

# North Korea's Entrapment and Time Delay Tactics during Nuclear Negotiations

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Weaker parties in a negotiation can change the assumed structural outcome of the negotiation by using strategies such as time delay tactics, which lead to entrapment. In this article, the Six-Party Talks are evaluated empirically to explore the utility of applying this bargaining tactic insight into international relations. The article applies Galin's (2015) five stages of time delay tactics to the fifth and sixth rounds of the Six-Party Talks, with a focus on the triangular relations between the United States, South Korea, and North Korea. The article shows how North Korea as the weaker negotiating party used the time delay tactic to affect the fifth and sixth rounds of the Six-Party negotiations in its favor. North Korea's use of several tactics included slowing down negotiations as much as possible, avoiding reaching a final agreement, prolonging negotiations by diversion, dragging out the negotiation process until some external or internal change occurs, and exhausting opponents until they are ready to concede. These tactics ultimately entrapped North Korea's opponents resulting in the unsuccessful outcome of the Six-Party Talks.

**Keywords** entrapment, North Korea, nuclear proliferation, Six-Party Talks, South Korea, time delay tactics

## Introduction

In 2006 and 2009, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereafter the DPRK or North Korea) conducted two successful underground nuclear weapons tests during the Six-Party Talks, which included the following party members: North Korea, the United States of America, the Republic of Korea (hereafter ROK or South Korea), Japan, China, and Russia. The fifth and sixth rounds of the Six-Party Talks are particularly important, because the latter round was started following North Korea's first underground nuclear test in 2006, while the former illustrates how North Korea had used time delay tactics, leading to entrapment, i.e. "step by step decisions that result in a step by step loss of room for maneuver" (Meerts 2005, 114), to deter any progress in denuclearization efforts. Further-

more, both rounds were crucial in how the parties would deal with North Korea's 2006 underground nuclear weapon test and whether they would be able to reach another Action Plan on nuclear disarmament, which would build upon the Joint Statement issued after the fourth round of talks.

This article analyzes North Korea's application of time delay tactics as a successful coercive diplomatic strategy during the Six-Party Talks. To achieve this, the study applies Galin's (2015, 146) five stages of time delay tactics in international negotiations. In particular, the article focuses on the triangular relationship between three of the six parties (the United States, South Korea, and North Korea) who participated in the talks. This relationship is important because of the history that exists between these three countries. North Korea, as the perceived structurally weak party within the negotiations, was not ready to offer viable concessions, because it was engaging in false pretense negotiations and did not want to give up its nuclear program. But it also wanted to weaken the resolve of the US–ROK alliance in attaining a nuclear agreement that would stop its nuclear program. South Korea was particularly singled out as a target by North Korea, because of its close alliance with the United States. This approach by North Korea was successful in influencing the decisions of the United States, which ultimately favored North Korea. It put the United States in an untenable position with limited options because it was forced to adopt South Korea's position, which diverged from that of the United States. It should also be noted that in the case of the Six-Party Talks, the use of time delay tactics, which ultimately led a conducive environment for entrapment, was successful, but this might not always be the case. This, thus, presents a methodological limitation of this article's research design and strategy. For instance, Art and Greenhill (2018, 77) argue that power has limits of compellence: even though there might be power disparities between the powerful state and the weaker or smaller state, compellent successes do not come easily. Even when successful, the outcome of these gambits is too often not as decisive and enduring as could be hoped for (*ibid.*).

This study recognizes that there were four unsuccessful rounds, which led up to the fifth and sixth rounds, but those rounds will not be analyzed given that they lack the unique factors—time delay and entrapment—that characterized the fifth and sixth rounds. The layout of the article proceeds as follows. First, the following section presents the study's theoretical and analytical framework. Second, the article proceeds to an analysis and assessment of North Korea's time delay tactics and the resulting consequences (entrapment) in the context of the fifth and sixth rounds of the Six-Party Talks.

