

The North-South Summit Meeting and Confidence-Building in Northeast Asia: A Japanese Perspective

Hideshi Takesada
Second Research Department
National Institute for Defense Studies

Introductory Summary

This paper proposes establishing a new four party peace process, involving the US, the ROK, Japan and the DPRK, to discuss the issues of food aid to Pyongyang and Pyongyang's missile development program. The proposal is based on my observation of the changes and continuity on the peninsula since the June summit meeting between the North and the South. The changes include the improvement of the DPRK's image in the ROK, the relative decline of the US leading role, and China's growing influence and Russia's active search for its role. As for continuity, Pyongyang's nuclear and missile issue remains unsolved. Pyongyang still holds a large and capable military, is able to develop and continue to deploy Scud missiles, and can economically sustain that ability by exporting its weapons overseas.

This paper argues that confidence-building in Northeast Asia after the North-South summit meeting should build on expanding experiences of security cooperation among the US, the ROK and Japan. Although it is premature to say that a division is widening between the PRC-Russia-DPRK camp and the US-ROK-Japan cooperative framework, the two groups diverge on the US military presence on the peninsula, the New Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation, theater missile defense, and approaches to peace building in Northeast Asia. Given this, this paper suggests that by employing as a basis cooperative experiences among the US, the ROK and Japan through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the Trilateral Coordination Group (TCOG), a four party peace process be established among the these three parties and the DPRK.

From a Japanese perspective, Japan needs to develop more opportunities to contribute to confidence-building efforts in the region. For Japan, successful examples of cooperation among the US, the ROK and Japan through KEDO and TCOG are encouraging. If this proposed four party peace process works well regarding food aid to Pyongyang and solving the DPRK's missile program, it can include China and Russia to become a six party peace talk in the future.

The paper is divided in three parts. First, I will clarify the three changes that occurred after the epoch-making North-South meeting in June 2000. The second part will discuss the

DPRK's nuclear and missile issues with focus on the DPRK's military objectives, the regime's military cooperation with Pakistan and Iran, and the personnel aspect of the military. Finally, this paper will review the several existing multilateral frameworks for peace and confidence-building measures in the region and will suggest a four party peace talk among the US, the ROK, the DPRK, and Japan.

1. The Three Changes Since the First-Ever North-South Summit Meeting

From the 1980s to the 1990s, many socialist states collapsed and the rest of them also suffered economic hardships. As a result, the US role in maintaining peace and prosperity in the world has grown and become a firm one. The advent of the age of information technology has also increased the US role because security and prosperity have become more and more dependent on such a new technology. In Northeast Asia, too, since 1993, the US has played a leading role in negotiations with the DPRK over the regime's nuclear and missile issues¹. In June 2000, a three-day summit meeting was held between the North and the South. This was the first of its kind since the establishment of both regimes in 1948. The joint statement agreed at the meeting was called the 6.15 Declaration, and both sides agreed to strive toward the unification of the two Koreas². Since then, three remarkable changes have been observed.

(1) Rising Korean Nationalism

First, the South Korean feelings toward their Northern fellows have changed. Since June 2000, the interest in DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and the expectation of his visit to Seoul have risen in the ROK. The general atmosphere in the South Korean community has also softened so much that even a North Korean prisoner in the South who has been long refusing to adjust to the South appeared on a TV program and voiced his praise of the DPRK regime. This is something unimaginable before the June summit meeting. South Korean fertilizer also reached the North by the end of June, and Seoul decided to provide 600 thousand tons of additional food aid to Pyongyang in 2000. The ROK government also gave priority to the

¹ For Washington's leadership in dealing with the DPRK nuclear issue, see Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas* (Addison-Wesley, 1997), especially Chapter 11; and Kenneth Quinones, *Kitachosen: Beikokumushoutokanno Kosyokiroku*, Chuokoronsya, 2000.

² In the inter-Korean summit meeting, both sides emphasized "Koreans" and "autonomous solution." The South Korean Chosun Ilbo pointed out that the summit would be a realistic approach toward the withdrawal of the US forces from the peninsula. See *Chosun Ilbo*, June 26, 2000. (<http://www.korea-np.co.jp/>)

realization of the August meeting between separated families over the ceremonies related to the 6.25 memorial for the Korean War. After the summit meeting, there were four ministerial talks and one defense ministerial meeting between the North and the South by October. Seoul jump-stated the re-linking of railways with the surrounding region and the elimination of minds before Pyongyang began the same construction³. The South intends to finish the construction of the Kyongseui Railway on the DMZ side by 2001⁴. Other projects include the prevention of floods from the Imjin River, the introduction of the Internet, the Mt. Kumgang economic free zone, the contribution of computers to Pyongyang. The ROK government has also restrained the use of anti-North terminologies, including “the puppet North,” and the ROK Defense Ministry has even revised many anti-North rhetorics⁵.

It is true that the advocates for incremental unification in the South are critical about all these changes. Paradoxically, however, these incrementalists are becoming the subject of public criticism in the South⁶. Even such a word as “South-South conflict” was coined to describe the emerging disagreement within the South Korean society over how to see the DPRK. We cannot rule out the possibility that the conflict may extend to the issue of US-ROK alliance relations in relation to North-South relations in the future⁷.

