

Nuclear Security Summit: Before & After Seoul

Session: Regency Room

Date/Time: February 16, 2013 / 17:00-18:15

Moderator: John Bernhard, Former Danish Ambassador to the IAEA and CTBTO

Speakers: Piet de Klerk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of the Netherlands
Kim Bonghyun, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Gary Samore, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University

Rapporteurs: Jenny Town, US-Korea Institute at SAIS
Natalia Sharova, Hudson Institute

Session Sketch

John Bernard, Former Danish Ambassador to the IAEA and CTBTO, commenced a panel of former and current Nuclear Security Summit sherpas to discuss the achievements and shortcoming of the NSS process. He started the discussion by acknowledging the political value of the NSS process in raising the profile of what needs to be done against nuclear terrorism and generating high level impetus for improving nuclear security around the world. The NSS process has brought about tangible and critical changes in national nuclear security infrastructure and practices. He invited the panelists to both reflect on the first two summits and discuss their expectations for the upcoming Hague NSS in 2014.

Gary Samore, Executive Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, offered four pieces of advice to the organizers of the Hague summit. First, to “keep it simple.” He recalled how in the Washington Summit, the Sherpas produced a short communiqué of political principles and then a longer work plan. For the Seoul summit, he recalled the difficulty of trying to build consensus on broader principles in a longer communiqué, especially since much of the matter was too technical for the negotiators to fully understand. He suggested aiming for a short, general communiqué for the Hague. Second, to “keep it focused.” Third, to “keep it practical,” pointing to the national

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

*The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan Nuclear Forum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.

commitments harvested at both summits. And finally, to “keep it going,” explaining that the NSS process was never intended to be permanent, but 2014 might not be the right time to end the series. He recommended a fourth summit in 2016.

Kim Bonghyun, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs at the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and former ROK Sherpa to the Seoul NSS, reflected on the challenges faced in preparation for the Seoul NSS. He explained that for the Seoul summit they chose to focus on the civilian use of nuclear material to better manage expectations. He recalled pressure from NAM states to include nonproliferation on the agenda, and the controversy for declining those pressures. He recalled criticisms from NAM states that the states with the most nuclear material do not contribute proportionately to the nuclear security regime. He suggested that outreach to NAM states should be a high priority for a third summit.

Piet de Klerk, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Netherlands Sherpa to the Hague NSS, acknowledged the successes that have been achieved through high level political attention on nuclear security since 2010, but also questioned how much more could realistically be achieved at a third summit. He announced that the Hague Summit will be held March 24-25, 2014, and accompanied by both an industry and academic summit on the side. He identified areas in which he felt progress could still be made, including improving laws, addressing standards for military nuclear material, diminishing the use of weapons-usable materials, increasing state-industry cooperation on nuclear security and so forth. He also argued that the Hague NSS should be the last summit, insisting that the process needs to be inclusive and flow into regular multilateral channels, such as the IAEA, where technical expertise exists.

While no consensus was reached among the panelists on whether or not 2014 should be the final summit, they did point to the importance of the IAEA’s upcoming July ministerial level conference on nuclear security as a litmus test for political will to improve nuclear security to continue without high level attention. However, De Klerk did insist, that it was important to

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

*The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan Nuclear Forum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.

make a decision soon as this will greatly affect the way the Hague summit is structured.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.
*The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan Nuclear Forum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.