

**Sixth Meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on
Nonproliferation and Disarmament in the Asia Pacific
Bali, Indonesia, April 7, 2019
Key Findings**

USCSCAP and CSCAP Vietnam co-chaired the sixth meeting of the CSCAP Study Group on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (NPD) in the Asia Pacific. The meeting took place in Bali, Indonesia on April 7, 2019, on the front-end of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (ARF ISM on NPD). Approximately 45 senior scholars and officials and Pacific Forum Young Leaders attended, all in their private capacity, including a number of ARF ISM participants. Off-the-record discussions focused on recent developments in nonproliferation and disarmament, including the impact of the termination of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty; Korean Peninsula denuclearization in the wake of the US-DPRK Hanoi Summit; nuclear governance in Southeast Asia; and nuclear disarmament collaboration between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear states on nuclear risk reduction. Key findings from this meeting include:

The current strategic nuclear landscape in Asia is worrisome. The international security environment has continued to deteriorate, including among major nuclear-armed states (especially between the United States and Russia). It is unclear if there is enough political will in both capitals to extend the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

While the group did not attempt to determine the specifics regarding Russian or US compliance with the provisions of the INF, there was general agreement that the significant change in the security environment since the INF Treaty was signed in 1987 was a major factor in its demise. Any subsequent agreement needs to be multilateral and involve all key players including China, India, Pakistan, and Iran given the growing proliferation of these systems. There was skepticism that such a multilateral deal could be struck given the current international environment and reluctance of other missile-capable states to come on board.

Advances in weapons capability including the development of increasingly sophisticated missile defense systems and hypersonic missiles further complicated the process. There was a broader concern that the evolving major power competition and expansion of nuclear and missile capabilities made future arms control agreements more difficult.

Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of progress on Korean Peninsula denuclearization and the lack of specific details regarding how the Hanoi Summit ended without producing an agreement on next steps in the process. The fact that negotiations had not broken down completely and that both sides appeared willing to continue dialogue was encouraging, as was the continued absence of provocative actions.

A step-by-step approach toward denuclearization seems to be the most promising provided there is agreement in advance on a mutually acceptable desired end state, and a clearer definition of what constitutes “complete denuclearization.”

South Korea's role as an "honest broker" was debated given its critical interest in the outcome, as was the role of non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) in the denuclearization process. It was noted that South Korea has recently characterized its role a facilitator. Some argued that a cooperative threat reduction approach toward Korean Peninsula denuclearization would be useful.

Nuclear governance in Southeast Asia shows promising signs of progress, including the establishment of ASEANTOM and the strengthening of SEANWFZ. However, even with such progress, there remain significant challenges, including difficulty establishing safety norms and a decentralized model of establishing expertise.

Since being established in 2013 ASEANTOM has had an important role in coordinating bilateral and multilateral cooperation among ASEAN member states in promoting capacity building by facilitating nuclear security border exercises and enhancing emergency preparedness and response,

ASEANTOM presents potential as a broader nuclear security mechanism. It has served a very useful function for ASEAN member states by becoming a focal point for regional engagement with the IAEA and facilitating better coordination among national nuclear regulatory agencies.

SEANWFZ provides a potentially robust legal framework for managing nuclear safety and possibly security (which it presently does not) in Southeast Asia. A comprehensive institutional framework exists but requires coordination between ASEAN community pillars and sectors.

The fact that several ASEAN members states are not party to key safety and security conventions and treaties prevents full compliance with nuclear safety and security requirements in Southeast Asia. National policy frameworks on nuclear safety and security culture are fragmented and there is a lack of Nuclear Security Support Centers of Excellence in the region.

There is significant potential for enhanced nuclear safety and security engagement between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia through the existing nuclear security centers of excellence.

A game changer for nuclear energy utilization in Southeast Asia would be a decision to develop a nuclear power program using small modular reactors, especially if it involved floating reactors in the South China Sea which could pose safety and security concerns.

The trust gap between nuclear and non-nuclear states is a serious problem which is inherent to the current system of arms control and disarmament. Development of technological solutions to support verification of disarmament is a key way to resolve the trust gap – both by strengthening trust in disarmament, and by allowing non-nuclear states to be involved.

The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) is a unique way for non-nuclear states to get involved in resolving disarmament and verification challenges without violating NPT obligations. A concern was raised that involving a non-governmental organization in disarmament verification could result in the leakage of sensitive information.

For more information, please contact NPD Study Group co-chair Carl Baker [Carl@pacforum.org]. These findings reflect the view of the study group chair and is not a consensus document. A full summary of the workshop proceedings is being prepared and will be available upon request shortly.