

**Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Issue and Bringing Peace to the Peninsula: An
Appraisal of U.S. Strategy**

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Introduction

I have been asked to discuss U.S. strategy for resolving the DPRK nuclear threat and bringing about enduring peace on the Korean Peninsula. From an American point of view, while these are separable topics, they obviously have a strong relationship to one another, although the effects are not necessarily equal. That is, while success in one of these areas can help success in the other, perhaps significantly, nonetheless it will not guarantee it; failure in either area, however, could well spell disaster in the other.

In this paper, I will first talk about American attitudes and policies toward the North Korean nuclear issue, then toward long-term Peninsula stability, and finally how they interact. I will argue that the lack of an American strategy—indeed, the lack of a serious U.S. policy—over the past thirty-four months has endangered the prospects at least for the first and perhaps for the second, as well. I will also address the interaction among the United States, China and South Korea on these questions as seen from an American perspective.

Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Threat—The Clinton Approach

As we now know, when Bill Clinton left office in January 2001, North Korea was already engaged in serious clandestine efforts to develop an alternative source of fissile material through uranium enrichment to continue its nuclear weapons program. In earlier years there had been signs of such efforts, but no evidence that the North had succeeded or that those efforts yet posed a serious risk to the substantial achievement of freezing the DPRK's plutonium program since 1994, making a rapid breakout extremely difficult if not impossible.

That the Agreed Framework had flaws was never in doubt. Among other things, it was not comprehensive, focusing almost entirely on the plutonium program associated with Yongbyon. It did not deal with the non-nuclear aspects of the nuclear weapons program, including high-explosives weapons tests that CIA now estimates have given the North confidence in the reliability of its nuclear deterrent even without a nuclear test. It did not provide for challenge inspections of "suspect sites" such as Kumchangni, even though access to that site was eventually granted (and nothing suspicious found). And it left unresolved the issue of the estimated one or two weapons worth of unaccounted-for spent fuel from the unloading of the 5MW research reactor in 1989. Moreover, and of great importance, it allowed the retention in North Korea of the five to six weapons worth of spent fuel from the unloading of that same reactor in 1994 until a

certain stage of construction in the Light-Water Reactor (LWR) program and the completion of Pyongyang's accounting of past nuclear activity to the satisfaction of the IAEA.

But the Agreed Framework did accomplish a great deal. It suspended the plutonium program with the prospect that it would be dismantled at some (foreseeable if indeterminate) point within the next several years; closed down the 5MW research reactor under seal; suspended construction on the 50MW and 200MW reactors, which could, if completed, produce enough spent fuel for use in dozens of nuclear weapons each year; safely canned the spent fuel unloaded from the 5MW reactor in 1994; and shut down the reprocessing facility—all under the watchful eye of onsite IAEA inspectors. It also promised to provide North Korea with a more proliferation-resistant light-water reactor nuclear energy technology than the graphite-moderated reactors being shut off.

However, going beyond the technical issues of the nuclear problem—which was always the DPRK's desire—the United States and North Korea had issued a joint statement in October 2000 that pledged that neither “would have hostile intent” toward the other and that both would work toward a new relationship freed from the enmity of the past. This represented, in a sense, a renewal of pledges already made (if not fully implemented) in 1993 and 1994, but which had lost a great deal of credibility in the U.S. after the Kumchangni issue arose and after the Taepodong missile launch in August 1998. Now, in the wake of those setbacks, and following a renewed effort under the “Perry Process,” the new statement seemed a major step forward, especially coming the context of Vice Marshall Cho Myong-rok's “direct and warm” meeting with President Clinton at the White House. And following Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to North Korea in November, President Clinton even considered going to Pyongyang to conclude a missile deal, but he did not do so due both to the lack of specificity of what the deal would encompass and the complications introduced by the results of the U.S. presidential election.

...The Bush Approach

When President Bush took office, all of the momentum died. The North sought a reaffirmation of the October 2000 pledges, but the U.S. refused. In addition to the overall “ABC” (anything but Clinton) attitude of the incoming Administration, it had become an article of faith in Republican circles that the 1994 Agreed Framework was seriously—fatally—flawed, and that the North could not be trusted to live up to it or any other agreement.

