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## Last Call for the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula *How to Tackle North Korea's Nuclear Threat*

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to discuss recent developments tied to North Korea's nuclear programme and assess future scenarios for East Asian security. Following the 6 January nuclear test, Pyongyang proved it had reinforced its nuclear arsenal, making its next moves highly unpredictable. Given the failure of past UN Security Council resolutions to resolve North Korea's nuclear issue, the basic premise of this analysis is that only a reinstatement of the Six Party Talks would allow for an effective non-proliferation regime in the country and in turn support a gradual restoration of regional security to the area. Among the root causes of past failures, the inability of the Six Parties to speak with one voice on the issue of normalisation of relations with DPRK has been important. Recent developments and heightened threat perceptions have now created a different situation, one needing a different strategy. This should be able to combine the influence of the group itself with single bilateral talks among its members, pursuing a progressive package of incentives to denuclearise North Korea instead of simply resorting to sanction the regime.

*North Korea | East Asia | Nuclear weapons | Non-proliferation | Arms control*

keywords

# Last Call for the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula

## How to Tackle North Korea's Nuclear Threat

by Beatrice Valentina Ortalizio\*

### Introduction

On 6 January 2016 the international community was presented with evidence of North Korea's fourth nuclear test.<sup>1</sup> An issue that had been at the margins of the international debate since 2013 suddenly became a global headline again. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) had already described itself as a "nuclear weapons state both in name and reality."<sup>2</sup> Experts warned that by 2020 the country could have anywhere between 20 and 100 nuclear warheads capable of targeting all of East Asia and even the United States.<sup>3</sup> A Security Council meeting was called in order to deal with the event and on 2 March member states agreed to inspect all planes and ships carrying North Korean imports/exports and stop selling aviation fuel to the country.<sup>4</sup> While on the one hand, the resolution is aimed at curtailing Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, on the other one it actually bans the country from exporting most goods and natural resources, thereby contributing to the spreading of famine and poverty among the population.

<sup>1</sup> Greg Botelho and Euan McKirdy, "U.N. poised to act against North Korea after latest nuclear test", in *CNN*, 7 January 2016, <http://cnn.it/1OLEUBx>.

<sup>2</sup> AFP, "North Korea: We don't want Iran-style deal – we're already a nuclear power", in *The Telegraph*, 21 July 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/11752621/North-Korea-We-dont-want-Iran-style-deal-were-already-a-nuclear-power.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Carlin and Robert Jervis, "Nuclear North Korea: How Will It Behave?", in *North Korea's Nuclear Futures Series*, October 2015, <http://38north.org/2015/10/nukefuture102115>.

<sup>4</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2270 (2016), 2 March 2016, [http://undocs.org/S/Res/2270\(2016\)](http://undocs.org/S/Res/2270(2016)); Richard Roth, Holly Yan and Ralph Ellis, "U.N. Security Council approves tough sanctions on North Korea", in *CNN*, 3 March 2016, <http://cnn.it/1pnG0s2>.

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The nuclear test outraged the international community that is now called to give a concrete response to the threat to peace and security posed by such developments. However, history has proven that complex sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council are not sufficient to achieve the denuclearisation of the peninsula. Present circumstances are the result of a series of miscalculations that world leaders have undertaken since the Korean War. Policy approaches toward North Korea have changed over time, particularly following the election of a new president in the United States and the end of Kim Jong-il's reign. After an initial phase of cooperation among US, Russia, China, Japan, North Korea and South Korea, the group has however failed to secure the disarmament of the peninsula.

### 1. Brief history of North Korea's nuclear ambitions

North Korea ratified the UN Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1985. The treaty recognised five states as nuclear-weapons states: United States, Russia, China, France and United Kingdom (also the five permanent members of the UN Security Council). Later, India and Pakistan openly tested and declared that they possessed nuclear weapons, while Israel has always had a policy of ambiguity regarding its nuclear programme.