Thus, the South Korean views of the North are changing in general terms. One opinion poll shows that Kim Jong-il was ranked 3rd in the question of who is really moving the ROK and that Kim is also ranked 4th in the question of who should be the President of the unified

³ However, as for the elimination of mines, the issue has been discussed at the inter-Korean defense working-level talks and Red Cross talks. Kim Dae-jung began the construction because he hoped that the construction would mark the end of the Cold War in the region. See the Chonghwadae official website at <http://www.cwd.go.kr>.

⁴ When I visited the construction site on November 3, 2000, there was no prospect for the construction on the DPRK's side.

⁵ However, the ROK Defense Whitepaper 2000 uses “primary enemy (*jujoek*).” See the ROK Ministry of Defense, *Defense Whitepaper 2000*.

⁶ One of the domestic conflicts in the South is that between Kim Dae-jung and former President Kim Yong-sam. Another is between pros and cons over the Chosun Ilbo's opposition to Kim Dae-Jung's sunshine policy. The South-South conflict is especially the gap between pros and cons over the sunshine policy.

⁷ Washington and Seoul concluded the talks over the issue in late 2000, and Washington announced its regret over the issue. The issue, called the *Nogunri* Incidence, inflicted anti-American feelings in South Korea. For the US announcement of its regret over the issue on January 12, 2000, see <http://www.denselink.mil/news/Jan2001>.

Korea⁸. The former result is the first of its kind. We can conclude that the South Korean society is now in the midst of the change it has never experienced in its history.

Then, why is such a change taking place? One answer would be that ROK President Kim Dae-jung's own political philosophy has ignited the change. Another would be that the ROK people's sympathy with the DPRK people, who have been suffering food shortages, as the same Koreans made possible the historic North-South summit meeting. Several other factors can be pointed. However, we should not forget that the ROK has not yet abandoned the idea that the ROK should lead the unification issue. Since 1994, US-DPRK talks have progressed, but the ROK's role has not been fully reflected on the talks. The ROK jumped to the North-South meeting, hoping to increase its role while keeping an eye on the progress of US-DPRK talks. Since the summit meeting more and more information of the DPRK is coming into the ROK. Many episodes about the summit meeting are indeed interesting. There is even a view in South Korea that the increase of information about the DPRK (such as these episodes) helps the ROK take the initiative in diplomacy with the DPRK⁹.

(2) Possible Change of the US Role

A second change is an emerging sign that the US role on the peninsula may decline after the summit meeting. For example, the ROK government agreed with the DPRK to reconstruct the inter-Korean railway without consultation with the US¹⁰. To complete the reconstruction, however, the mines embedded near the US Second Infantry Corp have to be eliminated. There was already some worry in Washington about the April announcement of the North-South summit meeting. US Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated on April 10, "We welcome the North-South summit meeting, but the presence of the US forces in the South is necessary¹¹." US Special Envoy to the DPRK Wendy Sherman expressed her expectation at the time of her visit to Japan that the missile issue be discussed during the summit meeting¹².

⁸ The survey was conducted by the Korean Journal of Current Issues. See, *Korean Journal of Current Issues*, November 9, 2000, pp. 42-45.

⁹ Jungang Ilbo, July 9, 2000.

¹⁰ See Hideshi Takesada, "Nanbokutaiwa To Beichokyogi," *Chianforam*, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 2001.

¹¹ US Defense Secretary William Cohen stated after the inter-Korean summit meeting that the US hails the inter-Korean summit meeting, but that the US forces stationed in the South is still necessary. See *Sankei Shimbun*, April 11, 2001.

¹² Wendy Sherman expressed her interest in how the missile issue would be treated in the summit meeting when she visited Seoul and Tokyo, but it was obvious that the issue was not included in the agenda of the meeting. See Aidan Foster-Carter, "Missile Aren't Key to Korea Summit," *Asia Today*, June 7, 2000. (<http://www.asiasource.org/news/at-mp-02cfm?newsid=22063#Korea> English Language News).

US President Bill Clinton discussed with Kim Dae-jung the DPRK issue when they visited Tokyo for the funeral of the late Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. Thus, the US was concerned about how the missile issue would be dealt with by the North and South Korean leaders¹³. At the same time, the US has strengthened its engagement with the DPRK. Washington announced on June 15 that it would provide 50 thousand tons of wheat to Pyongyang. On June 19, the US Administration also announced that it would ease economic sanctions on the DPRK. The administration also decided to provide heavy fuel oil to the DPRK through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The DPRK, in response to this, announced that it would continue to stop further missile launches¹⁴. In October, however, US-DPRK relations entered a new phase. After DPRK Deputy Defense Minister Jo Myong-rok's visit to Washington, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Pyongyang. The DPRK media reported that the DPRK would resume the operation of its nuclear facility for electric generation unless the issue of the compensation for the electric loss caused by the delaying construction of the light-water reactors is solved¹⁵. The 5th round of US-DPRK missile talks in Malaysia deadlocked when the DPRK demanded that the US compensate for US\$ 1 billion in exchange for the DPRK's abandonment of its export of missile parts and technologies. The DPRK even announced through its spokesman, "The US has no right to criticize the DPRK's missile while thousands of its own missiles are (still) deployed in East Asia¹⁶." Thus, while US-DPRK talks were resumed, the DPRK's attitude toward the US became tougher.

