



Conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula

The current state and prospects

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Introduction

At the end of 2017, the Korean Peninsula reached the brink of a nuclear war, as the US president Donald Trump and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un exchanged words of nuclear threats each other. A tug of war as to whose nuclear button is bigger and stronger exacerbated the nuclear crisis.

However, the South Korean President Moon Jae-in intervened to resolve the crisis by taking advantage of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. In doing so, President Moon intended to pursue denuclearisation and peace-building on the Korean Peninsula at the same time. North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-un responded positively to the South Korean call to hold the inter-Korean summit and the Trump-Kim summit.

In order to end the Korean war and promote peace-building on the Korean Peninsula including termination of hostile acts on inter-Korean relations, the two Koreas adopted the April 27 Panmunjom Declaration, the September 19th Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Inter-Korean Military Agreement at their summit in 2018. The Military Agreement is aimed at reducing tension and building trust between the two Koreas through conventional arms control, while the North Korean nuclear issue is being resolved through the US-DPRK summit.

The September 19th Military Agreement is a modest but remarkable success in arms control history when compared with a long-term stalemate or even retreat in the contemporary international arms control arena. Indeed, arms control is at its lowest point in history, so dim are its prospects.

Nevertheless, heated debates are taking place, both at home inside South Korea and abroad, over the legitimacy and rationality of the Sept. 19th Military Agreement. With little progress on the denuclearisation issue at the Kim-Trump summit and no sign of easing economic sanctions on Pyongyang, North Korea has test-fired short-range missiles ten times to exert pressure on the United States, undermining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Against this backdrop, this policy brief intends to analyse the true meaning of the September 19 Military Agreement between the two Koreas, to identify its problems and policy implications in order to draw up supplementary measures to implement it successfully. Furthermore, the paper will draw some implications for the relationship between progress on North Korea's denuclearisation issue and further conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula.

Policy of Four Actors on Korean Conventional Arms Control (Seoul, Pyongyang, Washington, and Beijing)

Throughout 2018 and 2019, efforts to resolve the nuclear crisis and to accomplish a peaceful co-existence on the Korean Peninsula through summit diplomacy have been made. Three summits between the two Koreas, two summits between the United States and North Korea with their one encounter at Panmunjom, and five summits between North Korea and China were held. Accordingly, the Korean Peninsula could be transformed from being on the threshold of a nuclear war into holding talks for a durable peace, thus making the advent of conventional arms control between the two Koreas possible. This chapter tries to explain reasons why conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula was made possible, by comparing the policies of the two Koreas, the United States and China.

1. President Moon Jae-in's Korean Peninsula Peace Initiative

While trying to resolve the nuclear crisis, President Moon Jae-in played a crucial role in inducing North Korea to participate in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in February 2018 and leading Kim Jong-un to dialogue with top leaders from the United States and China respectively. Not only did it broker a U.S.-North Korea summit, Seoul also provided clues to the reduction of military tension and the establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. The South Korean government's idea is to, simultaneously or flexibly, pursue three pillars: "peace building in the Korean peninsula", "denuclearisation", and "conventional arms control".¹ Experts call it a work to pursue denuclearisation, peace, and arms

control into a virtuous cycle.²

First, the President Moon Jae-in had a strong political will to realise the Roh Moo-hyun government's October 4th Joint Statement and Defense Ministers' Agreement in November 2007 to put an end to hostilities between the two Koreas. Given that there was no time left to implement the two Agreements because of an inter-Korean summit held at the end of President Roh Moo-hyun's term in 2007, President Moon wanted to rapidly develop inter-Korean relations during the early years of his term, making peace on the Korean Peninsula and impossible to return to the past of confrontation.

Second, by brokering the first-ever U.S.-DPRK summit which was going to address the denuclearisation issue of North Korea, Moon could focus on the peace issue on the Korean peninsula. In order to settle a durable peace on the Korean Peninsula, Moon thought that the 9-19 Military Agreement at the Pyongyang summit was inevitable. Furthermore, in order to prevent the linkage between North Korea's nuclear weapons and conventional weapons, and to restrain the ladder of crisis escalation to go up to a nuclear war, conventional arms control in tension reduction and separation of forces facing each other needed to be agreed, if possible.

