

Comparing ARF and Six Party Talks in the North Korean Nuclear Issue: A Regional Institution Approach

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Abstract

The North Korean Nuclear Issue is one of the post-World War II problems that are not yet settled after the Cold War concluded. This issue has been escalated at least to the regional level that is being discussed not only by the two Koreas but also by some regional parties particularly in Asia. Two of the most well highlighted regional fora that handle the issue are the Six Party Talks and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The existence of the two fora itself able to represent the two camps of regional studies in describing the dialogues on North Korean Nuclear issue: Global power-led and the multilateral mechanism-led. This paper is basically comparing the manifestations of these two camps. The result showed that for the case of North Korea issue, the multilateralist ARF able to consistently deal with the issue longer even though the progress is relatively low. The Six Party Talks is in contrast where with more ambitious goal, more dedicated forum to the issue, and larger involvement of the global powers, the Talks was unable to maintain its existence for a longer time nor achieve the expected progress.

Keywords: North Korea; Nuclear; Regional Studies; ASEAN

Introduction

Korea, along with Germany, Vietnam and Yemen are the nations that got split up after the World War II. These cases of splitting are the direct results of the political ideology competition that resulted from the World War II. The competition of those ideologies, or mostly known as the Cold War had finally met its end by the early period of the 1990s with the dissolution of the Soviet Union as its symbol. Along with the Cold War that come into its demise, most of the divided countries with the political ideology as the reason were able to overcome their political differences and ended up reunited with the different sides.

However, Korea is an exceptional case. The end of the Cold War did not automatically bring both sides into a reunification. Even though both sides have established special agencies that dealing exclusively for the sake of reunification since 1960s, the expected reunification never happened until the time this essay is written. In contrast with the other divided nations that reunited soon after the Cold War ended, the situation in the Korean Peninsula somehow got worsen. The finding that stated the North Korea were developing the nuclear weapon put the ambition of the reunited Korea stray further from the reality.

The fact that the North Korea also have successfully developed its missile weapons capabilities somehow escalated the political tension in the Korean Peninsula. The combination of nuclear weapon and the

ballistic missile capabilities was a good formula to automatically escalate the North Korean nuclear weapon issue into a higher level that cannot be solved merely by the both sides of Korea.

It was the year 2003 when the world was entering the new level of suspiciousness after the DPRK decided to leave the non-proliferation treaty after confirming its uranium enrichment programme. This situation might be viewed as how the nuclear power have taken a significant determining factor of North Korea's influence particularly in the whole East Asian region.

At that time the world reacted to North Korea's action by forming a regional dialogue in a form of six party talks. Not a very long period before the action, it was recorded that North Korea joined as a party within the ARF which stresses on the confidence building measures around the ASEAN and its surrounding region. After years passed, the situation is the Six Party Talks' existence ceased, while North Korea's participation in the ARF remains. The DPRK started from the year of 2009 opted to handle its international aspect of its nuclear capability through bilateral approaches rather than relying on the multilateral dialogue like the Six Party Talks.

This situation shows the situation where there are two form of regionalism that deals directly with the North Korean (Nuclear) issue. These two regional institutions took two different approaches,

structures, and degrees of involvement with the issues. However, regardless the differences, we can see these two institutions as forms of regionalism, or a system in a regional level; while the North Korea on the other hand standing as an actor within the regional system. These system-actor interactions would be interesting to be elaborated further in a short writing.

The paper will be a kind of evaluative paper on how the regional institutions particularly the Six Party Talks and the ARF deal with the issue. Further, this paper also tries to elaborate why the highly intensive regional dialogue like the Six Party Talks unable to handle the issue for a longer time; while the ARF could still give impact in dealing with the issue.

Conceptual Framework & Method

The main focus of this paper is actually how the regional institutions particularly the ASEAN Regional Forum and The Six Party Talks dealing with the North Korean Nuclear issue. In relation thereto, it would be better to slowly walks with the idea of the regions as well as the regional institution itself before going deeper with the context of regionalism in the North East Asia.

Region, as commonly defined requires certain degrees of geographical features and/or identity or other interest proximities to make it able to be accepted as a single region. Related to this concept,

there are terms that could be loosely translated into possibilities that may construct certain geographical areas to be accepted as a region: regionalism and regionalisation. The former term refers to a situation where the view as a region is more likely come from a top-down process that come from state and people interaction within a nation state. The later term works the other way: from a bottom-up mechanism where the view come from issues or activities that originally goes beyond the scope of a single nation state therefore needs certain cross-border activities among nation states. Both regionalism and regionalisation could occur as a response towards the situation happened at the global level (globalisation) or the internal dynamics within the region. There is a high likeliness in the creation of any regional institutions the process of the regionalism gets along dialectically with the regionalisation where the process resulting the establishment of the regional institutions.

Based on the premise developed in the previous paragraph, there is a big chance that the creation process as well as the condition of regional institutions in all regions on earth will be different due to the different regionalism and regionalisation process that may occur in each party of the institutions. It is quite fair to expect the European regional institutions will have different values and approach towards its members compared to the Asian or even American institutions. The condition also gave us a sign to stop using certain values or standard—for example: European values or standards—in dealing with the issues

that basically lies beyond the border of where the values or standard originated.

For the case of East Asian regional institution, Beeson and Stubbs (2012) implicitly mentioned the diversity, strong communitarian view as well as the output-oriented view is the key on the regionalism and regionalisation process within the East Asia. These features somehow well managed by the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) therefore the role of ASEAN become central within the region of East Asia and beyond through the dialogue that basically ASEAN centred.

Kim Sung-han (2008) mentioned that the North East Asian feature of regional situation is a paradoxical one where the economic integration/activities is somehow high but the political cooperation could be regarded stagnant for quite a long time. In regard of the management of the North East Asia security—especially in dealing with the North Korea issue, Kim Sung-han also mentioned that the multilateral dialogues like the ARF and East Asia Summit has the supplementary role in dealing with the North East Asian Security issue, especially in the North Korean issue. Kim still views the US-led mechanisms—the bilateral approach and the Six Party Talks—is still the primary approach in dealing with the issue due to their ownership of the operational power.

