

The Prospects of N. Korean Nuclear Issues after 2.13 Agreement

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1. Introduction

A series of US NK Talks (June, 1993), 3 Party Talks among NK US China (April 2003), and 6 Party Talks among US, China, Japan, Russia, NK, and SK (August, 2003) has been held in order to promote Nuclear non Proliferation in North Korea.

As a result of the fifth 6 Party Talks on Feb. 13, 2007 at the 3rd level meetings, the Agreement has been reached, and multi party Talks have turned out to be the key to a successful solution of the problem. The official title of the Agreement reached on Feb 13, 2007, is "Initial Actions for the Implementation of the September 19th Joint Statement."

Therefore, it is imperative that we scrutinize the content of the September 19th statement. The Joint Statement of September 19th, 2005, contains the following 6 items [1]:

- 1) The six parties unanimously reaffirmed that the goal of the six party talks is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.
- 2) The six parties undertook, in their relations, to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recognized norms of international relations.
- 3) The six parties undertook to promote economic cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and investment, bilaterally and/or multilaterally.
- 4) Committed to joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in northeast Asia.
- 5) The six parties agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the aforementioned consensus in a phased manner in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action."
- 6) The six parties agreed to hold the fifth round of the six party talks in Beijing in early November 2005 at a date to be determined through consultations.

Concerning actions, it is the Agreement of Feb 13th, 2007 that includes the initial Actions to implement the 9.19 Joint Statement. The major part of the Agreement is schematically shown in Fig. 1.