In 1993 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) first accused the DPRK of violating the NPT.<sup>5</sup> The claim led Pyongyang to threaten to withdraw from the treaty, but North Korea ultimately granted access to US inspectors. The inspections took place in 1999, when the US agreed to provide international aid in exchange for examining the underground facilities, suspected to be hiding nuclear weapons. During a visit to the suspected nuclear site in May 1999, US inspectors found no evidence of any nuclear activity. North Korea also agreed to stop testing long-range missiles, while US President Bill Clinton agreed to ease economic sanctions against Pyongyang.

US-North Korea talks deteriorated in January 2002 when US President George W. Bush labelled North Korea, Iraq and Iran the "axis of evil." Bush accused the countries of posing "a grave and growing danger," "by seeking weapons of mass destruction."<sup>6</sup> His administration later revealed that North Korea had secretly admitted to operating a nuclear weapons programme, but Pyongyang never confirmed this version of facts. In December 2002, North Korea requested the IAEA to remove monitoring equipment from its nuclear facilities and expelled the inspectors. Even if the ratification of the NPT was never really implemented in DPRK, in January 2003 the state announced its full withdrawal from the treaty. The decision made it clear that the country actually was developing nuclear weapons

<sup>5</sup> For more information see Arms Control Association, *Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy*, updated March 2016, <http://www.armscontrol.org/node/2597>.

<sup>6</sup> The White House, *President Delivers State of the Union Address*, 29 January 2002, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.

and the international community became alerted to the concrete threat of a nuclear disaster in East Asia.

In August 2003 the United States, Russia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and North Korea met in Beijing for the first round of what later became known as the Six Party Talks (SPT). The committee established "a multilateral mechanism for co-operation and co-ordination in dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue."<sup>7</sup> With the aim of enhancing security and peace on the Korean peninsula, the process involved the main regional and global powers, all of which felt threatened by the risk of a nuclear disaster. In February 2004, during a second meeting of the SPT, North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear programme in exchange for aid, the easing of international sanctions and the removal of the country from the US's list of state sponsors of terrorism. The US, on the other hand, wanted DPRK to disclose all nuclear activities and allow inspection. The talks continued in 2005, when Pyongyang insisted on a bilateral non-aggression pact with the US before considering the dismantling of its nuclear programme. The Bush administration stubbornly insisted on the need to dismantle the programme before any further concessions, including economic assistance would be provided.

After the fourth round of Six Power Talks, the DPRK agreed to sign a Joint Statement of Principle, the first international agreement among the six parties for a denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. Signed on 19 September 2005, the purpose of the Joint Statement was that of setting the stage for a pact of non-belligerence between the parties. The United States had to affirm that it had no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula and that it did not intend to attack the DPRK; the ROK reaffirmed its commitment not to receive or deploy nuclear weapons; and finally North Korea declared itself "committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and returning" to the NPT and to the IAEA safeguards.<sup>8</sup> However, the document did not produce any stable results. Instead, the DPRK, which in February 2005 had already claimed to be a nuclear-armed state, went ahead and conducted its first nuclear test on 9 October 2006.<sup>9</sup> Following the test, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1718 which imposed a series of economic and commercial sanctions on Pyongyang, insisting that it "return immediately to the Six Party Talks without precondition."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Chung-in Moon, "The Six Party Talks and Implications for Peninsular and Regional Peace and Security", in Rüdiger Frank and John Swenson-Wright (eds.), *Korea and East Asia. The Stony Road to Collective Security*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, p. 218. See also Chung-in Moon, *The Six Party Talks and Implications for Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone*, paper presented at the East Asia Nuclear Security Workshop, Tokyo, 11 November 2011, <http://nautilus.org/?p=237>.

<sup>8</sup> US Department of State, *Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks*, Beijing, 19 September 2005, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> During this occasion, DPRK successfully tested a nuclear weapon in Hwaderi near Kilju city. South Korean administration confirmed this version, registering an artificial earthquake and later revealing radioactive debris in the region of the test.

