

Global Net 21 Forum

Presenter

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North Korea and the Non-Proliferation Treaty Regime

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North Korea has long been a challenge to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime by pursuing nuclear weapons, withdrawing from the NPT, and twice testing nuclear device. On March 28, 2011, the East Asia Institute invited Ambassador Robert Joseph, former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security under the Bush administration. He considered some key questions related to the North Korean nuclear crisis such as why the Six-Party Talks have not worked, what lessons can be learnt from previous successful disarmament experiences such as Libya, and what the prospects for the future are.

The following is a summary of the presentation by Ambassador Joseph and the roundtable discussion with leading South Korean scholars and experts. Ambassador Joseph's remarks are his own expressed opinions and views.

Summary of the Forum

The case of Libya's decision to give up its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program in 2003 has been considered a non-proliferation success story and held up by policy experts as a model for the denuclearization of North Korea. Understanding the causes and motivations of the Libyan government in making this strategic decision is important and a closer analysis of the events at the time indicates four factors involved in Libya's decision.

Invasion of Iraq There was great fear within the Gaddafi regime that it would be the

next target of the United States if it hung onto its WMD program.

Exposure of the WMD Program In late 2003, the Libyans were caught red-handed importing uranium centrifuges from Malaysia. This public exposure by the U.S. and UK intelligence services provoked the Gaddafi regime to be more open about its WMD program

Disruption of the A.Q. Khan Network Libya's WMD program was dependent upon a single foreign network run by the Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan. Having cut off this crucial link, the Libyan WMD program was disrupted.

Reform and Opening The Gaddafi regime at the time was interested in pursuing reforms and opening, including supporting the U.S. War on Terror.

While it is true that all states have different circumstances, the lessons learned from this case can be applied to others including North Korea. These successes can be effectively applied when the failures of the past are taken into account.

Amb. Joseph stated that the Six-Party Talks have ended up in failure, but that does not mean that the framework of the Talks is at fault. Bringing together all the related countries with North Korea is the right way to approach the problem. However, it has been the policy and actions of various countries, including the United States which has resulted in North Korea expanding and enhancing its nuclear capability as opposed to giving it up. The Six-Party Talks have achieved nothing because of its repeated cycle of provocation,

negotiation, lack of verification, withdrawal, and again provocation. In fact, this cycle has worked in North Korea's favor to the extent that it views possession of nuclear weapons as a golden goose that it will not give up. Moving on from the failures of the past and applying these lessons, there are three ways to make the Six-Party Talks a success.

Resolute Approach The United States needs to be perceived as serious when negotiating in the Six-Party Talks.

Multiple Instruments of Power Skilled use of multiples instruments of state power will help apply real pressure on North Korea; this includes diplomacy, economic tools, intelligence, and military force.

The Right Strategy There is a need for a clear strategy to denuclearize North Korea, simply participating in the Six-Party Talk themselves is not a strategy.

In addition to a new approach to the Six-Party Talks, the role of China is critical for pressuring North Korea. Following North Korea's nuclear test in 2006, Beijing showed a willingness to pressure Pyongyang through supporting UN sanctions. This stands in contrast to the situation following the sinking of *Cheonan* in 2010 where China has shown little interest in pressuring the North Korean regime. Currently, there are no consequences for China if they do not pressure the North. What will be required are coordinated efforts to encourage China to back efforts to pressure North Korea. ■

About the Speaker

Amb. Robert Joseph

Robert Joseph is Senior Scholar at the National Institute for Public Policy and Professor in the Graduate Department of Defense and Strategic Studies (Missouri State University). Prior to July 2007, Ambassador Joseph served as U.S. Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, and Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Proliferation Strategy, Counterproliferation and Homeland Defense in the National Security Council. Amb. Joseph received his M.A. from the University of Chicago and Ph.D. from Columbia University. Amb. Joseph authored a book recounting and assessing some of his counterproliferation experience, *Countering WMD: The Libyan Experience* (National Institute Press, 2009).

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