

Response to “First Technical Steps for North Korean Denuclearization”



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Article by Kosima Weber Liu

CONTENTS

[I. Introduction](#)

[II. Comments by Kosima Weber Liu on "First Technical Steps for North Korean Denuclearization"](#)

[III. Nautilus invites your responses](#)

[Go to "First Technical Steps for North Korean Denuclearization" \(February 7th, 2007\)](#)

[Go to Policy Forum Online index](#)

I. Introduction

The following are comments written by Kosima Weber Liu on the editorial "First Technical Steps for North Korean Denuclearization" by Jungmin Kang.

II. Comments by Kosima Weber Liu on "First Technical Steps for North Korean Denuclearization"

For the upcoming six-party-talks in Beijing on February 8, 2007, it is not enough to understand the technicalities of how to go about the denuclearization of the DPRK. However, it is just as important, if not more important, to understand what DPRKorea is expecting and willing to give at the 6P talks.

For DPRKorea the 6P talks are basically not about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, that is only a very small part. But rather the goal is, normalization of relations with the US and becoming an equal and respected part of the world community. The DPRKorean nuclear programme mainly exists for this reason. North Korea will only be able to give it up if it will be able to ultimately reach that goal. If the demand is, to irreversibly dismantle the nuclear programme, it will be just as important to irreversibly put North Korea onto the road of normalization of relations and giving it a chance for economic development as part of the world community.

In order to make the 6P talks successful, all participating parties must be able to understand the North Korean position clearly or there won't be a successful outcome. It simply takes looking at the world from the North Korean perspective to understand that such change for DPRKorea is an even bigger commitment than the steps it takes to stop producing plutonium. In fact that is a much bigger offer to the world than to just give up its nuclear programme. It also is not possible for DPRKoreans to de-link the two.

DPRKorea is not negotiating about a nuclear programme but about the fundamental changes for the future of its country. With this understanding it will be easy to see, that the North Korean negotiators will come to the negotiating table with a lot of strength and energy. It will also be crucial to understand that failing will simply result in raising the sticks and going back to another nuclear test, which is their sacrifice, so to speak, in order to obtain a better and secure future for North Korea. (The economic, security and health burden of another test are clearly understood).

DPRKorea does not need to be pressured into giving up its nuclear programme. It will happily do so. Regarding food and energy supplies, it might look like it is asking for a lot of free gifts. But for them food and energy are justly deserved - as it feels it has been victimized for so long. Food and energy, it simply feels, it deserves because of it's long suffering.

Food and energy are not finally understood as crucial bargaining items for dismantling the nuclear programme.

DPRKorea is ready to make its fundamental change. It does not need to be pressured to do so. If the US and the rest of the world will allow it to join the world community, the denuclearization is a natural and integer part of this process. Yet sequencing is very important: only a parallel process will bring the positive results everyone at the 6P talks has been hoping for for so long.

If all participating parties at the 6P talks understand that the talks are an opportunity to help North Korea to make a fundamental transition, then the denuclearization everyone is so fixated at, will become a natural part of that overall process.

The 6P talks have failed because they are fixated only on one issue, the denuclearization. Yet denuclearization can only happen as part of a much bigger change, by giving North Korea a real

chance for change .

III. Nautilus invites your responses

The Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network invites your responses to this essay. Please send responses to: napsnet-reply@nautilus.org . Responses will be considered for redistribution to the network only if they include the author's name, affiliation, and explicit consent.

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[Return to top](#)

[back to top](#)

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