<sup>10</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1718 (2006), 14 October 2006, [http://undocs.org/S/Res/1718\(2006\)](http://undocs.org/S/Res/1718(2006)). The sanctions included a ban on imports and exports of battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships,

On February 2007, the DPRK returned to the negotiation table and signed an action plan, the Initial Actions of the Implementation of the Joint Statement, under which it received a 400 million dollar aid package. While the 2005 Statement of Principles only produced general guidelines for denuclearisation, the 2007 agreement provided a specific three-phase strategy that included initial actions, disablement and dismantlement. Thanks to the involvement of the SPT, the DPRK allowed inspectors back into the country and announced the dismantling of its nuclear programme by the end of 2007, while agreeing to allow US technical experts to take part in the process.

However, during a further meeting negotiations broke down over North Korea's refusal to allow international inspectors access to a suspected nuclear site that had not yet been disabled yet. In May 2009, the international community's concerns proved to be correct when Pyongyang announced it conducted a second nuclear test, followed by a 4.7 magnitude earthquake in the Korean peninsula.

As a result a new Security Council resolution was approved,<sup>11</sup> preventing the DPRK from acquiring any services from UN member states and agencies, extending the arms embargo and outlawing any financial assistance to North Korea.

Pyongyang reacted furiously, reactivating its Yongbyon nuclear plant to extract plutonium. At the same time, the regime announced its intention to become a full nuclear state, developing a uranium enrichment programme. Expelling US and IAEA inspectors, North Korea declared further SPT to be useless.

In the spring of 2010, South Korea's naval warship *Cheonan* was destroyed by an explosion, killing 46 crewmembers. The DPRK was widely accused for the attack, but Pyongyang has denied any involvement. Moreover, in November 2010, following the annual joint US-Republic of Korea military exercise *Hoguk*, the DPRK attacked the ROK's Yeonpyeong island, killing two South Korean soldiers and injuring seventeen others. According to the information released on a later date, Pyongyang considered the exercise a preparation for a combined armed attack on the North. The UN declared the episode to be one of the most serious incidents since the end of Korean War back in the 1950s. Relations between North Korea and the international community have never been so hostile, and worsened further when, in December 2011, leader Kim Jong-il died and was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong-un.

When in February 2013 the new government conducted a third underground nuclear test, the time for talks seemed to be definitely over. The DPRK declared

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missiles or missile systems and any related materials, including spare parts and any other items identified by the sanctions committee. According to the resolution, UN members were also banned from exporting luxury goods to North Korea and any shipments going to the area could have been subjected to inspection.

<sup>11</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1874 (2009), 12 June 2009, [http://undocs.org/S/Res/1874\(2009\)](http://undocs.org/S/Res/1874(2009)).

that due to the “hostile” US policy toward North Korea, there will no longer exist the Six-Party Talks and the 19 September joint statement.<sup>12</sup> The DPRK stressed that it would not return to the SPT under UN sanctions, but, according to some, it was unrealistic for the DPRK to demand that sanctions under UNSCR 1874 be lifted before it would return to the SPT.<sup>13</sup> Carrying out its third nuclear test, North Korea wanted to prove Kim Jong-un’s political status and legitimise his succession. US president Barack Obama responded to the move by calling it a “highly provocative act”<sup>14</sup> that “undermined stability in Asia and failed to strengthen North Korea’s own security.”<sup>15</sup>

In May 2015 an official in Kim Jong-un’s government declared that the country has the missile capability to strike the US and would do so if it “forced their hand.”<sup>16</sup> The statement was also followed by an underwater test of a ballistic missile launched from a submarine.

## 2. A world full of actors

In January 2016 the international community suddenly awoke to the explosion of the fourth nuclear experiment, bringing attention back to the issue of North Korea’s nuclear programme.<sup>17</sup> One of the difficulties of addressing the issue relies on the multiplicity of international actors involved. Because of its particular geography, a Korean nuclear threat is capable of undermining the stability of a large area and the security of those territories is one of the priorities for the international community. However, because of the numerous states concerned, it is extremely hard to cope with different needs and fears.

