

## Article

# Six Party Talks: The Sixth Round Talks and its Future Prospect\*

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## Introduction

After the six party talks started in August 2003, some scholars see the six party frameworks as a step towards the future possibility of multilateral security arrangement in East Asia. Especially in Japan, liberal scholars tend to prefer multilateral security frameworks over a bilateral security arrangement since they fully recognize negative aspects of U.S.-Japan bilateral security arrangements. A prominent political commentator in Japan argued that the six party talks will eventually develop into a Northeast Asian multilateral security framework if the United States and North Korea reach an agreement to normalize with multinational backing in the six party frameworks.<sup>1)</sup> This line of argument has been popular especially among liberal scholars who promote regional cooperation and advocate the importance of the so-called East Asian or Northeast Asian Community.<sup>2)</sup>

On the other hand, security experts tend to be more pessimistic about the prospects of the six party talks to become an effective framework for confidence building measures or develop a multilateral security framework. Among security experts, traditionally speaking, bilateralism over multilateral frameworks has been considered more effective in dealing with security matters especially in Northeast Asia.<sup>3)</sup> Also, former assistance secretary of the U.S. defense department, Joseph S. Nye who was also once expected to become Ambassador to Japan in the Obama administration, has argued that the establishment of a multilateral security arrangement may be desirable. However it will not replace U.S. bilateral security arrangements with Japan as well as South Korea.<sup>4)</sup> Specifically on the six party talks, one Korean expert in the United States argues that the focus of the six-party talks frameworks solely on North Korea has limited capacity and utility of the talks to address traditional and nontraditional regional security issues beyond North Korea.<sup>5)</sup>

Departing from expectations of liberal scholars, the original intention of the Bush administration for the six party talks was not to create a multilateral security framework in Northeast Asia, but to jointly press North Korea to give up nuclear weapons through the framework of the six party talks. The Bush administration has adopted the following strategies (1) terminating the agreed framework; (2) withholding U.S. reciprocal measures until North Korea takes steps to dismantle its nuclear program; (3) assembling an international coalition through six party negotiations to apply diplomatic and economic

pressure on North Korea; (4) imposing financial sanctions on foreign banks that facilitate North Korea's illegal counterfeiting activities.<sup>6)</sup> However, China, South Korea and Russia have criticized the Bush administration for not negotiating directly with North Korea and they voiced opposition to economic sanctions. After North Korea conducted a nuclear explosion on October 9, 2006, the Bush administration changed its North Korean policy and engaged in bilateral negotiation with North Korea. As a result, the six party talks have produced two important nuclear agreements.

The purpose of this paper is not to evaluate whether the future prospects of the six party talks are to become a base for a multilateral security framework or not. Rather this paper gives an overview of the current situations of the six party talks and points out a few implications for future regional cooperation in Northeast Asia. Section I traces the recent development of the six party talks especially on the question of verification and of delisting North Korea from the terrorist sponsor state list. Section II argues main issues of contention regarding the talks. Section III explores the future prospects of the six party talks especially focusing on policy challenge on the United States and abduction issues. Finally, a few implications of recent development of the six party talks for regional cooperation will be drawn from the analysis.

## **I. Recent Development of the Six Party Talks**

On February 13, 2007, North Korea reached an agreement with other parties of the Six Party Talks. The agreement specified two phases of implementation. The implementation of initial phase of the agreement requires North Korea to freeze North Korean nuclear installations at the Yongbyon site, invite back IAEA personnel to conduct all necessary monitoring and verifications, and declare all nuclear programs. The agreement also establishes working groups of the six countries on issues such as denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, normalization of DPRK-US relations, normalization of DPRK-Japan relations, economy and energy cooperation, and a Northeast Asia peace and security mechanism.<sup>7)</sup> The implementation of the initial phase was delayed until the Bush administration agreed to North Korean demands for access to frozen accounts at the Banco Delta in Macau which was the object of U.S. financial sanctions.

The second phase of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was articulated in a six party agreement of October 2007.<sup>8)</sup> North Korea would allow disablement of the plutonium facilities at Yongbyon and would provide a declaration of its nuclear programs. North Korea also reaffirmed its commitment not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how. On the other hand, the Bush administration would reciprocate by removing the designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism and terminating the application of the U.S. Trading with the Enemy Act. Under the agreement, the North is to receive one million tons of heavy oil or its equivalent in aid from the five other countries in return for disabling its key nuclear facilities and disclosing its nuclear programs. Phase two was to be completed by December 31, 2007. However, it was delayed because the United States and North Korea disagreed over the issue of the North Korean nuclear

declaration. While the United States insisted that the issue of their uranium enrichment program as well as their nuclear linkage with Syria should be included, North Korea denied the existence of uranium programs and refused to deal with such matters.

