

**Fourth Meeting of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)  
Study Group on Non-proliferation and Disarmament (NPD) in the Asia Pacific  
Hanoi, Vietnam, Oct. 25-27, 2017**

**Key Findings**

The Pacific Forum CSIS, with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, held the Fourth Meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on Nonproliferation and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific in Hanoi, Vietnam on Oct. 26-27. About 45 senior scholars, officials, and Pacific Forum Young Leaders attended in their private capacity. Off-the-record discussions focused on recent developments in nonproliferation, nuclear technology, and nuclear security in Asia; approaches to and sanctions against North Korea; implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC); and non-proliferation and disarmament (NPD) capacity building. Key findings from this meeting include:

More than a decade after UN Security Council Resolution 1540 came into force there are still persistent gaps in implementing measures to control access to goods and technologies associated with weapons of mass destruction and related delivery systems. The impact of new, disruptive technologies such as biological weapons and the evolution of life sciences must be considered in approaches to nonproliferation.

A persistent weakness with UNSCR 1540 implementation has been the process of matching requests for assistance from recipient countries with offers of assistance from donor countries. The 1540 Committee is working to reduce this weakness by providing assistance to states in developing implementation plans that include specific capability requests and providing more guidance for those states offering assistance.

The recent UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (nuclear ban treaty) has a range of potential policy implications. These include highlighting the difference between opposing disarmament models – a step-by-step approach to disarmament versus an outright nuclear weapon ban (or their use). Additionally, there are legal and practical implications for the states that ratify the ban, particularly if they have a close relationship with nuclear weapons states or are dependent on a nuclear umbrella.

The nuclear ban treaty may help establish a disarmament norm, but there is disagreement whether the treaty should be broad to help establish a community around banning nuclear weapons, or be more specific and technical to give nuclear-armed states a framework for facilitating disarmament.

The UN sanctions regime against North Korea has expanded and now includes broader restrictions on entire classes of goods. Separately, the US Department of Treasury (OFAC) has been given a major mandate to sanction DPRK-related financial transactions. This means that banks and other financial institutions must now follow US rules about sanctioned transactions.

Amid DPRK threats to conduct an atmospheric nuclear blast, participants agreed that such an action is completely unacceptable and in violation of the comprehensive test ban. It was suggested that Russia and China convene an emergency UNSC meeting to discuss in advance what sanctions would be applied to DPRK if it conducts an atmospheric nuclear test.

A significant difference was identified between implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). With the BWC, not only is there lack of a verification mechanism, but there has also been little effort to develop a comprehensive approach to treaty implementation. Implementation of the CWC has been much more systematic with the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons taking specific measures to promote implementation with separate departments established to provide targeted guidance and assistance.

Effective treaty implementation requires that interested parties provide services to determine necessary measures for each state. There is a strong link between implementation, nonproliferation, and capacity building. National legislation can help link to nonproliferation by providing a basis for regulation and for operationalizing the national stakeholders to at least cover initial measures.

In terms of their impact on safety and security requirements, land-based Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) are similar to large-size nuclear reactors, but floating SMRs may have a major impact on nuclear security governance. To date, “3S [Safety, Security, Safeguards] by design” has been a failure. But SMRs, which are still at an early stage of development, provide an opportunity to integrate 3S into the design.

There are regulatory gaps in handling SMRs. Existing treaties and conventions do not fully address the unique safety and security issues associated with floating nuclear plants, yet the initial deployment of floating nuclear power plants is expected by 2020.

Regulatory issues related to floating SMRs are a prime opportunity, specifically for ASEANTOM, which should work on establishing regulations to ensure they are safe and secure. ASEANTOM should work with the IAEA and vendors to ensure regulations are developed and the 3S’ are integrated into the design before the reactors becoming operational.

The most important aspect of implementation is political will – the local recognition that something needs to be done. Countries in Southeast Asia should think about how to create the capacity internally. For example, in anticipation of floating reactors being introduced in the region, Southeast Asian countries should devise a regulatory framework for them. This would be an excellent opportunity for ASEANTOM to establish standards for the region that could be adopted by other regions.

Ensuring procedures for utilizing equipment provided are included in the capacity building process is critical. Providing equipment and training without an equal focus on integration wastes resources. Capacity building must be contextual and meaningful to the local situation. This approach of sustainable capacity building has been integrated into both the IAEA and the OPCW implementation efforts.

Countries have different perceptions of the proliferation threat. In Southeast Asia, much of the focus has been on economic development. It takes time for the political/security community to come together, speak with one voice, and understand the security requirements of the region. ASEAN partners must integrate what ASEAN sees as important and focus on developing mutually beneficial outcomes.

With the maturation of the ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on NPD, it is important to focus priorities for future activities on the implementation of the full range of nonproliferation commitments and obligations. Careful consideration should be given to shaping the ARF Work Plan on NPD to clearly outline the steps required to implement specific obligations while identifying projects that facilitate effective implementation and take advantage of the wide range of capacity building assistance that is available.

*For more information, please contact the NPD Study Group co-chairs Carl Baker [carl@pacforum.org] or Nguyen Thiep [thiep@mofa.gov.vn]. These findings reflect the view of the co-chairs and is not a consensus document. A full summary of the workshop proceedings is being prepared and will be available upon request shortly.*