As some scholars argue, “Japan is probably the country most threatened by North Korea’s nuclear programme among the countries involved in the Six Party Talks. Many believe that if North Korea were to use a nuclear weapon, Japan would be

<sup>12</sup> “Korean Peninsula’s Denuclearization Becomes Impossible”, in *Korea News Service*, 25 January 2013, <http://www.kcna.us/2013/01/25/news-16>.

<sup>13</sup> Tae-Hwan Kwak, “The Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks”, in Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo (eds.), *North Korea and Security Cooperation in Northeast Asia*, Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2014, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> The White House, *Statement by the President on North Korean Announcement of Nuclear Test*, 12 February 2013, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/statement-president-north-korean-announcement-nuclear-test>.

<sup>15</sup> Tae-Hwan Kwak, “The Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks”, cit., p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> See the interview with Park Yong Chol, deputy director of the DPRK Institute for Research into National Reunification: Will Ripley and Tim Schwarz, “Exclusive: North Korea Would Use Nukes If ‘Forced,’ Official Says”, in *CNN*, 7 May 2015, <http://cnn.it/1F767Kf>.

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, after the test DPRK’s leader also called for a further expansion of the size and power of the country’s nuclear arsenal. See Shane Smith, “North Korea’s Evolving Nuclear Strategy”, in *North Korea’s Nuclear Futures Series*, August 2015, p. 16-18, <http://38north.org/2015/08/nukefuture082415>.

the most likely target.”<sup>18</sup> Japan’s distance from North Korea would perfectly allow an easy rocket launch, not too far from the “evil” US, without compromising the air safety of the Korean peninsula.

South Korea, on the other hand, knows perfectly well that it would not likely be the first target of a nuclear attack, because any nuclear bomb exploded on its territory would have terrible consequences in the Northern areas too. However, after the attacks on *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeonpyeong island, the military threat posed by Pyongyang is still shaping the life and the political decisions of its neighbouring society.

Russia, even if present in the Six Party Talks, has always had a limited role in East Asian security. In this region, Moscow’s attention has always been more focused on the rapidly expanding Sino-Russian economic interdependence and on China’s growing influence in the Russian Far East. Moreover, after the Ukrainian crisis and the growing role of NATO in Central Asia, the North Korean issue seems to not represent a priority for the Russian international agenda.

Since 2010, China has become a key player in security affairs and it is constantly seeking a political standing in regional affairs commensurate with its growing economic weight. No matter its relevance from an economic perspective, China’s role in the North Korean issue has always been slightly ambiguous. Many Chinese policy-makers do not believe that North Korean nuclear programme would imply a direct challenge to China.<sup>19</sup> Beijing’s policy has always been more concerned about the possibility of a regime collapse, which would essentially led to an increase in tensions on the peninsula and to a massive flood of refugees across its border. Moreover, a breakdown in Pyongyang would probably result in South Korea absorbing DPRK and this event would eventually cause a permanent presence of US troops, currently stationed in South Korea, on the Chinese border too. Beijing had always suggested it fears this possibility, which would prevent China from having a close ally in the Korean Peninsula and extending US geopolitical influence closer to its borders.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, one of the original purposes since the establishment of the Six Party Talks was to work together to contain and transform North Korea, but those talks have already been interrupted for a number of years.

<sup>18</sup> Hitoshi Tanaka and Adam P. Liff, “East Asia and Its Evolving Security Architecture”, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Olser Hampson and Pamela Aall (eds.), *Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World*, Washington, U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2011, p. 423.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 422.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

### 3. A new security plan for the Korean peninsula

On 16 September 2015, US Secretary of State John Kerry warned the Security Council about the ineffectiveness of UN sanctions against North Korea.<sup>21</sup> Even if the country must not be allowed to become a nuclear weapons state, it is not through sanctions nor UNSC resolutions that this result can be achieved. The latest developments have proved this theory to be correct. An embargo on weapons or luxury goods does not affect DPRK decision-making, not least since it has proven to have the means to resist so far even without foreign aid and trade.

