

Session 2: Nuclear Weapons States v. Non-Nuclear Weapons States

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Summary

The moderator, Dr. Lee Jung Hoon, began by noting that the 2010 NPT Review Conference had called attention to a host of issues that pitted the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) against the Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS), calling special attention to 1) the perception that the NWS – the US and Russia in particular – needed to reduce their stockpiles, and 2) the need to advance the sharing of nuclear energy (the benefits for the NNWS). The NWS / NNWS conflict had already permeated a number of forums: Dr. James Walsh mentioned the inactivity at the Conference on Disarmament (for a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty), and the lack of progress on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

During his initial presentation, Henry Sokolsi from the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center argued that the two presumptions related by Dr. Lee were exactly the two issues that caused proliferation problems in general. He suggested that calls for the two Cold War powers to take further concrete action to completely disarm stood at odds with the true intent of the NPT, and now served as little more than political cover for other states to take no action. Dr. Walsh carried this logic out, predicting that the refusal of China and France to further reduce their stockpiles would become an issue at the upcoming 2015 RevCon. Returning to Mr. Sokolsi, he suggested that the second presumption – that NNWS were entitled to the full benefits of nuclear energy – had created a loophole ripe for exploitation, with North Korea diverting those technologies and resources it had obtained via the NPT bargain. For Dr. Etel Solingen, the issue wasn't 'how' but 'why.' She suggested that nuclear weapons were attractive as instruments for regime survival. The pitting of NWS and NNWS

was in some ways a misnomer, for only a select group of NNWS (those with inward-looking economic tendencies) were likely to pursue the weapons anyway.

While each of the panelists had differing focuses on how to reduce the conflict between the NWS and the NNWS, there were thematic links. Dr. Solingen examined the differing strategies that the international community has employed – including positive inducements and sanctions. The major issue appeared to be coordination: in both enforcement (as in other panels, China’s commitment to taking action to stem North Korea was called into question), but in ideology (with the NWS often disagreeing on the proper mix of action to take). Dr. Walsh’s suggestion for stronger institutions seemed to follow this same logic. Additionally, he suggested that the existing nuclear bargain needed to deemphasize the role of nuclear energy, in essence shifting from a nuclear-to-nuclear tradeoff between the NWS and the NNWS. This was a point Mr. Sokolsi agreed on, even though his argument was more drastic – to remove the ‘inalienable right’ altogether.

Overall, the panelists painted a rather grim image of the stalemate that persists between the NWS and the NNWS. Drastic change is necessary – if not to the incentive structure, than to the recipient parties, or perhaps to the fundamental bargain itself.

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