

Policy Forum 05-99A: US Double-Dealing Attitude and Japan's Privilege

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Essay by Lee Junkyu

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I. Introduction

Lee Junkyu, Coordinator of Policy Planning at the Civil Network for a Peaceful Korea, writes "The US

inconsistent attitude toward its nuclear policy becomes more visible when we look into the differences of policies applied to Israel, Pakistan, India and to North Korea and Iran. North Korea and Iran are the states that are 'suspected' to develop nuclear weapons while Israel, Pakistan and India are mavericks of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, armed with nuclear weapons. However, the U.S. has never been stingy in supporting them."

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II. Essay by Lee Junkyu

- US Double-Dealing Attitude and Japan's Privilege
by Lee Junkyu

May 2nd of this year, former president Carter criticized in an article in the International Herald Tribune practices of the U.S. and other nuclear states. He said, "Considering that Iran and North Korea now retain or are trying to retain a nuclear weapon program, the indifference attitude from the U.S. and other nuclear states toward NPT is quite surprising", and "leaders of the U.S. have declared that they protect the world from the nuclear threat caused by Iraq, Libya, Iran and North Korea, but they themselves do not pay much attention to the implementation of its own responsibilities under NPT. Rather they insist on testing and developing new types of weapons" Mister Carter's column was published around the opening of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, and correctly pointed out not only the problems related to the NPT itself, but also what recent international politics are now faced with regarding the nuclear issue.

International politics of non-proliferation that goes with the inequity

The NPT, which is the core piece of the international non-proliferation regime, contained inequity from its very start. It entered into force in 1970, prohibiting all states, other than the 5 nuclear states at that moment (the U.S., the U.K. France, China, and Russia), from possessing nuclear weapons. We can therefore conclude that the NPT acknowledges the nuclear privileges of some states.

On the other hand, article 6 of the NPT stipulates that parties to the treaty should hold conferences and conclude treaties for dismantlement of nuclear weapons. When the NPT was extended indefinitely at the NPT review conference in 1995, NSA (negative security assurance), which has a binding force on the nuclear states against non-nuclear states, and nuclear dismantlement, were the very two conditions for the extension of the NPT. At the NPT review conference in 2000, the parties reached an agreement on 13 implementing measures that specified these two conditions for the dismantlement of nuclear weapons. However, nuclear states including the U.S. have not yet implemented the agreements. Given those facts, it may be more righteous to say that the inequity of the NPT was not caused by its own contents, but by the non-compliance of the nuclear states including the U.S.

We can perceive this two-faced attitude of the U.S. and other nuclear states also in the plans for controlling the uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing business what became controversial issue at the NPT review conference in May of 2005. IAEA suggested that enrichment and reprocessing facilities should be under the multinational control system, and the establishment or operation of those facilities should be suspended for the following 5 years (the so-called 'Elbaradei Initiative'). This suggestion was based on the idea that the control of the enrichment and reprocessing is the very key to prevent nuclear proliferation.

Despite such suggestions, the U.S. and other nuclear states insisted that enrichment or reprocessing should be prohibited to most of the parties except to the nuclear and a few other states. In addition, some states as the U.S. and France also make it clear that they oppose to the multinational control system and the plan of the 5-year suspension. Japan also decided to oppose to it, considering it has already been reprocessing huge amounts of plutonium and considering Japan now possesses the Rokkashomura nuclear reprocessing facilities, which is scheduled to operate from December this year. Although it is a non-nuclear state, Japan reprocesses under the U.S.'s implicit permission a large amount of the plutonium and enriches uranium from within Japan and other countries including U.K. and France. That means that Japan is enjoying a privilege among the non-nuclear states.

Inconsistent attitude of the U.S. runs counter to the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmaments

It is agreed on by almost all the states that the most serious obstacle to the international nuclear non-proliferation and dismantlement is the U.S. This criticism from the international society has been rising since the inauguration of the Bush administration. First of all, the Bush administration declared its nuclear first use strategy officially, and withdrew NSA (negative security assurances), which means "not attack or threat to attack by nuclear weapons", by including the use of nuclear weapon in the preemptive attack strategy. This policy is one that breaks down one of the important pillars that buttresses the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Moreover, the U.S. is modernizing its pre-existing nuclear power to destroy the basement facilities of enemy states such as North Korea. In addition to this, the U.S. has launched the development of new types of nuclear weapons. After the inauguration of the Bush administration, some of the budget has been continuously allocated for the development of new types of nuclear weapons. Such a U.S. Policy is bringing about the domino effect that causes vertical proliferation among the nuclear states, meaning the enhancement of the nuclear power within nuclear states by investing in R & D. April 2005, the president of Russia Putin professed in a meeting with high-level officials it is developing new types of nuclear weapon systems. In October, the Independent, one of Britain's newspapers, shocked people all over the world, reporting that Prime Minister Blare had ordered to develop new types of nuclear weapons.

From non-proliferation to disarmament

The US inconsistent attitude toward its nuclear policy becomes more visible when we look into the differences of policies applied to Israel, Pakistan, India and to North Korea and Iran. North Korea and Iran are the states that are 'suspected' to develop nuclear weapons while Israel, Pakistan and India are mavericks of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, armed with nuclear weapons. However, the U.S. has never been stingy in supporting them.

Israel is assumed to possess 100~300 nuclear warheads, which ranks the 6th largest following the 5 nuclear states. Supported by the U.S. it maintains its position as a military power in the Middle East. President Bush also considers Pakistan, which actively cooperated with the U.S in the attack against Afghanistan, as a friendly nation or an ally.

India, which occupies an important position for the US policy to keep China in check, even agreed with the U.S. on the mutual cooperation for the use of nuclear energy. Such a double standard applied by the U.S. not only erodes the trust for the US nuclear policy. The main problem lies in the fact that it is now shaking the roots of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Today's most controversial issue regarding the nuclear non-proliferation problem is of course, the

development of nuclear weapons by North Korea and Iran. However part of their behavior is largely attributable to the inequity of the NPT-regime and the inconsistent attitude of nuclear states.

That is why the criticism by former president Carter and the arguments of the New Agenda Coalition are now drawing attention. The New Agenda Coalition proposes the 'suspension of the vertical proliferation efforts by the nuclear states', the accession of 'Israel, India, and Pakistan's to the NPT', together with 'the reduction of the nuclear weapons by nuclear states'.

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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