



ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATION ACADEMY

Harnessing Middle Powers to Restart Multilateral Negotiations and Decrease Nuclear Tensions on the Korean Peninsula

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MEMORANDUM: HARNESSING MIDDLE POWERS TO RESTART MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND DECREASE NUCLEAR TENSIONS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Policy Memo

TO: The Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of India, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan

FROM: Maureen Ahmed, Rut Einarsdóttir, Henry Kim, Milana Ozerina

DATE: July 24, 2024

SUBJECT: Harnessing Middle Powers to Restart Multilateral Negotiations and Decrease Nuclear Tensions on the Korean Peninsula

Despite significant investments by great power countries, including the United States (U.S.), China, and Russia, to influence the security apparatus on the Korean Peninsula across the 21st century, tensions remain as high as ever. Denuclearization efforts have failed to restrain the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea's (DPRK) aspirations, as the country conducted missile tests near the border of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and fired the country's first solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missiles as recently as January 2024 [1]. And yet, negotiations since the Six Party Talks have indefinitely stalled and are unlikely to be reprioritized by great power states in the face of other global threats. At the same time, the DPRK and ROK cannot reasonably reduce tensions on their own. There is a need for others to step up, play the role of mediator, and restart talks on the peninsula.

This paper outlines why middle-power states in the Indo-Pacific region — namely Japan, India, and Pakistan — are best primed to restart multilateral negotiations and establish new grounds for dialogue that can decrease nuclear tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Instead of approaching negotiations from a zero-sum approach, which has ultimately failed through the Six Party Talks, middle powers can offer a new zone of possible agreement (ZOPA) that has the potential to be accepted by the affected parties. While Japan, India, and Pakistan have diverging approaches and relations with the ROK and DPRK (see Appendix 1), their unique relationships and comparative advantages are best suited to pick up where the Six Party Talks left off and improve upon it with an innovative approach that can eventually result in an agreement, something yet to be achieved in this context.

Defining Middle Powers in the Region

While there is no standard method that defines which states are considered middle powers, from a security perspective, a middle power country can be considered one that can play a significant role in international nuclear reduction, whether it be through its bilateral relations with global nuclear powers, its own nuclear or de-nuclear aspirations, and/or through its regional influence. Japan, India, and Pakistan can be effective and credible mediators because they are all middle power countries that not only have the aspirations to play an increasing role in shaping security across the region, but also have the capacity to do so, based on a set of key parameters: (1) diplomatic influence — the extent and standing of a state's foreign affairs; (2) military capability — conventional military strength; (3) defence networks — partnerships that act as force multipliers of

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military capability; and (4) future resources — the projected distribution of future economic, military, and demographic resources¹[2]. See Appendix 2 for a summary of how each country ranked across these indicators.

Historical Overview

The cessation of nuclear development in the DPRK remains a significant challenge, and necessitates a renewed diplomatic effort. Historically, there have been multiple negotiation initiatives in the form of bilateral talks between the U.S. and DPRK, otherwise known as inter-Korea talks, as well as multilateral approaches with regional stakeholders.

First, In October 1994, following the first DPRK nuclear crisis, the United States and DPRK signed the Agreed Framework. Under this agreement, North Korea committed to freezing its operations at the Yongbyon nuclear reactor and halting the construction of several reactors that were underway. In return, the U.S. agreed to provide two light-water reactors, work towards normalising economic and political relations, and supply 500,000 metric tonnes of heavy oil annually. However, this negotiation was broken down due to various political hurdles [3].

In addition to bilateral negotiations between the U.S. and DPRK, the Six-Party Talks, which included major regional stakeholders (DPRK, ROK, Japan, China, Russia, and the U.S.), have been the primary mechanism for multilateral negotiation. However, these talks have been stalled since December 2008 [4], underscoring the need for innovative approaches to restarting dialogue. See Appendix 3 for a detailed chronology of past talks.

Since the Six-Party Talks have yielded no solutions, the nuclear capabilities of the DPRK have experienced significant and rapid advancements, as evidenced by the DPRK conducting a sixth nuclear test and proclaiming the completion of its nuclear force in 2017. Moreover, the Yongbyon nuclear facility, which is instrumental in producing plutonium, and a centrifuge facility for the production of highly enriched uranium, both became operational. This ongoing operation underscores the regime's unwavering commitment to expanding its nuclear capabilities for its own interests.

The U.S.-DPRK bilateral summits undertaken by the U.S. Trump Administration in 2018 did not yield a lasting resolution [5]. In the same context as the negotiation efforts, the new President Yoon of ROK announced “audacious initiatives” to restart bilateral communication between the DPRK and ROK, yet all have diminished, leaving a significant void in direct engagement efforts [6].

In September 2022, the DPRK formally enacted its ‘Nuclear Forces Policy Laws’, which delineate the circumstances under which it might undertake both pre-emptive and retaliatory nuclear strikes. The discretion to initiate nuclear engagement rests solely within the jurisdiction of the DPRK's ruling regime and lowers the nuclear threshold. This offensive nuclear doctrine has precipitated apprehensions within the ROK about devising effective strategies to deter the DPRK from deploying its nuclear arsenal. Accordingly, the leaders of the ROK and the U.S. concluded ‘the Washington Declaration’, which reassures the U.S.-ROK Joint Extended Deterrence Strategy.