Third, whereas conventional arms control policy of the South Korean government in the past had three phases starting from military confidence-building to military constraints to arms reduction, Moon's conventional arms control policy took a flexible approach so as to produce a meaningful outcome pertaining to the peace on the Korean Peninsula by incorporating North Korea's threat perception as equally important to build an inclusive framework for conventional arms control. Given that there have been a dozen military clashes between the two Koreas in the 21st century, the Korean Peninsula can easily go back to the confrontation of the past, unless measures to prevent such military clashes are taken beforehand. Therefore, the 9-19 Military Agreement was considered to be necessary to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula and build mutual confidence.³ In addition, if North Korea were to be brought to the complete denuclearisation decision, South Korea and the United States must consider ways to mitigate North Korea's security threat perception. This strategic consideration was reflected in the give-and-take negotiation, such as military talks between the two Koreas.⁴

Fourth, Moon's expectation that denuclearisation will take a long time led South Korea to make efforts in the short-and mid-term to build trust and ease military tension on the Korean Peninsula so that such progress will reinforce the denuclearisation process and certainly bring about peace on the Korean peninsula later.

2. Kim Jong-un's Push for Inter-Korean Conventional Arms Control

First, it is noted that political and strategic confidence Kim Jong-un has gained through possessing nuclear weapons has enabled him to pursue operational arms control in the military talks between the two Koreas. The Kim-Trump summit showed that Kim Jong-un has emerged as an international figure to deal one-on-one with U.S. President Trump. Thus, after Kim Jong-un got the US concession on the suspension of the US-South Korean joint military exercises at the June 12 Singapore Summit, Kim may have thought that he could extract more on the conventional military issue by negotiating conventional arms control agenda with the South Korean counterpart.

Second, reading President Moon's strong will to set up a peace zone which was agreed in the 2007 inter-Korean summit between the Kim Jong-il and Roh Moo-hyun, Chairman Kim intended to take advantage of military talks in North Korea's favour, resulting in setting up a no-fly zone along the DMZ (Demilitarised Zone on the ground) and the sea buffer zone in the West and East.

Third, though the Kim Jong-il regime had made efforts to nullify the Armistice Agreement while refusing any military confidence building between the two Koreas under the banner of the military-first politics, the Kim Jong-un regime admitted the reality of the Armistice Agreement, acknowledging the need for confidence building talks with the South. Therefore, Seoul and Pyongyang could engage in military talks to take measures to reduce military tension and build confidence between the two Koreas. Pyongyang's motivation on engaging in military talks with South Korea turned out to be an attempt to secure economic aid from the South for its economic development, including resumption of the

Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Kumkang Mountain Tourism Project.

3. U.S. Policy

First, U.S. President Trump has had the will and confidence to achieve denuclearisation through direct talks with Chairman Kim Jong-un, thus prioritising North Korea's denuclearisation. Through the Trump-Kim summit, it was revealed that President Trump has a strong political motivation to use the denuclearisation issue for his re-election victory.

Second, Trump and Kim agreed on the improvement of U.S.-North Korea relations, making efforts to establish a Korean Peninsula peace regime, to achieve complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and to repatriate the remains in Singapore on June 12, 2018. At the summit, Trump promised to suspend the U.S.-South Korea joint annual military exercises by accepting Kim Jong Un's security concerns. The suspension of joint military exercises amounts to a unilateral military concession that President Trump made without prior consultation with his South Korean ally. From here, one can conclude that Trump may not intend to set up a close linkage between conventional military issues and his denuclearisation negotiation with North Korea.

4. China's Position

The Chinese government has never officially revealed its priority between the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula. China has shown its willingness to cooperate with the U.S. and South Korea in inducing North Korea to denuclearise. It was known that the Chinese government has placed higher priority on the security of the Kim Jong-un regime and no war on the Korean Peninsula than on the denuclearisation issue. Beijing used to claim that the North Korea's denuclearisation should be pursued through dialogue simultaneously with the U.S. suspension of joint military exercises with South Korea to mitigate North Korea's security concerns.

Since China regards North Korea as a buffer zone between the U.S. and China, it supports South Korea's peace building efforts through war-ending declaration and conventional arms control with regard to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

5. Summing up

A common element which can be found in the above discussion is that the two Koreas, the U.S., and China regard conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula as necessary to set preconditions for the US-DPRK talks on Pyongyang's denuclearisation. In other words, they want the US-North Korea negotiations to focus on denuclearising North Korea, while military tension reduction and confidence building on the Korean Peninsula is to be carried out between the two Koreas.

