries, but might comprise:

- Public and private expressions of political support to the key players
- Ensuring supportive multilateral frameworks – regionally (for example the East Asia Summit, APEC) and globally (Security Council and the UN system)
- Willingness to offer 'good offices' for mediation and reconciliation

²⁶ See <http://safeairspace.net/information/north-korea/>.

²⁷ See background at <https://www.38north.org/2013/10/jbermudez101013/>.

²⁸ For a full examination of these issues see [http://a-](http://apl.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_No_53_-_Energy_Insecurity_in_the_DPRK:_Linkages_to_Regional_Energy_Security_and_the_Nuclear_Weapons_Issue)

[pln.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_No_53_-_Energy_Insecurity_in_the_DPRK:_Linkages_to_Regional_Energy_Security_and_the_Nuclear_Weapons_Issue](http://apl.org/briefings/briefings_view/Policy_Brief_No_53_-_Energy_Insecurity_in_the_DPRK:_Linkages_to_Regional_Energy_Security_and_the_Nuclear_Weapons_Issue).

- Practical support to negotiations such as Singapore's hosting the DPRK/US summit
- Consideration of opening or upgrading of relations with the North
- Offers of expertise and capacity building in observance of nuclear non-proliferation norms, and CW and BW disarmament commitments
- Support for the international and any other verification mechanisms that will be needed, especially the IAEA
- Contributions to energy security proposals that might arise
- Willingness at an appropriate point to coordinate closely on easing and ultimately lifting of sanctions.

24. Civil society will also have a role:

- Outreach and advocacy to governments in support of a negotiated settlement
- Continued encouragement of a better and broader-based understanding of the issues and potential solutions amongst media and the public at large
- Identification of policy and technical gaps which will need attention for example in designing and implementing verification approaches
- Offering good offices for track-2 engagement
- Offers of expertise, mentoring and training.

25. For its part, the APLN remains committed to building on its past work in support of a negotiated settlement of Northeast Asian nuclear issues and is keen to find additional partners to expand its contributions.

The Author

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These express the views of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of APLN members or the CNND, or other organizations with which the authors may be associated. They are published to encourage debate on topics of policy interest and relevance regarding the existence and role of nuclear weapons.

APLN and CNND

The **Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (CNND)** contributes to worldwide efforts to minimize the risk of nuclear-weapons use, stop their spread and ultimately achieve their complete elimination. The director of the Centre is Professor Ramesh Thakur. See further <http://cnnd.anu.edu.au>.

The **Asia Pacific Leadership Network (APLN)** comprises more than ninety former senior political, diplomatic, military and other opinion leaders from fifteen countries around the region, including nuclear-weapons possessing states China, India and Pakistan. The objective of the group, founded by former Australian Foreign Minister and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group Gareth Evans, is to inform and energize public opinion, and especially high level policy-makers, to take seriously the very real threats posed by nuclear weapons, and do everything possible to achieve a world in which they are contained, diminished and ultimately eliminated. The co-Convenors are Professors Chung-in Moon and Ramesh Thakur. The Secretariat is located at the East Asia Foundation in Seoul, Republic of Korea. See further www.a-pln.org.

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