

## What Do They Really Want?: Obama's North Korea Conundrum

We remained deadlocked over a particular clause in the document. Our counterparts across the table demanded language that we thought to be unacceptable. Yet, in an effort to move the already faltering negotiations forward, we agreed to send the language back to Washington overnight for approval. This was the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks in September 2005. The talks had been suspended previously for well over a year, and the Bush administration, in its second term, was reengaging in a way that the first term had not. At issue was the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) demand that we put into writing a statement of U.S. non-hostile intent. The clause in question stipulated that the United States "has no intention to attack or invade the DPRK with nuclear or conventional weapons."<sup>1</sup> To my surprise, the language came back the next morning having been approved in Washington.

When we came back to the negotiation session at the Diaoyutai State Guest House with the accepted language, the Russians asked the Chinese chair for a recess from the deputy head of delegations drafting session. During the recess, they held a bilateral meeting with the North Koreans. In this meeting, they told the North, according to my Russian counterpart on their delegation, "The Americans are serious. You see this [clause]? This is called a negative security assurance. We tried to get this from them throughout the Cold War and were unsuccessful."

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It seemed to me at the time that the DPRK finally received the security guarantee and the end to “hostile” U.S. policy that they had long sought. Yet, after holding this out as a precondition for progress, in subsequent rounds of negotiations they proceeded to brush this off as a meaningless commitment, a piece of paper that guaranteed nothing for North Korean security. Today, the clause remains buried in the 2005 Joint Statement bereft of any significance, despite all of the intent to make it the definitive statement of U.S. non-hostile intent.

Negotiating with North Korea is all about contradictions. What can be important one day can become unimportant the next. A position they hold stubbornly for weeks and months can suddenly disappear. But these contradictions tell us a lot about core goals that may lie beneath Pyongyang’s rhetoric and the provocative actions which culminated in a second nuclear test on May 25, 2009. Understanding these core goals, moreover, offers insights into how spectacularly unsuccessful North Korean leader Kim Jong-il has been as he prepares to step down.

What do the North Koreans ultimately want with their recent spate of provocative behavior? What is often stated through the mouths of their foreign ministry officials is only a part of the Pyongyang leadership’s broader goals. The judgments that follow are also informed by the experiences and “gut instincts” of those who have negotiated with the regime over the past sixteen years.

### **What Do They Really Want?**

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The latest statements out of North Korea appear to be telegraphing their next set of provocative moves. They have threatened everything from further ballistic missile tests, another nuclear test, withdrawal from the 1953 armistice that ended Korean War hostilities (there is no peace treaty), and cyber warfare. They have demanded that the United Nations “apologize” for its punitive statement against the April 2009 missile launch. They have threatened to retaliate with “nuclear war” against any sanctions implemented from UN Security Council resolution 1874, adopted in response to their May 2009 nuclear test. They refuse to return to Six-Party Talks. And in an unprecedented act, the North Koreans had sentenced two U.S. journalists, Euna Lee and Laura Ling, to twelve years of hard labor and reform. Had these two women be sent to labor camps in North Korea, they would have been the first civilian U.S. nationals ever to suffer such a fate.<sup>2</sup>

In the past, this litany of DPRK threatening actions was always understood as a tactic to get the attention of the United States and to draw Washington into bilateral talks.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this was often the argument that the Bush administration had to contend with whenever North Korea undertook provocative actions. Even after unprecedented provocations, such as the ones in October 2002 when

North Korea revealed its uranium-based nuclear program (in violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework) or the October 2006 nuclear test, pundits would “blame” these actions on the Bush administration’s reluctance to engage in high-level bilateral negotiations with Pyongyang. Terms such as “a bombshell that’s actually an olive branch” were how people rationalized what would otherwise be considered exceptionally brash and rogue actions in international relations.<sup>4</sup> North Korea’s threatening actions were interpreted as cries for help and attention. Pyongyang sought a grand bargain with the United States, the armchair psychologists of North Korean behavior argued. And quite frankly, a very unhelpful dynamic developed in which the causes for North Korean bad behavior were thereafter pinned on U.S. diplomatic inaction rather than on North Korean intentions.

President Barack Obama managed to correct this vicious cycle, at least for now. He came into office with none of the allergies that the Bush administration seemed to have had to its predecessor’s agreements, and signaled his interest in high-level negotiations with Pyongyang by appointing Ambassador Stephen Bosworth as a special envoy, who immediately traveled to North Korea. He made clear to the other members of the Six-Party Talks—China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea—his commitment to the multilateral negotiating forum and to moving forward with the September 2005 Joint Statement, a watershed roadmap agreement that first, in exchange for a freeze of North Korea’s nuclear programs, promised energy and economic assistance, and then, in exchange for North Korea denuclearization, pledged large-scale assistance, diplomatic normalization with Japan and the United States, a peace treaty ending the Korean war, and the creation of a new Northeast Asian Peace and Security Regime.<sup>5</sup> The hope was that the new administration’s willingness to do Six-Party Talks, augmented by higher-level bilateral talks with Pyongyang, would accelerate the denuclearization process, which was not possible even in the forward-leaning second Bush administration because of its inherent aversion to meeting the North Koreans at levels higher than former Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill.