¹ This determination was made based on reviewing the Lowy Institute’s 2023 Asia Power Index, which scored 26 countries across the Indo-Pacific region across eight thematic measures, including the four identified by this paper. Japan and India consistently ranked high across all four indicators; while Pakistan ranked moderately across all indicators, Pakistan has been identified as a middle power that can have great influence, thanks in part to its long standing relationship with the DPRK and having its own nuclear capabilities.

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Current State of Affairs and Negotiating Positions

The DPRK

Perspective and Goals: Three major theories dominate the WMD proliferation literature, exploring motivations for developing or acquiring a WMD: national security theory, domestic actor theory, and norms theory [7].

1. **Deterrence Capabilities for National Security:** The DPRK aims to deter any military action against it by other states, leveraging its nuclear capabilities as a means to prevent regime change. Estimates show that the DPRK may now have an arsenal of 60 nuclear weapons, and it has declared that it is deploying “tactical” missiles along the Korean border, implying its intent to utilise lower-yield nuclear weapons [8].
2. **National Pride and Ideology for Domestic Audiences:** The nuclear programme is tied to a narrative of self-reliance and national pride, reinforcing the regime’s ideology.
3. **International Standing:** Possession of nuclear weapons is also seen as a means to boost its standing and prestige on the international stage.

Literature sheds light on the regime security goal of DPRK by using nuclear programmes as a means of bargaining chips [9]. The primary goal of the DPRK's leadership is the survival of its regime. It sees nuclear weapons as a guarantor against what it perceives as external threats, particularly from the USA and the ROK [10].

Regional Security Arrangements: The DPRK’s negotiating leverage is that it may use its nuclear programme as a bargaining chip in negotiations to extract economic concessions, security guarantees, and political recognition from other countries [11]. It also seeks to break out of its diplomatic isolation and improve relations with other countries, particularly China and Russia. Ultimately, the DPRK wants to see a reduction in the U.S. military presence in the region, which it views as a direct threat to its security. To that extent, the DPRK adopted a constitutional amendment to enshrine its policy on nuclear force in September 2023 and claims it successfully launched its first military spy satellite on Nov. 21, transmitting photos of the White House, the Pentagon, U.S. military bases, and "target regions" in South Korea.

The ROK

Perspective and Goals: The ROK's perspective and goals regarding North Korea's nuclear proliferation are shaped by its unique geopolitical situation and the complex history of the Korean Peninsula.

1. **Denuclearization:** The foremost goal of the ROK is the complete denuclearization of North Korea. The ROK views North Korea's nuclear programme as a direct threat to its national security and regional stability.
2. **Maintaining Peace:** The ROK seeks to avoid any military conflict with North Korea, knowing that such a conflict would be devastating for the peninsula and their economic prosperity.

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- 3. Unification:** Korea has a long history of being a unified nation with a shared language, culture, and traditions. This historical unity was disrupted only in the mid-20th century due to Cold War politics. However, it's important to note that the concept of reunification is viewed differently in the DPRK and the ROK, with varying visions of what a unified Korea would look like. In the ROK, reunification is often imagined under a democratic and capitalist system, while the DPRK's vision is tied to its socialist ideology. These differing visions, along with the substantial economic, political, and social differences between the two Koreas, complicate the prospects of reunification. The DPRK especially worries about unification by the ROK absorbing the DPRK due to the wide gap in national powers.

Regional Security Arrangements: The ROK seeks stability and peace and, as such, pursues policies aimed at reducing tensions and promoting stability in the region [12]. As an economic powerhouse, ROK's interests lie in maintaining a secure environment conducive to trade and economic development. Tensions and military conflicts are detrimental to these interests. The ROK prefers strong U.S. engagement in the region to balance threats from the DPRK and to serve as a counterbalance to China's rising influence. To ensure its own security, the ROK pursues increased military cooperation with both regional and international allies and seeks advanced defensive capabilities to protect itself from the DPRK's missile and nuclear threats. Following the DPRK satellite launch in November 2023 and previous violations of the Comprehensive Military Agreement signed between the Koreas in 2018, the President of ROK announced a partial suspension of the accord.

Japan

Japan seeks to normalise its relations with the DPRK in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. However, there are a few outstanding issues, such as the kidnappings of Japanese citizens by the DPRK in the 1970s and 1980s. So far, 17 abductees have been identified, and the DPRK returned 5 of them in 2022, although the DPRK has shown little to no further effort, and therefore Japan sees the issue as unresolved. Furthermore, Japan condemns the DPRK for not following UNSCR resolutions related to the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. In March 2022, the DPRK launched an alleged new ICBM, which is estimated to have fallen about 150 kilometres off the Japanese mainland.

Ever since the split of the peninsula following the Korean War, Japan has supported the ROK and recognised its government as the sole ruler of both Koreas, although the ROK has been reluctant to view Japan as its ally. This is partly due to Japanese imperial history and because during World War II, the Japanese rule brought many women from Korea to work as "comfort women" for Japanese soldiers, a practice not acknowledged officially by Japan until 2015. While the agreement between Japan and the ROK on the issue of comfort women seemed like a step in the right direction to fix the strained relationship between the two countries, it caused friction at the time since Prime Minister Abe contracted his affirmation on the issue only three days later [13]. However, in 2023, the ROK agreed to meet with Japan and the USA to form a trilateral military exercise plan [14].

