

Session 1: Nuclear and Missile Commerce: The Cases of Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, and Syria

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Summary

Leonard Spector opened the session by drawing attention to the special cases of Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, and Syria, who along with Pakistan either operate outside the NPT or may be seeking weapons in violation of their treaty commitments. These states have also capitalized on outside assistance to advance their programs in addition to their history of collaboration amongst themselves, which he detailed state by state. Spector outlined WMD trade control strategies ranging from a patron-state applying diplomatic pressure to the unappealing option of military action. He concluded that despite some successes in blocking dual-use items, export controls have not kept pace with the tactics of traffickers, and predicted that further constraints on shipping, expansion of UN Security Council designations, and other strategies would likely be employed in the future.

Next, Joshua Pollack outlined research he conducted on North Korea's missile exports for an upcoming article in *The Nonproliferation Review*. He identified a "funnel" theme to the program which could be found both in the DPRK's characteristic packaging of acquired technologies from multiple sources for a single customer, as well as the dwindling number of clients over the past decades. Pollack explained that despite the perception that North Korea continued to ship whole missiles to destinations around the world, his data indicated that the DPRK was rather acquiescing to its customer's demands for technology transfer, and that their self-sufficiency was in turn causing the number of its exports and clients to decline. Four developments could be traced to this trend: increased export control diplomacy, sanctions and interdictions, pressuring buyers to shop elsewhere, and ballistic missile defense. While Pollack found that export control diplomacy and pressure on the demand-side were

indeed persuasive arguments for the decline, he saw no measurable influence on missile exports from sanctions and interdiction or missile defense.

Jeffrey Lewis concluded the panel discussion by examining the unusual case of Myanmar, which stands accused of developing a clandestine nuclear program. He noted that a uranium enrichment program is inherently difficult to prove compared to the more traditional plutonium reprocessing route. While emphasizing that there was no “smoking gun,” Lewis reviewed a several significant pieces of circumstantial evidence stemming from Myanmar’s relationship with the DPRK, Myanmar’s declared uranium deposits, two workshops of high-end machine tools that were procured under suspicious circumstance from Germany and Switzerland, and a large ore processing facility. Lewis also examined alternative theories that the equipment and ore processing facilities were linked to a program of extracting rare earth metals, or that they were acting as a transshipment point for North Korea. Regardless, he found that from a policy perspective, Myanmar needed to be pointed in the direction of greater transparency. Simply stating that they were abandoning their nuclear research is not enough. The session closed with questions and commentary from Russian, American and Pakistani participants.

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