

Panel: How Viable Are Nuclear Weapons Free Zones? (Grand Ballroom I)

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

Talking Points for: Chun Chaesung, Professor, Seoul National University

Historically the success of NWFZ in Latin America, South Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Africa has been based upon several agreements: 1) threshold states should not manufacture nuclear weapons; 2) nuclear threats from states in the region should be permanently eliminated; 3) offshore great powers should not station or transport nuclear weapons which might endanger regional states. With the agreement, there followed solid mechanisms for international assurance including negative security assurance(NSA) and positive negative security assurance(PSA), and well-founded routes for verification. Political and strategic common views are also crucial by confirming the recognition of peaceful status quo, permanent need for arms reduction, and the maintenance of multilateral security mechanisms.

In Northeast Asia, there are assets of which we can make us: Japan's three Non-Nuclear Principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons, in line with Japan's Peace Constitution; Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; UN recognition of Mongolia's self-declared nuclear-weapon-free status. However there are serious harmful elements as well: North Korea's manufacturing of nuclear weapons; rising voices for nuclear armaments in South Korean and Japan; geostrategic competition between two NWS, the United States and China; and aggravating relationship between China and Japan. Also the region lacks formidable multilateral security institutions necessary for security assurance and verification.

Under these conditions, the prospect for reaching an agreement for complete NWFZ is quite moderate. We can set up more prudent and feasible targets, though: to confirm the status of NNWS for South Korean, Japan, and Mongolia -> to work for denuclearization of North Korea -> development of multilateral security mechanism, nuclear deterrence and assurance -> to work for the elimination of nuclear security dilemma between the United States and China -> to establish a full-scale NWFZ.

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