In 2023 alone, Japan has been expanding its military connections significantly, as well as doubling its defence budget. This is one of the key reasons Japan is seen as a significant and influential middle power in the region in terms of security policy. Japan has entered into a trilateral agreement with

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ROK and the US which will play an invaluable role to coordinating and communicating the viewpoints of the ROK (and in turn, the United States) in any future negotiations with the DPRK.

India

India has repeatedly condemned DPRK nuclear tests and views its nuclear programme as a threat to regional security, especially as the DPRK continues to provide support for Pakistan's own nuclear aspirations. At the same time, India has made active efforts to engage in "dialogue diplomacy" to establish peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula while hoping to act as a bridge between the DPRK and the West [15]. For example, India is one of approximately 20 countries that have had diplomatic relations with the DPRK. The Government of India (GOI) has sustained ties with Pyongyang for 50 years, largely in part due to both countries' membership in the Non-Aligned Movement and their common views on multilateral issues. New Delhi has often come to Pyongyang's assistance in difficult times by providing humanitarian aid, including \$1 million in medical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Its consistent humanitarian aid to the DPRK demonstrates the valuable role humanitarian outreach can play in leveraging India's ability to gain the trust of the DPRK, which can help India establish itself as an effective communication mediator with the ROK.

India's relationship with the ROK has significantly expanded in recent years, especially within the realm of economic and technological cooperation. India and the ROK both seek to advance their "Special Strategic Partnership" through regular bilateral dialogue, exchanges of visits, and increased trade, economic, and defence cooperation [16]. Both countries view their ties as a way to promote regional prosperity, peace, and security by expanding trade, commerce, and supply chain diversification, and by cooperating on infrastructure development, defence, and digital technology. As their strategic partnership strengthens, India can identify opportunities to incentivize the ROK to come back to the negotiating table.

India has maintained that any peaceful agreement between the DPRK and the ROK will be strongly endorsed by its government. Therefore, New Delhi could try to position itself as a critical channel of communication between Seoul and Pyongyang. India has already demonstrated that it is serious about playing a leading role in the global arena, having concluded its reign as President of the G20 in 2023. With its increased role in the Quad, BRICS, and other multilateral arenas, India is invariably emerging as a key Asian power, and its aspirations to play a more influential mediating role among the key protagonists may become more realistic if New Delhi expands its bilateral ties with Pyongyang. New Delhi's relations with Pyongyang and its strategic alignment with Washington and Seoul could be of possible use as they look to lower tensions with Pyongyang [15].

Pakistan

Pakistan has engaged in a protracted exchange of nuclear expertise for missile hardware with the DPRK since the late 1990s. Despite evolving into a vital ally of the U.S. in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Islamabad has sustained its military collaboration with the DPRK, demonstrating an unwillingness to fully adhere to the UN sanctions imposed on the latter. This persistence is underscored by the continued presence of the DPRK consulate in Karachi and an embassy in Islamabad, revealing a resilience in diplomatic relations that remains unhampered by international sanctions [17].

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In contrast, Pakistan's relationship with the ROK traces its roots back to the 1950s and 1960s, during the Korean War, when Pakistan contributed to the ROK's sustenance by supplying wheat. Over the years, the diplomatic ties between Pakistan and the ROK have evolved, with a particular emphasis on trade cooperation, showcasing the diversification of their engagement beyond historical contexts.

Recognising Pakistan's unique position as a nation maintaining cordial relations with both the DPRK and the ROK, it is possible that the country could leverage its diplomatic standing to serve as an intermediary in resolving several issues on the Korean Peninsula. However, it is imperative to underscore that such a role cannot be undertaken in isolation. To this end, forging robust alliances with other middle powers, such as Japan and India, is deemed essential. Despite historical conflicts between India and Pakistan, their demonstrated ability to collaborate on regional security concerns underscores the potential for cooperative endeavours that are focused externally, facilitating a multilateral approach to addressing Korean Peninsula challenges.

