Session 2:
The Conventional Forces of North Korea and Arms Control in Korean Peninsular: Breaking through the Stalemate

Du-Hyeogn Cha
CONTENTS

[ ] North Korean Military Capability and Its Threats

[ ] Ongoing Military Confrontation Between the South and the North

[ ] Arms Control in the Korean Peninsula: The Way too Far

[ ] Isn’t There No Way?

[ ] Toward the More Peaceful Peninsula and East Asia
Continuous Conventional Force Construction Despite Economic Difficulties

- ‘Selection & Concentration’ in development and deployment of the military force
- About 70% of ground forces deployed south of the Pyongyang-Wansan Line
- Long-range artillery aiming Seoul Metropolitan Area and its capability improvement
- Enhancement of special forces
- Efforts for acquisitioning of new submarines, torpedoes, and missile patrol boats
North Korean Military Capability and Its Threats (2)

✔ Maintenance of missile hovercrafts for amphibious attack
✔ 40% of Air Force capabilities deployed to forward bases

➢ Myth on the ‘Inferior Military Capability of North Korea’

① ROK’s Overwhelming superiority in economic power and defense budget? → considerable hidden military expenditure of North Korea

② Obsolete Weapons/Equipment of KPA? → old modeled, but brand-new
North Korean Military Capability and Its Threats

③ Lack of training/exercise? → very long service term of KPA and veteran troops

④ Anachronistic believe in ‘3:1 advantage of defenders’ → modern warfare and the merit of surprise attack

⑤ Ultimate victory of ROK in war by the superiority of ‘war sustaining capability?’ → deterrence rather than defense

➢ Substantial threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction of North Korea

✓ 2,500 to 5,000 tons of chemical weapons
North Korean Military Capability and Its Threats

✓ Suspected biological weapons as anthrax, smallpox, and cholera
✓ Wide variety of ballistic missiles
  • Scud B/C (300km to 500km range, operationally deployed)
  • Rodong (1,300km range, operationally deployed)
  • Musudan IRBM (3,000 km range, operationally deployed)
  • Taepodong (More than 6,700km range, under development)
Ongoing Military Confrontation Between the South and the North (1)

- Military confrontation and periodic conflicts since Armistice Agreement of 1953

- Three major armed skirmishes taken place from 2009
  - Daecheong Naval Campaign (November 10, 2009): navy clash near Northern Limit Line
  - The Sink of Cheonan (March 26, 2010): a ROK patrol corvette was sank by the torpedo of North Korea
  - The Yeonpyeong Shelling: North Korea fired more than 100 shots against Yeonpyeong Island
Ongoing Military Confrontation Between the South and the North (2)

- No reliable institutional mechanism
  - North Korea’s refusal of Military Armistice Commission since mid-1990s
  - Stalemate of South-North High-level Military Talks since 2008
  - Suspension of political talks

- Domestic politics of North Korea and its implications on military provocation
  - Army-first Politics: a compromise between the supreme leaders and military corps?
Ongoing Military Confrontation Between the South and the North (3)

✓ Distorted Party-Military relations: still unstable succession system
✓ Corporate interests of KPA: provocations as measures for enhancing political position?

➢ Motivation of North Korea on limited provocation Unless 2nd Korean War

✓ Relatively low political/military burden
✓ Appealing its own justification
✓ Inducing diplomatic support from some neighboring countries
✓ Stimulating the dialogue with the U.S.
Arms Control in Korean Peninsula: a way too far

1. So many suggestions, but not realized

- Despite some preliminary measures, no meaningful progress in real arms control
  - Military assurance for inter-Korean crossing in land and sea
  - Improvements of the inter-Korean military communications
  - Periodic dialogues
- No fixed negotiation channel for arms control
- Propaganda, rather than reliable policy (North Korea)
Why so many suggestions have been ‘Much ado about nothing?’

- Lack of sincerity and political/economic motivation
- Unrealistic approaches (ex. Mutual disarmament to 100,000 soldiers proposed by the North)
- Aiming at exploitation of the counterpart’s disadvantage
- Appliance of European experiences without cautious review
Passive approaches among neighboring countries on peninsular arms control issues

- Focused on the maintenance of status quo instead of on fundamental policies to alleviate inter-Korea tensions
- Regional actors have sought the ‘hedging strategy' by cultivating a level of cooperation with both the South and the North
- Relative unconcern on conventional arms control after emerging nuclear issues
- The lack of the consensus on regional arms control
Isn’t There No way? (1)

Starting from resolution of political distrusts between the South and the North

- Adopting measures and policies that reflect the real political approval on each other
- Restoration & institutionalization of political/military dialogue channels
- Frank discussions on the implementation of existing bilateral agreements including the ‘Basic Agreement’
- Compliance on the agreed or de facto ground/maritime boundary including NLL
Isn’t There No way? (2)

- Stable armistice system prior to ‘Peace Treaty’
  - Restoring the mechanisms/institutions that assure the armistice including the Military Armistice Commission and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission
  - More active approach on the Peace Treaty, but not adhering to specific option or roadmap
  - Linkage between economic cooperation/aid and arms control dialogues between two Koreas
Cooperative engagement of neighboring countries

- Common approaches and messages against military provocation in Korean Peninsula
- Developing institutional mechanisms for resolving peninsular/regional conflicts (ex. the establishment of East Asia Crisis Management Center within DMZ)
- Preparing regional arms control options that can corresponds with the South-North arms control, especially on the issues of WMD
Pursuing step-by-step approach toward the positive changes of North Korea

Step 1: Relatively non-hostile North Korea
Step 2: Transparent and WMD-free North Korea
Step 3: North Korea as a responsible stake-holder for coexistence
Step 4: North Korea as a partner in common prosperity era
Step 5: North Korea as a partner for peaceful unification
Supporting North Korean leaders to transform its rational of political legitimacy

- From military confrontation to coexistence
- From personal idolization to policy outcomes
- From ‘Army-first Politics’ to check & balance among state apparatus

The enhanced multilateral cooperation also needed