

Key Findings
18th CSCAP WMD Study Group Meeting
Tokyo, Japan, July 7, 2014

The 18th meeting of the Study Group on Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD SG) of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) was held in Tokyo, Japan on July 7, 2014, back-to-back with the 6th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ARF ISM/NPD). It brought together approximately 60 participants from 19 countries from throughout the Asia-Pacific and beyond, including several ISM/NPD participants and Pacific Forum CSIS Young Leaders. All attended in their private capacities. The meeting examined recent developments in nonproliferation and disarmament, the Nuclear Security Summit process, implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, and the role of strategic trade controls and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Key findings from this meeting include:

The ARF needs to continue its move from the “raising awareness” stage to the “implementation” stage when it comes to dealing with issues of non-proliferation and disarmament in the Asia-Pacific region. Nuclear forensic workshops and 1540 seminars are positive steps in this direction.

The outlook appears bleak for the 2015 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) because of tensions between the West and Russia over the Ukraine crisis (which inhibits new arms-control initiatives) and continued frustration by non-nuclear-weapon states (which allege lack of progress toward nuclear disarmament). The delays in convening the promised dialogue on the establishment of a Middle East WMD-free zone present another hurdle.

There is hope, however. Much has been achieved in the interim NPT review process, most procedural foundations have been laid out, and considerable progress has been made in and outside the NPT review process, including toward the universalization of the Additional Protocol (AP), strategic trade controls, nuclear safety and security cooperation, and increasing endorsement of PSI principles and objectives.

Leadership is key to a successful 2015 RevCon and the ARF should encourage the NAM to select a strong RevCon Chair in a timely manner. The ARF ISM/NPD should highlight or prioritize those action plan items of particular relevance to the Asia-Pacific, express its strong support for the AP as a requirement for prospective nuclear energy users, and consider earlier CSCAP proposals such as the establishment of an ASEAN Reprocessing and Enrichment Free Zone, as contained in the CSCAP Memorandum on Promoting the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy:

<http://www.cscap.org/uploads/docs/Memorandums/CSCAP%20Memorandum%20No%2017%20--%20Promoting%20the%20Peaceful%20Use%20of%20Nuclear%20Energy.pdf>

The movement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear-use (which promotes getting to nuclear disarmament quickly) is at odds with the P-5 approach (which considers an incremental approach toward zero as more practical). Work is needed to bridge this gap. As a first step, the P-5 should be more transparent on their disarmament activities, including by filing annual reports.

Dialogue is critical to promote denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The Six-Party Talks 2005 Joint Statement should be the basis of negotiations, along with UNSCR 1718, 1874, 2087, and 2094. DPRK return to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state must remain the primary objective of the Six-Party Talks or any future dialogue. Asian states should also consider describing consequences in advance of a potential fourth DPRK nuclear test.

The Nuclear Security Summit process has helped raise awareness of the threat of nuclear terrorism and the need for enhanced nuclear security. However, the nuclear security regime remains fragmented and underdeveloped, and its future is uncertain. A comprehensive systematic approach to nuclear governance is necessary. The ARF should encourage the conclusion of a framework agreement to unite currently disparate and loosely-defined nuclear security conventions, rules, and standards.

The Nuclear Security Centers of Excellence (CoE) in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and (soon) China can elevate understanding of nuclear security and provide education and training to professionals in the field. CSCAP and ARF should work to institutionalize nuclear governance in Asia by improving coordination among the CoE to avoid duplication of efforts and take advantage of economies of scale and comparative advantages of each.

The value of UNSCR 1540 is broadly recognized. The ARF should continue to promote 1540 Information-sharing, identify best practices, promote National Action Plans, and designate points of contact. As indicated in a forthcoming CSCAP Memorandum, greater effort is needed at both the national and regional levels to implement the Resolution. These include: identification of regional champions; private sector outreach; regional incentives for cooperation; a clearinghouse for regional expertise sharing and assistance; the development of standards and criteria for domestic proliferation controls and tangible shared regional objectives; a forum for regional coordination among concerned agencies on trade control violations, suspicious transactions, and best practices; and common standards for trade that will both help facilitate legitimate trade and discourage illicit trade.

The ARF is strongly encouraged to continue its examination of the CSCAP Memorandum on "Guidelines for Managing Trade of Strategic Goods," which provides key guidelines to implement strategic trade controls. By making trade of sensitive goods and items more secure, such controls can serve as trade-enhancing mechanisms.

The EU control list provides an invaluable starting point for managing trade in strategic goods. It is already used widely in the region, is easy to understand and implement, and incorporates the lists from all four multilateral export control regimes. Its adoption, with individual national modifications as appropriate, will facilitate faster national implementation by reducing the administrative burden of identifying, categorizing strategic goods, and ensuring acceptability by other states.

Strategic trade management principles could be integrated into the ASEAN Single Window to promote better cross-border coordination. The CSCAP Export Controls Experts Group (XCXG) is exploring the benefits, risks, and costs of such development in an attempt to improve the management of trade of strategic goods in Asia.

Misunderstandings about the purpose and operation of the PSI persist, despite growing popularity of the Initiative among regional states. In-depth analysis of what PSI is and is not, as well as what it entails, should enhance regional acceptance of its principles and objectives.

Greater awareness of the efforts of individual ARF member states in coming into compliance with various international NPD protocols could provide useful insights and lessons learned that would be helpful in facilitating greater regional awareness, acceptance, and compliance. The efforts of the Philippine government, as highlighted in this WMD SG session, could serve as one such model.

As the 6th ARF ISM/NPD begins its focus on the disarmament pillar, we call its attention to CSCAP Memorandum No 19 on the "Reduction and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" produced in Feb, 2012, which lays out a set of principles to guide the process of moving toward a nuclear weapon-free world. It provides a series of recommendations for consideration by the ARF ISM/NPD, including promoting and supporting an improved international normative-legal-enforcement framework; developing a wider understanding of the disarmament process through education and public awareness; strengthening the role of IAEA and the International Monitoring System of the CTBT, while taking and supporting measures to enable the CTBT's entry into force; participating in good faith in FMCT negotiations; taking steps to de-legitimize the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; making the proliferation of special nuclear materials an international crime and developing the means to prevent non-state actors from acquiring nuclear weapons, pending their total elimination; and prohibiting the deployment and use of space based weapons. CSCAP Memorandum No 19 is available on the CSCAP Web Site:
<http://www.cscap.org/uploads/docs/Memorandums/CSCAP%20Memorandum%20No%2019%20--%20Reduction%20and%20elimination%20of%20nuclear%20weapons.pdf>

For more information, please contact CSCAP WMD Study Group co-chairs Ralph Cossa [RACPacForum@cs.com] or Nguyen Nam Duong [nd@namduong.info]. These findings reflect the view of the seminar chairmen; this is not a consensus document. A full summary of the workshop proceedings will be available upon request shortly.