BATNA in the Region

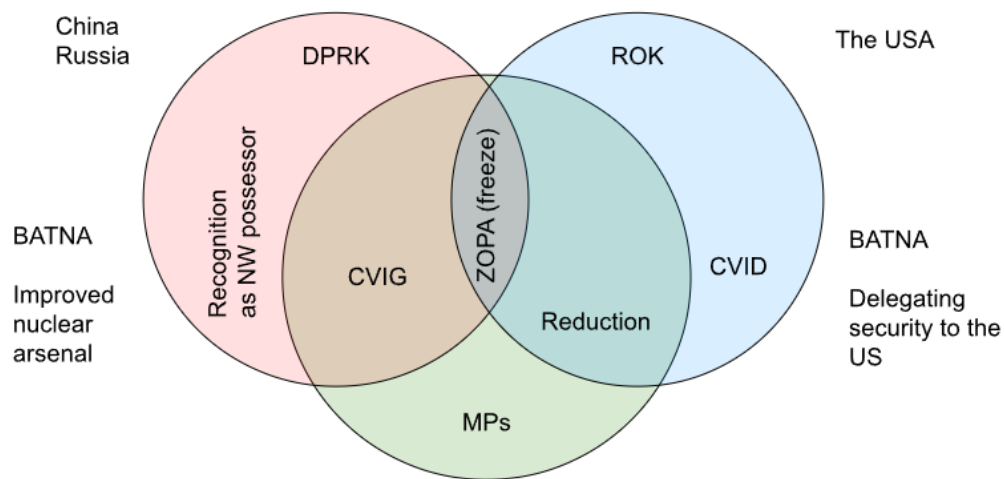


Figure 1

The DPRK and the ROK respectively have maximalist expectations: the DPRK wants CVIG (complete, verifiable, and irreversible guarantee) of its regime and recognition as a nuclear weapons possessor; meanwhile, the ROK wants CVID (complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization). That sounds equally impossible because there seems to be little that would incentivize the DPRK to get back to the NPT. This forces the conversation to shift from a non-proliferation discussion towards a de facto arms control discussion between the DPRK and the ROK, with the U.S. and MPs involved. See Appendix 4 for more information.

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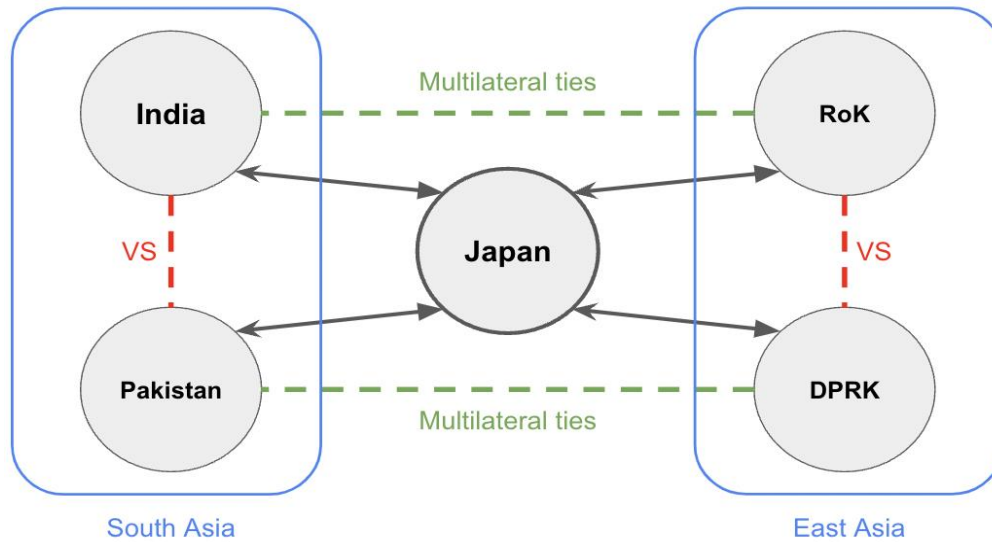


Figure 2

The visual here demonstrates how multilateral ties and coalition building can help bridge the gap between competing states. While India and Pakistan have bilateral tensions within South Asia, and the ROK and DPRK experience the same within East Asia, with the introduction of coalition building, these tensions can be reduced through middle power intervention. India and Pakistan can ease bilateral tensions by focusing on an external goal: regional security on the Korean Peninsula. Japan, having relations with a number of countries (see Appendix 5), can help lead renegotiating talks. The ROK and DPRK can entrust upon their respective partners (i.e. India or Japan for the ROK, Pakistan for the DPRK) to help them communicate their BATNA to the other side.

What is the Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA)?

The ZOPA between the DPRK and the ROK is subject to complex geopolitical dynamics. Considering all the issues between the parties and relying on the research made by Siegfried S. Hecker, Robert L. Carlin, and Elliot A. Serbin on a risk management roadmap to denuclearization [18], a ZOPA in this context can be determined by the following points:

1. Complete and short term (<1 year) elimination of nuclear arsenals;
2. Complete and immediate stop of nuclear tests and elimination of test infrastructure in a long-term framework (6 to 10 years);
3. No intermediate or long-range missile tests should be conducted;
4. No more production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium (>20%);
5. No export of nuclear weapons, materials or technologies should be done.

Should the DPRK persist in maintaining civilian nuclear programmes and peaceful space access, the potential risks associated with these activities can be effectively mitigated through the development of robust verification measures. While there is a possibility that DPRK's 5 MW(e) light water reactor and a research reactor could be diverted for plutonium production, these risks can still be managed. Similarly, in the case of space launch vehicles, when subject to appropriate

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verification protocols, their advancement is unlikely to contribute significantly to the DPRK's ICBM programme compared to the current missile build-up.

An agreement to have DPRK retain a civilian nuclear programme and a peaceful space programme also solves the personnel redirection issue. In addition to transitioning to civilian activities, the technical staff can help to decommission and clean up the facilities dedicated to the weapons programme [18].

However, the DPRK will not give up its weapons and its weapons programme until its security can be assured. Such assurance cannot be achieved simply by a promise or an agreement on paper; it will require a substantial period of coexistence and interdependence. But as a first step, an Indo-Pacific Nuclear Weapon Free Zone can be established: the DPRK, the ROK, and Japan will declare non-nuclear weapon status, and the United States, Russia, and China will provide negative security assurances under the legally binding treaty.

Within this agreement, the following institutions could be established:

1. A permanent Indo-Pacific Security Council - led by Japan, India, and Pakistan, to monitor and verify compliance with agreements related to the Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, to track the denuclearization process, and to facilitate cooperation on regional security issues.
2. An Indo-Pacific Energy Cooperation Committee to assure equal rights to access all forms of energy, including nuclear energy [19].