## Theoretical and Analytical Framework

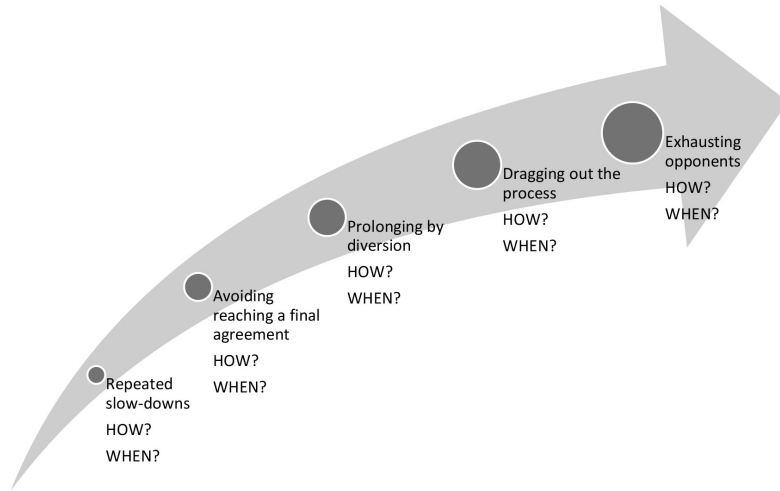
This article adopts neoclassical realism to analyze North Korea's diplomatic

instruments (time delay tactics and entrapment) during the fifth and sixth rounds of the Six-Party Talks. The value that neoclassical realism adds to this topic is found in its fundamental guidelines in analyzing the interactions of states in the international system, and how structural analysis could impact those interactions. Neoclassical realists posit that the structure of the international and domestic systems and their complex interactions determine the behavior of states, such as their conduct of diplomatic negotiations (Firoozabadi and Ashkezari 2016, 95). Interstate conflict emerges due to the lack of a supreme authority over states and the relative distribution of power in the international system (Dunne and Schmidt 2008, 98). In the absence of a supreme authority, the behavior of states serves the states' own interests, and often states do not incur any consequences for unacceptable behavior. The anarchic nature of the international system favors the structurally stronger powers over the weaker powers, which creates a system that reinforces the interests of the strong rather than the weak. Power (or the lack thereof) and interests influence state behavior and interaction in international negotiations (Hampson and Hart 1999, 345; Holsti 1964, 193). Hence, structural analysis places power as an indicator of strength at the center of all state behavior and, pertinent to this contribution, negotiations (Zartman 1989, 240).

A weaker but ambitious actor must source its power from somewhere else to advance its national interests in this prevailing anarchic terrain. Hence, non-material approaches, besides coercion and compellence, such as undermining the international structure, which favors stronger powers, such as time delay tactics and entrapment, are attractive and useful for weaker actors (Buszynski 2013, 14; Firoozabadi and Ashkezari 2016, 95). Powerful states are often unaware of alternative approaches, as they are in a more favorable position to determine the direction and outcome of negotiations. By using time delay as a tactic to affect the outcome of negotiations, the weaker player has the ability to entrap the stronger power(s) or, even, the entire negotiation, giving the weaker power leverage over the stronger parties.

Hence, time delay tactics are used to coerce other parties into yielding to demands. To clarify the point further, the term delay has been described as “[a] relatively innocuous example of coercive bargaining, a tactic in which one urges, or threatens to impose, costs on the other side unless it yields to some demand (Young 1991, 14).”

In order to explain and illustrate North Korea's use of time delay tactics during the fifth and sixth rounds affected the outcome of negotiations, the study employs Galin's (2015, 146) stages of time delay tactics (see Figure 1) in international negotiations as its analytical framework: (1) slowing down negotiations as much as possible; (2) avoiding reaching a final agreement; (3) prolonging negotiations by diversion; (4) dragging out the negotiation process until some external or internal change occurs; and (5) exhausting opponents until they are ready to concede.

**Figure 1.** Stages of Time Delay Tactics

Source: Adapted from Galin (2015, 146)

Next, we proceed with an application of Galin's stages of time delay tactics, before offering an assessment of North Korea's use of this tactic and its consequences.

