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U.S. like an unleashed wild tiger

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Doves in the Bush administration, like Secretary of State Colin Powell, seek international cooperative measures in U.S. foreign policies, but hawks, such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney, tend to depend on military power with little compromise posture.

This latter group has had strong influence in the government since the beginning of the Bush administration. The rise of hawks is ascribed to the fact that the United States has been intoxicated with the charm of power as a single dominant superpower since the end of Cold War.

The United States resembles an unleashed wild tiger. Indeed, it is quite powerful, but it is barbarous and rough in manner with little sense of responsibility as a hegemonic power in the international community.

However powerful the country may be, it does not possess cultural hegemony or the aura to be a true leader. Other nations are fearful of the United States, but they neither respect nor admire the nation as a natural leader whom they are willing to follow spontaneously.

U.S. handling of North Korea's development of nuclear weapons demonstrates its lack of leadership skills. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly presented evidence to North Korean on Oct 3 that the country had been developing nuclear weapons despite the 1994 Framework in which they agreed not to do so.

North Korea first denied this allegation, but surprisingly, on the following day, First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Joo candidly admitted that North Korea was developing not only nuclear weapons but also more powerful weapons, presumably chemical and biological weapons.

Kelly's finding was not news to Washington leaders: The Central Intelligence Agency has been providing them with information that North Korea was secretly developing nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, this open admission precipitated a heated debate on how to handle this issue between hawks and doves within the Bush administration. Consequently, it took 12 days for the administration to announce this news to public.

Since Washington is busy with the Iraqi issue, the doves so far have an advantage over the hawks: Washington is making efforts to establish a regional coalition aiming at making the Korean peninsula nuclear free zone rather than taking unilateral, military-oriented approach to solve this problem.

Bush believes that this is a golden opportunity to bring regional powers South Korea, Japan, China and Russia, on board led by the United States, and send a strong message to Kim Jong Il.

However, many hawkish advisers consider this to be only a temporary measure, insisting on the need for regime change, if necessary by unilateral action, to eliminate dangers and instability on the peninsula.

For them, the lesson of North Korea's outright violation of the 1994 agreement is that compromise means appeasement for North Koreans and the United States must have a gun in hand to force them to behave and comply with any international agreement.

Let's place ourselves in North Korea's position. The United States currently provides South Korea with a nuclear umbrella, 37,000 troops, and 100 sophisticated fighters, tipping the military power balance in advantage for South Korea over North Korea.

The United States demands that North Korea must not develop nuclear weapons even as it maintains several thousand nuclear warheads. It is just like saying, "Since smoking is bad for health, you must not smoke," while the advice giver smokes hundreds of strong cigarettes every day.

The Bush administration named North Korea as part of an axis of evil and declares the Bush Doctrine, approving preemptive strikes against any state sponsoring terrorism or hostile nation possessing weapons of mass destruction including chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons.

Anyone facing this situation would make every effort to defend his own country. Developing nuclear, and possibly more powerful, weapons is the ultimate result of this vicious circle. Nobody can blame North Korea alone; the United States must share equal responsibility for Pyongyang's adventurous approach.

A tough, unilateral approach with the willingness to use military force would only make the world more dangerous. On the other hand, a generous give-away approach would make North Koreans depend on others and will demand more and more whenever they face any difficulty at home.

The international community must stand firm and say, without any direct military threat, that North Korea must comply with any promise it has made and stand on its own feet. The United States, on the other hand, must reflect deeply on its own misconduct and fallacy of the Bush Doctrine, rather than pointing its fingers outwardly.

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