



Achieving a New Structure of Peace on the Korean Peninsula: An Atlantic Council Working Group Report

Editor's Note: In April 2007, a distinguished bipartisan working group of U.S. policy experts, former military officials, and retired diplomats, organized by the Atlantic Council of the United States, issued a report and recommendations on achieving a "comprehensive settlement" in Korea. Entitled "A Framework for Peace and Security in Korea and Northeast Asia," the report's recommendations on "peace arrangements" for the Korean Peninsula seem particularly timely in light of the impending North-South summit and recent progress in the Six-Party Talks.

Rather than focusing on a single "peace regime," declaration, or treaty to transform the political and diplomatic structure in Korea, the working group called for "parallel negotiations" to achieve a series of agreements on political, security and economic issues related to the nuclear negotiation. In the working group's view, this approach will provide the U.S. with greater diplomatic leverage for achieving its strategic policy goals of denuclearizing North Korea and establishing long-term peace and security in Northeast Asia.

Ambassador James Goodby and General Jack Merritt co-chaired the Atlantic Council working group. Donald Gross served as project director. The full report and a list of working group members can be found at http://www.acus.org/docs/070413-North_Korea_Working_Group_Report.pdf.

Recommendations of the Working Group

The working group recommends that the United States take the following steps:

- Express a strong U.S. commitment to achieve a comprehensive settlement in Korea both to facilitate the success of the denuclearization talks and to resolve other critical security, political, and economic issues on the Korean Peninsula. Peace arrangements would take the form of a series of measures, outlined in further detail below, which includes a Denuclearization Agreement, a Four-Party Agreement that replaces the 1953 Armistice, a U.S.-North Korea agreement for normalizing relations, a trilateral U.S.-South Korea-North Korea agreement on military measures, and an agreement establishing a multilateral organization for security and cooperation in Northeast Asia that could grow out of the current six-party arrangement.
- Proceed reciprocally and step-by-step in a Denuclearization Agreement toward the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, including the removal of spent nuclear fuel, the destruction of existing bomb and warhead stockpiles, and the

implementation of a full protocol for verification and inspection to ensure ongoing compliance.

- Pursue a four-party agreement among South Korea, North Korea, China, and the U.S. to replace the 1953 Armistice with a new overall political and legal structure for long-term peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Among other measures, this agreement would provide for a formal cessation of hostilities in Korea, recognize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Koreas, extend U.S. and Chinese security guarantees to North and South Korea, and affirm the goal of eventually achieving Korean national reunification. This agreement should be endorsed by a resolution of the UN Security Council.
- Negotiate a bilateral agreement with North Korea – in close coordination with South Korea – to settle outstanding political and legal issues, normalize diplomatic relations, and provide U.S. assistance to foster economic development and economic reform in North Korea. The bilateral agreement would address the steps to facilitate a change in existing U.S. laws regulations, and policies that inhibit normal U.S. relations with North Korea, as described in the companion volume to this report, "*U.S.-North Korea Relations: An Analytic Compendium of U.S. Policies, Laws and Regulations.*" (Rather than negotiating a single agreement, the U.S. and North Korea might instead negotiate several agreements that, taken together, adjust and normalize the overall bilateral relationship).
- Negotiate a trilateral agreement among the United States, South Korea, and North Korea to implement military confidence-building measures as well as to adjust deployments and force levels on the Korean Peninsula. In these talks, the U.S. and South Korea would first agree between themselves and then negotiate implementation of military measures with North Korea.
- Aggressively explore establishing a new multilateral organization for security and cooperation in Northeast Asia both to manage North Korea-related issues and to help realize U.S. strategic policy goals for the region as a whole. Modeled on OSCE and other existing multilateral security frameworks, the new multilateral organization's agenda will focus on security, economic and humanitarian issues.
- Convene a series of meetings of foreign ministers of the countries negotiating a comprehensive settlement – South Korea, North Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the U.S. – for the purpose of overseeing these negotiations and forming the nucleus of a new multilateral organization for regional security and cooperation. An initial meeting of foreign ministers, agreed in the six-party "joint agreement" of Feb. 13, 2007, should take up these issues.

- Immediately propose *interim* military confidence-building measures, from among those contemplated for a trilateral agreement, to foster the political confidence among parties negotiating a comprehensive settlement.
- Seek bipartisan consensus in the Congress on U.S. diplomatic objectives regarding Korea. While leadership on North Korea issues remains firmly with the administration, bipartisan Congressional support will be critical for realizing a comprehensive settlement and funding for any arrangements agreed with the North.
- Synchronize U.S. strategy more effectively with South Korea. Clearly, a strong U.S. effort to achieve a comprehensive settlement on the Korean Peninsula, in and of itself, would significantly improve U.S. relations with South Korea. Nevertheless, because a U.S. leadership role in pursuing a comprehensive settlement would thrust the U.S. to the forefront in determining a historical political outcome in Korea, Washington should exert all possible efforts to coordinate negotiating positions with Seoul and strengthen cooperation through the Strategic Consultation for Allied Partnership (SCAP), a new set of diplomatic meetings agreed upon in January 2006.

Members of the Working Group

The members of the working group believe that the recommendations stated in this report promote overall U.S. interests. While there may be parts of the report with which some participants are not in full agreement, each participant believes that the report, as a whole, provides a sound basis for future actions by the U.S. government. The views of the working group members do not represent the official position of any institution.

For more information, please see http://www.acus.org/docs/070413-North_Korea_Working_Group_Report.pdf.