After a series of intensive negotiations between the United States and North Korea, Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill and North Korean counterpart Kim Gye gwan reached an agreement on how to draw up the declaration list of North Korea's nuclear programs in Singapore in April 2008. The Chief negotiators agreed on a tentative deal in which the North would "acknowledge" U.S. concerns about its uranium enrichment program and transfer of nuclear technology to Syria in a secret side agreement with the United States, while North Korea kept its stance that it has no uranium enrichment program as well as no nuclear connections with Syria.<sup>9)</sup> This decision was considered as a compromise on the part of the United States.

On June 26, 2008, as North Korea submitted its declaration of nuclear programs to China, the chairman of the six party talks, President Bush announced that he officially notified Congress of his intent to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism after a 45 day notification period as articulated by U.S. law. The White House mentioned an intention to remove North Korea from the list on August 11, 2008. At the same time, President Bush stated in the White House statement of June that removal of North Korea from the terrorism support list was dependent on North Korea agreeing to a verification system to verify the contents of its declaration.

Between July 10 and 12, 2008, a meeting of the six parties reached agreement in principle to verify North Korea's declaration of its plutonium stockpile, including visits to facilities, reviews of documents, interviews with technical personnel and other measures.<sup>10)</sup> Following the sixth round of the talks, six parties focused on the specifics of verifying and monitoring North Korea's nuclear program. Washington's proposed draft includes verifying North Korea's past nuclear programs, conducting intrusive inspections of its nuclear facilities, and doing soil tests as well as interviews with key scientists.<sup>11)</sup> Washington originally demanded unlimited free access to the sites for verification citing the "international standard."<sup>12)</sup> The United States was also adamant that the verification be initiated before the delisting of North Korea takes effect. However, North Korea rejected the U.S. proposal. Samples taken from the nuclear facilities could be crucial in determining the nuclear activities of the North. The Bush administration did not remove North Korea on August 11, 2008, when the 45 day congressional notification period passed.

Condemning Washington's delay in delisting North Korea from the list, North Korea started to break its early promise to disable its nuclear facilities. North Korea suspended the disablement of Yongbyon and threatened to resume operations of its nuclear facilities. A spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry issued a statement on August 26, 2008 and claimed that no agreements reached among the six parties or between the DPRK and the United States contain an article which stipulates the verification of the nuclear declaration of the DPRK as conditionality for delisting it as a state sponsor of terrorism. It also criticized the United States for suddenly raising all the issue of applying an "international standard" to the verification of the nuclear declaration.<sup>13)</sup>

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill went to Pyongyang from October 1 to 3,

2008 to discuss a verification deal with North Korea. The United States negotiated a more limited verification inspection system with North Korea concentrating inspections only on Yongbyon. The tentative agreement between the United States and North Korea allowed access to only declared nuclear facilities. Undeclared nuclear sites would be accessible only by mutual consent. In other words, it could allow North Korea to block access to undeclared sites. Subsequently, North Korea agreed and announced a resumption of disablement. In return Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced on October 11, 2008, that North Korea was removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The move by the United States to delist North Korea from its list of terrorism sponsoring countries halted North Korea's retreat and Pyongyang agreed to put a halt to its nuclear arms programs in return.

## II. Key Issues of Contentions

The removal of North Korea from the terrorist list did not promote an early conclusion of the February 13 six party nuclear agreement, contrary to the intentions of the Bush Administration. The latest six party talks which were held in December 2008, ended with no breakthrough. The United States and North Korea disagree with the content of the October 2008 agreement on verification issues, especially on the taking of samples of nuclear materials from the Yongbyon installations. North Korea opposed the demands and claimed that such methods may encroach upon its sovereignty. Also, the outgoing Bush administration strove to finalize the second phase of the agreement of the six party talks to gain a landmark diplomatic achievement. Such an approach to deal with the nuclear issues created criticism both within and outside the United States. There are at least several contentions among concerned parties as far as verification issues and other related issues are concerned.