As a result, the Bush Administration's approach to North Korea not only did not extend to embracing statements of no hostile intent, it was dismissive of any talks with the North at all. Many on the new team wanted to end the LWR project, which they deemed a proliferation danger, and to terminate the Agreed Framework, which they considered little more than appeasement. In the process, the Administration walked away from ongoing nuclear and missile talks with the North, foregoing what some closely involved believe was a reasonable chance on the former account to successfully address some of the known problems with the 1994 agreement.

The failure of ROK President Kim Dae Jung's March 2001 visit to the United States had multiple causes, but the Administration's attitude was chief among them. Still, after consultation with Japan and South Korea, the Administration agreed in June 2001 to meet with the North "anytime, anywhere" to talk about anything, but only under the principle of having a very broad agenda (including human rights and economic reforms) in which everything had to be agreed as part of a comprehensive package before anything was finally agreed.

As part of his decision, President Bush stated that the United States would abide by the terms of the Agreed Framework as long as North Korea did. This had what, for the President, in any case, may have been the unintended consequence of setting off a hunt by those seeking to sink the Agreed Framework for an excuse to do so. The infamous "anticipatory breach" argument arose in this context.

As we all know, it took the North a long time to agree to meet on the basis the U.S. laid out, and when it finally did agree to do so a year later, in July 2002, that was scuttled by a North-South naval face-off in the West Sea. And by the time a meeting was rescheduled in October, the U.S. had intelligence it believed was credible on the existence of an extensive and fairly far advanced HEU program.

The North, of course, bears basic responsibility for the current situation for pursuing a clandestine uranium enrichment program and continuing in other ways to develop nuclear weapons. Whether Pyongyang admitted to having an HEU program or not in October 2002 (and I believe that is not clear), the fact that there is a uranium enrichment program and that, at least in principle, it is inconsistent with a series of agreements is not in much doubt.

But the U.S. bears significant responsibility for the atmosphere created by the previous two years of posturing without a serious strategy or realistic goal. Moreover, the diplomacy of the year

since the HEU issue was first broached in Pyongyang has been affected in a major way not just by the U.S. belief that it heard a “confession,” but also by Washington’s refusal to accept the DPRK offer to talk and the decision to apply pressure, instead. Insistence initially that the North unilaterally, verifiably, and completely dismantle the HEU program—and only then would the U.S. talk—demonstrated that Washington still had an *attitude* but not a *policy* designed to move the situation from where we were to where we wanted to be, and it predictably failed to achieve its stated goal. Moreover, the cutoff of heavy fuel oil, as logical as it might have appeared in one perspective, triggered the unfreezing of the plutonium program, removal of the seals and ouster of the IAEA inspectors, the restart the 5MW reactor and the reprocessing facility and resumption of construction on the 50 and 200MW reactors and, so Pyongyang claims, the uncanning and reprocessing of the 8,000+ spent fuel rods theretofore in safe storage.

Looking for Solutions

Whatever the flaws of the approach up to that point, the effort to achieve a consensus of the other principal players in this drama—China, Japan, South Korea and, hesitatingly, Russia—has much merit. If harmony of views is achieved, then this will make it far harder for Pyongyang to slip around the edges of any demands. Moreover, it should actually reassure the North, which can count on the other players to bring pressure to bear on the United States to accommodate any reasonable North Korean positions and to moderate its own demands to meet the standard of reasonableness. Further, any assurances provided to North Korea, individually or on a broader basis, will carry the weight of the endorsement of the entire group and thus have a value that a guarantee by a single power could not have.

That said, the U.S. focus on multilateral process to resolve the issue *to the exclusion of* any serious bilateral component or even, to date, a substantive plan is unlikely to work, unless the goal is merely to stretch the process out for awhile. As viewed from Washington, this approach reflects two major factors: the attitude of the President of the United States and the serious splits within his Administration over objectives and methods.¹ The splits complicate the ability to come up with a serious substantive position, and I discuss those below. But the fact is that the President’s role is far more important to any future progress. This is seen by analogy in American China policy, where a deep divisions also existed—and no doubt still exist—within the

¹ To a certain extent, it may also reflect the realities Washington faces in Iraq, though one should note that the U.S. pressed for a multilateral approach on North Korea before the Iraq war and the harsh realities of winning the peace.

Bush Administration over how to approach the PRC and Taiwan, but where even before September 11th—and with renewed emphasis afterward—the President imposed discipline on his team. He has done no such thing on North Korea policy and, until and unless he does, progress will be hard to come by.

