

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of CBRN Weapons

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This project will analyze one important difference between the US and China with regard to how they make their respective nuclear arms control policies. On the one hand, the US's approach is led by the president. On the other hand, China's nuclear arms control policy has been managed mostly by technocrats in the foreign ministry, the defense industry, and the military. By analyzing the contrasting approaches and its impact on progress in nuclear arms, this project calls on the Chinese president to be more directly involved in guiding China's nuclear arms control policy making while calling on the US president to persuade the Chinese counterpart to be more active in pushing China's nuclear arms control policy forward. This is an opportune time to do so because the two presidents are starting to build a closer personal relationship. Most importantly, as things have been stalled between the two countries on nuclear arms control cooperation for a long time, now is a crucial moment for both presidents to coordinate on a range of strategic security issues and provide strategic guidance on nuclear arms control policies in their respective countries. This would help break domestic bureaucratic barriers and organizational inertia to make real progress towards better nuclear arms control cooperation.

US-China Strategic Dialogue on DPRK

Lauren Hickok, Jonathan Miller

This project will focus on how US-China dialogue on North Korea can help bring about renewed talks on its nuclear weapons program and diplomatic de-escalation between the DPRK and its rivals. Of course, the simple answer is that this is an exercise in futility with the Six-Party Talks being dead and the North insisting that it will never give up its nuclear deterrent while the US maintains its "hostile policy". This project will analyze the "shift" - or lack there of - in China's policy on its northern neighbor and also point to why the timing is right for a creative solution led by Beijing and Washington. The recommended approach going forward will be a newly created multilateral dialogue that involves four parties (China, US, ROK and DPRK) - along with one permanent host: Mongolia. Ulaanbataar has a historically strong relationship with the DPRK and also has strong ties with the US, Korea and Japan. In fact, Mongolia has already been serving as host to renewed talks on the abduction issue between Japan and the DPRK. While removing Russia from the talks appears less problematic, there are significant issues with the displacement of Japan (weakening the hand of the US-ROK-Japan camp, potential backlash on US-JPN alliance). While Japan's security, and talks of a nuclear cascade, is also at stake with these talks, Tokyo was managing an uncomfortable tap-dance during the previous Six-Party Talks due to its dyadic approach (abduction issue and nuclear/missile threat). Tokyo already seems committed to approach the former bilaterally with the DPRK. On the surface, such an approach seems like a "net-plus" for the DPRK, but in the end it could help the US-ROK side by marginalizing extraneous issues and leveling off the North's criticisms that the talks are unbalanced. The project will briefly discuss the risks and benefits of such an approach and weave this in with any recent outcomes/news from the Obama-Xi summit.

Maritime Security – Recommendations from the Traditional and Non-Traditional view of Maritime Security in Southeast Asia

Traditional: Richard Heydarian, Benjamin Lelis, Daryll Saclag, Pete Yemc

Non-traditional: Nelson Cainghog, Maria Castronuevo, Chin-Hao Huang, Joycee Teodoro, Kathline Tolosa

This project seeks to address maritime security issues in Southeast Asia by focusing on the difficulties of the regional institutions from both the traditional security and non-traditional security lenses. The recommendations for changing the institutions to better address traditional security issues in Southeast Asia

are well-established; however, it becomes equally important for the regional institutions (as well as the actors involved) to recognize their own institutional and structural rigidity, and to implement mechanisms to prevent regional disagreements to conflate into regional conflicts. These “stop-gap” measures may serve to initiate interactions which could influence the greater institutional change and conflict resolution. Non-traditional security issues, while being overlooked at many levels, may also present opportunities for engagement, much like Track 2 discussions, which can foster relationships and begin to create agreements which can filter up to the Track 1 level. As with all factors in the layered maritime security in Southeast Asia, actions taken to address traditional and non-traditional security will both complement and hinder each other. Regional institutions must be prepared to address this relationship as well.

Energy Security in the Arctic

Prashanth Parameswaran, Aiko Shimizu

As climate change accelerates, the Arctic will become a crucial region for energy security because natural resources, such as oil and gas that had previously not been accessible will become exploitable. Today, most Arctic issues, including energy, are dealt with regionally, especially by the five countries that are littoral to the Arctic Ocean. However, in the past few years, non-Arctic states, including those that are not located near the region, such as Japan and China have become interested in the region because climate change has created new opportunities and challenges. These non-Arctic states have lobbied for obtaining observer status in the Arctic Council. Just last week, China, India, Italy, Japan, ROK, and Singapore gained permanent observer seats in the Council. This is encouraging given the fact that the Asia-Pacific currently lacks a coherent Arctic energy policy. There is no doubt that the region will become important in the next few decades as countries scramble for limited energy supplies and turn to alternative sources that are outside of the regions where they have traditionally turned to for energy sources. There should, therefore, be increased coordination among the non-Arctic Asia-Pacific states to work with the Arctic states to achieve energy security.

Modernization of Conventional Military Platforms

Jiun Bang, Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi, Harry Kazianis, Chriatian Laluna, Martina Ucnikova

This project promotes the establishment of a Track 1.5 Study Group that addresses overlooked questions regarding the advancement of conventional military technology. The objectives of the dialogue are three-fold: promote mutual transparency and negate media sensationalism, explain operational aims and rationale of new weapons systems acquisitions, and minimize potential impact of maritime disputes attributing to kinetic conflict. In recent years, territorial tensions, arms competition arising from modernization of indigenous defense industries, and mutual distrust, miscalculation and misinterpretation have increased the potential of armed conflict in the region. To alleviate these risks, it is vital to establish a Track 1.5 Study Group that discusses the development of conventional weapons systems, military expenditures, military-level dialogues, and military exercises. The aim is to offer an opportunity for states to forward explanations and rationale to their defense policies and iron out miscalculations and misinterpretations. Produced outlines from this study group can then be forwarded to the government level, such as the ARF, EAS, or the Shangri-la Dialogue.