The plan seemed like a good one and was widely accepted in the region, with some mild anxiety in Japan, until Pyongyang responded with a ballistic missile test on April 5, 2009, its second nuclear test on May 25, 2009, and a series of ballistic missile tests on July 4, 2009. These latest North Korean provocations can no longer be rationalized as an attempt to engage the United States. Many of the proponents of this view were at a loss to explain the second nuclear test as

**North Korea’s latest provocations can no longer be rationalized as an attempt to engage the U.S.**

they no longer could reflexively blame it all on the Bush administration. At the June 11, 2009 hearing on North Korea before the Senate Foreign Relations committee, the normally taciturn and eminently reasonable Richard Lugar (R-IN) responded in a stern tone to one of the panelists who trotted out the same tired arguments blaming U.S. inaction and lack of negotiations for North Korea's provocations:

I will say respectfully, professor, of course we want negotiations. The whole point we're trying to make is the North Koreans have deliberately walked away from it, have shot missiles across Japan, have done a nuclear test. Of course [the U.S. government] want[s] negotiation, but until we really do something as an international community, I don't see much movement in that respect.<sup>6</sup>

Lugar is right that negotiations have been proffered to Kim Jong-il. Yet, North Korea continues to threaten and refuses to come to the table. So what do they really want?

### **They Want Nuclear Weapons . . . For Keeps**

In social science, graduate students learn about a term called "Ockham's razor." Proposed by William of Ockham, a Franciscan living at the turn of the fourteenth century, the principle is "*Pluralitas non est ponenda sine neccesitate*," which translates to "entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily." This has become adopted in social science theorizing to mean that the best theories or explanations are often the simplest ones. Hence, the simplest explanation for North Korean actions is the desire to improve their nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Tests of the types conducted on April 5, May 25, and July 4—whether they succeeded or failed—are opportunities to demonstrate, learn from, and improve upon their nuclear weapons and short- and long-range delivery capabilities. The April 5 missile test, for example, believed to be a test of the long-range Taepodong-2 intercontinental ballistic missile with ranges potentially as far as Alaska and Hawaii, was more successful than the July 4, 2006 ballistic missile test, which failed in its ascent stage. The 2009 test successfully deployed its first stage, which was to fly over the Japanese archipelago, and deployed the second stage in the Pacific Ocean, though it failed to put a satellite into orbit.

The ensuing July 4, 2009 test of seven ballistic missiles about 300 miles into the Sea of Japan appeared to have improved the accuracy of their short- and medium-range arsenal. Similarly, the May 25 nuclear test registered seismic magnitude wave activity of 4.7, indicative of a 3–8 kiloton weapon, which is larger than the "fizzle" test of October 2006, which was less than one kiloton (0.5–0.8 kilotons), according to scientific analysis in the public domain.<sup>7</sup> Rather than "upping the ante" with the United States or seeking attention, as many of

the post-test analyses argue,<sup>8</sup> Pyongyang seeks to build a better nuclear weapon and ballistic missile, and there is no substitute for learning than doing.<sup>9</sup>

Kim Jong-il may want nuclear weapons, but is that all that he wants? After all, you can't eat plutonium. This logic leads many to argue that Pyongyang seeks nuclear weapons only for lack of a better deal out there offering them food, energy, and a new relationship with the international community. The problem with this logic is that Kim Jong-il has been offered such a deal twice before. The 1994 Agreed Framework negotiated by the Clinton administration initially froze North Korea's plutonium production facilities at Yongbyon in return for U.S.-supplied heavy fuel oil, but the agreement also laid out a design for normal relations with the United States as well as economic and energy assistance in exchange for denuclearization.<sup>10</sup> The 2005 Six-Party Joint Statement also offered all of these benefits and more in return for the same denuclearization. It is no wonder then that members of the Obama administration have stated their disinterest in buying the same horse three times.

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### **They Want a U.S.–India Deal**

I believe that North Korea wants a deal ultimately, but not one that requires full denuclearization on their part. In later rounds of Six-Party Talks, North Korean negotiators used to demand that the Bush administration deliver the light water reactors for civilian nuclear energy promised by the 1994 agreement negotiated by the Clinton administration. They asserted in formal sessions that this was the quid pro quo for giving up the small experimental reactor at Yongbyon, ostensibly for nuclear energy, but from which they produced plutonium for nuclear weapons. Yet, in the course of sometimes heated talks, the North Koreans would assert to Hill, the lead U.S. negotiator, that the United States should simply accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state, much as they have done for India and Pakistan. When they were told that this was not likely (nor should they want to be treated like Islamabad), their negotiators countered that the talks should not be about the one-sided denuclearization of North Korea. This was tantamount to “stripping us naked” without any corresponding actions. Instead, the talks should be about mutual nuclear arms reductions between two established nuclear powers: “you know, like you used to have with the Soviet Union during the Cold War.”

