

How Viable Are Nuclear Weapons Free Zones?

- Session:** Grand Ballroom 1
Date/Time: February 20, 2013 / 14:00-15:15
- Moderator:** William Potter, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies
- Speakers:** Emiliano Buis, Non-proliferation for Global Security Foundation
Chun Chaesung, Seoul National University
Peter Hayes, Nautilus Institute, RMIT University
Ta Minh Tuan, Office of the Government, Vietnam
- Rapporteur:** Kristine Bergstrom, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Session Sketch

William C. Potter, Director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, opened the discussion by pointing out that in light of recent progress in creating new Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs), it is not surprising that a number of additional zones have been proposed.

Emiliano Buis, Professor and Researcher at the Non-proliferation for Global Security Foundation, noted that NWFZs compliment the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, they are regional, and they contain protocols that commit countries to not deploy nuclear weapons in the region. But NWFZs are merely a means toward the elimination of nuclear weapons and not an end, they lack practical enforcement practices, the geographical scope is very limited, and some countries preserve the right to use nuclear weapons in NWFZs in certain circumstances. In order to function, NWFZs have to be naturally created, multilateral, and global, concluded Dr. Buis.

Chun Chaesung, Associate Professor at Seoul National University, noted that there are certain assets that can create the conditions for a NWFZ: Japan's three Non-Nuclear Principles of not possessing, not producing, and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons; the Joint

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Declaration of South and North Korea on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; the United Nations' recognition of Mongolia's self-declared nuclear-weapon-free status. However, there are serious harmful elements to take into account as well, including North Korea's manufacturing of nuclear weapons; rising voices for nuclear armaments in South Korea and Japan; the geo-strategic competition between the United States and China; and the aggravating relationship between China and Japan. Under these conditions, concluded Dr. Chun, the prospect for reaching an agreement for complete NWFZ is quite moderate.

Peter Hayes, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Nautilus Institute at RMIT University made the point that considering the need to reduce the risk of Taiwan Strait-induced United States-China nuclear use; the need to moderate the Sino-Japanese conflict axis and the potential for Japanese nuclear weapons; as well as the need to set South Korea up so that it remains non-nuclear in the long-run, there is only one framework that can manage the cross-cutting interests of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapons states, and that's a NWFZ. But to get there, there is a need for a comprehensive security settlement that includes the termination of the state of war, creation of a permanent council on security to monitor the agreement, a mutual declaration of no hostile intent, provisions of assistance for nuclear and other types of energy, termination of sanctions, and the creation of a NWFZ. If North Korea agrees to such conditions, it would be possible to make room for the country to enter the NWFZ, concluded Dr. Hayes.

Ta Minh Tuan, Assistant to the Deputy Prime Minister in the Office of the Government, Vietnam, made the case for NWFZs, but pointed out that there are four conditions to their success: the treaty must be comprehensive; each party must willingly legislate on issues that strengthens the treaty; a regional organization must take action in case of violations; and nuclear-weapon states must respect the zone.

Dr. Potter wrapped up the discussion by pointing out that most treaties are far from perfect, so it is important to seize on the opportunities for NFWZs as they appear.

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