### Repeatedly Slowing Down Negotiations

In November 2005, North Korea accused the United States of violating the spirit of the Joint Statement when Washington imposed financial sanctions against the DPRK. This issue became a major obstacle in the negotiations and pretext for North Korea to suspend the renewal of the Six-Party Talks (Snyder 2007, 36). Sanctions imposed on Macau-based Banco Delta Asia (BDA) were the primary reason North Korea suspended negotiations and delayed the overall prospects of reaching an agreement (Klingner 2012, 1). Although Gluzman, Barak-Corren, and Yaniv (2015) point out that parties that use such time delay tactics enter negotiations to ensure that they do not face punitive measures, North Korea had failed to avoid punitive measures and to assume the position of a "willing participant" in negotiations. By choosing to delay the fifth round by suspending the entire negotiation process, North Korea was able to fully demonstrate its frustration. However, the United States' punitive measure was a warning to North Korea, which would ultimately derail the Six-Party Talks. The United States had not imposed any punitive measures when North Korea stalled negotiations; therefore, backtracking from the Joint Statement had to be done with some consequences, which could discourage North Korea from pursuing a strategy that

was intended to delay the negotiation process.

The Bush administration perceived Seoul as reluctant to use their economic relations with North Korea to make Pyongyang abandon their nuclear program (Schneider 2010, 93). Seoul's position in 2006 was mainly motivated by their "engagement policy," which complicated their relationship with Washington, which had taken a hardline approach, by imposing sanctions on the Macau-based BDA prior to North Korea's nuclear test. Vice President Dick Cheney's remark that the United States would "defeat evil instead of negotiating with it" haunted Seoul (Moon 2008, 75). Washington would have supported Seoul had they scaled down their economic projects with their northern neighbor. David Asher, who led the US effort to crack down on North Korea's illicit activities during the Bush administration, asserted that there was a greater need for extreme financial containment and a pressure strategy against North Korea (Asher 2011, 31). Following North Korea's 2006 nuclear test, the United States would undoubtedly have welcomed a hardline approach by South Korea toward North Korea (Schneider 2010, 93). However, the United States and South Korea were not communicating a unified message regarding North Korea, and North Korea's actions continued to strain the US-South Korea alliance and to frustrate negotiations, well into the fifth round. North Korea's delay following US imposed sanctions could to some extent have been a result of the difficult negotiation process itself (Spangler 2003). Furthermore, the DPRK remained reluctant to accept any agreement that did not facilitate its nuclear program. In contrast to the United States, South Korea wanted to continue economic engagement with North Korea. The Roh Moo-hyun administration's Foreign Minister, Ban Ki-moon, and National Security Adviser, Song Min-soon, appealed to the Bush administration to show a more flexible attitude on the Macau-based BDA issue as an incentive to bring North Korea back into the Six-Party Talks (Moon 2008, 95). Economic sanctions had been imposed on the bank because the US Treasury Department believed that the bank was being used by North Korea for illicit activities that could help development of their nuclear program. Removing sanctions that were imposed on the BDA could not guarantee that North Korea would return to negotiations, even though North Korea was using the sanctions on the BDA as an excuse for delaying continuance of the fifth round.

What North Korea was doing, and what South Korea was falling for, is what Glozman, Barak-Corren, and Yaniv (2015, 689) have explained as a tactic used by time delayers in negotiations to conceal their true intentions by creating a smoke screen through making claims attesting to a willingness to shift to a more cooperative stance if certain conditions are met. For example, North Korea claimed that it was willing to resume negotiations and to remain interested in an agreement if the sanctions on the BDA were removed. Therefore, South Korea's efforts to compel the United States to show restraint on the imposed sanctions undermined US foreign policy tools, which could have been used for punitive

measures, simply because Ban Ki-moon and Song Min-soon wanted to continue a more appeasing policy approach to North Korea.