Doves have always maintained that North Korea is willing to trade their nuclear weapons for security. Hawks say that the North equates nuclear weapons with ultimate security. But the record of negotiations implies that Kim Jong-il's

true goal may indeed be a deal with the West, but not the deal believed by the doves. Pyongyang wants the United States to accept it as a nuclear power.<sup>11</sup> As their candid comments and actions demonstrate, they may be aiming to turn the Six-Party Talks into a bilateral U.S.–DPRK nuclear arms negotiation, in which the North is accorded a nuclear status. The ideal outcome of this negotiation, in the North’s view, is not actually a reduction of U.S. nuclear weapons, particularly since the United States has no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula, but rather a situation similar to the arrangement that the United States negotiated with India. That is, an agreement in which North Korea is willing to come back under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and monitoring, but is also assured of a civilian nuclear energy element (i.e., Pyongyang’s long-held desire for light water reactor technology and a national energy grid capable of supporting these reactors).

Most important, they would want the control of a portion of their nuclear energy and weapons programs outside of international inspection, which in their eyes could then serve as their nuclear deterrent. This was, of course, the most controversial element of the U.S.–India civil nuclear energy agreement, which left a portion of India’s reactors (8 of 22) outside international inspection. Pyongyang would certainly want a great deal in return even for these “concessions,” including energy assistance, economic development assistance, normalized relations with the United States, and a peace treaty ending the Korean War.

**They want the rules of the NPT regime essentially rewritten for them, as they were for India.**

But on the nuclear side of the equation, they want the rules of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime essentially rewritten for them as they were for India, who never signed the NPT.

The North Koreans have never tabled an India-type agreement as a formal negotiating position at the talks or in bilateral dialogue with the United States. Despite their relative isolation from the world, perhaps they understand that such a position is a bridge too far. And frankly, they would have been laughed out of the room, even by the Chinese, if they formally proposed it. But the North Koreans are acutely aware that the ground constantly shifts in a protracted negotiation, and what seemed implausible at one point, could become plausible later. After all, they witnessed the Bush administration move from a position of non-dialogue during the first term to allowing Hill to bilaterally negotiate in Pyongyang at the end of its second term. The North’s incessant rejection of the talks as one-sided denuclearization, their continuing references to their de facto

nuclear weapons status, and their demand that they be treated like India and Pakistan offer insights into their goals.

### **They Want the House of Kim Jong-il . . . Forever**

But that is not all that North Korea wants: Kim Jong-il's stroke last year and his reported pancreatic cancer has led many experts to see Pyongyang's recent nuclear and missile tests as Kim Jong-il's way to kill two birds with one stone. The tests establish the North's nuclear status and security from external threats such that the ailing Kim Jong-il can hand power over to one of his sons without worries. The tests also serve to secure the Dear Leader's place in Korean history, having bequeathed to the nation the ultimate weapon against all future enemies in fulfillment of *kangsong ta'e'guk* ("rich nation, strong army"). After all, even dictators need to polish their legacies.

Yet, on closer analysis, Kim Jong-il's recent provocations do not appear to represent the final jewels in the crown he shall hand to his son. Indeed, the nuclear tests and ballistic missile barrages may represent desperate attempts to achieve the bare minimum of more ambitious goals, such as an India-type deal, rather than the mere demonstration of nuclear capabilities. If a civilian nuclear deal—including acceptance as a nuclear state, the promise of civilian nuclear energy, and exclusive control of a portion of its programs outside of international rules—is Kim Jong-il's ultimate goal, he has fallen far short of that. What the world sees as Kim Jong-il's successful second nuclear test (and the international community's failure to stop him) may actually be the last gasps of a dying regime, bankrupt materially and ideologically, trying to secure the first step in a longer-term and distant goal of becoming the next India. Like the poor student who rushes to finish the exam before time runs out, Kim Jong-il races against the geriatric table to achieve the minimum for his son, rather than the maximum for his legacy.

Apologists for North Korea often argue that the regime's nuclear programs derive from insecurity. The small, isolated state had few friends during the Cold War and even fewer after East Germany and the Soviet Union collapsed (Kim Il-sung was good friends with Erich Honecker, often vacationing together). When China normalized relations with South Korea in 1992, the relationship between Pyongyang and Beijing, which had been "sealed in blood" through the Korean War, was never the same thereafter. Pyongyang validated the apologists' theories by saying that they desired an end to the hostile policy of the United States, and they pointed to comments, such as Bush's "axis of evil" and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's reference to it as an "outpost of tyranny," as evidence of this hostile policy. While virtually no one in the United States, or the world for that matter, believes that any U.S. president is itching to attack North Korea

**The North wants a special type of “regime security assurance” from the U.S.**

(not even Bush), apologists argue that it is natural for a small paranoid state to have such concerns.

There is some truth to this claim, and for this reason the United States, on countless occasions, has stated that it does not have a hostile policy toward North Korea. Table 1 offers the first compilation of all statements of U.S. non-hostile intent to North Korea dating back to the George H.W. Bush

administration because it is essential for analysts and officials to recognize how often the United States has definitively made this statement. U.S. negotiator Hill was fond of saying that the United States did not have a hostile policy toward North Korea, but that it did have a hostile policy toward its nuclear weapons. The North’s response, once it received such assurances even at the presidential level, was that words were not enough.

