

⇒ 研究ノート ⇐

## Where Will the 6-Nation Talks Go? : Predicting the Outcome of North Korean Nuclear Crisis

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### I. Introduction

There is still a Cold War framework in East Asia even after the Soviet Union collapsed. China and North Korea remain as communists' countries, while South Korea, Japan and the United States remain as the West. Under such a situation, another North Korea's nuclear crisis has occurred. Why did North Korea bring up another nuclear crisis? Will there be policy gains for North Korea again? I believe there will be a promising outcome for North Korea again. In this project, I would like to explain why, by means of the win set method.

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North Korea's nuclear crisis seemed to be solved in 1994 when the Clinton Administration agreed to supply North Korea with light-water reactor. However, due to famines and a few coup attempts, desperate North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Il, has carried forward its nuclear program, breaking such an agreement with the international community.

### II. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita depicts in his book, *Principles of International Politics*, manipulating perceptions for policy gains of North Korea, South Korea, and the United States over the nuclear crisis in 1994. His win set figure shows perceptions of each player and the agreeable range to three parties. The vertical axis measures North Korea's international legitimacy, and the horizontal axis measures the degree of progress of North Korean nuclear weapons program. International legitimacy means that "how well the international community

treats a nation by extending diplomatic recognition, foreign aid, and the like.” The horizontal axis “involves how North Korea and the international community each view North Korea’s nuclear policy.” (BdM, 2003) The figure also indicates that misunderstanding of opponents’ perceptions could lead to political losses. The bargaining power of a weak state can be increased by the appearance, bluff, or reality of misconduct. In fact, through the negotiations, North Korea’s international legitimacy increased more than the U.S. old status quo, and North Korea gained an enormous amount of foreign aids as well as its nuclear capability.

Now, before analyzing the current win set, let’s take a look at the current situation of each party, so that we can anticipate their acceptable ranges. The claims of each nation before the 6-nation talks are as follows.

United States:

- North Korea must give up its nuclear development program before any economic assistance.

- No intension for a written U.S. assurance to resume crude oil supplies and promise nonaggression

- No economic assistance proposal at the 6-nation talks

China:

- North Korea’s abolition of nuclear development

- North Korea’s security should be assured.

Russia:

- North Korea’s abolition of nuclear development

- North Korea’s regime should be assured in a written form in the 6-party talks.

Japan:

- North Korea’s complete abolition of nuclear development before negotiation

- North Korea’s abolition of ballistic missiles, bio/chemical weapons

- Solving kidnapping problem

- Energy support

- Some form of security assurance

South Korea:

- North Korea’s complete abolition of nuclear development before negotiation

- Draw concession through political & economic talks

North Korea:

- Mutual nonaggression treaty with US
- Normalization with both US and Japan
- Energy supply (crude oil & light water reactor)

### III. Location of each party

Next, let's consider the locations of each party in Figure 1. The United States would be located at a point where North Korea's low international legitimacy and no nuclear program, as indicated. Japan would be very close to the United States: no nuclear program in the Korean Peninsula and low legitimacy. Japan, however, cannot act as aggressively toward North Korea as the United States can, so it is located slightly above the United States. Japan has no effective method to prevent or intercept North Korea's nuclear/bio-chemical/ballistic missile attacks. South Korea is located above the U.S. and Japan's points because it has the Sunshine Policy toward North Korea. Once war breaks out, South Korea would have enormous casualties; thus, it is more careful than its allies. As for China, it wants to increase its influence over the Korean Peninsula, although it would not agree with North Korean possession of nuclear weapons. Thus, China would highly support North Korea's international legitimacy. Russia does not appear too interested in this region. However, it wants to increase its influence in this region, so Russia needs to be as supportive to North Korea as China is. As a result, all these countries line up for no nuclear development. Lastly, North Korea is located far right since North Korea alleged its possession of nuclear weapons. Thus, its international legitimacy is low.

The size of the circles shows how flexible/rigid their policies are. The larger the circle is, the more flexible their policies are. The United States would have a small circle because 1) it was betrayed by North Korea regarding the 1994 agreement; 2) it now knows that it had misperception about North Korea's intension of nuclear development during the 1994 talks; and 3) the Bush Administration is significantly influenced by neo-conservative politicians. Japan would also have a small circle especially due to the unsolved kidnapping problem. The government is trying to pass economic sanction law by the next Diet session, targeting North Korea. On the other hand, South Korea has more lenient policy toward North Korea due to its Sunshine Policy. Thus, it would have a larger circle than the United States and Japan do.

As for China and Russia, they would have similar circles. China would give a helping hand to North Korea, so that its circle would be quite large, as depicted in the Figure. So is Russia's. Russia would like to be as influential in this region as possible. As for North Korea, its actions are harder to anticipate than the other 6 nations. Kim Jong-Il may decide to isolate the country

again or decide to interact with the neighbor countries.