One of the possible scenarios is “to let North Korea go nuclear,” since many believe that it would require more time to emerge as a fully-fledged nuclear power,<sup>22</sup> but recent developments proved this theory to be wrong. The IAEA still needs to confirm if the latest test was a hydrogen bomb or not, but it is commonly recognised that the DPRK today has a nuclear enrichment facility composed of 2,000 centrifuges.<sup>23</sup> The H-bomb has never been tested in military operations and its reactions and consequence are still widely unknown. Accepting North Korea as a nuclear power would not only mean allowing its further development, but also concentrating world attention on the consequences of one of those attacks rather than prevent them. Recent events demonstrate that the DPRK has nuclear weapons and it may be willing to use them. Full acknowledgment of North Korea’s nuclear status would not have any benefits for the global community if it does not provide solutions to the challenge of proliferation. The focus should rather be on preventing use of nuclear weapons and provide valid solutions for East Asian security.

Another possible scenario could be armed intervention by the international community. Moon identifies three possible military options.<sup>24</sup> The first proposes a pre-emptive surgical strike in Yongbyon, where most of the nuclear enrichment facilities are. The second involves a combination of a surgical strike and pre-emptive all-out attack on the territory. The third possibility consists of a sequence of surgical attacks, retaliation by the DPRK and counter-attack. Regardless of the types of option, the operation is likely to result in a massive failure because of the lack of knowledge of both the territory and the actual capabilities of the enemy, which could completely floor the troops. It would be extremely hard to plan an attack because of the very little information available on the country and on the

<sup>21</sup> US Department of State, *Press Availability with South African Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane*, Washington, 16 September 2015, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/09/246978.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Chung-in Moon, “The Six Party Talks and Implications for Peninsular and Regional Peace and Security”, cit., p. 219.

<sup>23</sup> Joel S. Wit and Sun Young Ahn, “North Korea’s Nuclear Futures: Technology and Strategy”, in *North Korea’s Nuclear Futures Series*, February 2015, p. 17, <http://38north.org/2015/02/nukefuture022615>.

<sup>24</sup> Chung-in Moon and Jong-Yun Bae, “The Bush Doctrine and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis”, in *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2003), p. 9-45; Chung-in Moon, “The Six Party Talks and Implications for Peninsular and Regional Peace and Security”, cit., p. 220.



military capabilities the North Korean armed forces could employ. No matter how backward and ill equipped the DPRK military is, Kim Jong-un's country is still considered the least known regime in the world. Moreover, South Korea and the US cannot effectively win a war without the support of neighbouring countries, especially China and Russia. For the aforementioned reasons, neither Moscow nor Beijing want to be involved in a war against a country that is not a direct threat to them – and that is an ally against the US.

As a result, among the three possible scenarios the resumption of the Six Party Talks appears to be the best option left for the international community. Previous negotiations showed how punitive measures and international sanctions are not an effective option anymore, because the DPRK is somehow self-sufficient – although at the expenses of the living standards of its population. In a sense, North Korean society does not have everything it needs, but the regime is not interested in what the country lacks. The government is willing to let people die from starvation if it can save financial resources to strengthen the arms industry. This concept is hard to grasp, largely because it does not apply to Western democracies, but it is not new in the history of military regimes.

What the SPT should develop now is a new approach based on incentives. Sanctions and punishments have not hastened a change in Pyongyang, but the DPRK may still be swayed by increases in international aid. UNSC sanctions blocking trade, port access and weapon deliveries for Pyongyang have not produced decisive results, but famine in the country is a cruel reality which even the North Korean regime has to deal with.

The Clinton administration was the first and only one to take the incentives option into consideration. Its cooperative strategy was based on a bilateral approach that promised international food aid in exchange for gradual denuclearisation. This collaborative stance failed because it remained only bilateral and it was not shared with the other parties of the SPT. Moreover, all previous progress has been turned back by George W. Bush's approach based on a hard line that viewed the Geneva Agreed Framework as an act of appeasement that rewarded North Korea's bad behaviour. A deeply rooted distrust of North Korea, which was widely shared among key decision makers in the Bush administration, blocked the chances to succeed even for the previous established talks.<sup>25</sup> The Obama administration, on the other hand, did not discuss a specific bilateral agreement with the North Korean government, if not in the perimeter of the SPT process, and made relatively little effort on this issue.