While the authors of the research highlighted above suggest the establishment of the Northeast Asia Security Council and Energy Cooperation Committee, we suggest expanding the area of influence and participation to the Indo-Pacific region so that Middle Powers such as India and Pakistan can take part in these organisations as observers and facilitate future activities.

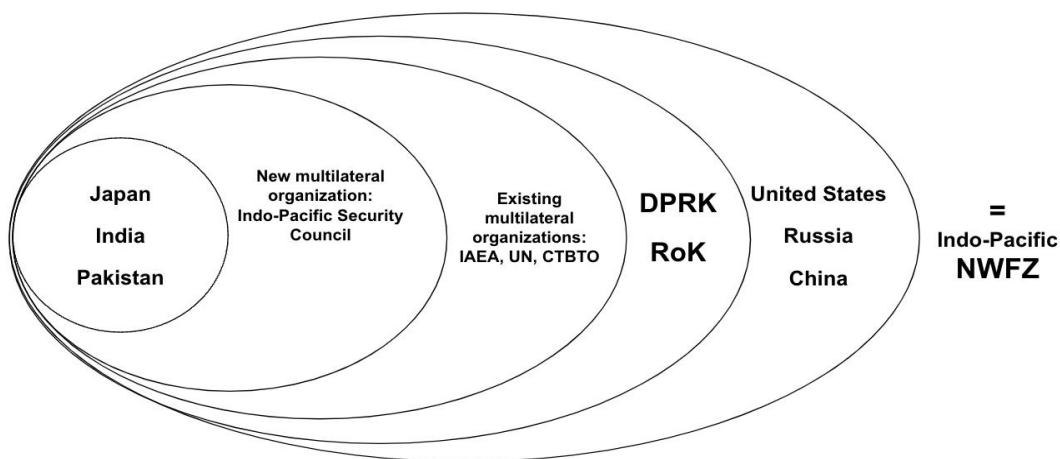


Figure 3

Recommendations

Roadmap to Achieve ZOPA

Step 1: Noting how arms control started between the U.S. and former USSR, SALT treaties offered arms limitation (the first one in 1972), and only by 1991 did they move on to arms reduction (START). Therefore, the ZOPA includes a freeze on nuclear weapons production by the DPRK in exchange for a freeze on nuclear material build-up in the ROK, in addition to a promise of no deployment of additional weapons systems by the US to the ROK. To ensure neutrality, a comprehensive verification process should be conducted by international agencies to ensure compliance with the agreement instead of bilateral verification. This would ensure trust is established before moving on to the advanced stages.

Step 2: Reduction comes as stage two once it's established how many nukes the DPRK has. The DPRK would have to allow inspectors from the official NWSs to inspect the arsenal, but not from the IAEA. Reduction will be "traded" for CVIG with the belief that the survival of the regime in DPRK can be guaranteed without it retaining nuclear weapons.

Step 3: Stage three would need to be clarified once stage two has made some progress, although this roadmap is a more realistic approach towards nuclear reduction in the DPRK than has been proposed since the failure of the 1994 Agreed Framework and the Six Party talks following the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT. Here we will need to see what CVID can be exchanged for, as well as give further guarantees to the DPRK. The DPRK may seek security assurances from the United States and the ROK to ensure the regime's survival in the absence of nuclear weapons. Offers of economic aid, sanctions relief, and the prospect of increased economic cooperation could be part of the agreement to incentivize the DPRK to align its nuclear programme with international standards.

Roadmap for Japan, India, and Pakistan to Achieve ZOPA

1. The middle powers, Japan, India, and Pakistan should continue to strengthen their relationships amongst each other in order to work towards a common goal. An external focus on regional security on the Peninsula would also potentially improve existing relations between India and Pakistan, for example, as they work towards a goal outside of their bilateral prism, which has its own complicated nuclear history.
2. With potentially the strongest bilateral relationship with the DPRK out of the three, Pakistan can utilise its diplomatic ties to propose an expert-level discussion with the DPRK. India and Japan can help bring the ROK into subsequent dialogues. The dialogues would serve as an initial step for brainstorming what the parameters of the ZOPA and BATNA would be.
3. A multilateral forum to take place to solidify a nuclear freeze, whether that takes place in any of the three countries on a rotating basis or one of the countries, for example, in India. This forum would build on the experts' discussions and establish the mutual gains for all parties involved. Participation by great power states such as the United States, China, and Russia would be essential in securing the conditions set for the freeze. It would also help incentivize broader security cooperation across the Indo-Pacific region.

4. Post forum, the three countries should play a coordinating role (either jointly or through specified roles) to ensure the successful implementation of the agreed-upon plan.

To ensure success, the middle powers will need to change their rhetoric on the DPRK and be consistent in messaging so that Pyongyang understands that the change is long term, and is not a one-time trick to buy the DPRK's attention or undermine them. This new rhetoric should reflect the individual and collective agency of the three middle powers with respect to the security on the Korean Peninsula.