Engaging with Seoul only when Washington attempted to reconcile had been a well-established policy and practice of Pyongyang for two decades (Sigal 2008, 12). North Korea had used Seoul as a pawn to reach Washington for a while, and this tactic was proving to be worthwhile once again, because Seoul was being drawn into the false pretense of engagement that was being offered by North Korea. South Korea's proactive role in resolving the dilemma constituted the core principles of South Korean President Roh's North Korean nuclear policy. These principles were implemented according to the principle of zero tolerance for war on the Korean Peninsula, and Roh's rigid position became a primary source of friction between South Korea and the United States (Moon 2008, 75-76). If South Korea maintained its engagement policy, it could be argued that friction between the ROK and the United States on North Korea would persist, particularly as Seoul had remained concerned about Washington's response to North Korea's nuclear program. At the time, South Korean Ambassador to the United States Hong Seok-hyun criticized the Washington's hardline approach: "[A]s diplomatic means, there are carrots and sticks, but they say the finest horse trainers use carrots first" (as cited in Klingner 2012, 13). Ambassador Hong was not only criticizing the United States for imposing sanctions but was also justifying his government's position toward North Korea in the wake of the sanctions. Seoul's reluctance to use punitive measures against North Korea caused some friction with the United States. However, negotiators typically are more inclined to utilize persuasion and other influential activities in the second half of the negotiation (Zartman and Rubin 2005, 9).

Time delays are only effective if opponents do not have any alternative at all or at the very least any good alternatives—"best alternative to a negotiated agreement" (Galini 2015, 146). North Korea's decision to delay the first phase of the fifth round was to some extent the result of a lack of a better alternative than to slow down negotiations, so that it could get a better deal from the United States. Besides wanting to compel the United States to remove the sanctions, North Korea was also straining the alliance, under the guise of wanting a better alternative currently proposed deals and blaming the United States as uncooperative. However, delaying because of the lack of a better alternative should not be regarded as a better solution to any negotiation. Ultimately, North Korea retained its nuclear weapons program because of its time delay tactics. The parties had agreed to hold the fifth round of the Six-Party Talks in Beijing in November 2005, and discussions on key elements had been made when US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Public Affairs Christopher Hill visited North Korea before the fifth round (U.S. Department of State 2005). Therefore, the issue of sanctions should have been raised when North Korean officials met with Christopher Hill on the sidelines of the fifth round, so that

negotiations would not have been disrupted because one of the parties was not pleased with the sanctions that were imposed on them.

## Prolonging Negotiations by Diversion

The first session of the sixth round began on time on March 19-22, 2007, but it achieved no substantive agreement in its initial sessions, after the North Korean delegation walked out over delays in the release of funds from the sanctioned BDA (Liang 2012, 4). This diversion was time-consuming, and it removed the focus from North Korea's denuclearization. Even though the sanctions on the BDA were part of resolving the nuclear issue, since it had been blacklisted by the United States for laundering money which aided North Korea's nuclear program, the BDA was a distraction utilized by North Korea to beat around the bush and avoid reaching an agreement (Grzelczyk 2009, 111).

Weaker parties not only take on stronger ones in negotiation, but they often emerge with sizable, even better than expected results (Zartman and Rubin 2005, 4). Even though the United States, as the stronger party, had a better negotiating position, the demands of North Korea's lead negotiator in the talks, Kim Gye-gwan, at the start of the sixth round illustrated that Pyongyang wanted to emerge from negotiations with their nuclear program intact, but also without sanctions. However, Ballbach (2013, 230) notes that after the technical problems in transferring the sums of money to North Korea that had been frozen after sanctions were imposed on the BDA, the six participating states barely negotiated as they waited for the money transfer, and this led to an overall break of the down negotiations. North Korea controlled the pace of negotiations, even though it was relatively weak and thus not in a powerful position to do so. At times North Korea delayed and thwarted negotiations and potential diplomatic achievements in the short term, from calling for the expulsion of Japan from the Six-Party Talks to its on-off relations with South Korea (Martin 2008, 8).