The call now is for a renewed approach, a method that would establish a new framework for the SPT, combined with bilateral talks among all members of the committee. The purpose of this action is to bring North Korea back to the

<sup>25</sup> Chung-in Moon, "The Six Party Talks and Implications for Peninsular and Regional Peace and Security", cit., p. 222.

negotiating table in order to avoid a nuclear disaster. The new SPT framework may be organised according to the following principles:

- US, Russia, China, Japan and South Korea should agree a common position towards Pyongyang;
- bilateral talks should be established between the DPRK and each single country of the committee;
- China should have a greater mediating role among the SPT countries;
- the negotiations should address counter-proliferation first and denuclearisation later;
- the overall approach should be based on gradual incentives for Pyongyang, rather than sanctions.

The first point would see the establishment of bilateral talks among each of the five member states with Pyongyang. US, Russia, China, South Korea and Japan should all work for the resuming of the committee, based on a policy of bilateral diplomacy toward DPRK, which would later merge into a combined action of all five states.

The countries should all agree on a common action plan, making a concerted effort to ensure that the obstacles discussed earlier do not continue to frustrate the progresses.<sup>26</sup> Under these terms, China is called to be the main mediator of this process, because of its historic alliance with the Communist regime established by Kim Jong-il. In this sense, it would be necessary for Beijing to give up on its traditionally ambiguous role, and start speaking more frankly with the DPRK about the future of East Asian security.

Although the United States is certainly concerned about North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, many – particularly in Japan – fear that the US main priority has shifted from denuclearisation to counter-proliferation.<sup>27</sup> When addressing the fourth point, world powers have to submissively admit that the DPRK has achieved nuclear status since 2009. According to this given situation, the states involved should define a reliable negotiation plan that would put at the first place the security of the East Asian area. The denuclearisation of Korean peninsula is not a feasible result in the short term, but it is still possible to start with a step-by-step modality to achieve it in the long term. Counter-proliferation should be the first stage. The international community cannot simply accept the presence of thermonuclear weapons in the hands of Kim Jong-un's regime. Only a preventive suspension of new nuclear weapons development can lead toward the denuclearisation of the North Korean peninsula.

The proposed strategy is a classic diplomatic approach of sticks and carrots. Pyongyang is still sensitive when it comes to international aid and, if sanctions do not work in the way the Security Council hoped for, it is now time for a new strategy. The international community is called to support this process. Since

<sup>26</sup> Hitoshi Tanaka and Adam P. Liff, "East Asia and Its Evolving Security Architecture", cit., p. 433.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 423.

North Korean civilians have been dying, and continue to die from starvation, it is not acceptable to simply turn one's back on the issue. Food aid, such as rice, dried meat and drinkable water are the essential prerequisites to invite Pyongyang to the negotiating table. This offer may install an adequate system of SPT checks and balances. Each shipment of aid should correspond to the DPRK's actions, gradually reducing activity at nuclear facilities and accepting UN inspectors. After food aid, the international community could gradually start a medical assistance programme, providing at least first aid medicine to the area.

In order to present a powerful voice, it would be important to coordinate the actions and the measures to be undertaken. However, cooperative efforts are not enough to succeed. Only through mutual cooperation and bilateral agreements, would the SPT be an efficient tool to achieve a gradual denuclearisation of the area.

The North Korean nuclear threat is only a piece of the dramatic reality of nuclear weapons currently threatening global stability. However, it is probably the most urgent case to address because it is seriously undermining peace and security in a vast geographical area with more than 1.5 billion people. No matter how arduous historical events have been, there is no need today for a stubborn stance on precarious diplomatic positions. The international community is called to speak up with a single voice, not underestimating the concrete nuclear threat, but providing a different strategy in order to pursue feasible results.

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