What Kim suggested in his works somehow parallel with the works of Stadtmüller (in Farrell, Hettne & Langenhove (eds.; 2005)) and Buzan and Waever (2003). In both of the works, the idea of regional security is located between the level of national and global security therefore the involvement of the global power in certain degrees might not be evitable. Nesadurai (in Farrell, Hettne & Langenhove (eds.; 2005)) also adopted this argument when she described about the regionalism process in the Asia Pacific region; where she mentioned the case of APEC summit in Bangkok (2003) where the forum which originally is a regional economic cooperation forum able to come up with outcomes that related to terrorism—thanks to the US influence. Unlike Kim who put the United States (global power) role as the main instrument, Stadtmüller was in favour of the multilateral mechanism as the preference in dealing the international security issues. With this logic, Stadtmüller expected the development of the security discourse at the regional level at the later stage could develop the security discourse at the multilateral level due to the ability of the regional security regime that somehow more experienced in dealing various kind of issues up to the sub-state level.

Up to this point, we can see that there are basically two camps on describing possibilities to deal with the regional security issue especially in the context of the North Korean Nuclear issue: Global power-led and the multilateral mechanism-led. Both camps agree that the regional

institution is good in supplementing the existing security mechanism. Somehow these two camps could be represented by the existence of the two institutions that would be the focus of this paper: The Six Party Talks (Global Power-led) and the ARF (multilateral mechanism-led).

The comparison between of the two camps that mentioned earlier is about to be manifested into the working method of this work. Some qualitative data with time series approach will be used as the main comparison tool where the Six Party Talks are reviewed through the achievement during its life span while the similar data of ARF (with the focus of Korean Peninsula; especially the nuclear issue during the period of 1994 - 2023) achievements got the same treatment.

The North Korean Nuclear Issue

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or commonly known as the North Korea established in the 1945 after Japan admitted its defeat in the World War II and abandoned all of its conquered areas in the Asia Pacific—including the Korean Peninsula. The Korea itself once was a united political entity under a kingdom before Japan conquered and annulled the existence of the Kingdom. The vacuum of power in the Korean Peninsula “invited” the winners of the World War II (the United States and USSR) to fill into the situation prior to let the Koreans decide on its future. However, these two “protectors” of Korea

were failed to agree on the design of the future of the Korea due to ideological differences and rather ended up splitting the countries according to their preferences on political ideology. The problem came into realisation since these two sides of Korea still see them as a single nation on the Korean Peninsula and both are claiming for the political legitimacy to rule in the region.

As a nation, the DPRK has its own main goal which is known as 강성대국 (gangseong daeguk; a Strong and Prosperous Nation). The goal has two main pillars which are the nuclear might and economic prosperity and further strive for a position of a great power within the region. The nuclear weapon capability itself might be regarded as a vital an indispensable asset for the DPRK government due to its ability to help North Korea achieving its national goal. Bruce W. Bennett et. al. (2021) mentioned that there is possibility North Korea have set its national objectives based on the capabilities of its nuclear weapon (for details please check table 1). The objectives mentioned here is not merely political-security objectives; but also, some more aspects beyond and also visionary as far as creating the so called one nation-two systems as the future of the two Koreas with the Northern regimes as its leader.

Table 1. Evolution of North Korea's National Objectives Inferred by Nuclear and Missile System Developments

Domain	Evolving Situation		Objective
Nuclear status	Number of warheads: 50–100* Delivery system: MRBMs, IRBMs, and SLBMs		Number of warheads: about 200* Delivery system: MIRVed ICBMs and TBMs
Military	Deterrence by Assured Retaliation • Develop ICBM capability • Ensure second-strike capability with SLBMs on ballistic missile submarines Hybrid Warfare • Enhance long-range strike capability and reduce conventional forces • Enhance information warfare capability		Nuclear-Armed Status • Fully deploy dozens of MIRVed ICBMs • Dissolve extended deterrence and ROK-U.S. alliance • Exercise A2/AD strategy against U.S. intervention in the environs of the Korean Peninsula
Diplomatic	Nuclear Brinkmanship Diplomacy (Phase 1) • Entangle United States in "denuclearization" diplomatic quagmire by obfuscating North Korea's true intention • Gain international respect for North Korea and perception that it is no longer a failed state	Nuclear Brinkmanship Diplomacy (Phase 2) • Force United States to accept "gradual path toward denuclearization" • Have the United States and North Korea enter into peace talks • Normalize diplomatic relations with United States • Partially dismantle old sites to induce United States to lift sanctions	Regional Great-Power Status • Achieve U.S.–North Korea peace treaty • Achieve withdrawal or minimization of U.S. Forces Korea • Achieve bilateral arms-control talks • Obtain U.S. assurance that it will intervene in Korean Peninsula affairs only with North Korea's prior consent • Achieve strategic autonomy from China, Russia • Achieve full lifting of sanctions
Economic	The New Path (Phase 1) • Accept dependence on China's assistance and strategic support • Implement structural adjustments to withstand economic pressure	The New Path (Phase 2) • Achieve partial lifting of sanctions • Restart inter-Korean economic engagement • Make China and Russia more emboldened to assist North Korea	Parasitic Exploitation • Compel ROK, China, and Japan to enter into preferential trade and investment agreements with the North • Rebuild public distribution system and centrally planned economy
Political	Prestige and Propaganda (Phase 1) • Strengthen Kim Jong-un's legitimacy and consolidate control • Gain international respect for North Korea and perception that it is no longer a failed state: e.g., U.S.–North Korea summits	Prestige and Propaganda (Phase 2) • Fully attain international respect through normalization of diplomatic relations with United States and Japan • Increase public favorability by partial lifting of sanctions and restart of inter-Korean economic engagement	One State, Two Systems • Compel ROK to legalize communist parties • Intervene in ROK politics and foreign policy through proxy parties • Make ROK North Korea's protectorate^a

Source: Bruce W. Bennett, et. al. (2021)

The critical phases in North Korea's national strategy are the boxes marked 1, 2, and 3. These boxes are numbered in the order of North Korea's strategic execution. Stage 4 is the final phase; it represents North Korea's "victory" of becoming a "Strong and Prosperous Nation." Therefore, the most critical phase is Stage 2 (shaded red) of the diplomatic domain.