However, it is fair to say that despite Pyongyang's toughened stance, the US role has become bigger as the missile talks between the US and the DPRK became more important. On July 11, US Ambassador to Seoul Stephen Bosworth stated, "It is natural that the North and the South used "autonomous" in their joint statement to mean that no outside force can influence their will...US forces in the ROK have been there to deal with the North's threat based on our security treaty. Despite the favorable outcomes of the summit meeting, the threat is still as present as ever. The further the engagement policy progresses, the more important the strong US-ROK military arrangements become¹⁷." It should be noted, however, that on July 1, US Defense Secretary William Cohen stated during his interview with CNN, "Depending

¹³ The US response was remarkably quick. For Washington's "concern" about the summit meeting, See *ibid.*, especially "Inter Korean Summit Draws Concern" at <http://www.asiasource.org/news/at-mp02cfm?newsid=22063#Korea> English Language News.

¹⁴ The US immediate decision to ease sanctions against the DPRK did not attract as much attention as the summit meeting and Kim Jong-il's move.

¹⁵ *Sankei Shimbun*, October 8, 2000.

¹⁶ *Sankei Shimbun*, October 10, 2000.

¹⁷ For the US ambassador's statement, see *Sankei Shimbun*, July 12, 2000.

on how North-South relations develop, at one time in the future, we can discuss the size of our forces.” While emphasizing the importance of the continued presence of the US forces on the peninsula, the US began to suggest that the Inter-Korean dialogue could influence the future of the presence of the US forces¹⁸.

Thus, the US role has gone through some ups and downs since the summit meeting. In the mid to long run, this may continue in the future.

(3) Chinese and Russian Attitudes

The third change since the inter-Korean summit meeting is related to China and Russia. As for China, it should be noted that China provided the venue for inter-Korean contacts leading up to the June summit meeting¹⁹. Kim Jong-il visited China in late May just before the summit meeting. The visit was the first of its kind in 17 years since June 1983. For the new DPRK regime, strengthening relations with China is the top priority, and both the DPRK and China had been coordinating Kim Jong-il’s visit to the PRC since October 1998. In fact, Kim Jong-il was supposed to visit China in November 1998. For Kim Jong-il, not only his own visit to China, but also Jiang Zumin’s visit to Pyongyang was important²⁰. Jiang said at the DPRK-PRC summit meeting, “China hopes that North and South Korea will support an autonomous and peaceful unification and improve their relations²¹.” It is not unusual that China refers to “an autonomous and peaceful unification.” It should be noted, however, that China emphasized “the same Korean comrades” before the inter-Korean summit meeting. This has a lot to do with the fact that China has been more and more critical about the presence of the US forces on the Korean Peninsula. Another notable move is China’s unusual reference to its food aid to the DPRK. During the PRC-DPRK summit meeting, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced that China provided a certain amount of food and material aid to the DPRK on an unconditional basis. This suggests that China wanted to illustrate itself as the DPRK’s

¹⁸ For William Cohen’s statement, see <http://DefenseLink.mil/pubs/easr98.pdf>.

¹⁹ What support and cooperation China had provided until the decision of the summit meeting was made remains unknown. China may have expressed its support for the meeting just before the official decision by the two Koreas on April 8 to hold the meeting. The South Korean *Chosun Ilbo* reported that the DPRK-PRC summit meeting was held just before the June inter-Korean summit meeting because Pyongyang wanted to discuss the inter-Korean summit meeting with Beijing. See *Chosun Ilbo*, June 6, 2000. <http://www.chosun.com>

²⁰ Soon after Kim Jong-il’s succession, China was seen as the first destination of Kim’s overseas visit. As of May, some reports said that a Chinese high-ranking official may visit Pyongyang. The DPRK media reported that Beijing strongly supported the inter-Korean summit meeting. See *Chosun Ilbo*, June 16, 2000. <http://www.korea-np.co.jp/>

²¹ For the official statement, see *Chinese People’s Daily*, June 16, 2000. <http://j.people.ne.jp/2000/06/16/>

supporter²². Immediately after the June summit meeting between the North and the South, Jiang Zumin sent a personal letter to both Koreas²³. In his letter to Kim Jong-il, Jiang stated, “(The inter-Korean summit meeting) is a result of the two leaders’ profound, insightful and wise judgement based on their fundamental national (Korean) interests.” Here, too, we can see “national” or “Korean.” In his letter to Kim Dae-jung, Jiang said, “I believe that the summit meeting this time will be an opportunity for the promotion of mutual understanding, trust and exchange and also for the realization of an autonomous and peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula.” This indicates that China supports “the solution of the Korean issue by the Koreans,” which was stated in the inter-Korean joint statement²⁴.

How should we see China’s support of an autonomous and peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula? China is now preparing for a newly emerging environment created by the inter-Korean summit meeting. Behind this move, there is China’s assessment that the DPRK is no longer to collapse any time soon. If the DPRK regime collapsed, a unified Korea would increase its military power while keeping the US forces on its soil. This would force China to face a liberal nation with 70 million people. This is something China would strongly oppose. China always desired “status quo” and never referred to the withdrawal of the US forces from the peninsula when there was a possibility that a unified liberal Korea would lean to the US. However, once the DPRK overcame its food crisis and retreated from isolationism, the US role and the meaning of the presence of the US forces have changed²⁵. It would be in China’s interest that both Koreas improve their relations and begin to form a federation “autonomously,” or without the US influence²⁶. It is not a coincidence that China’s attitude toward the Korean Peninsula has changed when the North began to enter the international community and the

²² This was the first unconditional aid to Pyongyang ever provided by Beijing. See *Chinese People’s Daily*, June 2, 2000. (<http://j.people.ne.jp/2000/06/02/>)

²³ See *Chinese People’s Daily*, June 17, 2000. <http://j.people.ne.jp/2000/06/17/> Only China sent such a letter to both Koreas. See *Sankei Shimbun*, June 16, 2000.