The first issue of contention is of course related to the method of the verification system. The United States and other nations in the six party talks demand North Korea agree to allow sampling of their atomic materials and other scientific measures as key methods based on the "international standard." North Korea claimed that applying the so-called "international standard" would be an infringement on their sovereignty without taking into consideration the present level of confidence in relations between the two countries that are technically at war. From the North Korean perspective, North Korea walked out of the NPT and the IAEA, undertook a nuclear test outside the NPT and declared its right to have access to nuclear weapons. Therefore, technically speaking, the so-called "international standards" cannot be applied to the case of North Korea if the standards in question are those of IAEA as well as NPT.<sup>14)</sup> Therefore, North Korea strongly insisted that the sampling should be dealt with after the member states enter the last phase of dismantling the North Korea's nuclear facilities.

Also, the scope of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is a matter of contention. While the United States and other parties in the six party talks focus more on denuclearization of the northern part of the peninsula, North Korea argues that denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula should include verification of U.S. military bases

in South Korea as well as South Korea's own facilities. On January 13, 2009, North Korea criticized through their Foreign Ministry Spokesman the United States for its wrong view and assertion about the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. North Korea claimed that there can never be an exception to the principle of action for action as far as the issue of verification is concerned. It is necessary to simultaneously verify the whole Korean peninsula at the phase when the denuclearization is ultimately realized.<sup>15)</sup> However, it is highly unlikely for the United States to accept North Korea's demands. So far it has proved difficult to find a middle ground regarding the verification system between North Korea and the United States in current situations. Especially, since sampling of their nuclear material may prove the existence of the so called highly enriched uranium program, it will be difficult to make North Korea agree to the proposed verification mechanism in the six party talks.

Thirdly, negotiating tactics of the U.S. were also called into question within the United States. Conservatives in the United States severely accused the Bush Administration of being too soft on North Korea as well as delisting North Korea. They hotly questioned the ways that Christopher Hill acquiesced to North Korean counterpart. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Florida Republican and ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said he was profoundly disappointed when the Bush Administration dropped its demand for agreement on a plan to verify the North's recent nuclear declaration before delisting.<sup>16)</sup> Details of North Korea's suspected nuclear development program with highly enriched uranium remained unclear. As a matter of fact, the primary objective in removing North Korea from the terrorism support list under the Bush Administration was to achieve the completion of the disablement of North Korea's plutonium nuclear installations at Yongbyon, since that plutonium is the known source of North Korea's production of atomic bombs. Other issues such as their alleged North Korean highly enriched uranium program should be given less priority. Therefore, the other important issues are seemingly inevitably deferred into the future agenda of the next administration.

Finally, although not directly related to the verification system, delisting North Korea from the list also posed difficulties for the bilateral relations between the United States and Japan which had basically conditioned the delisting on resolving the fate of Japanese nationals kidnapped by North Korea in the 1970s and 80s. The Bush administration initially linked North Korea's kidnapping of Japanese citizens to the six party talks and to the terrorism support list. However, the United States changed its policy toward North Korea after North Korea's atomic bomb test in October 2006. One of the major changes was to link removal from the terrorism exclusively to a successful North Korean implementation of its obligation under phase two of the February 2007 agreement in the six party talks.<sup>17)</sup> Japanese officials as well as politicians warned that there would be a certain short term negative effect on U.S.-Japan relations if the Bush administration removes North Korea from the list without any substantive progress on the abduction issues of Japanese nationals.<sup>18)</sup> In a recent interview with the Washington Post, Prime Minister Aso expressed his negative views that the Bush administration had a tendency of vaguely wording the issue of verifiable inspections.<sup>19)</sup> It is true that the removal of North Korea from the U.S. list of state sponsors terrorism was considered as a diplomatic defeat

for Japan.<sup>20)</sup>

### **III. Future Prospects for the U.S. North Korean Policy and the six party talks**

Since the new rounds of talks will proceed under the Obama Administration, future prospects of the six party talks will largely depend on the policy course of the new U.S. administration. Needless to say, the most important and urgent policy agendas for the Obama administration are to cope with the world economic and financial crisis. As for international security matters, withdrawal from Iraq, war on terrorism in Afghanistan, along with the Russian intervention in Georgia seem more urgent security issues for the United States. Therefore, the North Korean nuclear problems may not be the highest priority although it does not mean that the issues are not important. In particular the questions of proliferation as well as uranium enrichment which the Bush administration virtually deferred to the Obama administration, could become an urgent issue for the Obama administration as well.