So, in September 2005, the North Koreans won the negative security assurance that they had long sought: a written statement in full view of China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea that the “The United States affirmed that it has no nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula and has no intention to attack or invade the DPRK with nuclear or conventional weapons.”<sup>12</sup> This assurance went further in text than the statement of non-hostile intent provided by the Clinton administration in October 2000, which read, “As a crucial first step, the two sides stated that neither government would have hostile intent toward the other and confirmed the commitment of both governments to make every effort in the future to build a new relationship free from past enmity.”<sup>13</sup>

Yet, the North dismissed this as a piece of paper with no meaning. Instead, the North wants a special type of “regime security assurance” from the United States, which is more problematic for the United States to give. The desire for this very personal type of security assurance stems from the fundamental reform dilemma that the DPRK faces. It needs to open up to survive, but the process of opening up could lead to cracks in the hermetically-sealed country, precipitating the regime’s demise.<sup>14</sup> Thus, what Pyongyang wants is not just a negative security assurance from the United States against nuclear attack, but a positive security assurance that it will not allow the House of Kim Jong-il—that is, Kim Jong-il or his son, Kim Jong-un, who is set to succeed him—to collapse as Pyongyang partially denuclearizes and goes through a modest reform process to absorb the economic assistance and opening to the outside world that would come with a grand deal.

This type of positive regime assurance must be an even more prescient concern for the North Korean leadership given Kim Jong-il’s deteriorating health condition. The likely leadership transition to his inexperienced son would be an



inherently unstable process in the best of times. The fluidity created by this process combined with the imperative for reform probably makes regime assurance a top-line preoccupation.

So, if escaping the horns of the reform dilemma has been one of Kim Jong-il's goals, here too he has failed miserably. He leaves his son with a regime that has neither reformed economically nor gained an ounce of international goodwill to help it out of its current state. Moreover, the sentencing of two U.S. journalists, Lee and Ling, to twelve years of hard labor in a prison camp have put North Korea's human rights abuses squarely in the sights of many Americans who might otherwise care less about a nuclear-toting country on the distant side of the globe with a quirky dictator. Many news reports saw this ordeal as an attempt by Pyongyang to link the fate of the two journalists with the nuclear issue. Governor Bill Richardson (D-NM), a frequent visitor to North Korea, described the two women as "chips" in a "high stakes nuclear poker game."

While the arrests and the nuclear test occurred within the same time frame, it is actually unlikely they are linked. In the former case, the two journalists, of their own admission, went into North Korean territory from the Chinese border illegally to report on the trafficking of women who try to escape the country for a better life in China. They were captured by North Korean authorities and detained in Pyongyang until former president Bill Clinton's trip in August 2009 to declare their release. The harsh sentence against the two Americans in this regard was meant as a measure to defend against yet another vulnerability of the regime—the slow but steady trickle of refugees seeking to vote with their feet by leaving the country for China and South Korea—as it goes through its shaky power transition. Yet, even here, Kim Jong-il and his son are caught in a vicious circle. They are compelled to make an example of these two Americans in order to deter further attempts to document or encourage a growing refugee problem on the Sino-North Korean border. This is important to secure the regime in an inherently unstable leadership transition, but it also removes any shred of empathy in the international system for the North's reform dilemma.

### **Obama's Conundrum**

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Where does this leave the Obama administration? By signaling a willingness to negotiate with the North during his campaign and again early in his administration through envoys Bosworth and Department of State's special envoy for the Six-Party Talks Ambassador Sung Kim, Obama has positioned the United States well both for a negotiation track and the sanctions track. The emphasis now is on implementing the sanctions in Security Council resolution 1874, passed in the aftermath of the May 2009 nuclear test, and institutionalizing a

**Obama has positioned the U.S. well both for a negotiation and sanctions track.**

multilateral counterproliferation regime against North Korean weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

Many initially criticized the resolution as lacking teeth because it did not authorize the use of force in its provisions for inspection of suspect North Korean cargo. But after the DPRK ship, the *Kang Nam*, reversed course because the government of Burma/Myanmar stated publicly its intention

to comply with the provisions of resolution 1874 and inspect the cargo, critics began to appreciate the potential for building an effective counterproliferation mechanism. Ironically, the resolution effectively institutionalizes, in a UN context, the proliferation security initiative of the Bush administration, making it both more effective and more inclusive.

One of the challenges the Obama administration will face is keeping the Chinese honest in complying with the sanctions in resolution 1874 even after the North Koreans show interest in returning to the table for negotiations. Removing sanctions against DPRK proliferation should not be a quid pro quo for resuming multilateral or bilateral negotiations, tempting as this might be for Beijing to advocate.