²⁴ According to the *Chinese People’s Daily* on June 6, 2000, the PRC government has consistently argued that the Korean issue should be solved by the Koreans. This suggests that the PRC thinks that no outside forces should intervene into the issue. See *Chinese People’s Daily*, June 16, 2000. <http://j.people.ne.jp/2000/06/16/>

²⁵ Chinese security experts had often refrained until mid 1990s from referring to whether or not the US forces should be pulled out. However, some Chinese experts have begun to argue more explicitly that there is no need for the continued presence of the US forces. One Chinese foreign affairs expert clearly made such a statement at a session of the yearly-held US Security Studies Conference, Seoul, October 2000.

²⁶ For China, the US forces in the South would work as a buffer against the collapse of the North.

two Koreas began to stress “Koreans.”

As for Russia, Russia is beginning to seek for a new role on the Korean Peninsula. Since Vladimir Putin came in office, Russia has been striving to restore its leverage over the peninsula. In February 2000, Russia reached a new treaty with the DPRK. Both sides eliminated from this new treaty the article that once assured Russia's military intervention in support of the DPRK. However, they agreed to consult with each other in times of contingencies. This agreement could be termed as an agreement of selective intervention, and the agreement signifies the improving relationship between the two countries²⁷. President Putin stated regarding the inter-Korean summit meeting, “It is important for us Russians, too, that the Korean Peninsula is restoring friendly relations because the peninsula poses the direct influence on Russia²⁸.” Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov stated during his meeting with his ROK counterpart on June 29, “Cooperation among the ROK, the DPRK, and Russia has laid a groundwork for Russia's advancement to the DRPK.” Ivanov also proposed, “We want to link our Siberia Railway with the inter-Korean Railway and to cooperate with Pyongyang in operating factories in the North²⁹.” Putin also visited both Beijing and Pyongyang in July. This was the first visit to Pyongyang by the Russian President. During his meeting with Kim Jong-il, Putin expressed his strong interest in the Korean issue. The common interest between Russia and the North is indicated in Russia's sale of weapons to Pyongyang, bilateral military exchange, and opposition to the US national missile defense (NMD) initiative and Japan-US defense cooperation. The better the DPRK economy and foreign currency situation becomes, the more Russia's weapons export to Pyongyang could be facilitated³⁰.

These are the most notable three changes I have observed since the June inter-Korean summit meeting³¹.

²⁷ For the DPRK-PRC joint statement, See *Chosun Ilbo*, February 11, 2000. <http://www.korea-np.co.jp/>

²⁸ For the Russian official's statement, See *Chosun Ilbo*, June 16, 2000. <http://www.korea-np.co.jp/>

²⁹ Ivanov proposed a new framework of Russia and Inter-Korean cooperation. See *Chosun Ilbo*, June 30, 2000.

³⁰ Russia has been producing less conventional weapons since 1991, but a Russian high-ranking official revealed that there was a 10% increase in the production in 2000. See *Sankei Shimbun*, January 18, 2001.

³¹ See Hiedeshi Takesada, “Chosenhan to No Atarashii Choryu,” *Tsubasa*, Vol. 63, Fall 2000, pp. 137-140.

2. The DPRK Nuclear and Missile Issue

Diplomatic relations over the Korean Peninsula have seen reduced tensions, but the DPRK military has remained unchanged. Especially, the issue of the DPRK's missile development is yet to be solved. This issue has emerged as one of the most worrying problems in Northeast Asia³².

(1) Subs and Missiles: Pyongyang's Most Important Weapons

The DPRK's current interest in weapons is concentrated on submarines and missiles. The military is a large one with 1 million personnel, 3,000 tanks, and 600 fighters. However, modernization has been delayed, and there are few high-tech weapons³³. This does not mean, however, that the military is an "unusable" one because the regime has been strengthening its military with view toward unification and against the South and has also more or less improved the military capabilities³⁴. The military can mobilize special agents and undertake blitzkriegs against the adversaries. The psychological use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) could also be effective in actual battlefields. However, the regime's current emphasis is on submarine and missile capabilities³⁵.

For submarines, the DPRK started producing 2.50 million tons of small-size submarines and 70 tons of sub vessels in 1992. Four to six subs have been deployed yearly. The sub sonars are imported from Russia. These subs are used for infiltration into ROK waters. From 1992 to 1993, the ROK government loosened its vigilance on its coastline, and the DPRK regularized its sub infiltration into ROK waters during this period³⁶.

³² For a chronology of North Korea's missile development, see, for example, Boueinenkankankoukai, *Boueinenkan*, 2000, pp. 68-69. For the DPRK's missile technology, see Hajime Ozu, *Tepodonna Kyoji*, Shinkigensya, 1999; and Bill Girtz, *Darega Tepodonkaiatsu Wo Yurushitaka*, Bungeishunjusya, 1999.

³³ The DPRK has upgraded and re-deployed its missiles every 5 years, although their accuracy of target-hitting may not be so good. See *Boueinenkan* 2000, pp. 68-69. The fact that the DPRK exports its missiles overseas means that there is demand for the missiles. We cannot underestimate these exported missiles. The DPRK has also state-of-art computer software technologies. See Yonhap News, "North Korea's computer software technology is world class," *Yonhap News*, June 14, 2000. <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/nk>

³⁴ See Katsuichi Tsukamoto, *Kitachosen: Guntoseiji*, Harashobo, 2000. The DPRK is shifting from conventional to nuclear forces. See especially pp. 190-191.