#### **Policy Challenges for the United States**

The Obama administration seems to be adopting the two-track approach which includes bilateral talks between the United States and North Korea as well as the framework of the six party talks. President Obama himself made it clear during his presidential campaign that he is ready to meet Chairman Kim Jong il in North Korea. Of course it does not mean that the new administration will replace the six party frameworks with bilateral negotiations. Rather, the United States will pursue direct talks with North Korea to review and implement the February 13 and October 3 agreements and determine how the United States and North Korea can move forward toward the twin objectives of denuclearization and normalization of diplomatic relations under the six party frameworks.<sup>21)</sup> Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard mentioned in his speech in Seoul, February 2009 that the main vehicle for pursuing U.S. objectives will be the six party talks, although the Obama administration will continue to bolster the multilateral talks through bilateral engagement.<sup>22)</sup> Along with these policy statements by U.S. leaders, given the fact that the Democratic Party has seized control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Obama administration is expected to implement a more liberal policy toward North Korea and as a result one may expect a dramatic development in relations between the United States and North Korea occur.<sup>23)</sup>

However, the Obama administration will also have to face North Korean challenges in order to develop U.S.-North Korea relations dramatically. First of all, the new administration also has to deal with North Korean nuclear issues, which will take time to resolve. The Obama administration expressed its commitment to achieve the complete and verifiable elimination of North Korea's nuclear production and inventory. During a Senate hearing, Hillary Clinton said the Obama administration will confirm North Korea's history of plutonium production, its uranium enrichment activities, and get answers to questions of its involvement in proliferation to Syria.<sup>24)</sup> From the U.S. perspective, resolving the North Korean nuclear issue is a prerequisite for diplomatic normalization and

improvement of U.S.-North Korea relations. In response to Secretary Clinton's statement that normalized relations will not be possible without complete and verifiable denuclearization, DPRK Foreign Ministry has mentioned in January 2009 that its nuclear status and prospects for diplomatic normalization with the United States are two different issues and emphasized that North Korea would not give up its status as a nuclear weapons state even after normalization as long as it is exposed to the slightest U.S. nuclear threat.<sup>25)</sup> From the North Korean perspective, however, U.S. hostile policy created a nuclear North Korea. Therefore, it is improbable that North Korea moves first unless it obtains guarantees from the United States. In other words, the United States and North Korea have no trust in each other. Unless both the United States and North Korea fill the gap of these perceptions between them, it will be difficult to resolve the nuclear deadlock and see dramatic development of U.S.-North Korea relations even under the Obama administration.

Secondly, trilateral cooperation among U.S., Japan and South Korea will be a matter of concern for the new administration as well. In the latest six party talks held in December 2008, although the United States, South Korea and Japan emphasized together that the verification protocol include sampling of atomic materials as a key method, Japan strongly insisted that such a deal must be put down in writing to avoid any ambiguity on the issue.<sup>26)</sup> Japan's emphasis on writing was aimed not only at North Korea but also at the United States, which made a successive compromise with North Korea. Also, Washington, Seoul and Tokyo linked the verification issue to their economic and energy aid to the North to pressure North Korea to surrender to the verification protocol. South Korea recently aligned with Japan and adopted a stern policy that links verification to the promised energy aid while in the previous administration it played the mediator's role to bridge gaps between the United States and North Korea.<sup>27)</sup> If the Obama administration adopts a more conciliatory policy toward North Korea, it will need a more coordinated approach among these three allies especially when Japan and South Korea seem to take a tough policy toward North Korea.<sup>28)</sup> In sum, agreement to a satisfactory verification arrangement as well as trilateral coordination remains the essential issues for the new U. S. administration although North Korea will remain reluctant to accept the demands regarding the verification system.

### **The abduction issues in the six party talks**

Although Japan seems to remain a "hardliner" toward North Korea in the six party talks, the situations in the six party talks have not been favorable for Japan. First of all, Japan has lost one of its tools to press North Korea on the abduction issues when President George Bush removed North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism in order to make North Korea agree to the verification plan. Although the United States has kept saying that it will support the abductions issue and that U.S.-Japan relations remain one of the most important bilateral relations in the world, Japan was offended by the U.S. actions as already discussed above. Secondly, Japan's focus on the abductions issue has caused it to isolate itself from the other five parties especially from South Korea and China. Japan has refused to provide energy aid due to the lack of progress in resolving the

issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese nationals in the past. Some warn that this approach may put Japan in a difficult position as it increases the risk of breaking unity among other nations in the six party talks seeking progress in North Korea's denuclearization.