Risk Mitigation: Implications of Shifting from Non-proliferation to an Arms Control Paradigm

In contemplating the transition from a non-proliferation framework to an arms control paradigm on the Korean Peninsula, a spectrum of potential outcomes emerges, encompassing both risks and benefits. This strategic shift poses implications that extend beyond the immediate regional dynamics, offering opportunities for increased stability by minimising the potential for miscalculation and escalation, improved diplomatic relations and increased trust, and a reinforcing of global non-proliferation efforts by demonstrating the commitment to disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy. However, alongside these potential gains, there are associated risks, including concerns about possible violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, verification challenges in a secretive regime, and the potential for triggering security dilemmas that could destabilise the region. This shift might face resistance domestically or internationally. Some parties may view it as a concession to a regime with a history of non-compliance, potentially leading to political backlash. Restarting these discussions will most likely open up conversations about the current status of the NPT and how/or if the DPRK belongs there, but that's inevitable in the long run.

This transformation necessitates a comprehensive exploration of its multifaceted consequences. Addressing these risks and carefully designing effective verification mechanisms will be crucial in ensuring that the benefits of arms control are realised without compromising the broader goals of nuclear non-proliferation and regional stability.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Views of Great Powers and Asian Middle Powers in Regards to Regional Security around the Korean Peninsula

		Korean Peninsula	
		DPRK	ROK
Great powers	China	<p>A joint statement of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Russia and China dated July 4, 2017 sets out the main content of the "road map" of the Korean settlement based on the relevant Russian and Chinese initiatives. It implied at the first stage a voluntary moratorium of the DPRK on testing nuclear devices and intercontinental ballistic missiles and reducing the scale or suspension of US-ROK exercises, at the second - the conclusion of bilateral agreements between the DPRK and the US, the DPRK and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the general principles of relations, and at the third - the start of multilateral negotiations in order to form a regional security system in Northeast Asia.</p> <p>Since the beginning of 2018, the situation on the Korean Peninsula began to develop in general in line with the Russian-Chinese roadmap. Military activity in the sub-region has significantly decreased.</p>	<p>Currently, for China, the DPRK is a buffer zone containing US troops located in the ROK, as well as separating China from the US allies - Japan and the ROK.</p> <p>Despite the increasing importance of the US, the role of Beijing as a third party between the DPRK and the ROK continues to maintain an important position in connection with the strengthening of the problem of nuclearization of the peninsula. Washington alone without Beijing's help cannot begin denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Regardless of the fact that the US and the DPRK sides have made progress in relations, efforts to implement the agreements must be increased in solving the nuclear problem, which is impossible without the participation of the Chinese side.</p>
	Russia	<p>In order to resolve the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula, six-party talks were convened in Beijing in August 2003 with the participation of China, Russia, the DPRK, the USA, the ROK, and Japan. The Joint Statement of September 19, 2005, adopted at the end of their fourth round, expressed the understanding of the main objectives and principles of the six-party talks agreed by all parties. The most important elements of this document are the DPRK's obligation to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programs and return to the NPT and the IAEA as soon as possible, as well as the US statement that there are no intentions to attack the DPRK and that it is ready to normalise bilateral relations with Pyongyang. The negotiators declared respect for the DPRK's right to peaceful use of nuclear energy and agreed to discuss within an acceptable time frame the issue of providing the DPRK with a light water reactor.</p> <p>Russia considers the efforts of the DPRK in order to ensure the country's defence capability at the proper level. But on the other hand, Moscow cannot perceive Pyongyang's nuclear status and recognize it as the legitimate owner of nuclear</p>	<p>Russia is concerned about the gradual tightening of the US nuclear infrastructure in the Korean Peninsula. This is, first of all, the regular presence of the components of the American strategic triad - aircraft carriers, submarines and bombers, respectively, in the ports of ROK and in the skies above it. Questions also arise about the activities of the recently created trilateral format of the USA-ROK-Japan: will it become the prototype of a wider military-political alliance directed, including one against Russia?</p>

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		<p>weapons, since this violates the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and contradicts a series of UN Security Council resolutions adopted earlier on the DPRK.</p> <p>The current UN sanctions regime against the DPRK, approved by the Security Council, includes a number of measures that seriously limit the country's ability to cooperate with other countries. Regarding the military-technical cooperation (including the space programme) between Moscow and Pyongyang, Russia complies with all the restrictions imposed on the DPRK by the Security Council, but within the framework of the current rules, the two countries have opportunities for cooperation, which they will discuss. The full range of relations between Russia and the DPRK implies dialogue and interaction in sensitive areas, such as military interaction and the exchange of views on the most pressing issues in the field of security. The DPRK remains interesting, but at the same time a difficult partner for Russia, relations with which have experienced both ups and downs more than once. They were traditionally determined by the presence of a balance of diverse factors, both favourable to cooperation, and those that made its development difficult.</p> <p>Russia consistently points out that it is necessary to approach the settlement of the problems of the Korean Peninsula, including the nuclear one, in the context of a comprehensive solution of the entire range of issues existing between the parties involved, which would further create favourable conditions directly for denuclearization. This is impossible without reducing general military-political tension, refusing to build up military infrastructure, reducing the scale of manoeuvres, and creating an atmosphere of trust between the states of the region.</p>	
	<p>U.S.</p>	<p>Long Standing policy: complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula - argues DPRK's nuclear program is illegal and subject to UN sanctions. Under the current administration, no official US-DPRK discussions have taken place since January 2021, but the US has repeatedly offered to meet with DPRK officials without any preconditions to discuss ways to denuclearize the Peninsula.</p>	<p>All parties want complete denuclearization of DPRK and for it to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missiles program and an establishment of a new trilateral working group to drive the cooperation, including with the international community, to combat DPRK cyber threats and block its cyber-enabled sanctions evasion. They are committed to re-establishing dialogue with the DPRK with no preconditions and express support for the goal of the ROK's Audacious Initiative and support a unified Korean Peninsula that is free and at peace. They intend to hold annual, named, multi-domain trilateral exercises on a regular basis</p> <p>Mid-August 2023, the three countries conducted a maritime ballistic missile defence warning test for the real-time sharing of missile warning data to demonstrate our ability to deter and respond to the DPRK's advancing nuclear and missile threats more</p>

