

Panel: A Nuclear North Korea: Nonproliferation Issues and Beyond (Regency Room)

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 19, 2013 / 14:00-15:15

Talking Points for: Lee Jung-Hoon, Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University

North Korea's third nuclear test on February 12th not only challenges most blatantly the international nonproliferation effort, but also throws off any prospect for improved inter-Korean relations as South Korea braces for the advent of a new government. What is more, Pyongyang warns of further nuclear tests and missile launches within the year. The implication for the international nonproliferation regime is most serious. In fact, it would not be an understatement to say that the actions of North Korea are a manifest demonstration of the failures of the nonproliferation regime. Until the international community comes up with better measures of enforcement, the nonproliferation efforts will not be able to cope with the real problem-makers – the rogue states – like North Korea. The international community's inability to contain North Korea unfortunately has compelled South Korea to discuss military options to offset North Korea's asymmetric capabilities. This discussion ranges widely from the full participation in the U.S. MD network to some form of a nuclear deterrent, currently absent except for the extended deterrence provided by U.S. nuclear umbrella. This is not good news for the nonproliferation regime. But with national survival at stake, these discussions are unavoidable for South Korea.

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