North Korea's playbook in this plan is actually developing the its nuclear capabilities in term of qualities, quantities as well as varieties to give it a more options in dealing with the counterparts. Diplomacy also plays as vital as the role of the nuclear weapon since this step often

be used as the resort to maximize its influence and power. Most likely there is a cycle of process where the DPRK use the nuclear provocations and diplomacy alternatively.

By understanding DPRK's national goal and playbook here, there is one possible explanation where the denuclearization of DPRK will more likely ended up as a promise within the dialogue instead of turning into realisation. Any denuclearization process of the DPRK will very much likely either partial, or should be paid by a condition where the United States keep itself away from the Korean Peninsula.

The Six Party Talks: Reaction towards DPRK's NPT withdrawal

As already mentioned on the previous sections, the Six Party Talks can be described as a reaction of Korean Peninsula "regional security stakeholders" led by the United States after the DPRK decided to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Prior to initiating the Six Party Talks, President George W. Bush included the DPRK into the part of the "Axis of Evil" rhetoric related to the global terrorism issue. By putting North Korea into this rhetoric almost automatically closing the possibility to negotiate with them bilaterally since US's stands to not negotiate with the terrorists.

However, according to the works by Toloraya (2008), the idea of the Six Party Talks itself may be originated from Russia's suggestion in 1994 to include Russia, Japan and China in discussing the security issues in the Korean Peninsula. However, the United States was unfavoured of the suggestion until the 2003 event took place. There is possibility that the Six Party Talks is how the US try to negotiate with the terrorist state (the DPRK) without directly engaging in bilateral negotiations.

The North Korea itself at the beginning was not really convenient with the existence of the Six Party Talks. North Korea's inconvenience is more likely related to its view towards US that is viewed as hostile towards the North Korean regime. Related to this view, at the beginning of the talks process The North Korea aimed high by demanding a economic sanctions removal as a symbol of the end of US hostility towards the DPRK.

Along its lifetime, the Six Party Talks able to conduct six rounds of meetings at the level of Senior Official which all of them are hosted in Beijing, China. The summary of those six rounds of meetings could be found further on the table 2.

**Table 2: Summary of The Outcome of The Six Rounds of the Six Party
Talks**

Round	Date	Outcome Summary & Issued Discussed
I	August 27 th - 29 th , 2003	No outcome agreed
II	February 25 th -28 th , 2004	- Chairman's Statement - Agreement on 'Denuclearization of the Peninsula' and 'Peaceful Coexistence of Participating States' / stresses the use of 'mutually coordinated measures' to resolve the crisis. - Agreement to retain the momentum of the talks by holding the 3rd round of talks with full participation during the second quarter of 2004 / agreement to <u>organize a working group meeting to prepare for the 3rd round of talks</u>
III	June 23 rd - 25 th , 2004	Failure to announce a Joint Declaration / agreement on a Chairman's Statement of eight articles - Chairman's Statement - reconfirmation of determination for the denuclearization of the Peninsula, stresses the prompt specification of the scope/time, interval/method of verification for the CVID process as a first step in resolving the crisis / emphasizes gradual progress under 'words for words' and 'actions for actions' - <u>Agreement to hold 4th round of talks in Beijing before September 2004</u>
IV	Stage I: July 26 th - August 7 th , 2005	- Failure to arrive at a Joint Declaration despite 13 days of talks, mainly due to U.S.-North Korea differences on the peaceful use of nuclear energy - 3-week recess period announced through Chairman's Statement to retain the momentum of the talks
	Stage II: September 13 th -19 th , 2005	1) The six parties unanimously reaffirmed that the goal of the six-party talks is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. 2) The six parties undertook, in their relations, to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recognized norms of international relations. 3) The six parties undertook to promote economic cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and investment, bilaterally and/or multilaterally. 4) Committed to joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in northeast Asia. The directly related parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula at an appropriate separate forum. 5) The six parties agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the aforementioned consensus in a phased manner in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action." 6) The six parties agreed to hold the fifth round of the six party talks in Beijing in early November 2005 at a date to be determined through consultations.
V	1 st stage: November 9 th -11 th , 2005	1. The parties reaffirmed the principles and goals of the joint statement: To fully implement the joint statement in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action"; To realize the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula at an early date; To contribute to lasting peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. 2. The parties also agreed: to implement the joint statement through confidence building; to commence and conclude the process in a timely and coordinated manner; to achieve balanced interests and mutually beneficial results through cooperation.
	2 nd stage: November 18 th - 22 nd , 2006	1. The Parties reaffirmed their will to achieve peaceful denuclearization. 2. The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to carrying out the Joint Statement of September 19, 2005 and agreed to take "coordinated steps." 3. The parties held useful discussions on so-called "starting phase actions" to be taken. 4. The Parties agreed to reconvene at the earliest opportunity.
	3 rd stage: February 8 th - 13 th , 2007	The parties adopted a denuclearization agreement stipulating that North Korea will take initial actions with the eventual goal of dismantling its nuclear facilities; in turn, the other five parties will take corresponding measures. At the operational level, the parties also agreed to make working groups for these issues: - Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula - Normalization of DPRK-U.S. relations - Normalization of DPRK-Japan relations - Economic and Energy Cooperation - Northeast Asian Peace and Security Mechanism