The issue of the BDA funds was merely a time delay tactic to distract the key players from focusing on the development of North Korea's nuclear program. Meerts (2005, 101) argues that for a weaker state, autonomy and influence are much weaker than those of a superpower, and its opportunities for pursuing autonomy and influencing policy are few. Therefore, the DPRK used every opportunity it could find during negotiations to stall the process because that was the only way it could affect the negotiations in its favor. Thus, tactics, when used strategically within a negotiation by a weaker party, can redirect power dynamics within a negotiation setting. On the other hand, Ballbach (2013, 232) argues that the DPRK should have hardly been able to induce any sort of influence on its main counterpart, the United States. The United States had two options: namely, either to ignore North Korea's demands as negotiations crumbled or to agree to

North Korea's demands so that negotiations would continue. In 2007, President Bush was willing to reverse his previously hardline stance, to see if engagement with North Korea—even after it had tested a nuclear device—would possibly break the deadlock (Kim 2015, 107). The United States had chosen to give in to North Korea's delay tactics so that the negotiation process would stay alive, even though the DPRK's tactics had not been in the best interests of the United States. However, it should be questioned whether it was in the best interests of the negotiations to keep them going, since North Korea had proven to be uncooperative in the past and during the current round of negotiations.

### Dragging Out Negotiations

On October 17, 2006, Christopher Hill criticized public tours to North Korea's Mount Kumgang as a method of foreign currency accumulation, which North Korea could use at its discretion (Bae 2010, 339). Mount Kumgang tours were organized by South Korea for its people to visit the mountain, which is in the southern region of North Korea. However, American diplomats viewed continuation of these tours as a factor that gave North Korea a financial lifeline to mitigate the effect of the globally enforced economic sanctions. Bae goes on to say that the US Ambassador to South Korea, likewise, pointed out on October 18 that the Gaeseung Industrial Complex, as well as the Mount Kumgang tours, should be reconsidered in light of the new international sanctions against North Korea (*ibid.*). By continuing with the public tours to Mount Kumgang and the Gaeseung Industrial Complex, South Korea provided North Korea with a financial lifeline, despite the original goal of sanctions after the nuclear test. Seoul's actions explain why sanctions have not been able to compel North Korea to stop its nuclear program, as there are always states like South Korea that provide the North with a financial lifeline, which defeats the purpose of sanctions as a punitive measure. South Korea's positive economic relations with North Korea did not help the US agenda for denuclearization of North Korea. The United States had invited South Korea to join negotiations to form an alliance and to put pressure on—not aid—North Korea. The Roh government's daring diplomatic efforts to occasionally defy and even attempt to change the policy behavior of the United States had been unprecedented in South Korea's diplomacy with the United States up to this period in history (Moon 2008, 108).

In response, on October 19, 2006, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reminded South Korea of the importance of its participation in the United States' Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Seoul remained defiant, as their officials insisted on continuing their projects in North Korea without interruption, and, in the case of the Gaeseung project, even enlarging them, while again refusing to fully commit to the PSI (Bae 2010, 339). For the United States, South Korea



was supposed to support rather than undermine Washington's agenda. During the fifth round, South Korea did not hold North Korea accountable for its time delay tactics. Had South Korea chosen to do so, it would have stopped the economic projects which in essence provided a financial lifeline to North Korea and acted in accordance with the United States' position during the negotiations. Consequently, US-ROK relations were strained during the Six-Party Talks.

In order to avoid manipulation of one alliance against another, alliances should enter negotiations with the highest level of coordination between alliance members, to avoid the situation such as the one that occurred between the United States and the ROK during the fifth round of the Six-Party Talks. The fifth round exacerbated what Moon (2012, 2) called "the uncompromising and even incomprehensible attitude of North Korea" and the politics of "spoilership" by South Korea, which contributed to the stalemate. South Korea continued to play the so-called *advocate-in-chief* for North Korea, which allowed for lack of coordination between Washington and Seoul in dealing with the North Korean nuclear issue. Not only did the lack of coordination aid in North Korea's agenda to acquire a nuclear weapon, but it also allowed North Korea to use South Korea as a willing advocate in its strategic goals of defeating the purpose of the Six-Party Talks.

