A central issue broached in this paper and touched on by other participants numerous times throughout the workshop was the appropriate approach to take regarding North Korean nuclear ambitions and its clandestine development programme. Should the North's efforts be regarded as a fait accompli or should efforts — either strenuous or modest — be expended to reverse the North's clandestine programme? Dr. Boutilier wondered whether threats of any sort were wise and suggested that the main concern ought to be the strengthening of the North's badly deteriorated (and deteriorating) economy since that was a major reason for the nuclear option in the first place. Some measure of internal stability was in everyone's interests.

In the discussion that followed the Boutilier paper, there was considerable interest in discussing how best to approach the Kim regime in North Korea. In particular, what combination of "carrots" and "sticks" would best achieve three important but perhaps incompatible objectives: (1) contain or even reverse the North Korean nuclear weapon programme; (2) promote stability on the peninsula (i.e., reduce and/or control the chance of conflict between North and South Korea); and (3) foster the smoothest possible integration of the North into a larger, South Korean-based state. Several participants agreed that it might be best to abandon any hope of forcing the Kim regime to undo its nuclear programme because such efforts were not only unlikely to succeed but could easily promote greater instability in the attempt. Aggressive efforts to force North Korea to renounce its nuclear programme could even precipitate war. Other participants were uncomfortable with the idea of permitting the Kim regime to flaunt the NPT and, in effect, suffer no penalty for defying international will.

***This basic conundrum structured many workshop discussions. The Kim regime was so resistant to outside pressure and so apparently volatile that any efforts to shape or constrain its behaviour could be very dangerous — as might be doing nothing. And doing nothing risked undermining the Non-Proliferation Treaty.*** It was very difficult — if not impossible — to gauge these two risks.

Most participants agreed that there was relatively little leverage available to the international community if it did decide to apply more serious pressure. An outright attack against the suspected North Korean nuclear facilities seemed to be out of the question. Larger scale conventional or nuclear attack seemed even less likely. That left sanctions of various levels of severity, official entreaties, or trade-offs of some kind (the "buy-out option").

Of course, North Korea already was very isolated from the rest of the world which made sanctions a dubious option, particularly given the regime's volatile nature. The Kim regime had thus far proven surprisingly resilient and no one knew what it could sustain in the way of additional