VI	1 st stage: March 19 th - 22 nd , 2007	The sixth round was expected to proceed smoothly since the United States and North Korea had reached a last-minute agreement to release the North's funds that had been frozen at Banco Delta Asia (BDA), a Macao-based bank. However, Pyongyang insisted that it would only take part in the talks after the transfer of its BDA funds was complete. Because the funds transfer was delayed due to technical issues, the talks could not progress as planned. As a result, the six parties took a recess without setting a schedule for the next meeting.
	Chief Negotiators Meeting I: July 18 th - 20 th , 2007	The parties reaffirmed their will to implement agreements reached at the previous talks. They agreed that · They will faithfully implement the September 19th joint statement in 2005 and the February 13th agreement in 2007. · North Korea will fulfill its commitment to a complete declaration of its nuclear programs and disablement of its nuclear facilities. · North Korea will be provided with economic, energy and humanitarian aid worth 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil. · All parties will fulfill their respective obligations specified in the September 19th joint statement and the February 13th agreement.
	2 nd stage: March 19 th - 22 nd , 2007	· North Korea will complete disabling its nuclear facilities by December 31, 2007. · North Korea will declare its nuclear programs by December 31, 2007. · North Korea reaffirmed its promise not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how. · North Korea and the U.S. will remain committed to the normalization of relations. (The U.S. will start the process of taking North Korea off the list of state sponsors of terrorism.) · North Korea and the U.S. will make effort to normalize their diplomatic relations. · North Korea will be provided with economic, energy and humanitarian assistance, in accordance with the February 13th deal. · The parties will hold a six-party ministerial meeting.
	Chief Negotiators Meeting II: July 10 th - 12 th , 2008	The parties agreed to · establish a verification mechanism consisting of experts of the six countries; · take three verification measures—on-site visits, review of documents and interviews with technical personnel; · and establish a monitoring mechanism consisting of the heads of delegation of the six parties. · The other five parties, except North Korea, will complete the provision of heavy fuel oil and non-HFO assistance to the North by the end of October, 2008. · North Korea will work to complete disabling its nuclear facilities by the end of October, 2008. · continue to discuss the guiding principles of peace and security in Northeast Asia; · hold the six-party ministerial meeting; · and continue to advance the process of the six-party talks in a comprehensive manner.
	Chief Negotiators Meeting III: December 8 th -10 th , 2008	The six parties did agree on the disablement of North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facilities in parallel with the provision of economic and energy assistance equivalent to 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil. But these agreements were a mere reiteration of denuclearization principles. The vague agreement to hold the next round of talks "at an early date" indicates that the participants virtually failed to resume the six-way talks.

Source: summarized from

https://world.kbs.co.kr/special/northkorea/contents/archives/six-party/1st_round.htm?lang=e

From the summaries above it is fair to say that the progress of the discussion is not that progressive. The statement may be indicated on how the process on the discussing the aim of the talks should wait until the final stage of the fifth round before it can go into the discussion of the operationalisation.

After the last meeting of the Chief Negotiators Meeting, there were a series of situation where the North Korea decided to leave the plurilateral dialogue and revert back to the bilateral US – DPRK approach. The United States as the main initiator of the Six Party Talks also unlikely still in favour to keep the Six Party Talks mechanism as the main solution in dealing the nuclear weapon issue. The changes of leadership regime in the US in 2008 and DPRK in 2012 might be regarded have some stakes towards the fate of the Six Party Talks due to the vital role of those two parties in the talks. There is an attempt to resuscitate the talks in 2013 by China and supported by the DPRK. However, this attempt ended up in failure due to lacking of support from the United States and Japan.

ASEAN Regional Forum: Multilateralism Approach towards the North Korean Issue

Unlike the Six Party Talks, the ARF is established on 1994 as a dialogue forum to facilitate discussions on political and securities issues as well as a medium to conduct confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy in Asia-Pacific Region. It clearly means that the issue of security in the Korean Peninsula technically can fall within the domain of the discussion topic of the ARF. The membership of the ARF is relatively open regardless of the geographical, economic and political ideology as long as the applicant could stay committed to the

contribution towards the Asia-Pacific regional security and the number of the participants is still within the range of manageability.

This section is emphasising on the Chairmen's statements of Korea Issues in each ARF meetings. The importance of Chairmen's statements here are due to the fact that the statements are made at the end of each meetings as conclusions towards the dialogue process within the forum. It might not be the best tool to describe the discussions, but it can be considered to see how the discussions were concluded. The summaries of the chairmens' statements can be seen in the forthcoming table 3.

Table 3: Summary of The ARF Chairmans' Statements that Related to the Korean Peninsula Security

Meeting Number (year)	Chairmen's Statements on Korea Issues
1 st (1994)	Bearing in mind the importance of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Meeting welcomed the continuation of US-DPRK negotiation and endorsed the early resumption of inter-Korean dialogue.
2 nd (1995)	recognized that the Korean Peninsula issue has a direct bearing on peace and security in the Asia-Pacific. They welcomed the recent US-DPRK talks held in Kuala Lumpur and expressed the hope that this would lead to the full implementation of the Agreed Framework of 21 October 1994. The Ministers urged the resumption of dialogue between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and believed that it would assist in the successful implementation of the Agreed Framework and the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers also recognised the importance which international support for the Korean Peninsula Energy Organisation (KEDO) has for the implementation of the Agreed Framework;
3 rd (1996)	Bearing in mind the importance of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, the Meeting stressed the need to establish a peace mechanism and also emphasized that the 1953 Armistice Agreement until then should remain valid. The Meeting reiterated the importance of the resumption of dialogue between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea. The Meeting noted the importance of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and encouraged ARF participants to consider giving further financial and political support to KEDO
4 th (1997)	Bearing in mind the importance of peace and security in the Korean Peninsula, the Ministers reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the 1953 Armistice Agreement until a permanent peace regime is in place. The Ministers expressed their concern, over the impact of the food shortage in the DPRK on the security and the well being of the people. The Ministers welcomed the recent developments on the proposed four party talks which could pave the way to a permanent peace on the Peninsula. The Ministers also welcomed the progress made by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) in implementing the Agreed Framework of 1994 and reaffirmed continued support of the ARF to KEDO;