However, there are few prospects for a change in Japan's policy and Japan will keep bringing up the abduction issues within the framework of the six party talks. First, in the agreement of February 13, 2007 one of the five working groups established in the six party Talks was about the issues of normalization between Japan and North Korea. In addition to that, during a joint press conference on February 17, 2009, Secretary Clinton mentioned that the issue of abduction of Japanese citizens by the North remains part of the six party talks when she met with Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone in Japan.<sup>29)</sup> From the Japanese perspective, it is completely legitimate for Japan and North Korea to make progress toward resolving the issues of concern such as the abduction issues and normalizing their relations in the six party talks.

Secondly, South Korea has become tougher on North Korea as North-South relations have deteriorated since President Lee Myung bak took office last year. This may reinforce the position of Japan as far as the abduction issues are concerned. On March 11, Kim Hyon hui, a former North Korean terrorist met with relatives of a Japanese woman who was abducted in 1978. She has been at odds with the former liberal government under President Roh Moo hyun. At least for the short term, the event may provide momentum to Japan's effort to call for North Korea's sincere action to settle the abduction issues. Especially when the support ratings for the Aso administration are at a historic low, the Aso administration has enough motivation to emphasize the abduction issues. Needless to say, the abduction issues still remain politically very sensitive although there is some degrees of "abductee fatigue" among the Japanese public.

#### **IV. Concluding Remarks: Implications for Regional Cooperation**

Based on the above discussions, a few implications for regional cooperation in Northeast Asia can be drawn. Firstly, the framework of the six party talks has been useful in dealing with North Korean nuclear issues and has played an important role to promote denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Although the original intention of the United States was to squeeze or isolate North Korea through the mechanism of the six party frameworks, the framework itself goes beyond such intentions, and starts to have its own logic and mechanism. It has certainly prevented the U.S. from taking unilateral actions, offered a legitimate platform for both the United States and North Korea to engage in negotiations, and promoted to some extent coordination among participating parties. In particular, the Obama administration has made it clear that it will forge a more effective framework in Asia that goes beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits and ad hoc arrangements, such as the six party talks on North Korea.<sup>30)</sup> Although it is too early to see the possibility for the six party talks to develop into a multilateral security framework, the framework of the six party talks has created a basis for future development.

Secondly, on the other hand, returning to the past experience and recent development,



when the United States actively started to engage in direct negotiations with North Korea, denuclearization was actually promoted. In other words, the role of the six party talks has changed from the platform for the six nations to discuss North Korean nuclear issues, to simply reconfirm the results of the negotiations between the United States and North Korea. While the Obama administration expressed its willingness to use the framework of the six party talks, if direct and bilateral negotiations between the United States and North Korea turned out to be more effective, the role of the six party talks may be limited. It follows that future prospect for a regional security framework in Northeast Asia may also be more symbolic rather than an effective framework in dealing with security issues. In either case, at least for the foreseeable future, it seems that the regional framework for East Asia will consist of multilayered security frameworks which include both bilateral and multilateral security arrangements.

### Future Directions

The analysis of this paper is based on the recent development of the six party talks. Accordingly the impact of North Korean rocket or missile launch in April 5, 2009 as well as the second nuclear test along with missile launches in May 25, 2009 is beyond the scope of the paper. Needless to say, these issues are crucial to the future directions of the six party talks as well as North Korean policy in the Obama administration. Therefore, the impact of these events is worthy of the next inquiries.

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### Notes

- 1) Kang Sung Jung, *The Asahi Shimbun*, December 31, 2004.
- 2) For the same author, see for example, Kang Sung Jung, *Toward the Common House of Northeast Asia* (Tohoku Asia Kyodo no Ie o Mezashite), Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2001. Also, Haruki Wada, *Northeast Asian Common House: Manifestation for New Regionalism* (Tohoku Asia Kyodo no Ie: Shin Chiiki Shugi Sengen), Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2003.
- 3) See for example Janice M. Heppell, "Confidence-Building Measures: Bilateral versus Multilateral Approaches," *Peace and Security in Northeast Asia: The Nuclear Issue and the Korean Peninsula*, An East Gate Book, 1997, pp. 269-301.
- 4) Joseph S. Nye, "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1995, 74, 4, pp. 90-102.
- 5) Scott Snyder, "Prospect for a Northeast Asia Security Framework," presented for conference Towards a Northeast Asian Security Community: Implications for Korea's Growth and Economic Development, held October 2008 in Washington D.C., and sponsored by the Korea Economic Institute(KEI), the University Duisburg-Essen, and the Hanns Seidel Stiftung, p. 5.
- 6) Larry A. Nikch, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program*, CRS Report for Congress, August 1, 2006, p. 2.
- 7) Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement, 13 February 2007.