The two Koreas agreed on operational arms control measures through conventional arms control negotiations, and agreed to improve relations to prevent possible clashes in their border areas. In spite of such agreement, Pyongyang conducted tests of short-range missiles ten times, thus undermining stability and confidence while arousing concerns as to whether North Korea is going to comply with the Sept. 19th Agreement faithfully.

Evaluation of the Sept. 19th Inter-Korean Military Agreement and Ways to Ensure Successful Implementation of the Agreement

1. Background

In the April 27 Panmunjom Declaration of 2018, practical directions for military tension reduction and confidence building between the two Koreas were presented. Thereafter, military talks were held in June and July and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Military Agreement for the Implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration were signed at the inter-Korean summit on September 19, 2018. This includes operational arms control measures with some implementing procedures stipulated in the Agreement. The set-up of detailed procedures for the Agreement was handed over to be the task of the

South-North Joint Military Committee thereafter.

2. Operational Arms Control Measures in the Sept. 19 Military Agreement

Military authorities of the two Koreas signed the Sept. 19 Military Agreement to implement practical measures to ease military tension and build trust between the two Koreas. The Agreement can be divided into two parts: confidence-building measures and military constraints.

The conventional arms control is divided into two categories: operational arms control and structural arms control. Operational arms control is to impose restrictions on exercises, manoeuvres and deployment of troops and weapons, while keeping the number of troops and weapons intact. Structural arms control intends to reduce and dismantle troops and weapons, which is called to be arms reduction or disarmament. In more detail, operational arms control can be divided into two sub-categories: confidence-building and military constraints. The purpose of confidence-building is to improve relationship between concerned parties by increasing transparency, openness and predictability on military affairs through institutionalisation of dialogue channel, information and personnel exchanges, on-site observations and inspections, and joint works for taking transparency measures.⁵ Military constraints are intended to limit military authorities to conduct military operations by constraining or suspending the scale of exercises, military activities in certain areas, and establishing areas where no deployment is allowed.⁶

- ***Inter-Korean military confidence-building measures***
 - Although the two Koreas have agreed on confidence-building measures, it is still a principle agreement, and no concrete implementation has been followed yet.
 - Declaring the principle of peaceful resolution of all military disputes
 - Agreement to form and operate the Joint Military Committee between South and North Korea
 - Agreement between South and North Korean military authorities to set up a hot line
 - Agreement on regular inspection and evaluation of the implementation status of the South-North Military Agreement
- ***Inter-Korean operational arms control measures***
 - The inter-Korean arms control measures have been agreed in much more detail than in the past, with some already being implemented.
 - Agreement to cease hostile actions on the ground, at sea and in the air
 - Agreement to demilitarise the DMZ (Demilitarised Zone) to set up a peace zone and the Joint Security Area of Panmunjom
 - Agreement to set up a buffer zone in the West Sea by banning firing and military exercises within it,
 - Agreement to set up a no-fly zone in a certain area with same distance from the Military Demarcation Line (MDL)
- ***Establishing a Peace zone in the DMZ***
 - Guard Posts (GP) were decided to be completely withdrawn from the DMZ. As a pilot project, the two Koreas agreed to shut down and withdraw 11 each, completing the work on November 30, 2018.
 - Demilitarise the joint security area of Panmunjom and allow free travel of tourists.
 - Work to jointly excavate remains from the Korean War in certain areas of the DMZ.
- ***Setting up the ground buffer zone***
 - Agreement to set up ground buffer zones within 5 kilometres of each side of the MDL, and to halt all artillery fire drills and outdoor manoeuvres within the area.
- ***Establishment of a buffer zone around the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the West Sea and East Sea***
 - Agreement to establish a buffer zone to prevent armed clashes between navies of the two Koreas in the West Sea, including the NLL, and to ensure safe fishing activities by fishermen
 - North Korea is prohibited from firing from land to sea, covers must be installed at ports and artillery posts.

- South Korea is required to halt artillery firing and naval manoeuvres at sea, install cover on ports and artillery posts.

- **Setting up no-fly zones**

- The two Koreas have decided to ban tactical drills involving live-fire artillery from fixed-wing aircraft within a no-fly zone set over the eastern and western areas of the MDL. Fixed-wing aircraft will be banned from flying within 40 kilometres of the MDL in the eastern part and 20 kilometres from the MDL in the western part.
- Rotary-wing aircraft will be banned from flying within 10 kilometres of the MDL in the eastern part and within 10 kilometres of the MDL in the western part.
- The drones will be banned from flying within 15 kilometres of the MDL in the eastern part and within 10 kilometres from the MDL in the western part.
- Hot-air balloons are prohibited from flying within 25 kilometres of the MDL.