5 th (1998)	The Ministers welcomed the resumption of official dialogue between South and North Korea in Beijing and the launching of the Four-Party Talks Peace Process on the Korean Peninsula in Geneva. The Ministers emphasized the vital importance of the inter-Korean dialogue in promoting reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas. The Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of observing the 1953 Armistice Agreement. The Ministers reiterated their full and continued support for the talks and the KIEDO project to help establish a durable peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and promote global nuclear non-proliferation. In view of the current financial difficulties that the KEDO is facing, the Ministers called for more international contribution to this organization.
6 th (1999)	The Ministers noted that developments in the Korean Peninsula remain of concern and agreed that parties involved should not adopt policies which could undermine peace and stability. They emphasised the importance of observing the 1953 Armistice Agreement. The Ministers expressed concern over the August 1998 payload launch and other missile-related activities which could heighten tensions and have serious consequences for stability in the Korean Peninsula and the region. The Ministers supported all efforts to improve relations between the DPRK and the ROK and in this connection, noted the ROK's policy aimed at establishing a regime of peaceful co-existence with the DPRK. They welcomed the recent positive developments at the Four-Party Talks and the US-DPRK negotiations on the suspected underground facility. They also reiterated support for the Four-Party Talks and reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the 1994 Agreed Framework and implementing the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) projects
7 th (2000)	DPRK joined The Ministers noted with satisfaction the positive developments on the Korean Peninsula, including the increased dialogue and exchanges between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and several ARF countries. The Ministers welcomed in particular the historic Summit between the leaders of the DPRK and the ROK held in Pyongyang on 13-15 June 2000 and expressed their support for the "June 15 North-South Joint Declaration", the first agreement signed by the two leaders since the division of Korea in 1945. In this regard, the Ministers were of the view that the Summit represented a turning point in inter-Korean relations, and that the on-going momentum of dialogue and interaction would be carried forward with a view to achieving lasting peace and eventual reunification on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers also expressed the hope for further efforts by all parties concerned within the frameworks of inter-Korean dialogue, the US-DPRK and Japan-DPRK talks, the Four-Party Talks and broader international efforts, as well as for further positive developments regarding the temporary moratorium by the DPRK on missile test launches and for the full implementation of the 1994 Agreed Framework, including the work of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).
8 th (2001)	The Ministers noted with satisfaction the recent positive development of overall situation on the Korean Peninsula including increased dialogue and on operation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Summit on June 15, 2000 in Pyongyang. They further encouraged both the DPRK and the ROK to build on the success of the Summit to continue the peace process and emphasised the importance of holding the second Inter-Korean Summit with a view to establishing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers also took note of the DPRK's position concerning the DPRK-US Agreed Framework of 1994. They welcomed continued efforts by the international community to contribute to the above endeavours including the recent visit by H.E. MR. Goran Persson, the President-in-Office of the European Council and Prime Ministers of Sweden, to both the DPRK and the ROK. The Ministers were of the view that outstanding security and humanitarian issues would be addressed through increased dialogues. The Ministers appreciated the active participation by the DPRK in ARF activities in the last year and considered this a contribution towards strengthening the ARF process and advancing the cause of regional peace and security
9 th (2002)	The Ministers expressed concern over the recent naval clash in the Yellow Sea/West Sea which had heightened tensions in the Korean Peninsula. They noted, however, the latest moves towards the easing of tensions and the resumption of dialogue. They stressed the need to ensure the prevention of the recurrence of such an incident in the future and underlined the importance of promoting Confidence Building Measures. The Ministers expressed the hope that genuine progress would be made for the mutual confidence building between North and South Korea and the enhancement of North and South reconciliation and cooperation. In that regard, they highlighted the importance of the smooth implementation of the 15 June North-South Joint Declaration and the follow-up measures agreed upon during the visit to Pyongyang by the Presidential Envoy of the ROK last April. They also emphasized the importance of the holding of a second Inter-Korean Summit. The Ministers reiterated the importance of the full implementation of the 1994 Agreed Framework including the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) project. The Ministers hoped that prospects for dialogue between the DPRK and the United States would improve. They also welcomed the Red Cross Talks between the DPRK and Japan and encouraged further dialogue.
10 th 2003	The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Chairman for the initiatives that he had undertaken in accordance with the provisions and spirit of the paper "Enhanced Role of the ARF