The sixth round was supposed to demonstrate the ways in which the past years of negotiating with North Korea had borne fruit, but instead, the round ended in a complete breakdown in negotiations, just like previous rounds. Throughout the sixth round, North Korea had made it impossible for the nuclear issue to be at the forefront of negotiations, which also made it possible for it to follow a "delay the talks" strategy in an attempt to maintain its nuclear program. On September 17, 2008, during a stalemate on verification in the talks, there were reports that North Korea had nearly completed a new missile test site on its western coast near Pongdong-ni (Liang 2012). This confirms the argument that North Korea had used the time delays to strategically develop its nuclear program. North Korea's strategy of developing its nuclear capability while the negotiations were in limbo had started in the fourth round, and because the strategy had worked leading up to the 2006 nuclear and missile tests, North Korea may have decided to carry on using it. Every time Pyongyang resorted to escalation, they expected a response from the United States, in either a concession to break the deadlock or direct bilateral meetings with the Bush administration.

The year 2008 proved to be very frustrating for the Bush administration and others involved in the Six-Party Talks hoping to oversee the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program (Bechtol 2009, 40). In this instance, Pyongyang was preparing to conduct a nuclear and missile test, because the sanctions on the BDA had managed to strangle North Korea's economy. Therefore, preparation for conducting a nuclear and missile test amid the hiatus of the negotiations was intended to force a reaction from Washington. Pyongyang's preparation to conduct a nuclear and missile test was intended to demonstrate resolve.

However, by increasing the stakes in negotiation, they were repeating actions that they had previously used in the fifth round. Therefore, Pyongyang realized that another nuclear and missile test in the same negotiation process would not jeopardize the negotiation process. As Meerts (2005, 120) asserts, victims of entrapment are often trapped by their own actions. Washington's decision to continue negotiations following the 2006 nuclear and missile tests had created an environment conducive for North Korea to do another nuclear and missile test, in the sixth round. Therefore, Pyongyang's actions during the sixth round were a continuation of lessons learned from the previous rounds on how Washington would react if the stakes were raised during negotiations.

Downs (1999, 5) explains that in their interactions with North Korea, negotiators faced the following dilemma:

North Korea escapes being called to task for infractions of international agreements because those who wish to see them stay at the negotiating table strive to maintain a commodious environment (*ibid.*).

Washington had not found a way to deal with Pyongyang's penchant to always increase the stakes if negotiations did not go their way. Withdrawing from the Six-Party Talks because it was not happy with the way negotiations were going had not started with the Six-Party Talks; North Korea had resorted to the same strategy to get out of the Agreed Framework and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. North Korea was unwilling to answer important questions about its proliferation to rogue states, its highly enriched uranium (HEU) program, and the location or numbers of its plutonium weapons (Bechtol 2009, 21). North Korea needed to avoid discussing its HEU program, and the presence of plutonium weapons would lead to the likelihood that the negotiations would end in failure, given where party members stood before the negotiations started.

## Exhausting Opponents' Negotiation Abilities

The second North Korean nuclear crisis in 2009 was arguably the most critical event of the Six-Party Talks, as it illustrates North Korea's willingness to exhaust its opponents by bringing unrelated issues, such as the Bush administration's 2006 National Security Strategy, to the negotiations. North Korea skillfully put the parties in a position where they had to choose either to abandon negotiations or to continue with negotiations but not focus on the fact that North Korea had test-fired a low-yield underground nuclear missile during negotiations. The United States utilized effective counter-tactics to blunt the most underhand aspects of North Korea's negotiating style, but it was unable in the early stages of the crisis to design and implement an effective strategy to achieve North Korea's

denuclearization (Snyder 2007, 69). The United States' failure to counter North Korea's tactics in the previous rounds of the talks had created an environment which enabled North Korea to conduct a missile test.