The other negotiation trap the administration must avoid is the dilemma of “relative reasonableness.” What this means is that every agreement in the Six-Party process is negotiated with painstaking care, in which parties hammer out specific quid pro quos, the synchronization of steps, timelines, rewards, and penalties. Yet, sooner or later, Pyongyang plays brinksmanship and demands more than it was promised or does less than it should. While everyone accepts the DPRK as being completely unreasonable, they also realize that a failure of the agreement could mean the failure of the Six-Party Talks and precipitate another crisis. To avoid this, the parties end up pressing the United States, knowing full well that the DPRK is at fault, traversing the bounds of fairness and good faith. But at the same time, they are certain that the only chance of progress can be had from U.S. reasonableness in the face of DPRK unreasonableness. The result is that any additional U.S. flexibility is widely perceived favorably in the region as evidence of U.S. leadership, but is viewed negatively in Washington as some combination of desperation and weakness.

The talks, if ever resumed, will never achieve what either Washington or Pyongyang wants—given what they desire and what we can’t give—but they serve as a way to manage the problem, contain the proliferation threat, and run out the clock on the regime. There will definitely be a mess in the end when the Kim Jong-il family falls from grace. But planning today for that eventuality with

Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo could help tidy things up. The administration would do well to consider a set of separate dialogues, either bilaterally or multilaterally among China and South Korea, for that contingency. The North Korean leader's time in office is severely limited given the new revelations about his rather serious health problems, including pancreatic cancer.

While the United States and South Korea have restarted planning on how to respond to a sudden collapse scenario north of the 38th Parallel, they also need to begin a quiet discussion with China. The purpose would be to create some transparency about relative priorities and likely first actions by the three parties in response to signs of political instability in the North. Presumably, the United States would be interested in securing WMDs and materials, and South Korea would be interested in restoring domestic stability. China would be interested in securing its border against a mass influx of refugees. Coordination in advance would help to minimize misperception and miscalculation in a crisis. Koreans are suspicious about China's intentions in a North Korean collapse scenario given Beijing's investment in the North's mineral resources, but such a three-way discussion is important to ensuring China's support in any Security Council resolution that might accompany sudden change in the North.

If North Korea's objectives enumerated above are correct, then any Six-Party or bilateral negotiations, if they ever resume, will invariably reach a dead end. The United States is unlikely to offer Kim Jong-il or his son a civil nuclear deal similar to India's, and absent any real improvement in human rights, no U.S. president could possibly offer regime assurances to the butchers of Pyongyang. This pessimistic prognosis should not, however, mean that negotiation should be abandoned. If the choice is between dealing with a dictator with a runaway nuclear weapons program or one with a program capped and under international monitoring, the latter surely serves U.S. and Asian interests. The Six-Party Talks or any future derivative can still serve the purpose of freezing, disabling, and degrading North Korea's nuclear capabilities, even as the stated goal remains total denuclearization, while we await the unlikely transformation of the regime's objectives or its inevitable end.

## Notes

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1. Department of State, "Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks," Beijing, China, September 19, 2005, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm> (hereinafter 2005 Joint Statement).
2. See Jesse McKinley, "Two Paths, Same Faith for Reporters Facing Prison," *New York Times*, June 9, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/10/us/10hostages.html>.
3. See Michael Mazarr, "The Long Road to Pyongyang," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 5 (September/October 2007): 75-94; Lee V. Sigal, *Disarming Strangers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Selig S. Harrison, *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for*

- Reunification and U.S. Disengagement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Joel S. Wit, "Enhancing U.S. Engagement with North Korea," *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 53–69, [http://www.twq.com/07spring/docs/07spring\\_wit.pdf](http://www.twq.com/07spring/docs/07spring_wit.pdf); Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); John Feffer, "Responding to North Korea's Surprises," *Foreign Policy in Focus* 7, no. 14 (December 2002), <http://www.fpif.org/pdf/vol7/14ifnk.pdf>.
4. See Leon Sigal, "A Bombshell That's actually an Olive Branch," *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 2002, <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/oct/18/opinion/oe-sigal18>.
  5. See Hillary Rodham Clinton, "U.S.-Asia Relations: Indispensable to Our Future" (speech, Asia Society, New York, February 13, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/02/117333.htm>; Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Putting the Elements of Smart Power Into Practice" (speech, en route to Seoul, South Korea, February 19, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/02/119411.htm>.
  6. "North Korea: Back at the Brink?" hearing, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 11, 2009, <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/2009/hr090611p.html>. The full description is yet to be published.
  7. For seismic activity, see U.S. Geological Survey, <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/recenteqsww/Quakes/us2009hba.php>. For assessments of the October 2006 and May 2009 tests, see M.B. Kalinowski, M.B. and O. Ross, "Data Analysis and Interpretation of the North Korean Nuclear Test Explosion of 9 October 2006," *INESAP Information Bulletin*, no. 27, pp. 39–43, [http://inesap.org/sites/default/files/inesap\\_old/bulletin27/art12.htm](http://inesap.org/sites/default/files/inesap_old/bulletin27/art12.htm); Martin Kalinowski, "Second Nuclear Test Conducted by North Korea on 25 May 2009," fact sheet (Hamburg, Germany: Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Centre for Science and Peace Research [ZNF], University of Hamburg, May 25, 2009), [http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/file\\_download/177/Kalinowski.pdf](http://www.armscontrolwonk.com/file_download/177/Kalinowski.pdf).
  8. For examples of the "up the ante" argument, see John Glionna, "North Korea's Nuclear Test May be For Kim Jong-il's Legacy," *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/may/26/world/fg-north-korea-nuclear26>.
  9. It is worth noting that while the North Koreans learn from their tests, the United States learns a great deal more about the state of their programs and their level of development. See Richard Halloran, "How U.S. Exploited N. Korea Missile Tests," *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 12, 2009, <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/20090712/NEWS08/907120361/-1/NEWS08>.
  10. "Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), October 21, 2004, <http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf>.
  11. See Evans J.R. Revere, president of the Korea Society, testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 11, 2009, <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/RevereTestimony090611p.pdf>.
  12. 2005 Joint Statement, paragraph 1, clause 3.
  13. "U.S.-N. Korea Communique Calls for Permanent Peace Arrangements," U.S.-DPRK Joint Communiqué, Washington, D.C., October 12, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/2000/dprk-001012a.htm>.
  14. Victor Cha, "Korea's Place in the Axis," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May/June 2002): 79–92. The first to write on this dilemma was Byong-joon Ahn, "The Man Who Would be Kim Jong-il," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 6 (November/December 1994): 94–108.