There are two possible cases for North Korea: 1) North Korea has a rigid policy; and 2) North Korea has a flexible policy, in terms of giving up nuclear weapons program. For the first case, the circle is too small to reach or intersect with the circles of other parties. This suggests that the talks will end without reaching an accord, and thus that the United States might attack North Korea in the worst scenario, as the United States did to Afghanistan and Iraq. Unlike the Afghan and Iraqi region, however, there are U.S. allies in East Asia that may be targeted by North Korea if war breaks out. In addition, there are two regional powers, China and Russia, which would most likely oppose the U.S. attack against North Korea. Thus, it would not be too realistic to believe that the United States would attack it at this point. Since North Korea is eager to enhance international legitimacy, maintain its regime, and then gain economic assistance from foreign countries, it will probably have to have a circle that is large enough to intersect the other circles.

The second case is that North Korea has a large circle. As Figure 1 shows, the shaded area is the range of the new status quo after negotiation. North Korea would again manage to improve its international standing although it would lose its nuclear capability. As the Figure indicates, China and Russia help to bring North Korea's international legitimacy. Without their participation in the talks, North Korea would have to endure lower legitimacy and lower nuclear capability

#### IV. Conclusion

North Korea would have to shift its nuclear weapons program significantly toward left in the Figure in order to obtain promising policy outcome since the United States would have a small circle. North Korea is likely to have a large circle. North Korea desperately needs energy supplies and economic assistance to maintain its regime. This is the very reason that Kim Jong-Il officially admitted and apologized for the abduction issue to Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro during the Japan-North Korea talk in Pyongyang in 2002. North Korea would most likely concede and gain such rewards.

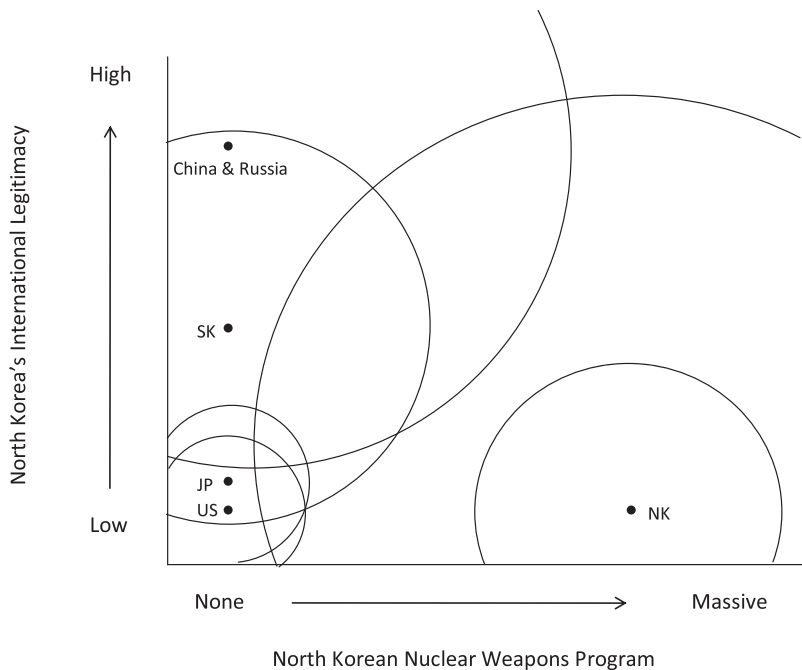
Russia and China can be very generous to North Korea. However, if their circles are too large, the United States and Japan would not have to concede and then would stick to their large preference area. In order for China and Russia to be influential, their circles need to go through the U.S.-Japan overlapped area. Therefore, China's and Russia's curves would go through Japanese and US overlapped area, bringing up the agreeable range.

North Korea would get security assurance as well as economic assistance, since all the

neighbor nations want to keep the status quo. In case that Japan refuses to give North Korea foreign aid until the abduction issue is solved, there may be some complication. Japan also needs to increase its security from nuclear weapons, so it would put more importance on the nuclear issue than the abduction issue, which would lead Japan to drop the abduction issue from the 6-party talks' subject.

This case involves many aspects of future international politics: the multi-polarized system (gradual power transition from the United States to China), a negotiation-oriented method, and emerging new alliance. After the success of the 6-party talks, China would gain most among all of the participants, by increasing influence over the East Asian region. This may be China's major step toward the regional super power, surpassing Japan. South Korea totally cooperates with China, while it has recently kept some distance from the United States. It may be possible for China, North and South Korea to form alliance in the future. Japan would have to reconsider its alliance partner. It would either stick to the U.S.-Japan alliance probably with an addition of India as a new ally, or would abandon the U.S.-Japan alliance and then join the China-Korea alliance.

Figure 1. Manipulating Perceptions for Policy Gains



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