

**CSCAP Nonproliferation and Disarmament Study Group Meeting
Putrajaya, Malaysia, April 17-18, 2016
Key Findings**

The second meeting of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) Study Group on Nonproliferation and Disarmament (NPD) was held in Putrajaya on April 17-18, 2016. The approximately 40 participants included representatives from CSCAP member committees and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM/NPD) along with 10 Pacific Forum CSIS Young Leaders. All attended in their private capacities. The group examined recent developments in nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear technology. Specific focus was given to recent developments on the Korean Peninsula and to a review of the ARF Work Plan on NPD, discussing future study group priorities and focusing on capacity building to strengthen the nonproliferation regime. Key findings included:

There was a shared concern that the current international political climate could seriously jeopardize the accomplishments achieved in arms control. The significant increase in the number of new nuclear weapon systems, the introduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, the development of advanced anti-ballistic missile defense systems, and the deployment of new missile systems have created increased concern that the current arms control approach is failing, which could lead to the collapse of several arms control treaties.

Participants agreed on the necessity of additional work and efforts in strengthening nonproliferation and arms control regimes. Track II dialogues and trust-building measures (notifications, better communication channels, data exchanges, self-restraint from provocative activities, etc.) as well as steps to reduce nuclear ambiguity and confrontation were seen as the best ways to resolve the current international political impasse.

The inability to agree on a final document during the 2015 Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference was a serious sign of a deeper rift between nuclear weapons states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS). The dramatic deterioration of relations between Russia and the US/West together with the lack of progress and commitment toward establishing a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone significantly contributed to the failure. Russia and the West need to move beyond political differences to build upon their mutual commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament.

There is a growing lack of confidence in the sustainability of the NPT. States under the US nuclear umbrella are concerned about the credibility of the deterrence regime, an increasing number of NNWS are becoming frustrated with the lack of progress on disarmament, and several nuclear-armed states are expanding arsenals.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran is a significant milestone, demonstrating the value of perseverance and multilateral diplomacy. However, there is still a great deal of skepticism about the domestic acceptance of the deal in the US, Iran, and elsewhere. Some participants considered the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as pivotal in the ultimate success or failure of the deal.

Despite the absence of the Russian Federation, the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit was considered successful in raising the level of awareness and understanding on nuclear security, persuading countries to make stronger high-level commitments to enhancing protection of nuclear and radioactive materials, and improving coordination among several key international agencies in combating smuggling. The ARF and CSCAP need to examine ways to build upon this cooperation at the regional level.

The recently passed UN Security Council Resolution 2270 will make it significantly more difficult for the DPRK to engage in normal trading activities and will impose new requirements on its trading partners to evaluate transactions, in an attempt to halt the further development of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems. The objective is behavior change, not regime change.

There is a serious impasse over prioritizing Korean Peninsula denuclearization versus a peace treaty. While it remains important to understand the different views, the general lack of trust and the enormous differences in perspectives will require innovative thinking to move the process forward. In this context, there seems little prospect for the resumption of Six-Party Talks in the near future despite the desirability of such dialogue.

Current DPRK preconditions for denuclearization discussions, including a US-DPRK Peace Treaty and a withdrawal of US forces, could provide incentive for DPRK neighbors to move toward the acquisition of their own nuclear weapons in the absence of a US nuclear umbrella. More discussion is needed on the role of extended deterrence in promoting regional stability and its impact on proliferation and disarmament.

There remains an urgent need to move toward implementation of key nonproliferation and disarmament treaties and implementing mechanisms, including UNSCR 1540, in the Asia-Pacific region. All ARF member states should be encouraged to accede to the key implementing mechanisms for enhancing nuclear safety and security and preventing the spread of strategic goods and technologies to nonstate actors.

A review of the ARF Work Plan on Nonproliferation and Disarmament reveals that past efforts have focused almost exclusively on nuclear issues centered on nonproliferation and nuclear security. There is also a significant need to control the use and spread of sensitive biological, chemical, and radiological materials. ASEAN, given its role as the “driver” of the ARF, should consider expanding its Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) into a WMD-free zone and/or a Reprocessing and Enrichment-Free Zone to further raise awareness of the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and set high standards.

Most previous ARF workshops have focused on raising awareness. Future workshops should expand their agenda to include building capacity and provide practical activities such as exercises or pilot projects. The last ARF workshop was held in September 2015; no other workshops are scheduled. The following topics were discussed as potential ideas for future workshops: spent fuel management, including study on the feasibility and desirability of regional spent fuel storage or a regional fuel bank; handling and transportation of radioactive materials; regional response to a nuclear incident (including possible table top exercises); implementation of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials 2005 Amendment; nuclear security culture; strategic trade control commodity identification training; a world Customs Organization workshop on Authorized Economic Operators; SEANWFZ Protocol for NWS; and a pilot project between NWS and NNWS on verification mechanisms for disarmament.

Participants emphasized the necessity to continue working on institutionalizing nuclear governance in Asia, especially by improving coordination among the Nuclear Security Centers of Excellence, to avoid duplication of efforts and take advantage of economies of scale and comparative advantages of each center.

Regional coordination in the regulatory management of nuclear facilities is increasingly important in Asia. While ASEANTOM is an important first step in this area there remains a significant amount of work to improve this coordination process.

Disarmament education remains an important goal for helping to reconcile the compromise between disarmament and nonproliferation. It is important to understand their respective expectations and to find ways to bridge the gaps between these mutually dependent goals.

The humanitarian consequences initiative lost considerable momentum following its inability to influence the outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. While many remain committed to its goals, the group has struggled with finding a common approach to persuading governments and the general public of the need for urgent action. The difficulty (perhaps even impossibility) of getting to zero should not deter efforts to move toward zero and a continued assessment of actions that undermine or support this goal.

CSCAP Memorandums covering nonproliferation, management of trade of strategic goods, UNSCR 1540, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy [<http://www.cscap.org/index.php?page=memoranda>] and the *CSCAP Handbook on Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Asia-Pacific* [<http://www.cscap.org/uploads/docs/WMDSGReports/CSCAP%20WMD%20Handbook%20final%201%20Dec%202010.pdf>] provide specific recommendations and background information that could prove useful to ARF member states and others interested in nonproliferation and disarmament.

For more information, please contact CSCAP WMD Study Group co-chair Ralph Cossa [Ralph@pacforum.org]. 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.