The Nuclear Confrontation

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Nuclear, the Chronology, Please

- North Korea joined NPT in 1985.
- Talks btw South and North resulted in 1992 Accord and Denuclearization Declaration.
- March 1993, the North announced of its withdrawal from NPT.
- Talk btw US and North resumed in June.
- October 12, 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the "Agreed Framework."

Themes in Korean Foreign Policy

- Quest for Legitimacy
- Quest for Security
- Quest of Development

Note that these apply to both North and South.
On August 28, 2003, North Korea announced at six-nation talks in Beijing that it was prepared to "declare itself formally as a nuclear weapons state."

On September 28, 2004, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su-hon told the UN General Assembly that the "hostile policy" of the United States was responsible for the nuclear standoff. At a news conference after his address, Choe said his country had converted 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods into weapons.

North Korea announced on February 10, 2005 that it had developed nuclear weapons for its self-defense, and suspended participation in the Six-party talks.

On September 19, 2005, Six-party talks reached agreement where North Korea agreed to abandon its nuclear weapons program for economic cooperation and assistance. Talk stalled on the "when" to deliver LWR.

Nuclear, Just the Facts, Please

- By October 1997, the spent fuel rods were encased in steel containers, under IAEA inspection.
- December 2002, the United States suspended fuel oil shipments.
- On January 10, 2003, North Korea withdrew from the NPT.
- By February 26, 2003, North Korea had reactivated a reactor
- On April 24, 2003, trilateral discussions btw US, China, and North Korea. US threatened sanctions, which North Korea has said would constitute a "declaration of war."
- On May 12, 2003, North Korea declared the 1992 accord with South Korea nullified.

The Highlights and More Recent Development

- NK joined NPT (1985)
- Declaration of denuclearization by NK and SK (1992) (after removal of tactical nuke of USAM in SK)
- NK's threat to w/d from NPT and the crisis that lead to Agreed Framework (1994)
- First summit meeting (Kim Dae Jung meets Kim Jong Il) (2000)
- NK's w/d from NPT and announcing its intent to develop nuclear, Six-Party talks (2003)
- NK test-fires missiles (7/4) and announced it had performed a nuclear test (10/9/2006)
- NK promises to "shut down" the Yongbyon reactor in exchange for fuel aid, with more to follow upon verification. (2/13/2007)
- North Korea announces resolution of the banking dispute regarding US$25 million in DPRK assets in Macau's Banco Delta Asia. (6/25/2007)
- North Korea announces it is shutting down the Yongbyon reactor after receiving 6,200 tons in South Korean fuel oil aid. (7/14/2007)

Rethinking the Nature of NK Nuke

- "Nuclear deterrence" (Mansourov)
  - Initiated by fear from SK and US's nuke capacity ➔ Regime survival
- A “bargaining chip”
  - The regime concerned about the econ and diplomatic isolation
  - Part of an econ opening and reform process (Segal)
  - But is in fact the only “chip” they have (Eberstadt)
- A symbolic manipulation (Park)
  - Aimed at unifying and mobilizing domestic support
Some Interpretations (of my own)

- NK cannot entirely shut off the nuke program
  - Regime survival
  - Have every incentive to bring this issue up again
- NK is trying solve its econ problems through this
- The immediate level of threat might have been exaggerated (at least to US)
  - Their “chip” is only good as long as they don’t use it
- Nobody (SK, US, JP) wants the immediate collapse of the NK regime

Dealing with NK (my own suggestions)

- “Bad politics is better than no politics”
  - “There’s no ‘evil’ in politics.” (political realism)
  - Should recognize the NK regime
- Slow but possible changes
  - Reduction in conventional arms
  - Induce economic reforms
- More “interdependency” and engagement
  - More flow of info, people, capital, and labor which will make NK more dependent on the outer world
- Make nuclear irrelevant
  - Monitor and inspect the possible sell to other countries
  - Get UN involved