**Table 1: Collection of All Statements of U.S. Non-hostile Intent Toward North Korea.**

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
February 27, 1989	George H.W. Bush	"I will work closely with President Roh to coordinate our efforts to draw the North toward practical, peaceful, and productive dialogue, to insure that our policies are complementary and mutually reinforcing."	Presidential address to ROK National Assembly <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/1989/02/27/world/bush-hails-seoul-for-building-ties-with-north-korea.html?pagewanted=2">http://www.nytimes.com/1989/02/27/world/bush-hails-seoul-for-building-ties-with-north-korea.html?pagewanted=2</a>
January 6, 1992	George H.W. Bush	"If North Korea fulfills its obligation and takes steps to implement the inspection agreements, then President Roh and I are prepared to forgo the Team Spirit exercise for this year."	Bush, news conference with ROK President Roh Tae-Woo <a href="http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=3819&amp;year=&amp;month">http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=3819&amp;year=&amp;month</a>
June 11, 1993	George H.W. Bush	"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have agreed to principles of: -Assurances against the threat and use of force, including nuclear weapons; -Peace and security in a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, including impartial application of full scope safeguards, mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs; and, -Support for the peaceful reunification of Korea. In this context, the two governments have agreed to continue dialogue on an equal and unprejudiced basis."	1993 U.S.-DPRK Joint Statement <a href="http://www.dprkstudies.org/documents/1993%20-%20US-DPRK%20Joint%20Statement.pdf">http://www.dprkstudies.org/documents/1993%20-%20US-DPRK%20Joint%20Statement.pdf</a>
July 10, 1993	William Clinton	"We are seeking to prevent aggression, not to initiate it. And so long as North Korea abides by the U.N. charter and international non-proliferation commitments, it has nothing to fear from America."	Presidential address to ROK National Assembly <a href="http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/w930710.htm">http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/w930710.htm</a>

Table 1 (Continued)

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
June 5, 1994	William Clinton	<i>"I approached them in the spirit of peace . . . I would like to have a relationship with North Korea . . . But we are not trying to provoke North Korea. We are only asking them to do what they have already promised to do."</i>	Clinton, CBS interview <a href="http://clinton6.nara.gov/1994/06/1994-06-05-president-in-cbs-interview-on-uss-george-washington.html">http://clinton6.nara.gov/1994/06/1994-06-05-president-in-cbs-interview-on-uss-george-washington.html</a>
June 22, 1994	William Clinton	<i>"We also always kept the door open. We always said—I always said I did not seek a confrontation; I sought to give North Korea a way to become a part of the international community. I have sought other means of personally communicating to Kim Il Sung that the desires of the United States and the interests of the United States and the policy of the United States was to pursue a nonnuclear Korean Peninsula and to give North Korea a way of moving with dignity into the international community and away from an isolated path . . ."</i>	Presidential press conference on North Korea <a href="http://www.ias.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/w940622.htm">http://www.ias.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/w940622.htm</a>
October 21, 1994	William Clinton	<i>"The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons by the U.S."</i>	1994 US–DPRK Agreed Framework <a href="http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf">http://www.kedo.org/pdfs/AgreedFramework.pdf</a>
April 17, 1996	William Clinton	<i>"The four-party talks are simply a way of providing a framework within which the South and the North can ultimately agree on the terms of peace in the same way that the armistice talks provided that framework 43 years ago. And if the United States can play a positive role in that, we want to."</i>	Clinton news conference with ROK President Kim Young-Sam <a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-1996-04-22/html/WCPD-1996-04-22-Pg665-3.htm">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-1996-04-22/html/WCPD-1996-04-22-Pg665-3.htm</a>
September 17, 1999	William Clinton	<i>"Our policy of seeking to ease tensions, prevent destabilizing developments, and explore the possibilities of a different and better relationship with North Korea, are fully in accord with the positions of our allies. So is our staunch support for the Agreed Framework, which is the linchpin of our effort to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program."</i>	Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, North Korea briefing <a href="http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/dprk/1999/990917-dprk-asia3.htm">http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/dprk/1999/990917-dprk-asia3.htm</a>

