

Panel: De Facto Nuclear Weapon States and the Non-proliferation Treaty Regim (Regency Room)

Date/Time: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 / 14:00-15:15

Talking Points for: Manpreet Sethi, Project Leader on Nuclear Security, Centre for Air Power Studies

There is a difference between the NPT and the non proliferation regime. The NPT is widely considered the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. However, the regime itself encompasses much more than just this treaty of 1970 and is more multi-dimensional. The NPT is, in a sense, already as universal as it can get in its present format. It has a total membership of 189 states and there are only four states that are not members of the treaty. The reason these states are out of the treaty is because the NPT settled on an arbitrary date for qualifying a NWS. States that had conducted a nuclear test before 01 Jan 1967 were recognised as NWS and by that rigid definition there is no scope for recognition of states other than the five who had developed their nuclear arsenals before that date even though all of these four do have nuclear weapons.

The presentation will focus on three specific questions:

1. Is presence of de facto NWS really the “main and enduring challenge” facing the NPT today?
2. Is membership of NPT a sufficient guarantee of compliance to non-proliferation?
3. How can de facto NWS be accommodated within the NPT?

Problems confronting the NPT go well beyond the existence of the de facto NWS. Many of the challenges to the treaty arise out of its inherent inequity and will have to be settled by the members. Removal of the inequity through steps towards nuclear disarmament would, in fact, provide an opportunity for the inclusion of the de facto NWS.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.