3. Nationwide Debate on the Impact of the Military Agreement

When the Sept. 19 Military Agreement was announced, the debate as to whether the Military Agreement is beneficial or harmful for the national security and defense of South Korea occurred both at home and abroad. Those who support the Military Agreement are of a positive view that the September 19 military agreement would not only affect peace and security on the Korean Peninsula positively, but also promote the denuclearisation of North Korea in the right direction. Those who oppose it contend that the Military Agreement not only undermines South Korea's security by making disproportionate concessions to the North, but also hinders effective security cooperation between South Korea and the U.S. armed forces stationed in Korea. Meanwhile, South Korean and U.S. authorities are showing a positive view of the September 19 military agreement and expressing strong support for its development.

(1) Positive Views

According to proponents for the Military Agreement, the two Koreas have achieved reduction in military tension and improvement of confidence by establishing a de facto peace zone in the DMZ, a maritime buffer zone along the western and eastern sea border, and a no-fly zone on both sides of the MDL. They believe that the agreement to ban hostile acts on the ground, at sea and in the air has eliminated the possibility of accidental clashes between the militaries of the two Koreas, thus effectively ending hostilities and paving ways conducive to building peace on the Korean Peninsula.⁷

One South Korean politician expressed strong support by commenting, “by agreeing to end military tension and threats of war between the two Koreas, it follows, in fact, that they took an interim step toward a three-way end-of-war declaration including the United States which will ultimately lead a process toward a peace treaty.”⁸

The Ministry of National Defense goes one step further. It announced plans to expand operational arms control including restrictions both on large-scale military activities and on the deployment of military forces and to go about structural arms control or disarmament later by making sure of faithful implementation of the existing September 19 Military Agreement between the two Koreas.⁹

(2) Negative Views

In a nutshell, those who do not favour the September 19 Military Agreement argue that South Korea has yielded more concessions to North Korea than North Korea did to South Korea.

First, given that South Korea possesses a far superior intelligence and reconnaissance capability, together with the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), compared with North Korea, the same geographical no-fly zone would turn out to be relatively disadvantageous to the South's security.¹⁰ According to this viewpoint, the South's air superiority that can offset the North Korea's long-range offensive artillery deployed forward near to the DMZ was given away to North Korea as a result of the same distance no-fly zone.

Second, because North Korea has continued to deny and neutralise the NLL, establishment of

a buffer zone in the West Sea with a longer mileage to the South is tantamount to admitting North Korea's claim that the NLL is illegitimate. Third, they argue that under the circumstances where North Korea possesses nuclear weapons and missiles, South Korea's acceptance of limiting operational capabilities in the conventional military area without the same corresponding concession on the North Korean conventional military is tantamount to undermining South Korea's security unilaterally, ultimately giving in to North Korea's saber-rattling tactics.

(3) Summing up

Comparing positive and negative views, one can find that each side emphasises different aspect of the Agreement. If the September 19 Military Agreement is being implemented in the long run beyond the current South Korean government, it could definitely help improve security and peace on the Korean Peninsula. On balance, it would be an exaggeration to argue that the South Korean security was unilaterally disarmed through the Military Agreement. Though there could be somewhat relatively favorable points for North Korea, the Military Agreement constrains operational capabilities on both sides so that it can prevent armed clashes between the two Koreas.

As for the claim that the NLL has been ignored or given in to North Korea, the job of establishing a peace zone has been deferred to the South-North Joint Military Committee which will be organised and held regularly in accordance with the Military Agreement. Considering the MND's explanation that the maritime buffer zone includes North Korea's large land in the North Korean Hwanghae-Province, whether South Korea made more concessions to North Korea will depend on the future negotiation between the two Koreas in which the two Koreas will discuss specifically how to apply operational arms control measures to the land of the Hwanghae-Province in more detail.

Overall, as long as the issue of North Korea's denuclearisation is handled right in the U.S.-North Korea negotiation channel, the September 19 military agreement can be seen as providing an opportunity for the two Koreas to reduce conventional military tension and build trust between the two Koreas, finally helping establish a solid peace on the Korean Peninsula.