**Table 1 (Continued)**

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
October 12, 2000	William Clinton	<p><i>“Hostility between our two nations is not inevitable, nor desired by our citizens, nor in the interests of our countries . . . This is why we must seize the opportunity to take the concrete steps required to open a new and more hopeful chapter in our relations.”</i></p>	<p>Madeleine Albright, speech at dinner with North Korean official Gen. Jo Myong-Rok at U.S. Department of State  <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/12/world/albright-says-she-will-visit-north-korea-soon.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/12/world/albright-says-she-will-visit-north-korea-soon.html</a></p>
October 12, 2000	William Clinton	<p><i>“[T]he United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have decided to take steps to fundamentally improve their bilateral relations in the interests of enhancing peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region . . . As a crucial first step, the two sides stated that neither government would have hostile intent toward the other and confirmed the commitment of both governments to make every effort in the future to build a new relationship free from past enmity . . . In this regard, the two sides reaffirmed that their relations should be based on the principles of respect for each other’s sovereignty and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, and noted the value of regular diplomatic contacts, bilaterally and in broader fora.”</i></p>	<p>2000 U.S. –DPRK Joint Communiqué  <a href="http://legacy.armscontrol.org/Events/communique.asp">http://legacy.armscontrol.org/Events/communique.asp</a></p>
February 20, 2002	George W. Bush	<p><i>“We’re a peaceful people. We have no intention of invading North Korea. South Korea has no intention of attacking North Korea. Nor does America. We’re purely defensive, and the reason we have to be defensive is because there is a threatening position of the DMZ, so we long for peace. It’s in our nation’s interest that we achieve peace on the peninsula.”</i></p>	<p>Bush, joint news conference with ROK President Kim Dae-Jung at ROK Blue House  <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/20/world/bush-says-the-us-plans-no-attack-on-north-korea.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/20/world/bush-says-the-us-plans-no-attack-on-north-korea.html</a></p>

Table I (Continued)

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
April 30, 2002	George W. Bush	"[The] president made it clear that we were willing to talk to them any time, any place, and without any preset agenda."	Secretary of State Colin Powell, Senate Appropriations Committee hearing <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/01/world/north-korea-is-prepared-to-negotiate-us-reports.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/01/world/north-korea-is-prepared-to-negotiate-us-reports.html</a>
October 22, 2002	George W. Bush	"The United States hopes for a different future with North Korea. As I made clear during my visit to South Korea in February, <i>the United States has no intention of invading North Korea</i> . This remains the case today."	Presidential remarks in meeting with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/22/world/bush-sees-korean-nuclear-effort-as-different-from-iraq-s.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/22/world/bush-sees-korean-nuclear-effort-as-different-from-iraq-s.html</a>
October 27, 2002	George W. Bush	" <i>We have no intention of invading North Korea or taking hostile action against North Korea.</i> "	Powell, news conference at APEC in Los Cabos <a href="http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/americas/10/26/nkorea.statement/index.html">http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/americas/10/26/nkorea.statement/index.html</a>
February 7, 2003	George W. Bush	" <i>[We] have no intention of attacking North Korea as a nation . . . . We're prepared to talk to them.</i> "	Powell, Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/07/world/threats-responses-nuclear-standoff-bush-administration-defends-its-approach.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/07/world/threats-responses-nuclear-standoff-bush-administration-defends-its-approach.html</a>
October 20, 2003	George W. Bush	"[What] [the President] himself has said, which is that <i>there is no intention to invade North Korea</i> . But the President is very committed to the six-party talks, believes that it is the forum in which we are most likely to get a satisfactory resolution of the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula. And so he reiterated the importance of moving those talks forward . . . . We are not going to go in, all guns blazing, say take it or leave it, this is it."	National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, press briefing <a href="http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/10/20031020-1.html">http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/10/20031020-1.html</a>