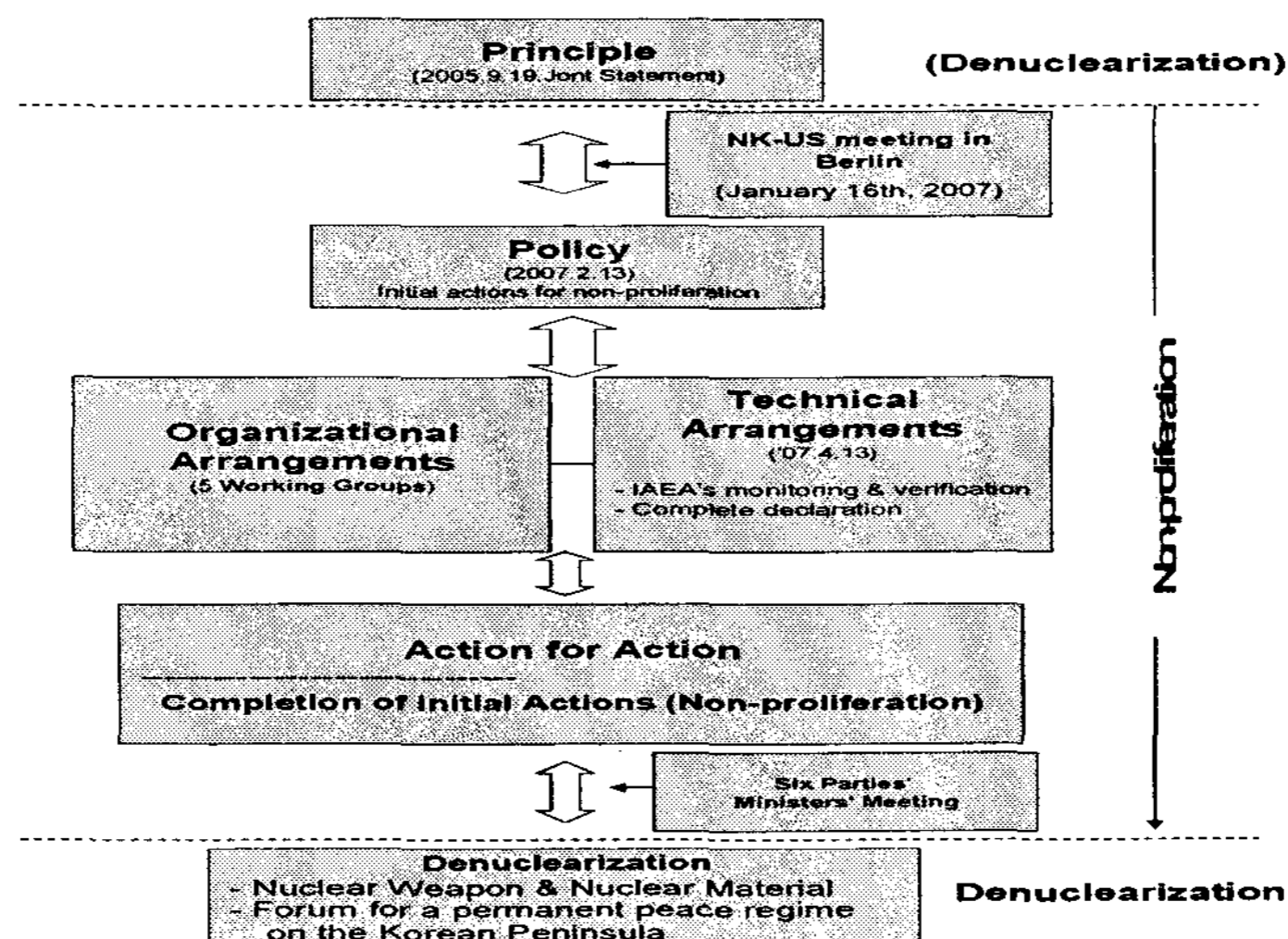


Fig. 1. Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement

2. The Prospects of North Korean Nuclear Issues

As the above schematized chart indicates, the Agreement of Feb. 13, 2007 seems far less sufficient than what has been pursued in the Joint Statement of September 19, 2007 [2]. For that reason, there have been much debate and heated controversy on the issue.

Nonetheless, the Agreement itself should be considered a positive signal, even if it is not completely satisfactory, given that the present world is nothing but anarchic.

Nuclear issues go well beyond any particular country or state, which means that it is important to approach the nuclear issues from a more realistic and practical perspectives. In that sense, it is worth noting that the US. has recently changed its attitude towards North Korea so that the US. would prefer to halt the non proliferation of nuclear program at any cost.

The contradicting evaluations about the Feb. 13th Agreement originate from the lack of unanimous consent on how to handle nuclear weapons and materials. In other words, even though the Feb. 13th Agreement is the initial implementation of the principle of non proliferation of Korea suggested in September 19th Joint Statement, it is still highly arguable that there is no comment about the disposal of nuclear materials and weapons.

3. Conclusion

Consequently, it is of our greatest concern over how the denuclearization of the Korean peninsular would take its course at the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of those six countries after the 2.13 Agreement. Furthermore, it would be extremely intriguing to find out how the working groups on Korea Denuclearization and on the normalization of the US NK diplomatic relation take their stands.

Once such issues are resolved, the actual action plans are expected to get activated at the next stage. In such a case, the following two scenarios in the matter of NK's disposal of nuclear programs can be anticipated: ① If and When NK accedes to NTP agreed on the September 19th Joint Statement. ② The US recognizes NK as a Nuclear Weapon State, although the U.S. normalizes its diplomatic relationship with NK to curb the nuclear transfer to other countries.

The first scenario follows a realistic approach that emphasizes national security which considers that nuclear proliferation should be controlled from the supply side.

In the near future, the following points will be examined: whether NK will actually agree on the denuclearization, i.e. the disposal of nuclear program or maintenance of such program. If they decide to quit nuclear weapons development, we will examine which model/procedure of nuclear disposal previously discussed will be more appropriate.

Following the second scenario, if North Korea insists on the status of Nuclear Weapon State, could the realization of their insistence be possible? This paper, on the basis of the above mentioned factors, discusses the policy implication about how to establish South Korean government's nuclear programs and their implementation.

REFERENCES

[1] Joint Statement of September 19, 2005

[2] Initial Actions for the Implementation of the September 19th Joint Statement, 2007