- 8) Second-Phase Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement, 3 October 2007,
- 9) *Korea Times*, April 21, 2008.
- 10) Press Communiqué of the Heads of Delegation Meeting of the Sixth Round of the Six-Party Talks, Beijing, July 12, 2008.
- 11) *The Korea Herald*, July 26, 2008.
- 12) *The Korea Herald*, October 11, 2008.
- 13) A spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry issued a statement on August 26 and said the DPRK decided to immediately suspend the disablement of its nuclear facilities that had been underway, and that it will soon consider a step to restore the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon to their original state as strongly requested by its relevant institutions.
- 14) Interview with North Korean government official in Pyongyang, January 6, 2009.
- 15) FM Spokesman Dismisses US Wrong Assertion.
- 16) *The Washington Times*, October 12, 2008.
- 17) Larry A. Niksch, *North Korea: Terrorism List Removal?* CRS Report for Congress, February 2, 2009, pp. 7-9.
- 18) It is of course unlikely to shake the foundations of the U.S.-Japan political and security alliance though there is much dissatisfaction regarding the U.S. delisting among the Japanese public as well as within the Japanese government.
- 19) *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2009.
- 20) *The Daily Yomiuri*, October 15, 2008.
- 21) Scott Snyder, "Smart Power: Remaking U.S. Foreign Policy in North Korea," Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, February 12, 2009.
- 22) Speech by Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard, "Prospects and Challenges for the Obama Administration's Policy toward the Korean Peninsula," February 17, 2009.
- 23) It is true for North Korea to see the Obama administration as an opportunity to improve relations with the United States. However, one major crucial difference between the Clinton and Obama administrations is that the United States and other concerned parties have to deal with a nuclear North Korea.
- 24) *Korea Times*, January 23, 2009.
- 25) *Ibid.*
- 26) *The Japan Times*, December 4, 2008.
- 27) *The Korea Herald*, December 15, 2008.
- 28) For the analysis on the issue of trilateral cooperation among the United States, Japan and South Korea under the Lee Myung bak government, see Sachio Nakato, "South Korea' Paradigm Shift in North Korean Policy and Trilateral Cooperation among the US, Japan, and Korea," *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*, Korea Institute for National Unification, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2008, pp. 41-61.
- 29) *The Japan Times*, February 19, 2009.
- 30) The Office of the President-Elect, "The Obama-Biden Plan," [http://www.change.gov/agenda/foreign\\_policy\\_agenda](http://www.change.gov/agenda/foreign_policy_agenda). accessed on 22 March, 2009.

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## 6者協議：第6回会合と今後の展望

本稿はブッシュ政権末期の米朝関係および第6回6者協議を分析するとともに、新たに発足したオバマ政権下での米朝関係および6者協議の展開を展望したものであり、以下の3点について論じた。第1に、ブッシュ政権末期の米朝関係は朝鮮半島の非核化をめぐる進展を示したが、アメリカの交渉姿勢は米国内の保守派や同盟国日本から疑問視される一方で、こうした批判勢力の声を一定程度反映しようとする米国の対北朝鮮政策は北朝鮮からの反発を受けて、第6回6者協議では成果を得られなかった。第2に、オバマ政権に対する北朝鮮の期待は高かったが、核問題の解決が米朝関係の進展の条件と考えるアメリカと核問題それ自体はアメリカの対北朝鮮敵視政策の産物であり、アメリカの対北朝鮮政策の転換が核問題解決の鍵だと主張する北朝鮮との認識ギャップは大きく、米朝関係の早急な進展は望めない。第3に、6者協議で拉致問題を取り上げることにに対する批判や問題点が指摘される一方で、日本は国内政治的要因と6者協議における日朝国交正常化のための分科会が存在することで正当性を担保し、6者協議でも引き続き拉致問題を追求し続けることが予想される。

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