(4) Evaluation of the September 19 Military Agreement and Additional Measures for Its Successful Implementation

In the first three months after the September 19th Military Agreement, the agreement was well executed. The two Koreas closed down 11 GPs each and dismantled those posts and showed them to the other side. It has largely been well implemented, including the road work to enable the joint excavation of remains between the two Koreas at the Arrowhead Heights; the demilitarisation of the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom was completed; compliance with the West Sea buffer zone and no-fly zone was noteworthy. However, the joint excavation project between South and North Korea was carried out only in the South Korean zone without North Korea's participation. There has been no further GP shutdown, and no efforts to form a Joint Military Committee have yet been seen.

In the meanwhile, North Korea tested short-range missiles and began issuing statements denouncing South Korea. South Korea and the United States held a limited-scale joint command-post exercise to prepare for the transfer of wartime operational control authority. North Korea tested again short-range missiles against South Korea's joint command-post exercises. Kim Jong-un criticised South Korea for the drills, while sending a letter to President Trump saying that he hopes for resumption of denuclearisation talks later. President Trump delivered the North's true intentions in a tweet, but it is clear that the North's missile tests have a bad influence on inter-Korean relations.

Therefore, several additional measures are needed to ensure successful implementation of the September 19 military agreement and to improve the inter-Korean relationship and further enhance mutual confidence.

- ***Composition of the South-North Joint Military Committee and Institutionalisation of the inter-Korean military dialogue channel***

In order to implement successfully the September 19 Agreement, the South and North should form and

hold the joint military committee regularly to discuss and consult on how to implement the September 19 military agreement fully. The South is determined to establish a joint military committee, but the North has showed no response at all. Therefore, it remains for the two Koreas to install a joint military committee and hold meetings regularly.¹¹

- ***Institutionalisation of military confidence building and transparency measures***

Measures for military confidence building need to be taken in parallel with such separation measures taken in the September 19 Military Agreement through the following inter-Korean talks. Without the combination of mutual meetings, exchanges and trust accumulated through dialogue, there is a limit to the ability to accumulate confidence through separation measures alone. Moreover, the September 19 military agreement has mainly set limits on the operation of exercises, intelligence surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. Therefore, hot lines should be established between high-ranking military officials. Unless confidence-building is institutionalised, it is hard to rule out the possibility of a single clash nullifying everything later.

Traditionally, North Korea has been negative about transparency measures. It was customary for Pyongyang to take unilateral action and to notify the other that they had implemented it. Without mutual contacts and exchanges, on-site observations and verification efforts, and cooperative work to implement the agreements, it is safe to say that there is little trust built up on the working level of military forces of the two Koreas. Therefore, research on how to conduct joint work, mutual observation and verification between the two Koreas is needed.

It is also necessary to discuss how the two Koreas will incorporate President Trump's pledge to suspend the South Korea-U.S. joint military exercises into a broader framework of inter-Korean confidence-building and operational arms control through the Joint Military Committee.

- ***Complete withdrawal of remaining GPs from the DMZ***

Closing 11 GPs to restore the armistice is a tangible and initial achievement. Closing down 150 remaining North Korean and 50 South Korean sites in the DMZ and making the DMZ a complete peace zone is of great political and military significance. Therefore, it is an issue that the Joint Military Committee should continue to discuss for its full realisation of the DMZ.

- ***Agreement on the scope of the west sea peace zone and how to execute it***

Future negotiations between the two Koreas on the scope of the peace zone and how to execute it should proceed in a confidence- and peace- building manner. It is a requirement for the South Korean government that Pyongyang's likely requests be closely examined and Seoul's countermeasures to handle such requests skilfully need to be developed. Since the thorny issue in the September 19 Military Agreement has been pointed out to be the lack of internal consultation with stakeholders in the South Korean society, it is necessary that the South Korean government should thoroughly prepare to carry out the negotiation successfully by gathering and reflecting public and expert opinion in the internal policy deliberation process.

- ***Establishment of the South-North Joint Verification Committee***

The South-North Joint Verification Committee should be launched to conduct verification of the implementation performance of the September 19 military agreement. The inter-Korean joint inspection and verification committee will also have to discuss how to include the United Nations Command (UNC) because, until the armistice agreement is replaced by a peace treaty in the future, the UNC is a legally responsible body for the implementation and monitoring of the Armistice Agreement.