	Chair," which the ARF adopted in Ha Noi in July 2001. They noted the Chairman's discussions with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union and his consultations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other ARF participants on the Korean issue. They agreed that the ARF should play a constructive role in seeking a peaceful resolution of the issue. Views were expressed on the situation on the Korean peninsula. The Ministers supported the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. They urged DPRK to resume its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to reverse its decision to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They called for a peaceful solution of the nuclear problem there for the sake of durable peace and security in the region. In this regard, the Ministers were of the view that the ARF has played a useful and constructive role and agreed to support further efforts by the ARF Chair to help ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers welcomed the resumption of high-level inter-Korean talks held in Pyongyang on 28-29 April 2003 and recognized the importance of inter-Korean dialogues and exchange at various levels as a channel to pursue peaceful resolution of outstanding security concerns. They welcomed the talks held in Beijing on 23-24 April 2003 among the People's Republic of China, the DPRK and the United States of America as a good start in the right direction. The Ministers were also of the view that outstanding security and humanitarian issues should be addressed through increased dialogues. The Ministers considered that the ARF's work on preventive diplomacy was being advanced through, among other measures, the actions that it had taken to address the situation on the Korean peninsula and to enhance confidence and cooperation in addressing common security threats, including international terrorism, transnational crime, piracy and other maritime crimes, and the support given to the ARF Chairman in carrying out the enhanced role of the Chair.
11 th (2004)	The Ministers exchanged views on recent developments on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers encouraged the efforts of concerned parties towards the maintenance of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and the region by achieving a peaceful solution through dialogue to denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers took note positively that the Third Round of Six Party Talks was recently held in Beijing on 23-26 June 2004, and the participating states agreed to convene the Fourth Six Party Talks in September 2004 in Beijing. The Ministers supported the parties' commitments to the goal of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and underlined the need to take first steps towards that goal as soon as possible. The Ministers emphasized the importance of a step-by-step process of "words for words" and "action for action" in search of a peaceful solution to the nuclear issues.
12 th (2005)	The Ministers exchanged views on recent developments on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers welcomed the resumption of the Six-Party Talks and expressed the hope that the talks would lead to a substantial progress in finding a peaceful solution acceptable to all concerned parties towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. They underlined the importance of finding a peaceful solution to the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula by engaging in dialogue to promote mutual confidence and common approach on the basis of the principle of mutual respect for sovereignty and equality. The Ministers welcomed the recent resumption of the inter-Korea dialogue and expressed the hope that the dialogue would continue in accordance with June 15 North-South Joint Declaration and expressed the hope that the on-going momentum of the inter-Korean relations will be conducive to the peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and to the peaceful achievement of the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.
13 th (2006)	The Ministers exchanged views on developments in the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers emphasized that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is essential in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region, and voiced support for the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue through dialogue. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for the Joint Statement on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula unanimously adopted on 19 September 2005 at the Six-Party Talks in Beijing and stressed the importance of the observance and early implementation of the Joint Statement. The Ministers also called upon all parties concerned to resume the Six-Party Talks without preconditions. The Ministers welcomed the informal discussion among some ARF participants on the situation in Northeast Asia in Kuala Lumpur on 28 July 2006 and expressed their hope that this could contribute towards the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.
14 th (2007)	The Ministers stressed that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is essential in maintaining the peace and stability of the Asia Pacific region and expressed support for the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation. The Ministers welcomed the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency verifying the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility. The Ministers welcomed the announcement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it shall earnestly implement its commitments to a complete declaration of all nuclear programs and disablement of all nuclear facilities. The Ministers

	reiterated their support for the Six Party Talks and welcomed the agreements reached at the Heads of Delegation Meeting of the Sixth Round of the Six Party Talks from 18-20 July 2007 in Beijing, China that Parties will earnestly fulfill their commitments in the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 and the agreement of 13 February 2007 in line with the principle of "action for action".
15 th (2008)	Singapore declaration: strengthening the ARF The Ministers welcomed the convening of the informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Six-Party Talks at the sidelines of the 15th ARF. They reiterated their support for the Six-Party Talks toward the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the eventual normalisation of the relations between the relevant Six Party members through the full implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005. They welcomed the submission of the declaration by the DPRK on its nuclear programs and emphasised the importance of the early establishment of an effective verification and monitoring mechanism. They expressed their hope that the recent progress would contribute to an expedited completion of the Second-Phase actions
16 th (2009)	The Ministers of several countries condemned the recent nuclear test and missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). They strongly urged all member countries of the United Nations to commit themselves to fully implement the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874 (2009) according to which these recent activities violated the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. They regarded these activities as adversely affecting peace and stability in the region and beyond as well as the non-proliferation regime. They expressed their strong conviction that peace and stability of each relevant State can and should be safeguarded through political and diplomatic means. In this connection, they supported the dialogue and cooperation among all the concerned parties, including the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks to address the issue of the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and humanitarian concerns of the international community. They also emphasized the importance of the full implementation of the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005. They expected that all concerned parties would exercise self-restraint and refrain from any moves that could aggravate the situation in Northeast Asia. The DPRK did not recognize and totally rejected the UNSC Resolution 1874 which has been adopted at the instigation of the United States. The DPRK briefed the Meeting of the fact that the ongoing aggravated situation on the Korean Peninsula is the product of the hostile policy of the United States against her, and stated that the Six-Party Talks have already come to an end, with the strong emphasis on the unique and specific security environment on the Korean Peninsula which lies in its continued division and presence of US military troops for over half a century to date in South Korea, since this factor is vital to consider and address the question of the Korean Peninsula.
17 th (2010)	The Ministers expressed deep concern over the sinking of the Republic of Korea's naval ship, the Cheonan, resulted from the attack on 26 March 2010. They extended condolences to the Government of the Republic of Korea for the loss of lives in the incident. They stressed the importance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, and called on the concerned parties to resolve all disputes by peaceful means. In this connection, they expressed support for the 9 July 2010 UN Security Council Presidential Statement. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for the complete and verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and encouraged the parties to return to the Six Party Talks. They also underscored the importance of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.
18 th (2011)	The Ministers welcomed the meeting between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea's Heads of Delegation to the Six Party Talks in Bali, Indonesia, and expressed the hope that the inter-Korean Dialogue should be sustained in the future. They emphasized that the inter-Korean Dialogue is a positive step in the efforts to creating an environment conducive toward the resumption of the Six Party Talks. To this end, the Ministers noted that the ARF, where all six members to the Six Party Talks are also participants, could also contribute in forging such conducive atmosphere for the resumption of the Six Party Talks. The Ministers reaffirmed that the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is essential not only for the enduring peace and stability in the region but also the integrity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this context, they expressed concern about the DPRK's uranium enrichment activities and called on the DPRK to comply fully with its international obligations and commitments, by abandoning all existing nuclear programs. Furthermore, they underlined the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns of the international community, such as the issues of abduction and family reunion. The DPRK responded that their uranium enrichment activities are an exercise of its legitimate right of a sovereign state for peaceful purposes. On the abduction issue, the DPRK responded further that the matter has already been settled.

