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**Panel:** Nonproliferation

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The doomsday clock is set at 3 minutes to midnight in 2015. It was five minutes to midnight in 2012. What was the reason of this difference?

A few days ago we heard another gloomy news from the Chinese experts that North Korea may have up to 20 warheads, as well as enough weapons-grade uranium to double that number within a year.

From today at New York time, however, the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT is held until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May at UN headquarters in New York.

Our international community has made great efforts in achieving three pillars (nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy) of the NPT since the previous 2010 NPT RevCon, particularly focusing on the issues of modernization of nuclear weapons and reducing the role of nuclear weapons in military operation and security policy.

However, in Northeast Asia, the political environment is not favorable to the three pillars of the NPT. Because of the survival of Geopolitics, Russia is hedging between South and North Korea. North Korea is always going against the efforts of international community by continuously modernizing its nuclear weapons and by enhancing the role of nuclear weapons in its security policy. Therefore, my today’s talk will be focused on the proliferation risk posed by North Korea.

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

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To better understand the risk of nuclear North Korea, we should pay great attention to some interesting observations.

- North Korea is risk taking entity in nature. North Korea is good at intentionally taking risk and instability, and even enjoys the risk and instability.
- North Korea is good at dominating the escalation of tensions, making good use of asymmetrical vulnerability of South Korea to any military provocation.
- Human factors and the change of mind-sets of the supreme leaders worsens the instability of the Korean peninsula
- North Korea’s preference of countervalue strategy to counterforce strategy will be serious threat to human security of China, Japan and South Korea.
- International community should pay great attention to possible proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials from North Korea to non-State actors and vice versa.
- There must be international regime to cope with management of current stockpile of fissile material which complements the negotiation on Fissile Material Cutting-off Treaty.

When considering human security as well as humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, the intimate cooperation among China, Japan and South Korea is imperative. China should also take into consideration 1) NK’s countervalue strategy, 2) minimization of humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, 3) minimization of radiological impact on mainland China, and 4) proliferation of miniaturized nuclear weapons (like uranium gun-type atomic bomb) and smuggled nuclear materials to the terrorists in China.

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