- ***South and North Korea (including UNC member states) to set up an advisory group on arms control and hold a regular meeting***

It is necessary to establish an inter-Korean arms control advisory group and hold a 1.5-track expert advisory meeting regularly to collect and utilise broad ideas for successful implementation of the September 19 military agreement, as well as to overcome differences in views on confidence building and arms control. The South and North Korean arms control advisory group should evaluate the performance of the first-phase operational arms control, identify supplementary measures to address the loopholes of the Military Agreement, consult the Joint Military Committee, study the issue of expanding and developing the second-phase operational arms control measures, and establish a system of recommendations to the South-North Joint Military Committee. It is also worth considering joining the Inter-Korean Arms Control Advisory Group with experts from the U.S. Forces Korea and the UNC. Only when these efforts are involved can we expect a virtuous cycle of denuclearisation and conventional arms control.

- ***A study on the application of the West Sea buffer zone to the North Korean Hwanghae-Province***

Since the West Sea Buffer Zone contains much of North Korea's land on the Hwanghae-Province and there has been no military constraints stipulated in the Military Agreements other than those on the West Sea Buffer Zone, the South-North Joint Military Committee should discuss ways to apply the same restrictions on artillery drills and deployment of artillery guns within the area in the Hwanghae-Province.

- ***Establishment of a Korea-U.S. arms control review committee and joint research on conventional arms control***

In order to further develop the September 19 Military Agreement system, governments of South Korea and the United States need to establish an arms control review committee. It should also launch joint research on conventional arms control between South Korea and the United States by utilising Track 1.5 and Track-2 experts. This is because the U.S.-North Korea nuclear negotiations and the inter-Korean conventional arms control negotiations will likely affect the operation and cohesiveness of the South Korea-U.S. alliance.

Prospects for Relationship between North Korea's Denuclearisation and the South-North Conventional Arms Control

Reducing conventional military tension and building confidence between the two Korean militaries must become more difficult in the North's nuclear era. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that conventional military threats and the possibility of military clashes will still remain on the Korean Peninsula, even if we assume that the U.S.-North Korean dialogue continues for successful denuclearisation. It is even more important to remember that the possibility of conventional conflict still remains high in the India vs. Pakistan case where the two countries achieved a balance of nuclear arsenal. Seen in this context, it was a meaningful attempt that the South Korean government approached the North Korean government to sign on and implement the September 19th Military Agreement in order to reduce and terminate the possibility of conventional military clashes and induce North Korea to concentrate on the denuclearisation talks with the United States.

However, it is not certain whether conventional arms control efforts between Seoul and Pyongyang could lead to successful US-DPRK talks for denuclearisation. Assuming that Pyongyang and Washington agree to strike a deal to achieve denuclearisation in one form ("a small deal" which is partial denuclearisation) or another ("a big deal" which is full and final dismantlement of all North Korean nuclear programme and weapons), Kim Jong-un may prefer conventional deterrent capabilities to nuclear deterrence. In this case, the North may not want to go forward toward more fundamental arms control such as arms reduction with the South. Even in the case of no progress in the denuclearisation talks, North Korea may not want further discussion about more implementation of the existing 9-19 Military Agreement. The sign of the latter case, that the North does not want to resume military talks with the South, has been observed recently.

In conclusion, it is expected that the North Korean military authority will meet a situation where Kim Jong-un faces a trade-off between conventional arms control and denuclearisation because he has to choose one of the two: conventional deterrence and nuclear deterrence for his own regime security. Considering two different cases in the above, it is necessary and sufficient for peace and stability for the two Koreas to implement the 9-19 Military Agreements to the full extent. To do so, it is necessary for the two Koreas to take supplementary measures through continuous dialogue in the Joint Military Committee to implement the 9-19 Military Agreement fully and successfully. To reduce tension and prevent military clashes by separating forces from each other, measures such as setting up a buffer zone and no fly zone alone are not so sufficient as to build a long and durable trust and peace. By engaging each other on all levels of contacts and communications, the two Koreas will be able to build long and trusting relationship.

In fact, a third era of confidence building and arms control on the Korean Peninsula has begun. Taking advantage of the September 19, 2018 Military Agreement, the two Koreas should continue to develop a comprehensive working partnership through confidence building and mutual exchanges and cooperation and joint work to build a peaceful relationship. Only then can we find a shortcut to establish a peaceful regime on the Korean Peninsula based on inter-Korean peaceful coexistence, which is conducive to the peaceful unification and complete denuclearisation in a long-term.

Endnotes

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This brief was written during his stay as Visiting Fellow at NUPI in the fall of 2019.



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