Delays can be difficult to manage, and they may raise questions about an actor's sincerity, because they call for the other party to predict the actor's response (O'Neill 1991, 105). The fifth round was more difficult to manage than previous rounds, due to North Korea's delay tactics. One of the main reasons for the alliance's continuance of negotiations from the fourth round into the fifth, despite North Korea's delay tactics, was that North Korea's nuclear program could be halted. The stalemate between the second phase and the third phase of the fifth round demonstrated that North Korea would continue to raise the stakes, even with potentially devastating international consequences, if its demands were not met (Snyder 2007, 40). The United States and South Korea should have been aware that North Korea would continue to raise the stakes or to delay negotiations. However, predicting the behavior of the party using time delay tactics is notoriously difficult while the party continually increases its demands and threats (O'Neill 1991, 105). In fact, Pyongyang's unpredictability when they used time delay tactics was clearly exemplified when they conducted nuclear tests during negotiations. The conducting of nuclear tests also demonstrated that both Seoul and Washington had become entrapped in North Korea's delay tactics. Unintended consequences, as a result of the step-by-step actions taken by the DPRK, made it possible for the "Hermit Kingdom" to advance in nuclear development as the Six-Party Talks progressed (Ha and Chun 2010, 87). North Korea was not only able to test a nuclear weapon, but it was also able to show that Seoul's so-called engagement policy was not persuasive enough to terminate its nuclear program. Negotiations are meant to de-escalate a conflict (Zartman 2001, 3-4). As a result, it is possible to ask the extremely relevant question: Why were the negotiations, which showed signs of failure, continued? North Korea's time delay tactics and the US-ROK alliance's decision to proceed with negotiations resulted in the negotiations falling into a state of entrapment.

## Assessment

North Korea, as the weaker state, has been less accepting of the Six-Party Talks, which sought to dismantle its nuclear program, especially as other parties to the talks maintained nuclear arsenals. As such, North Korea opted for a self-reliance strategy, in what it perceived as an anarchic international system. Constrained by, among other things, its international isolation, North Korea opted for time delay tactics and entrapment as a diplomatic instrument to influence negotiations and ensnare the stronger parties (Meerts 2005, 127; Young 1991, 14).

North Korea's use of time delay tactics to threaten the progress and potentially

the outcome of the negotiations put the stronger party, the United States, in a difficult situation, where it had to choose whether to stop negotiations or concede to North Korea's demands. Either scenario limited the United States' options, as North Korea repeatedly used the same tactic to force concessions from Washington, resulting in changes in the preferences of US policy strategies. Hence, North Korea gained some control of the negotiations and undermined structural assumptions, which would have been expected in such power dynamics.

North Korea used repetition as a time delay tactic, which entrapped the US-led alliance. North Korea's use of repeated time delays illustrates how repetition within negotiation can frustrate any chance of reaching an agreement. The fact that the United States and other states continued with the talks illustrates their eventual entrapment. Parties often hold on to the hope that a participant using time delay tactics might stop using the tactic in the next phase of negotiations, which does not always happen. North Korea's repeated use of time delay tactics created a favorable environment for entrapment. North Korea's dragging out of negotiations was a sign of the United States' entrapment (Maiese 2004; Meerts 2005, 111), as the US-led alliance, which was on the receiving end such tactics, focused on continuing negotiations, even though such time delay tactics were straining their alliance.

Here, entrapment affected both the strong and the weak parties (Meerts 2005, 126). North Korea used time delay tactics as a calculated risk that the other players would continue with negotiations even though they might not be getting any reasonable concessions from the weaker party. This resulted in the time delay tactics entrapping the US-ROK alliance, forcing them to grant more concessions to North Korea, to the detriment of their own agenda. The more these parties continued to follow North Korea's stalling tactics, the more they were ensnared in stagnating negotiations, which increasingly limited their options in favor of North Korea's strategy. Time delays, which resulted in entrapment of the alliance, were a direct result of North Korea's efforts to strain the alliance. Because the alliance ended up succumbing to the time delay tactics by shifting their position, this led the United States and South Korea further away from their goal at the start of the negotiations.

North Korea's entrapment of the US-ROK alliance resulted in an imbalance, as one party dominated the other parties, which lost their dominant position in the negotiations (Meerts 2005, 111). North Korea's ability to shift the negotiation process in its favor disoriented the US-led alliance and influenced it to change its position, which was not intended by North Korea to benefit the negotiation process, but to undermine its success.