³⁵ For the DPRK's submarine and missile deployment, see Shiryochosakai, *Sekaigunjjijosei*, Harashobo, 2000, pp. 58-60.

³⁶ For DPRK submarine special task forces, see Lee Gwang-su, *Senkomeirei*, Zasadasha, 1998. Lee Gwang-su is a former crew member of such a special task force.

Regarding missiles, the DPRK is capable of producing Scud B and C missiles. Pyongyang has also deployed Nodong missiles³⁷. The regime is also exporting its missiles to Iran and Syria, and enjoys their credit from middle-east countries for the ability to develop missiles. The DPRK earns US\$200 to \$1 billion from its weapons export overseas³⁸. As for Pyongyang's ability to produce warheads, it is unclear. No evidence has been found whether the DPRK has conducted a nuclear test or two, but we cannot rule out the existence of the regime's nuclear program. It is possible to obtain data on nuclear tests from overseas. It has recently been reported that the DPRK may have underground nuclear facilities. This possibility, too, cannot be precluded because the DPRK stores military goods and hide runaways³⁹.

(2) Foreign Military Relations

Some argue that from a motivation point of view, the DPRK would not develop nuclear weapons, including warheads and missiles. They base their argument on the fact that since the 1994 Agreed Framework, the DPRK has had no intention to undermine its stable relations with the US. They also point out that the regime has no technology to develop nuclear weapons and no funds to procure parts and material in the first place. The food crisis has prevented the regime from increasing its military power, they argue⁴⁰.

However, the DPRK's foreign currency earned by selling weapons overseas can compensate for the cost of weapons development. In the case of Pakistan, which undertook nuclear tests, Pakistan has allegedly spent US\$ 5 to 10 billion. It is not impossible for the DPRK to do spend a similar amount of money given what it has earned from weapons sale⁴¹. Just as Pakistan, many developing countries develop nuclear weapons to reduce the cost of conventional weapons development. In the DPRK's case, however, the modernization of conventional weapons has been delayed, and it would take long to catch up with the ROK's

³⁷ There are disagreements among material sources regarding the DPRK's missile performance and range. North Korea Advisory Group, *Report to The Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives*, November 1999, for example, estimates that the DPRK's missile range is 4,000km to 10,000km.

³⁸ The amount of foreign currency that the DPRK earns from weapons exports differs with each year. See Tsukamoto, *Kitachosen: Guntoseiji*, Harashobo, 2000.

³⁹ North Korean underground military facilities started in early 1980s. Especially, primary military facilities have been located underground. See the Defense Agency, *Bouei Hakusho* 2000, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁰ The DPRK's factories have been less operational, but the regime already began more effective resource allocations before the ongoing economic hardship affects the defense industry. See *Bouei Hakusho* 2000, especially p. 36.

⁴¹ In fact, the DPRK can produce AN2 MI2, and its military industry is large. See Yonghap News, *Pukhan Yongan* 2001, p. 1039.

level of conventional weapons even if the regime started it now. Nuclear development would be cheaper. Given this, the DPRK may have been developing nukes while earning money from weapons exports.

The DPRK and Pakistan have established military relations since the 1970's. In November 1995, the DPRK's People's Army head Choi Guang visited Pakistan and discussed with his counterpart military ties between the two countries. Their ties were revealed when rocket-use ammonium was confiscated in Taiwan in March 1996. It was known that such ammonium had been used for the DPRK's rocket fuel, which the regime had sent to Pakistan⁴².

In April 1998, Pakistan test-launched a *Ghauri* missile. This missile can carry nuclear warheads, with the target range of 1,450 km. CIA, based on its investigation since late 1997, sees the missile as originally the DPRK's *Nodong* missile. The US failed to persuade Pakistan out of conducting the test-launch before it was done. *Ghauri* missiles use solid fuel. Liquid fuel is not suitable for military use because it slows down missile launches. Many countries do not use liquid fuel, but the DPRK uses it⁴³. The PRC's current missile arsenal is entirely solid fuel. Therefore, the likelihood that PRC supplied Pakistan with the liquid-fuel *Dong Feng 2* (East Wind) missile technology of the 1960s is indeed remote. It is, therefore, not without reason to think that Pakistani missiles are either *Nodong* missiles, or missiles that employ *Nodong* technology. From the North Korean perspective, if *Pakistan* tested the missile, then North Korea could avoid having to launch its own into the Sea of Japan and contend with the international condemnation that would follow. Also, if Pakistan conducted a test explosion of a nuclear warhead, again North Korea would not have to face criticism for violating the US-DPRK agreement. So it is possible that two countries came to an agreement that Pakistan would provide the location, while the DPRK would provide the hardware⁴⁴.

(3) Iranian and Chinese Missile Programs and the DPRK

In July 1998, Iran announced that it test-launched its *Shahab 3*, which has a target range of 1,300 km, only after the US told Iran that it had detected the test-launch. US

⁴² However, both the DPRK and Pakistan have not admitted the existence of a military pact between the two countries.

⁴³ The DPRK has steadily been seeking to convert to solid fuel. The DPRK's test-launch of a *Taepodong* missile over Japan in August 1998 revealed that the DPRK has a high-quality missile technology. See *Bouei Hakusho* 2000, p. 40.