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			<p>effectively.</p> <p>At the end of 2023, they intend to operationalize their sharing of missile warning data on the DPRK in real-time in fulfilment of commitments reflected in the November 2022 Phnom Penh Statement and are committed to pursuing enhanced ballistic missile defence cooperation to counter DPRK nuclear and missile threats.</p> <p>In conclusion, all three countries want the Indo-Pacific to be free and open, thriving, connected, resilient, stable, and secure. They see denuclearization on the Peninsula as the key goal, and are increasing activities to curb the DPRK’s weapons program and malign cyber activities.</p> <p>Bilateral alliance is “nuclear-based” and still focused on deterrence- Washington in April 2023 has agreed to periodically deploy US nuclear-armed submarines to the ROK and involve Seoul in its nuclear planning operations.</p> <p>In return, the ROK has agreed to not develop its own nuclear weapons. The US already has a treaty obligation to defend the ROK, and has previously pledged to use nuclear weapons if necessary.</p> <p>Under the new deal, the US will make its defence commitments more visible by sending a nuclear-armed submarine to the ROK for the first time in 40 years, along with other strategic assets, including nuclear-capable bombers.</p> <p>The two sides will also develop a Nuclear Consultative Group to discuss nuclear planning issues.</p>
Middle Powers Across Asia	India	Does have relations, but becoming more aligned to the US view on DPRK. Favours reduction of tension in the Peninsula, and also concerned with close relations between Pakistan and DPRK. Sees DPRK’s weapons as an increasing threat to India. In 2017, trade ban with DPRK, except for food and aid. Has expressed previous interest to play mediator between West and DPRK.	India-ROK relations have made great strides in recent years and have become truly multidimensional. The ROK is currently the fifth largest source of investment in India.
	Pakistan	Exchange of nuclear and missile technology between Pakistan and DPRK. Some of the missiles being possessed by Pakistan are stated to have been developed in the DPRK. Today, the relationship between the states largely remains covert, with the majority of accusations and claims between the two remain unsubstantiated.	<p>The ROK and Pakistan established diplomatic relations in 1983. Since then, they have maintained embassies in each other’s capitals, contributing to diplomatic ties between the two nations.</p> <p>Economic cooperation between South Korea and Pakistan has included trade and investment. Both countries have sought to enhance economic collaboration in areas such as technology, infrastructure, and trade. The trade balance has historically favoured the ROK.</p>
	Philippines	Has diplomatic relations with the DPRK, as The Philippines has a non-resident ambassador in Beijing and North Korea has representation through its embassy in Bangkok and resident embassy in Hanoi. In 2017, the Philippines was reportedly the third largest trading partner of the DPRK according to the defector-led & run	The Philippines has an embassy in Seoul, while South Korea has an embassy in Manila. The relationship between the Philippines and South Korea can be classified as strong as the two countries have historically been and continue to be close diplomatic and military allies.

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		Daily NK web portal, next to India and China with the latter accounting for 90 percent of North Korea's trade, but the trade relations were suspended by the Philippines in September 2017 to comply with the United Nations Security Council Resolution which called for further sanctions against North Korea over its July 2017 missile tests.	Military relations between the two countries started during the Korean War when the Philippine government sent troops to enforce the United Nations campaign against the communist coalition of North Korea and China. The ROK is an active arms donor and supplier for the Armed Forces of the Philippines.
	Singapore	Hosted the 2019 meetings between the Presidents of the DPRK and the United States. Limited role in hosting rather than serving as a mediator.	Singapore and the ROK enjoy close and long standing relations, underpinned by frequent high-level exchanges, robust economic links, and multifaceted cooperation. The Korea-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (KSFTA), entered into force in March 2006. Since then, businesses from both sides have growing investment interests in each other's markets. In 2019, the ROK was Singapore's 8th largest trading partner.

