

THE IRAN DEAL AND KOREAN PENINSULA

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THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF Action (JCPOA) agreed between the P5+1/EU and Iran shows that the sides have displayed enormous political will and addressed all the issues connected with Iran's nuclear program as a package. The decision not to link the issue of Iran's nuclear program with regional issues was a wise one that enabled to reach agreement. JCPOA is a compromise with which the sides can live and cumulatively can lower the tensions around the "controversial" program.

The last 20 month marathon negotiations regarding the Iranian nuclear program have demonstrated once again the importance of dialogue and negotiations in addressing the delicate secu-

rity-related issues of common concern. However, judging from the US domestic reactions to the JCPOA, the Obama administration has an uphill battle to overcome a strong opposition from the US Congress. Much political capital will be needed in doing so. As the decade long negotiations on the issue have shown, and reflected in the text of the JCPOA, the prolonged negotiations have provided Iran with ample time to advance its nuclear program, including increasing the number and quality of its centrifuges, the level of uranium enrichment, building the heavy water reactor, etc., which, despite sanctions, have strengthened Iran's negotiating position.

After JCPOA was agreed last month, attention is now being turned to another equally important issue – DPRK's nuclear weapons program. Though open, frank talks would be important to jump start the stalled Six Party Talks, one should bear in mind that the DPRK's case is different since it already has a nuclear weapons program within which it has already conducted nuclear weapon tests and is reported to be working on miniaturizing the nuclear warhead. DPRK is not a threshold state. It is already a de facto nuclear weapon state. Therefore there is no question of limiting any "break-out time" as is the case with Iran. The blame game, which is being played out, especially on the part of the United States and the DPRK year in and year out, is not only unproductive and but even toxic. It is also a loss of time and opportunity to move forward, while DPRK's nuclear weapons program only advances. Therefore political will needs to be mustered on all sides. The negotiators cannot have it both ways: to press their own position and expect the other side to agree to it without getting anything in return. In negotiations there is always give and take, as was the case with the successful JCPOA. The reasoning that negotiating with the DPRK without preconditions would be rewarding its behavior is not convincing, historically and even logically, since careful study of the issues involved demonstrates that the blame for non-implementation of the earlier accords

cannot be attributed to one side only.

Tacit acknowledgment of the existence of DPRK's nuclear weapon program is needed, however difficult it may be for some of the parties. That is a reality. Today the sides need not cling to the negative leverages that they have been doing so for some time, but make use of positive ones, starting perhaps with moratoria on holding military exercises that always lead to increased tensions, mutual suspicion and re-cremations. The issues of recognition, ending the state of war, consideration

of conditions of sanctions relief, strict monitoring by independent third parties and other issues can be addressed as positive leverages. In order to make some movement towards resumption of the Six Party Talks, perhaps the sides could agree on freezing, during the period of negotiations, of the nuclear weapons component of DPRK's nuclear program. That would imply indirect acknowledgement of the program as it had been done in practice with regard to the program of another de facto nuclear state. Sounding out unofficial-

ly the possibility of resuming the Six Party Talks with positive incentives, for a change, could be a step in that direction.

At times views of the civil society provides the needed doze of reality. Perhaps the call of the participants of the Ulaanbaatar process, an inclusive Northeast Asian NGO association dedicated to the prevention of armed conflicts, on reducing nuclear threats through regional dialogue rather than escalating confrontation might be what is truly needed today. ■

Commentary to commemorate India's independence and 60 years of diplomatic relations

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LAND FAR-AWAY

By Gonchig GANBOLD

Ambassador-Appoint of Mongolia to India

BUT CLOSE TO THE HEARTS . . .

SOME 60 YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE the establishment of official diplomatic relations between Mongolia and India in December 1955 that further extended the ancient historical, cultural and spiritual links and ties between the two countries.

Mongolians revere India as a holy land where Lord Buddha was born and got enlightenment, besides seeing in it a 'mine' of knowledge. Ancient travelers tell tales of Mongolians studying at the Nalanda University. This spiritual link forms the basis for promoting close cooperative ties between the two countries, and the Indian side has expressed its readiness to provide scholarship to Mongolian students at this ancient in-

stitute of learning.

The 1973 Mongolia-Indian Joint Declaration that defined the basic principles of bilateral friendly relations and cooperation had been enriched several times extending bilateral cooperation and an all-embracing relationship with the conclusion of the Agreement on Friendly Relations and Cooperation of 1994, the 2008 Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership, and the 2015 Strategic Partnership Agreement. Today, more than 50 treaties and agreements are being successfully implemented between the two countries.

Mongolia and India have exchanged representatives at summit and other high levels. In 2009 the President of

Mongolia visited India and the Indian President visited Mongolia in 2011. And Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Mongolia in May this year, adding powerful impetus to further extending these deep-rooted ties and cooperation.

India consistently supported the process of transition to democracy and market economy, which began in Mongolia in 1990. The Indian Parliament, similarly like other legislatures in Asian countries, contributed to the drafting of Mongolia's first democratic Constitution.

Today quite several Indian companies are maintaining their business in Mongolia making substantial invest-