	While Japan stated the issue remains unresolved.
19 th (2012)	The Ministers underlined the importance of peace, security and stability on the Korean Peninsula and urged concerned parties not to take any further provocation actions and to comply with their respective obligations under the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and their commitment under the 2005 Six-Party Talks Joint Statement. The Ministers further reiterated the call for all parties concerned to explore all possibilities to engage in peaceful dialogue which would lead to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and confidence among the concerned parties. The Ministers noted the successful visit of H.E. HOR Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia to Pyongyang, Democratic Republic of Korea on 3-4 June 2012, in his capacity as both the ASEAN Chair and the ARF Chair. The visit has highlighted the enhancing role of the ARF Chair.
20 th (2013)	The Ministers underlined the importance of peace, security and stability in the Korean Peninsula. Most Ministers encouraged the DPRK to comply fully with its obligations to all relevant UNSC Resolutions and to its commitments under the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. To this end, Ministers reiterated their support for all efforts to bring about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Most Ministers reaffirmed their commitments to fully implement all the relevant UNSC Resolutions. The Ministers also emphasized the importance of addressing the issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community. The Ministers further encouraged exploring all possibility of engaging in a peaceful dialogue which would lead to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and confidence among the concerned parties.

21 st (2014)	The Ministers underlined the importance of peace, security and stability in Korean Peninsula. Most Ministers stressed the need for immediate steps towards the denuclearisation and full compliance with the obligations under all relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions as well as commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for all efforts to achieve the denuclearisation of the Korea Peninsula in a peaceful manner and encouraged for creating conducive environment for early resumption of the Six-Party Talks. The Ministers welcomed the reunion of separate families between the ROK and DPRK which took place in February 2014 and expected to have regular reunions in the future and emphasised the importance of addressing humanitarian issues. The Ministers welcomed the DPRK to participate in the 17th Asia Games in the Republic of Korea in September 2014. The Ministers also noted the meetings between Japan and DPRK to address pending issues in accordance with the DPRK-Japan Pyongyang Declaration and expected a concrete progress on the matter.
22 nd (2015)	The Ministers underlined the importance of peace, security and stability in the Korean Peninsula and emphasised the need to manage the dispute peacefully. The Ministers reiterated calls to de-escalate tension and refrain from taking any counter- productive moves. Most Ministers called on the DPRK to comply fully with its obligations to all relevant UNSC Resolutions. They further emphasised on the need for parties to fulfil commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. The Ministers encouraged all efforts to have constructive engagement, including under the ambit of ARF, towards the resumption of the Six-Party Talks that would pave the way for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. The Ministers also supported the reunification of the two Koreas including through the continuation of the inter-Korean talks and cooperation and reiterated the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns
23 rd (2016)	The Ministers shared concern over current developments in the Korean Peninsula, including the nuclear test on 6 January 2016, rocket launch on 7 February 2016 and ballistic missile launch on 9 July 2016, by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) which are in violation of the UNSC resolutions. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of peace and security in this region and reiterated ASEAN's support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Most Ministers also urged the DPRK to comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions, including the UNSC Resolution 2270 and called on all parties to exert common efforts to maintain peace and security in the said region and create an environment conducive to the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks to make further progress in denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. The Ministers stressed the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns.
24 th (2017)	The Ministers expressed their grave concern over recent developments in the Korean Peninsula including the most recent testing by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) on 4 and 28 July 2017 and previous ballistic missile launches and two nuclear tests in 2016, which have resulted in a major escalation of tensions that can affect peace and stability in the entire region and beyond. They urged the DPRK to immediately comply fully with its obligations under relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Some Ministers reiterated their support for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, called for the exercise of self-restraint, and underscored the importance of creating conditions conducive for dialogue to de-escalate tensions. Some Ministers emphasized the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. Some Ministers also expressed support for the initiatives to improve inter-Korean relations and to establish permanent

	peace on the Korean Peninsula. The participants' attention were called to two proposals, namely, "double freeze and simultaneous progress" and "phase-by-phase" plan, as a possible way of addressing the situation in the Korean Peninsula
25 th (2018)	The Ministers welcomed the Inter-Korean Summits held on 27 April 2018 and 26 May 2018, as well as the Singapore Summit between the United States (US) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 12 June 2018. They also welcomed the Panmunjom Declaration signed between President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK Kim Jong Un, as well as the Joint Statement signed between US President Donald J Trump and Chairman Kim. The Ministers urged all concerned parties to continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace and stability on a denuclearised Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration and the Joint Statement by the US and DPRK leaders. They also urged the DPRK to fulfil its stated commitment to complete denuclearisation and its pledge to refrain from further nuclear and missile tests. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and international efforts to bring about the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula which will contribute to peace and stability in the region. Some Ministers expressed their readiness to engage in dialogue with the DPRK to resolve other outstanding issues, including humanitarian concerns.

26 th (2019)	The Ministers stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all parties concerned in order to realising lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. They welcomed the efforts by the Republic of Korea (ROK), the United States, Russia, and China to establish a sustainable dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The Ministers welcomed the meeting between United States (US) President Donald Trump and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un on 30 June 2019 at the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) on the Korean Peninsula and looked forward to resumption of negotiations. They also urged the DPRK to fulfill its stated commitment to complete denuclearisation and its pledge to refrain from further nuclear and missile tests. The Ministers urged all parties concerned to continue or to resume peaceful dialogue and work together towards progress in the realisation of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Joint Statement by the US and DPRK Leaders, and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration. They reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions by all UN members and international efforts to bring about the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula which will contribute to peace and stability of the region. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the resolution of the abductions issue.
27 th (2020)	The Ministers stressed the importance of sustained and peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to realise complete denuclearisation and establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers recognised the efforts and achievements made by all the parties concerned for advancing the peace process on the Korean Peninsula over the last two years and urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working constructively towards the achievement of lasting peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the Joint Statement by the Leaders of the United States and the DPRK. They also urged the DPRK to fulfil its stated commitment to complete denuclearisation and its pledge to refrain from further nuclear and missile tests. The Ministers underscored the significance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and noted the ROK's proposals to advance Inter-Korean relations. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and noted the international efforts to bring about the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, which will contribute to peace and stability of the region. The Ministers reiterated readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the early resolution of the abductions issue.
28 th (2021)	The Meeting reaffirmed its support for diplomacy and dialogue in achieving complete denuclearisation and establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Meeting recognised the efforts made by all parties concerned for the resumption of dialogue. The Meeting also welcomed the restoration of inter-Korean communication lines, and noted that it will contribute to further improving and developing the inter-Korean relations. The Meeting urged all parties concerned to continue working together constructively towards realising lasting peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration and Pyongyang Joint Declaration between the ROK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the Singapore Joint Statement by the United States (U.S.) and the DPRK's Leaders. The Meeting also urged the DPRK to fulfil its stated