As to the splits, setting aside the deeply divided views in the United States over the value of the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, there are also deep divisions within this Administration about whether there can and should be a serious U.S.-DPRK bilateral process *alongside or embedded in* the multilateral process; if there is such a bilateral process, what its content should be; and what specific verification and enforcement mechanisms are appropriate. There now seems to be some movement in the Administration on the question of “parallel steps”—i.e., the notion that the U.S. would do some things demanded by the North without requiring that the North first do everything demanded by the U.S. But it is unlikely that the gaps will easily be bridged either within the United States or with Pyongyang regarding *which* “parallel steps” are appropriate and what the exact sequencing should be. The DPRK notion of “simultaneity” has been dismissed by the State Department spokesman as a “buzzword” of little consequence, though “coordinated actions” does seem to garner approval all around, even if there is no agreement on the definition.

There are various gradations of opinion among Americans about how to resolve the nuclear issue, but for the sake of stimulating discussion—recognizing that the majority of American experts and policymakers embrace elements of both positions—let me try to illuminate the nature of the internal U.S. debate by describing two polar opposites.

On one side are those who believe that the only reliable assurance of the North’s dismantling its nuclear program and not engaging in either missile or nuclear proliferation is a change in the DPRK leadership. These people may accept the limits the President has set on the use of military force to overturn of the current regime in Pyongyang, but they favor squeezing the North economically and diplomatically until it either changes policy (which most in this camp believe it will never do) or an internal dynamic is precipitated that leads to a change in leadership. Some in this group would accept an agreement if it included “zero tolerance” of any nuclear (and, preferably, any other WMD) program, if substantial irreversible dismantlement steps were taken before the U.S. and others took any significant steps in the DPRK’s direction, and if that approach were verified by an “anywhere, anytime” inspection regime by the international

community. But, in fact, most do not believe North Korean agreement to such an outcome is a realistic prospect, so for them, therefore, the negotiation is a prelude to something else.

Some in that group would also insist on including human rights reform and economic reform in any package deal with Pyongyang on the grounds that without them there would not be a sufficient change in the political system to guarantee that the North was sincerely giving up its nuclear ambition. Among the more ideological of these people, the spread of democracy and market economy is also a high priority goal in itself because of the intrinsic value of these institutions, making them no less important than nonproliferation goals and, therefore, objectives that should not be sacrificed in the pursuit of nonproliferation.

On the other side, there are those who, like the first group, also seek the complete, irreversible and verified dismantlement of the North's nuclear program, but who believe that, whatever the facts about the North's responsibility for the current situation, one cannot resolve the problem without addressing on a truly parallel basis what most of our Six Party partners consider to be the North's own reasonable security requirements. This extends beyond purely military security to a sufficient level of DPRK economic security and interaction with the world to hold out some hope for at least medium-term stability in the North.

This latter group would tend to support an active diplomatic process with the North that includes not only multilateralism but also bilateral talks to explore in depth—and help meet—the needs of both sides; a willingness to provide at least temporary security assurances to the North while negotiations are going on—with those assurances to turn into permanent guarantees when final arrangements have been made. While holding no brief for the repressive regime in Pyongyang, people supporting this position would avoid what they see as gratuitous aggravation of the negotiation through use of counterproductive characterizations of the North Korean leadership by senior American officials or adoption of a goal of regime change. And although they would not exclude either human rights or economic reform issues from a broader dialogue with North Korea, they would focus in the short term on reaching accord on the nuclear and missile issues.

Wherever one stands on those questions, there is a broad consensus that returning to the 1994 approach is not possible. Now, most Americans concerned with this issue rule out either a strictly bilateral agreement or one that lacks stringent verification and enforcement mechanisms. Not only would such an agreement be of questionable reliability, but it would be a political liability

for anyone advocating it. Moreover, the Congress would almost certainly not fund any activities under it, making it a dead letter from the outset.

At this point, there is also general agreement that early and complete dismantlement of the DPRK nuclear weapons program—including facilities, fissile materials and any existing weapons—is required, as is the early shipment out of the country of the existing (formerly canned) spent fuel or any plutonium extracted from it. Most Americans rule out the use of force as an instrument of choice to bring about this result, though the consensus on this point only seems to apply to an actual military strike (rather than, for example, high-seas interdiction), and only then if the North does not provoke an attack by crossing redlines such as providing nuclear materials or weapons to foreign interests.