⁴⁴ Pakistani-DPRK military relations are reciprocal. The DPRK provides missile technologies to Pakistan in exchange for Pakistani nuclear technologies.

governmental sources also pointed out that the DPRK might have aided the test-launch⁴⁵. It was known that the DPRK had provided military aid to Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. Even after the war, Iran began to depend more and more on the DPRK and Russia to improve its missiles because its missile technology was inferior to Iraq's. More specifically, the DPRK began exporting Scud missiles to Iran. When Iran test-launched the *Shahab 3* missile, which was more advanced than the Western world had known, suspicions rose that the DPRK had given Iran its missile technology or Scud missiles themselves⁴⁶.

Regarding PRC-DPRK relations, there are views that the end of the Cold War ended the relationship or that the relationship has worsened in general terms. However, the 1961 Friendship and Mutual Aid Treaty between the two countries is still effective, and the treaty still enables the two countries to militarily cooperate with each other. On March 3, the Chinese People's Liberation Army Deputy Chief of Staff visited Pyongyang. The visit aimed to re-establish military relations with the DPRK right after Kim Jong-il formally succeeded Kim Il-sung as Chairman of the DPRK Workers' Party. Also, in 1998, the PRC sent its military delegation to Pyongyang soon after Kim Jong-il's formal succession as the Workers' Party Chairman. Given this timing, the delegation may have aimed to further strengthen the military relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang⁴⁷. However, it is not clear if the PRC is actually aiding the DPRK with missiles. The DPRK's missile technology leapfrogged from Scud to *Nodgong* and *Taepodong* without adopting the Russian missile technology. Why? The key to answering this question would be Beijing's role. However, there is no hard evidence that indicates China's role. It is also questionable that China wants to provide its missile technology so easily to the neighboring countries. However, Beijing may not think that Pyongyang would pose a missile threat to Beijing. China, overwhelming military power, has always underestimated the North both militarily and technologically. Thus, there is no reason for China to be threatened by North Korea.

⁴⁵ North Korea's missile aid to Iran is a sort of "secret" that everyone knows. See *Report to The Speaker*, U.S. House of Representatives, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Report to The Speaker, p. 19 suggests the possibility of the DPRK selling its Taepodong missiles to Iran. However, the middle-eastern nations are less likely to purchase ballistic missiles that can reach Europe. The report says that the DPRK has exported 290 missiles so far to Iran, Syria, UAE, and Pakistan. The report also says that the DPRK has been selling its Nodong missiles to Pakistan and points out that the DPRK may export its Taepodong missiles to Pakistan in the future. For middle-eastern-DPRK missile relations, see Sekaino Misairu, *Kigensya*, 1997, pp. 159-191.

⁴⁷ Given the decreasing exchanges of defense high-ranking officials between the DPRK and the PRC after mid 1990s, the visit is noteworthy. However, the purpose of the visit is unclear. See *Pukhan Yongan* 2001, p. 970.

The above analysis leads us to conclude that there has occurred a sort of “weapons of mass destruction (WMD) network” among Iran, Pakistan, North Korea and China, with North Korea at its center. The construction of such a network is not necessarily an intentional one. Each of these countries has striven to improve its own missile technology, and only as a consequence, such a network has been constructed.

(4) The North's Military Policy and Its Growing Momentum

On the military personnel front, it is gaining a momentum. In July 1998, the Supreme People's Congress elected many members from the military. It was also revealed that Chief of Staff Kim Yeong-chun and Military Operation head Oh Keuk-yeol secured their positions. Both of them are seen to be close to Kim Jong-il. As for recent the capabilities of the People's Army, it still holds special forces, and fighter planes and missiles are increasing. Thus, there is little change in the military⁴⁸. Kim Jong-il began to use new slogans such as “Meet the New Age's Demand” and “New Innovation,” but he has not abandoned the existing military slogans, including “The Red Flag Marching Military” and “The Military-Led Revolutionary Line⁴⁹.”

3. Security Frameworks in Northeast Asia

As the above analysis shows, the North Korea does not seem to stop strengthening its military power. Give this, how can be confidence built in the Northeast Asian region? To answer this, we need to review the regional security and the existing frameworks for confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the region.

(1) Three Characteristics of Regional Security

The first characteristic of security in this region is that while policy coordination among the US, the ROK and Japan is in progress, the common interest between China and Russia is growing. In late July 2000, the US, the ROK and Japan had a working-level meeting for policy coordination in Honolulu. The three countries agreed to support the resumption of the normalization talks between Japan and the DPRK, to promote the implementation of the North-South joint statement, to facilitate the US-DPRK missile talks, to welcome the DPRK's entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and to bilaterally improve relations with the

⁴⁸ The DPRK has increased its tanks, missiles and other conventional weapons for the past year. See the Korean Ministry of Defense, *Kukbang Paeksoe* 2000.

⁴⁹ The military oriented slogan has also been stressed recently. See *Rodong Shinmun*, January 4, 2001.

DPRK. Even after the June summit meeting, the framework for policy coordination among the three countries has been strengthened. On the other hand, the DPRK, China, and Russia have commonly opposed to the Japanese-US defense arrangements and the US NMD initiative. This group is unfavorable to policy coordination among the US, the ROK, and Japan⁵⁰. Disagreements over security issues in the region are emerging between these two groups⁵¹.