Appendix 2. Parameters of a Middle Power, Based on Lowy Institute's 2023 Asia Power Index [2]

*For each parameter, countries were ranked out of 26 countries, with 1 ranking highest

Parameters of a Middle Power*	Japan	India	Pakistan	ROK	DPRK
Diplomatic Influence	3	4	18	6	25
Military Capability	6	4	10	5	8
Defense Networks	3	8	14	4	21
Future Resources	5	3	8	7	17

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Appendix 3: The Chronology of the Six-Party Talks

Date	Key points
August 2003	The first round of the Six-Party Talks.
February 2004	The second round of the Six-Party Talks.
June 2004	The third round of the Six-Party Talks. This first meeting where the US and DPRK presented concrete negotiation proposals. The U.S. - provision of energy, regime security assurance, removal from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, and normalisation of diplomatic relations. The DPRK - a detailed proposal specifying the subjects and timing for nuclear freeze.
July 2005	The fourth round of the Six-Party Talks - Leading to the adoption of the "Sept.19 Joint Statement," the first agreement on resolving the DPRK nuclear issue within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.
November 2005	The fifth round of the Six-Party Talks - Convened to discuss initial steps for implementing the joint statement, but no agreement was reached, due to the different perspectives over the timing of light-water reactor provision and the U.S. designation of Banco Delta Asia (BDA) in Macau as a concern for the DPRK illegal money laundering.
July-October 2006	The DPRK conducted ICBM tests (Taepodong missile) and a nuclear test.
October 2006	The United Nations Security Council passed 'Resolution 1718' and imposed sanctions.
February 2007	The third phase of the fifth round of talks began. - Culminating in the "Initial Actions for the Implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement (February 13 Agreement)." - Feb 14 Agreement: since resolving the Banco Delta Asia (BDA) issue, the provision of 50K tons of heavy oil to the DPRK commenced. In response, the DPRK began the shutdown of five nuclear facilities.
December 2008	A senior representatives' meeting of the Six-Party Talks failed to adopt a verification protocol.
April-May 2009	The DPRK conducted ICBM tests and a nuclear test.
June 2009	The UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1874.
June 2009	The DPRK Foreign Affairs Minister officially declared the development of enriched uranium, and the DPRK Ambassador to the UN claimed that the Six-Party Talks were "permanently over."

Appendix 4. Understanding the ROK's and the DPRK's approach to nuclear reduction on the Korean Peninsula.

	Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement of the DPRK (CVID)	Complete, Verifiable, Irreversible Guarantee of DPRK's regime (CVIG)
Concept explanation	The concept of CVID, developed in the G. W. Bush Administration, is already a familiar consideration with the international community, but also has arguable challenges to non-proliferation efforts. The CVID mechanism implementing North Korea is deeply reliant on stringent inspection activities to confirm not only all stockpiles and facilities but also knowledge and intellectuals related to the nuclear weapon program are fully removed.	In contrast to the CVID, the idea of CVIG is new and unfamiliar in arms control literature. There is a huge debate about which non-proliferation approach to North Korea is more appropriate, whether Trump's comprehensive denuclearization or Obama's incremental implementation. Basically, advocates of comprehensive denuclearization claim to make a package deal to complete the non-proliferation goal by a single blow.

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<p>The DPRK</p>	<p>Lessons from Ukraine and Muammar Gaddafi cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believes nuke is essential for regime security <p>CVID is a ratchet clause that can't be returned since withdrawal of their nukes</p> <p>Abandoning nuclear weapons is equivalent to forsaking the teachings of previous generations that serve as the foundation for DPRK society, as well as renouncing its militarism.</p>	<p>Top priority for their regime security</p> <p>Does not mean a promise in paper works...</p> <p>"Only when a US embassy is established in Pyongyang with the Peace Treaty and American capital flows in, can we consider that the hostile policy has been abandoned."</p>
<p>The ROK (and the U.S.)</p>	<p>Can't trust DPRK's hidden programs (e.g. underground or caves)</p> <p>Want complete dismantle of nuclear program including not only materials but also technique and know-how</p> <p>Expanding the agenda too much can impede the deal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japan asks to add missile, biochemical programs and the Japanese-kidnapped issues US Democrats want to add more issues about WMD and ICBMs 	<p>Peace Treaty needs a ratification by the US Congress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ROK wants to make three-party talks (US-DPRK-ROK) as the main actor in the Korean Peninsula. <p>Since the Peace Treaty, the US should withdraw the US Forces in Korea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regardless of the Peace Treaty between the US and DPRK, the war between the DPRK and ROK does not end yet.

Appendix 5. Japan's relationship with countries in the Indo-Pacific

	Japan
<p>United States</p>	<p>January 2023 Joint Statement: Together, we have aligned our collective force posture and deterrence capabilities to meet new and emerging threats, including in the cyber and space domains. The leaders also instructed their ministers to reinforce cooperation on the development and effective employment of Japan's counterstrike and other capabilities. We have deepened cooperation on critical and emerging technologies that are crucial for national security. We reaffirm our commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions.</p> <p>The United States restated its unwavering commitment to the defence of Japan under Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, using its full range of capabilities, including nuclear. The Ministers held an in-depth discussion on U.S. extended deterrence for Japan, as well as on the recently released U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, and reaffirmed the critical importance of ensuring U.S. extended deterrence remains credible and resilient, bolstered by Japan's capabilities. They reiterated that both countries intend to deepen the substantive discussions at the Extended Deterrence Dialogue as well as through various senior-level meetings.</p>
<p>India</p>	<p>Diversifying their defence cooperation in new and emerging domains like space and cyber (2023)</p>
<p>Pakistan</p>	<p>Pakistan and Japan have enjoyed a bilateral relationship since 1952, with the exception of Japan's sanctions of Pakistan in 1998 due to Pakistan's nuclear weapons tests that year. Pakistan is primarily represented through its embassy in Tokyo and Japan is represented through its embassy in Islamabad. Pakistan has received over ¥260 billion in grants and aid from Japan as well as around ¥3 billion in investments.</p>

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