Coordination in the Six Party process

All in both groups also attach importance to coordinating well with our Six Party Talks partners. But it is clear that there are some significant differences between the current U.S. stance and that of the others, especially as regards how forthcoming the U.S. position should be. As long as the focus is on process, i.e., having the North return to the table and keeping the dialogue alive, those differences can probably be managed. But since the U.S. focus is also on keeping pressure on the North not to advance its program and on producing results in a reasonable time frame, the potential for serious rifts with the others exists.

Moreover, if things go badly with the North, while the net result will not favor the DPRK, and indeed could threaten its very existence, it will also likely lead to long-term strains in ties among the other Six Party participants. The “saving grace” so far has been the North’s outrageous behavior, which has convinced even those countries most sympathetic with the DPRK not only that the North’s nuclear program must be dismantled, but that Pyongyang must be required to behave better. And those who seemed most skeptical about the existence of a program in the past (i.e., China and South Korea) now seem to accept its reality, although there still are differences among the Six Party partners both about the priority of the nuclear issue vs. other peace issues and about the best way to go about the Six Party negotiation.

This is perhaps a foolish time to be speculating about or prescribing solutions, since all signs point to the resumption of the Six Party talks within weeks and the movement of the U.S. position toward some sort of multilateral written security assurance to the North “in parallel with” steps by

the North to dismantle its nuclear weapons program. But the fact is, it is far from clear whether what the U.S. has in mind will suffice to meet the North's position on "simultaneous" steps and abandonment of the U.S. "hostile attitude."

Looking Ahead

In my own view, some multilateral piece of this is quite helpful, even necessary. But what is unclear—indeed, what is doubtful—is whether it is sufficient. Although recent DPRK statements seem to indicate some flexibility on the form of a U.S. assurance (after all, the issue is not the words on a piece of paper), North Korean statements point to the continued DPRK focus on the problem as essentially a bilateral one.

In any event, the United States needs to have a specific and reasonable plan in mind for moving ahead²—including an inspection and verification regime that is reliable but also realistic. At the same time, North Korea needs formally and unambiguously to declare its willingness and commitment, if given credible security assurances, to dismantle its entire nuclear weapons program under international inspection, including giving up any weapons and fissile material it may have secreted away.

As discussed earlier, agreement among the others in the Six Party process will be necessary on the definition of some of these terms, including the sequencing of steps to be taken and the specific requirements for verification, to ensure that the North is not allowed to create ambiguities or loopholes for retaining some capability. That will be a difficult task. But even if agreement is reached among the five on these points, if agreement with the North still proves impossible, the U.S. and the others will then face another, more extreme, dilemma of whether they can "live with" a North Korea possessing at least some nuclear weapons capability. The five may have different answers.

² My own preference is for development of permanent peace arrangements to replace the Armistice, and to use this as a way of meeting the North's desire for security assurances as well as the U.S. goals. This would allow for a number of elements including a North-South agreement (which is absolutely critical), some kind of U.S.-DPRK agreement, and an agreement that involves China as well as, in some capacity, Russia and Japan. It would also necessarily address the question conventional forces, which has been a particular focus of some in Washington and which lies at the heart of long-term Peninsula peace and stability. However, despite some press reports that the U.S. is looking at just such peace arrangements, as I understand it those reports are misleading to the extent that they suggest that Washington's vision is to fashion such arrangements as a way to resolve the near-term nuclear problem. Rather, the vision is that permanent peace arrangements will eventually be possible to ensure long-term security, but this is a very long-term prospect and not a vehicle for dealing with the immediate issues.

On the one hand, we presumably have been living with that reality (at least according to recent U.S. intelligence estimates) for a number of years. But, on the other hand, the degree of ambiguity about North Korean capabilities was greater before and thus easier to finesse. Now, while not totally clear, the situation is significantly altered due to DPRK actions and claims. So the question becomes: is the continuation or the expansion of that semi-acknowledged capability *literally* “intolerable” or “unacceptable” as many of the governments involved have said, and, if so, what does that mean in terms of policy responses? And would that change if the North either tested a nuclear weapon or formally declared itself a “nuclear weapons state”?