**Table I (Continued)**

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
October 27, 2003	George W. Bush	<i>"The president has made it clear that he has no intention of invading North Korea or attacking North Korea."</i>	Powell, Meet the Press <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/27/world/north-korean-defector-plans-talks-in-us.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/27/world/north-korean-defector-plans-talks-in-us.html</a>
February 11, 2005	George W. Bush	<i>"The North Koreans have been told by the president of the United States that the United States has no intention of attacking or invading North Korea."</i>	Rice, news conference in Luxembourg <a href="http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,146950,00.html">http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,146950,00.html</a>
July 12, 2005	George W. Bush	<i>"Now that they've decided to return to the talks, let's just remember that we have stated that this is a sovereign state, that we have no intention to attack it . . . ."</i>	Rice, SBS interview in Seoul <a href="http://seoul.usembassy.gov/12_july_06.html">http://seoul.usembassy.gov/12_july_06.html</a>
September 15, 2005	George W. Bush	<i>"The United States affirmed that it has no nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula and has no intention to attack or invade the DPRK with nuclear or conventional weapons . . . ."</i>	2005 Six-Party Talks Joint Statement <a href="http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm">http://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/c15455.htm</a>
October 10, 2006	George W. Bush	<i>"The United States of America doesn't have any intention to attack North Korea or to invade North Korea . . . . But the United States, somehow, in a provocative way, trying to invade North Korea – it's just not the case."</i>	Rice, CNN interview with Wolf Blitzer <a href="http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/10/10/rice.korea/index.html">http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/10/10/rice.korea/index.html</a>
October 11, 2006	George W. Bush	<i>"The United States affirmed that we have no nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. We affirmed that we have no intention of attacking North Korea. The United States remains committed to diplomacy . . . . But the United States' message to North Korea and Iran and the people in both countries is that we have – we want to solve the issues peacefully."</i>	Presidential news conference <a href="http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/10/11/bush.transcript/index.html?ref=newssearch">http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/10/11/bush.transcript/index.html?ref=newssearch</a>

Table I (Continued)

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
November 18, 2006	George W. Bush	<p>“Our desire is to solve the North Korean issue peacefully. And as I’ve made clear in a speech as recently as two days ago in Singapore, that we want the North Korean leaders to hear that if it gives up its weapons – nuclear weapons ambitions, that we would be willing to enter into security arrangements with the North Koreans, as well as move forward new economic incentives for the North Korean people.”</p>	<p>Bush, meeting with ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun  <a href="http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/11/20061118-4.html">http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/11/20061118-4.html</a></p>
June 26, 2008	George W. Bush	<p>“<i>First, I’m issuing a proclamation that lifts the provisions of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to North Korea. And secondly, I am notifying Congress of my intent to rescind North Korea’s designation as a state sponsor of terror in 45 days.</i> The next 45 days will be an important period for North Korea to show its seriousness of its cooperation. We will work through the six-party talks to develop a comprehensive and rigorous verification protocol. And during this period, the United States will carefully observe North Korea’s actions – and act accordingly . . . . Multilateral diplomacy is the best way to peacefully solve the nuclear issue with North Korea. Today’s developments show that tough multilateral diplomacy can yield promising results.”</p>	<p>Presidential press conference on North Korea  <a href="http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/06/20080626-9.html">http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/06/20080626-9.html</a></p>
July 31, 2008	George W. Bush	<p>“I will do nothing to undermine the six-party structure, the credibility of the six-party structure, and our partners.”</p>	<p>Bush, roundtable interview by Foreign Print Media  <a href="http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/07/20080731-7.html">http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/07/20080731-7.html</a></p>

**Table 1 (Continued)**

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
February 15, 2009	Barack Obama	“Our position is when they move forward in presenting a verifiable and complete dismantling and denuclearization, we have a great openness to working with them . . . . It’s not only on the diplomatic front . . . . the United States [has] a willingness to help the people of North Korea, not just in narrow ways with food and fuel but with energy assistance.”	Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, en route to Asia <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/16/washington/16dipl.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/16/washington/16dipl.html</a>
April 5, 2009	Barack Obama	“The United States is fully committed to maintaining security and stability in northeast Asia and we will continue working for the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks. The Six-Party Talks provide the forum for achieving denuclearization, reducing tensions, and for resolving other issues of concern between North Korea, its four neighbors, and the United States.”	Presidential statement on North Korea launch <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Statement-by-the-President-North-Korea-launch/">http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Statement-by-the-President-North-Korea-launch/</a>
April 5, 2009	Barack Obama	“The United States and the European Union stand ready to work with others in welcoming into the international community a North Korea that abandons its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and policy of threats aimed at its neighbors and that protects the rights of its people. Such a North Korea could share in the prosperity and development that the remainder of northeast Asia has achieved in recent years.”	U.S.-European Council Joint Statement <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/United-States-European-Council-Joint-Statement-on-the-North-Korean-Launch/">http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/United-States-European-Council-Joint-Statement-on-the-North-Korean-Launch/</a>

Table 1 (Continued)

DATE	ADMINISTRATION	STATEMENT	CONTEXT
June 16, 2009	Barack Obama	<p>“So I want to be clear that there is another path available to North Korea—a path that leads to peace and economic opportunity for the people of North Korea, including full integration into the community of nations. That destination can only be reached through peaceful negotiations that achieve the full and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. That is the opportunity that exists for North Korea, and President Lee and I join with the international community in urging the North Koreans to take it . . . <i>We are more than willing to engage in negotiations to get North Korea on a path of peaceful coexistence</i> with its neighbors, and we want to encourage their prosperity.”</p>	<p>Obama, Joint Press Availability with ROK President Lee Myung-Bak <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-President-Lee-of-the-Republic-of-Korea-in-Joint-Press-Availability/">http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-President-Lee-of-the-Republic-of-Korea-in-Joint-Press-Availability/</a></p>