A second major feature is the DPRK's consistent emphasis on bilateral talks, including the US-DPRK talks, the talks between the DPRK and European countries, the DPRK-Japanese normalization talks, and the inter-Korean dialogue. This is important to take into account in establishing multilateral frameworks for security dialogue⁵². It should be noted, however, that the DPRK postpones the talks with the US and Japan when the inter-Korean talks are in progress, but tentatively stops talking with the US when the inter-Korean dialogue starts⁵³. As for the talks with European countries, such as the normalization talks with the UK, the DPRK has quietly taken the bilateral approach. This suggests that the DPRK may not easily agree to multilateral frameworks. In addition, Pyongyang has taken the position that Pyongyang talks only with Washington in terms of the military issue. It is unclear whether the DPRK accepted the US continued military presence on the peninsula, but the DPRK harshly criticized the US-ROK joint military exercise that had began since August 2000⁵⁴. The DPRK also avoided discussing (military) confidence-building with the ROK during the North-South defense ministerial meeting on the Cheju Island⁵⁵. Thus, we can observe consistency in the DPRK's bilateralism, limiting North-South exchange to the political and economic areas, priority to US-DPRK in the military area. Regarding the military issue,

⁵⁰ Many sources said that the three countries might hold a summit meeting among themselves in Siberia in later 2000. The July visit to Beijing and Pyongyang by Russian President Putin also suggests that the three countries are becoming closer.

⁵¹ If Russia, China, and the DPRK have converged to oppose the continued presence of the US forces on the peninsula, the report that Kim Jong-il said that he would not demand the withdrawal of the forces turns out to be wrong. I confirmed with the DPRK website on January 18, 2001, that the DPRK is still arguing for the withdrawal. See <http://www.kcna.co.jp/calendar/frame.htm>. The statement carried on this site was put up on the site on June 19, 2000.

⁵² Another view holds that the DPRK is now leaning to multilateralism for the reasons of gaining profits. See *Pukhan Yongan* 2001, especially pp. 919-920.

⁵³ Some DPRK high-ranking official suggested to the ROK government that the DPRK would delay the North-South talks because the DPRK is busy and because it also lacks personnel. See *Chosun Ilbo*, October 30, 2000.

⁵⁴ The DPRK criticized the exercise as reneging the North-South agreement. See *Chosun Ilbo*, August 23, 2000. <http://www.korea-np.co.jp/>

⁵⁵ The first defense ministerial meeting ended only by agreeing to promote tension reduction on the peninsula.

especially, the DPRK has consistently demanded the withdrawal of the US forces from the peninsula and the stoppage of (US-ROK) military exercises since before the June summit meeting.

The third characteristic is that Japan's role has not been fully reflected on the regional dialogue. In 2000, Tokyo decided to resume 500,000 tons of food aid to Pyongyang, but domestic concerns about the issue of the DPRK's abduction of Japanese civilians made the normalization talks go slow. Although there are some proposals for Japan to play a more active role in the region, none of them has been realized⁵⁶.

(2) Issue-Oriented Frameworks: Old and New

There have been several frameworks for regional security. Let me review these. I will then propose an alternative, or additional one.

The Four Party Peace Talks among the US, China and the Two Koreas

The Four Party Peace Talks were initially proposed by former ROK President Kim Yong-sam during a US-ROK meeting⁵⁷. Although the 1994 Agreed Framework between the US and the DPRK called for the resumption of North-South dialogue, only the US-DPRK talks have progressed. The ROK wanted to increase its role by proposing the Four Party Peace Talks⁵⁸. The Four Party Peace Talks began just about the same time as the US-DPRK talks started. The DPRK agreed to join the Four Party Peace Talks in exchange for the US pulling its forces out of the region. In August 1998, Pyongyang announced that unless the US withdrawal of its forces was not put on the agenda, we would not participate in the talks. Since then, the talks have not been resumed. This is because there are disagreements among the four parties over the issue of the US forces in the region. The US and the DPRK prioritized their bilateral talks over the Four Party Peace Talks, which the ROK expected use to increase its influence.

⁵⁶ Six party peace talk proposals usually include Japan and Russia.

⁵⁷ The ROK proposed the idea at the US-ROK summit meeting in April 1996. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, September 4, 1996.

⁵⁸ This means that the ROK sees US engagement policy toward the DPRK only as a groundwork for the North-South dialogue.

US-ROK-DPRK Talks

Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger first proposed the US-ROK-DPRK talks in 1970s. In 1983, the DPRK also proposed to the US through China to set up a meeting among the US, the ROK, and the DPRK. This proposal, however, did not become an actual meeting because the DPRK made it clear that the DPRK would talk only with the US with regard to the military issue and that the ROK should be sidelined and because the US and the ROK disagreed with the DPRK. Furthermore, the proposed talks did not involve China, which was party to the 1953 Armistice Agreement. As long as the DPRK sees the ROK only as an “observer,” the US and the ROK would not agree to the proposal.

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)

The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was established based on the 1994 Agreed Framework between the US and the DPRK. The US, the ROK, Japan, EU, and Australia have been the main contributors to the implementation of the light-water reactor project. This multilateral framework is also issue-oriented because it has a specific objective of improving the DPRK's electric generation.

(3) Multilateral Confidence-Building Groupings

Proposed Six Party Peace Talks

To discuss various kinds of issues among the parties concerned, it is possible to expand the Four Party Peace Talks to six party peace talks. Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi proposed a six party peace talk. Former Russian President Boris Yeltsin also put forward such a proposal. The proposal is new in the sense that it would give Japan and Russia some leverage over peace talks. However, China has been reluctant about the proposal⁵⁹. ROK President Kim Dae-jung supported Obuchi's proposal, but the post-North-South summit meeting shifted Kim's emphasis to the bilateral talks between the two Koreas and to the Four Party Peace Talks. In addition, given the huge gap between the US-ROK-Japan group and the China-Russia group, this framework would not be an effective approach to discussing specific issues.