Which requires at least a quick word on “redlines.” The U.S. has avoided specifying steps that would trigger a sharp U.S. response, including possible use of force. There is one step, however, that would clearly cross the line, whether formally stated or not: shipping fissile material or nuclear weapons abroad. DPRK Representative Li Gun seemed to suggest to Assistant Secretary James Kelly in April 2003 that the North might just do that “depending on U.S. actions.” Later statements out of Pyongyang strongly suggest, however, that the DPRK subsequently got the point that turning the nuclear issue from a national security problem into a homeland security problem for the United States was a strategic error. So, rhetorically, at least, that has been put back in the box by North Korean statements that it has no intention of providing its “nuclear deterrent” to others. Still, there should be no doubt that if there were any such action, the U.S. would respond with force.

Creating a Stable Peace on the Korean Peninsula

The issue of maintaining an enduring state of peace and stability on the Peninsula is related but not identical to resolving the nuclear issue. However, the issues come together especially in growing attitudes in certain segments of South Korean society that the principal security issue for the ROK is reunification, not the North Korean nuclear threat. This has led to a certain resentment and even dismissiveness among segments of South Korean society about the U.S.-ROK alliance. That does not, however, seem to be a majority opinion in the South, or the attitude of the ROK government. Moreover, there is not a likely scenario that will bring about reunification in the near future, so the reality is that the threat of war will remain.

But the situation has been complicated by U.S.-ROK differences over North Korea policy and, in my judgment, the mishandling of various troop-related issues. These differences have had the

paradoxical effect of stimulating some calls in the ROK for reducing or ousting U.S. forces, while at the same time raising fears of U.S. abandonment.

The latter concern has, in turn, given rise to two, almost opposite, charges: either that the U.S. is abandoning South Korea for other “more pressing” security concerns off the Peninsula such as the war on terrorism, or that Washington is clearing the ground near the DMZ to facilitate an attack on the North.

In my judgment, while one cannot deny the salience of these concerns among some groups in South Korea, both are seriously misplaced. The U.S. commitment to the security of the ROK should be in no doubt. Having sacrificed almost 34,000 battle deaths, close to 100,000 wounded, over 7,200 prisoners of war and more than 8,000 still missing in action in the Korean War, the United States has for the half century since then remained deeply committed to the security of the ROK and the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Although the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty was originally negotiated with an authoritarian government in Seoul as a way of gaining Seoul’s agreement on the Armistice, it has grown into a strong bond with a democratic partner who now shares basic goals and values.³

Having advocated redeployment—and reduction—in U.S. forces in Korea over a decade ago, primarily to ensure the durability of the alliance by making their presence more acceptable to the Korean people, I still favor doing so now. But the domestic Korean political climate in which this is taking place, and the sense among many Koreans that this is being imposed on Seoul by Washington, in combination with serious disconnects that persist on North Korea policy, have led to the dual concerns noted above.

In my view, in order to ensure the maintenance of peace and stability on the Peninsula, one needs a combination of credible deterrence—and that in turn requires a strong sense of alliance between the U.S. and ROK as well as between the United States and Japan—and, increasingly, common cause with China. Stronger bilateral security cooperation between Japan and the ROK would also make a significant contribution to the climate of stability on the Peninsula.

As indicated above, the issue of Korean unification plays a key role here. I will not try to delve into it in any detail, but suffice it to say that it remains an important national objective, even

³ For Americans there is a certain irony here, in that the alliance was often viewed in the past by Americans as a check on South Korean ambitions to launch operations against the North; now many in the South see the alliance as a tool for the ROK to impose restraints on U.S. consideration of military options.

though most South Koreans understand it is not a realistic prospect in the near future, nor one whose heavy burdens they would readily welcome if it occurred suddenly. Still, Koreans suspect that all foreigners oppose unification (albeit perhaps for differing reasons) or that they at least throw unnecessary obstacles in the way for their own selfish reasons.

Others can speak to the views of the other countries involved. But, given that it is now assumed that unification would only take place on terms basically laid out by the South (rather than the previous fear that they would be imposed by the North), and although there are concerns about the social and economic impact, Americans basically would welcome unification of Korea and are mystified by the charge that they would not. However the fact that there is such a charge makes clear that work is needed to make the true attitudes known.