North Korea's influence on the outcome of the fifth and sixth rounds through tactics such as time delays and entrapment reshaped the material context and the outcome of the negotiations (Meerts 2005; Schoppa 1999, 307; Young 1999). Entrapment in this context was a consequence of the successful use of time delay

tactics. North Korea used these time delay tactics to avoid reaching an agreement, due to its dissatisfaction with the negotiating process, their joining of the process under false pretenses, as well as their not being ready to make significant concessions.

## Conclusion

The United States and the ROK had lost focus on what had originally motivated them to engage together in negotiations with North Korea, which made them relatively weak vis-à-vis North Korea, who had the ability to use their weaknesses as an advantage to strain the US-ROK alliance. As mentioned above, the alliance was supposed to put pressure on North Korea, but the opposite eventually took place. The use of time delay tactics really worked for North Korea, because not only did they manage to strain the US-ROK alliance, but they managed to continue with their nuclear program, while entrapping the alliance into a failing negotiation process. In addition to the strain that the United States and the ROK were putting the alliance under, through their following divergent policies, North Korea used South Korea as a pawn against the United States. Decision makers are faced with a real choice, namely deciding whether to persist with or withdraw from the previously chosen course of action, which could have entrapped them (Brockner 1992, 40). Not only did the conducting of nuclear tests entrap the parties, but it illustrated that the US-ROK alliance was unable to effectively counter such tactics, despite the alliance's supposed cohesive force in the negotiations.

The United States and the ROK were still not in agreement on the North Korean nuclear issue. They had differing views, which made a clash of interests in the talks imminent. It should be noted that the failure of the United States and the ROK to agree on a strategy to deal with the nuclear crisis that had resulted from North Korea's time delay tactics played right into the DPRK's strategy of wanting to weaken negotiations. Even though North Korea was conducting nuclear tests while it delayed the negotiations, the strained US-ROK alliance made it easier for North Korea to realize its nuclear ambitions, during a negotiation that was meant to dismantle any nuclear capability from North Korea. The United States and South Korea had differing views on the structure of the nuclear problem, which also played into North Korea's grand strategy of straining the alliance. From the outset, the Roh Moo-hyun administration believed that the North Korean nuclear issue was deeply embedded in the structure of the Korean conflict. As President Roh observed, North Korea's claim to a nuclear deterrent was a logical response to American nuclear and conventional threats emanating from the military confrontation along the demilitarized zone (Moon 2008, 99).

Pyongyang's use of time delay tactics illustrates their unwillingness to

dismantle their nuclear program. The negotiations were to a great extent an extension of North Korea's goal to achieve nuclear capability under the guise of negotiations which were intended to stop proliferation activities in North Korea. The tactic mostly worked, because of the strained US-ROK alliance. Therefore, in future negotiations with North Korea, both Washington and Seoul should avoid entrapment based on North Korea's false pretenses and negotiation tactics which are meant to create discord within the alliance:

Entrapment happens beyond the will of the entrapped, and as such it is difficult to see in its early stages of development to the extent that, by the time it has begun to become apparent, it is often too late to escape from it (Meerts 2005, 137).

The Six-Party Talks consisted of six rounds, and the parties had enough opportunity to notice how the negotiations were becoming entrapped. With every round the same tactics were used to frustrate any chance of reaching an agreement. By the time it was apparent to the US-ROK alliance that North Korea was not going to give up its nuclear ambitions, it was too late to escape the trap that North Korea had been setting up since the fourth round.

Therefore, Galin's stages of time delay tactics as a framework to analyze international negotiations can not only be used to analyze the intention of the party using the tactics, but can also be used to illustrate how negotiations fail to achieve their desired results when parties use these tactics. North Korea realized that it could frustrate the negotiation process while continuing with its nuclear program if it dragged the negotiation out as much as possible. South Korea and the United States ended up becoming diplomatically entrapped, due to North Korea's methodical use of time delay tactics. By the end of the sixth round it was clear that North Korea had not lost the object of desire (its nuclear program development) at the center of the negotiations, but the allies (South Korea and the United States) had lost significantly to a structurally weaker party.

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