⁵⁹ The DPRK, through its Korean Central News Agency, criticized on June 24, 2000, Japan's proposal of a six party peace talk. See the agency's homepage, <http://www.infovlad.net/underground/asia/nkorea/>

Northeast Asia Nuclear Free Zone

Many non-governmental groups have proposed the establishment of a nuclear free zone in Northeast Asia⁶⁰. However, these proposals have several problems. For example, some proposals include only parts of China and Russia, not the whole nation, and therefore there would not be a fully nuclear-free zone. Also, Russia and China can easily move their nuclear weapons. The problem of verification also remains. Although the two Koreas agreed to denuclearize the peninsula, not to militarily invade each other, and to strive for reconciliation, whether the DPRK has really given up its nuclear program remains unclear.

(4) Alliance-Based and Deterrence-Oriented Frameworks

The US, the ROK, and Japan formed a trilateral policy coordination group (TCOG) to deal with the DPRK's suspicious nuclear activities. This framework has worked well for a couple of reasons. For one thing, this grouping involves the US-Japan alliance and the US-ROK alliance. The more the three countries cooperate within this framework, the stronger these two alliances become. This is the major strength of this grouping. What underlies this grouping, needless to say, is the US leadership in promoting Japanese-ROK dialogue and friendly ties. We should not forget, however, that there were some disagreements among the three allies, including the DPRK missile issue and the food issue. One can even say that the disagreements urged the three countries to solve them and made them more cooperative in the face of the DPRK's threats. In addition to the inter-governmental TCOG, non-governmental Track 2 efforts should also be noted. These efforts include the Japan-US-ROK project by Japan's Okazaki Institute, security dialogues between the Okazaki Institute and the Korean Institute of Defense Analyses (KIDA), and the Japan-US-ROK naval talks between the Okazaki Institute and the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA)⁶¹. Then, how can Japan contribute to confidence-building in the region by building on these efforts of Japan-US-ROK cooperation?

(5) Conclusion: Toward New Confidence-Building Measures

There have been no effective multilateral frameworks for dialogue in Northeast Asia. There is still the possibility that the DPRK may promote its missile and nuclear programs. Weapons of mass destruction may spread, too. Given this, I will conclude this paper by briefly discussing

⁶⁰ The most widely known proposal would be that by John Endicott, professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

⁶¹ These Track 2 dialogues have also influenced practitioners. See, for example, Center for Naval Analyses, *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Korea-US-Japan, Workshop III* (October 1999).

Japan's role in facilitating tension reductions and dialogue between the North and the South and the US-DPRK talks.

First, I believe that the sound Japan-US and ROK-US alliances are essential to Japan-US-ROK policy coordination. Multilateral frameworks can be compatible with these allies. This has already been demonstrated during the process of tension reduction on the peninsula in 1990s.

Second, TCOG should be further utilized. TCOG has been successful because Japan, the US, and the ROK have coordinated their recognition of the situation, the US-Japan and US-ROK alliances were reinforced, and Japan-ROK ties have also been strengthened. It is also important to add more cooperative and dialogue elements to the existing deterrence-oriented function of this framework.

Third, the three allies should develop engagement with the DPRK as a group, not independently. The existing process is that the North-South dialogue, the US-DPRK talks, and the Japan-DPRK normalization talks proceed after policy coordination among the US, the ROK, and Japan. However, it would be effective if the three allies and the DPRK could sit at the same table and various issues so that unnecessary frictions and misunderstandings between the allies and the DPRK could be avoided and more effective engagement with and aid to the DPRK could be realized. Such a discussion framework could eventually cover the military issue.

Fourth, Japan and the ROK should further build their mutual confidence. Since the visit to Japan by ROK President Kim Dae-jung, defense exchanges between the two countries have progressed rapidly. These exchanges included mutual visits of battle ships and exchanges of defense academy students. The strengthening ties between Japan and the ROK are now becoming an important stabilizer in the region.

Fifth, Japan's role should be more directly reflected on the existing dialogue and discussion frameworks. The existing frameworks often deadlocked because of the issue of the US forces on the peninsula. The disagreements between the US and China have also posed obstacles. Economic cooperation-based frameworks have not been fully extended to cover the political and military issues.

Lastly, I would like to propose a new four party peace talk. This framework should involve Japan, the US, the ROK, and the DPRK. This framework should discuss the issues of food aid to the DPRK and Pyongyang's missile development. This framework can do so because

the US, the ROK, and Japan have the common policy of “dialogue and deterrence.” When this framework produced more or less successful results, then China and Russia could be invited to the framework. This new four party peace talk could now be expanded to a more comprehensive and cooperative one. This framework can also be compatible with the older Four Party Peace Talks. To realize this framework and promote stability and unification on the peninsula, however, is not easy. We have to consider China’s role more seriously. It is necessary, of course, to think about involving China in a multilateral framework. However, the gap is too wide to narrow between the US-ROK-Japan group and China in terms of the DPRK missile issue. China does not see the missile issue as its own military issue. Therefore, China would not join the new four party peace talk at least at the initial stage. The same is true with Russia. However, the new four party peace talks could be an opportunity to overcome obstacles that the existing frameworks have been unable to overcome. The new talks could also be the first step to military confidence-building and establishing multilateral policy coordination in the region.