Interaction between the Nuclear Issue and Enduring Peace on the Peninsula

Although resolving the nuclear issue would not solve all issues among the Six Party participants, the effort to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue has begun to create habits of cooperation among them that can have an important stabilizing effect on the Peninsula—indeed, on the region—over the long term. Seoul has recently been testing the notion that the Six Party process can evolve into a more permanent “Track I” Northeast Asia security dialogue. Whether this proves feasible in the end or not, it speaks both to the progress made in developing patterns of consultation and nascent cooperation and to the need for a government-level regional security consultative mechanism. (The ASEAN Regional Forum, or ARF, is useful, but it is viewed by most Northeast Asians—and the United States—as of only marginal relevance to issues specific to the area north of the Philippines.)

Similarly, although success in stabilizing the Peninsula’s security situation through strengthening of alliance and other bilateral relations will not assure success on the nuclear issue—after all, the North has been successfully deterred from attacking the South since 1953, but it has not been deterred from pursuing its nuclear weapons program—it will make the forging of a common position easier in what will undoubtedly be a difficult and drawn out Six Party process, thus enhancing the prospects for peaceful resolution of that issue.

On the other hand, the breakdown of efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue would almost certainly exacerbate tensions between and among the Six Party participants, making

successful management of Peninsula peace and stability relationships considerably more difficult. Indeed, failure could well lead toward the brink of war with the DPRK.

As well, failure of efforts to solidify the various bilateral relationships, and the generation of new tensions, would seriously undermine efforts to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, as it would complicate the task of presenting Pyongyang with a united front, perhaps leading the North to believe it could afford to continue high-risk nuclear games that would, in fact, force Washington's hand.

Conclusion

Clearly, it is in everyone's interest that the North Korean nuclear issue be resolved peacefully, and for that it must involve a central multilateral component. But such nostrums are of little use if not backed up with strategies and substantive policy positions that hold the prospect of moving toward success including, in my view, a significant U.S.-DPRK bilateral piece. But if the predictions of some observers are correct that both Washington and Pyongyang will engage in a "slow walk" of the issue over the next year—that is, avoiding an intensive effort to reach a conclusion at least until after the U.S. presidential election—I view this as a highly risky approach. Too much can unexpectedly go wrong if progress is not being made.

Everyone on the U.S. side understands that the relevant issues are difficult and consequential. But there is a sense among many Americans that not all of our Six Party partners share that understanding and a feeling that some of the "cooperation" we have seen of late is for the sake of ensuring U.S. adherence to a peaceful approach rather than part of a serious effort to resolve the issues, even if only over a long period of time.

As long as things move along relatively smoothly, then such gaps may not matter very much. But if for any reason the North decides to ratchet things up a notch, although Pyongyang itself will not likely benefit in the end—indeed could suffer grievously—in the course of reacting, the other Six Party participants could find their relations strained and their interests seriously damaged.

It is also obviously in everyone's interest to promote long-term peace and stability on the Peninsula. But if everyone acts as though all of the relationships necessary for that are in sound condition, we could also very well run into serious trouble on that account, as well. Whatever the pace of progress on the nuclear issue, Seoul and Washington need to work hard to generate positive attitudes in both countries about their alliance relationship. That means each needs to

make serious efforts to understand and work with the concerns of the other, not to submit to the whims of the other alliance partner, but to manage the relationship in positive directions and not allow grievances on both sides to dominate the agenda. Much the same can be said of U.S.-Japan relations, which are in good shape at the governmental level but need serious work in terms of public attitudes.

With China, one is tempted to argue for a “steady on course” American approach. But here, too, I believe that things are more fragile than they appear if one only looks through the lens of recent cooperation in the Six Party process. Even there, the U.S. still thinks China can exert more leverage on Pyongyang, and China still thinks the U.S. can take a more reasonable stance on both the substance of North Korea’s requirements and in giving the North some “face” through bilateral dealings. Moreover there are other important unresolved issues—Taiwan principal among them—that could affect the willingness of both Washington and Beijing to continue on the same cooperative path on Korea.

Without trying to become too prescriptive, the lesson is obvious: none of these issues can be neglected or left to chance. Not only the fate of the nuclear issue, itself, but of long-term peace and stability on the Peninsula and throughout the region hinge on a more active, thoughtful and creative approach by all concerned.