	commitment to complete denuclearisation and its pledge to refrain from conducting further nuclear and missile tests. The Meeting underscored the significance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and were encouraged by the efforts to advance inter-Korean dialogue, engagement, and cooperation to restore the virtuous cycle where inter-Korean relations and U.S.-DPRK relations advance in a mutually reinforcing manner. The Meeting reiterated the commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The importance of international efforts to bring about the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula was stressed in the Meeting. The Meeting stressed the need to promote a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue among the concerned parties, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms, such as the ARF. The Meeting noted views expressed by some ARF Participants on the importance of addressing the humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.
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29 th (2022)	The Meeting expressed concern over the recent surge in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) testing and ballistic missile launches, which reflects an increased tension on the Korean Peninsula and threatens peace and stability in the region and in the world. The Meeting called on the DPRK to fully comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions, and refrain from conducting further nuclear and missile tests. The Meeting also urged for utmost restraint and refraining from all actions that would hinder the resumption of a meaningful dialogue, and stressed the importance of sustained and peaceful talks among all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. The Meeting reiterated support for the international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere for peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.
30 th (2023)	The Meeting expressed concerns over launch of the ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 12 July 2023. The Meeting stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. The recent surge in the DPRK's intercontinental ballistic missile testing and ballistic missile launches and resulting tensions in the Korean Peninsula are a worrisome development that threatens peace and stability in the region. The Meeting urged all concerned parties resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. The Meeting reiterated commitment to the full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Different views were expressed at the Meeting on the root causes of the tensions. Diplomatic efforts, including the creation of a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties should remain a priority. The Meeting reiterated readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere for peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions and detainees' issues.

Source: summarized from

<https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/category/newsroom/arf-chairmans-statements/>

From its initial meeting in 1994, the Korean Peninsula security issues have never been absent from the discussion topic lists of the ARF. Prior to DPRK's participation into the forum, the topics of the Koreas security were relatively general that related to inter-Korean dialogue,

non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as maintaining peace in the Korean Peninsula.

The DPRK joined the forum in the seventh meeting of the ARF (year 2000) and the topics that related to the Korean Peninsula security at that time was relatively positive. This favourable development likely related to the “June 15 North-South Joint Declaration” that happened earlier in that year and regarded as the first agreement signed by the two leaders since the division of Korea in 1945.

In the year 2003, the year when the DPRK decided to leave the NPT, the ARF in its 10th meeting pushed North Korea to revert its decision on withdrawing its NPT membership. Along with the Six Party Talks, ARF echoed the results of the Six Party Talks have achieved during its lifetime to denuclearise Korean Peninsula and how to achieve the denuclearisation through peaceful means.

The ARF meeting that happened in the same year with the last Six Party Talks meeting was able to formulate the Singapore Declaration that aimed to strengthen the role of the ARF. This declaration later able to make the ARF gave stronger position in dealing with Korean Peninsula issues particularly the North Korean nuclear weapon problem. Some of these positions might be reflected in the 16th, 18th and 23rd ARF meeting where the Forum openly condemned the DPRK’s nuclear test and missile launches as well as uranium

enrichment activities. It is also recorded that the topic of denuclearisation of the Korea Peninsula has been consistently exist in every ARF Chairmans' statements since the 15th meeting of the ARF until the latest in 2022.

There are also two more interesting aspect in the post-Singapore Declaration ARF meetings are the fact that the DPRK as a member of the ARF were given chance to argue and being recorded in the Chairmans' report. The 16th and 18th meeting of the ARF were good examples of this situation where the DPRK were given the chance to argue regarding the UN Security Council no 1874, uranium enrichment activities as well as the abduction of the Japanese citizens by the North Korean.

The situation mentioned in the previous paragraph might be given some attention since some of the issues were failed to be discussed in the Six Party Talks. This situation later be reflected from the development of the Korean Security issue in the ARF getting more and more comprehensive from the 21st meeting of the ARF. ARF's nature as a multilateral discussion forum might give more opportunities for the members to discuss any issues that related to the Asia-Pacific security without any fear of influence of the global power.

Conclusion

The latest part of the conceptual framework might be viewed as a contestation between the global power supporters and multilateralism supporters in dealing with the regional security issues; or for this case of the Korean Nuclear issue. The result of the comparison explored by this paper might likely more favourable to the multilateralism side since the ARF could still consistently discuss the Korean nuclear issues from the beginning until the latest meeting with the scope of issues that getting more and more comprehensive. The Singapore Declaration also able to make the ARF give stronger positions towards “violations” conducted by the DPRK in regarding the nuclear weapon issues. Unfortunately, the ARF is still just a forum that has no effective power like an international regime that can act accordingly in managing the security issues.

There is another note regarding the comparison made in this paper where the actual aim of North Korea is to have a bilateral approach with the United States in dealing with the nuclear weapon issue. There would be better to have further studies on what could be developed from the ARF achievements and/or statements towards the bilateral processes in dealing with the issue.

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Declaration of Conflict Interest

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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