

## **The 1st Nuclear Security Summit: Analysis and Evaluation**

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### **Background and Objectives**

The 1st Nuclear Security Summit was convened in Washington D.C. from April 12-13 with great success. It was a major international conference hosting leaders from 37 countries and high-ranking officials from 10 additional countries, as well as representatives from 3 international agencies (the UN, the IAEA, and the EU). Over forty years have passed since the start of the nuclear nonproliferation system based upon the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), yet this conference marks the first time that 47 leaders and representatives from around the world have gathered in one place for an earnest discussion of nuclear issues. For the US as well, this is the first time Washington DC has hosted approximately 50 world leaders since the nation's founding. This year a distinct movement towards nuclear reduction is emerging on April 6th the Obama administration announced a new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) which reduces the dependence on nuclear weapons, and on April 8th the US and Russia met in Prague to sign the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. In this context, the 1st Nuclear Security Summit, yet another important event which took place this April, is anticipated to play a central role in constructing a new paradigm for global security.

The Nuclear Security Summit has its foundation in the strategy and vision for nuclear nonproliferation which President Obama laid out in Prague on April 5, 2009. In this speech Obama, emphasizing the need to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists, proposed that a nuclear security summit be held in order to stop the spread of nuclear material and technology and to systematize related international efforts. Last July, at the G8 Summit in Italy, Obama specified that this conference would be held in March 2010, but the following September at his speech to the UN General Assembly he adjusted the date to this April. In the UN speech he stressed that the world could not afford to let even one nuclear warhead fall into the hands of extremists, and so the security summit would seek to reaffirm each country's responsibility for controlling nuclear materials and to strengthen the system for preventing the smuggling and theft of those materials.

The US perceived of the Nuclear Security Summit in connection with Obama's strategic vision of "a world without nuclear weapons," in other words the idea of removing all nuclear warheads from the face of the Earth, as a measure for preventing nuclear proliferation. In raising this undeniably morally justifiable proposition of realizing "a world without nuclear weapons," regardless of its feasibility, the US is taking initiative and showing leadership, and appealing for the participation of other countries, which represents the basic essence of the nuclear nonproliferation strategy of the current Obama administration. In this context, the major objective of the first nuclear security summit is to gather together the leaders heading each country's decision-making apparatus and to bring about a broad framework agreement on the sensitive issue of the control of "nuclear materials," particularly highly enriched uranium and plutonium which can be used in nuclear weapon production.

US concerns about safe control and supervision of the over 2000 tons of highly enriched uranium and plutonium scattered across dozens of countries arise from its fears of the possibility of nuclear terrorism. Since his days as a senator, Obama has considered nuclear terrorism as the most urgent threat facing the international community, and this has its origin in the heightened concern about terrorism which Americans have felt since 9/11. On the premise that a nuclear terror attack might one day occur on US soil, most Americans believe that that possibility must be reduced and that event must be delayed at all costs. Therefore, the basic task of the nuclear security summit is to strengthen the international network and bolster related institutions for preventing nuclear terror, the greatest threat to world peace and the number one priority to emerge since 9/11.

## Major Achievements

The 1<sup>st</sup> Nuclear Security Summit's most significant achievement was to add a 4<sup>th</sup> pillar to the existing "3 Pillars" of the current nuclear nonproliferation system (nonproliferation, nuclear arms reduction, and peaceful use of nuclear energy). The participants did not make a clear agreement on this point, but the historical act itself of 47 leaders and representatives gathering in one place to discuss the nuclear terror issue was enough to establish nuclear security as the 4th pillar in a *fait accompli*. More specifically, we can draw 3 principal achievements from this conference: ① a joint statement, ② a plan for action, ③ mutual agreements and unilateral declarations.

First, the 47 representatives agreed on a high-level political statement. This joint agreement, made up of 12 items, can be summarized as follows:

- The participants approve of Obama's proposal to, within the next 4 years, ensure safe control of those nuclear materials around the world which have been inadequately controlled thus far
- The participants agree to make concentrated efforts to improve the safety and accounting of



nuclear materials among each country's resources, with emphasis on enriched uranium and plutonium, and to strengthen related regulations

- To collect the highly enriched uranium and plutonium that have been dispersed to various places, concentrate them together and manage them
- To promote the “universality” of major international treaties related to nuclear security and nuclear terror, so that all countries can participate
- To strengthen the abilities of law enforcement, industrial and technical personnel with attention given to the positive roles of systems such as the “Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism”
- The IAEA will develop guidelines for nuclear security and distribute them to the member states, and will allot the necessary materials for carrying them out as needed
- To promote bilateral and multilateral support for improving nuclear security
- To encourage nuclear energy industries to follow nuclear security regulations while not impeding the peaceful use of nuclear energy

Secondly, the participants agreed upon an action plan in order to concretely act upon the promises made in the joint statement, summarized as follows:

- To ratify and execute an international treaty on nuclear security and nuclear terrorism
- To execute a UN Security Council resolution with the cooperation of the UN, and to support other countries in fulfilling it
- To improve and put into practice guidelines for nuclear security in cooperation with the IAEA
- To examine each country's regulations and legal requirements with regards to nuclear security and nuclear material transactions
- To convert civilian nuclear power facilities which use highly enriched uranium so that they can switch to slightly enriched uranium
- To undertake research into new nuclear fuel, detection equipment and nuclear forensic technology
- To improve the industrial and institutional attitudes towards the importance of nuclear security
- To construct education and training systems so that each country can secure the manpower necessary to secure nuclear materials
- To carry out joint exercises with law enforcement and customs agents to improve detection methods

Thirdly, 30 of the countries participating in the conference made individual political declarations or bilateral agreements, such as the following:

- The US and Russia announced an agreement on disposal of 34 tons of plutonium each, a total of 68 tons (an amount sufficient to make 17,000 nuclear warheads), and completion of the work planned forward since the Clinton administration in the 1990s
- The Ukraine declared that it will destroy all of the 163 kg of highly enriched uranium it acquired in the process of breaking away from the former Soviet Union and disassembling its nuclear



weapons.

- Chile announced that as of March 2010 it has destroyed 18 kg of highly enriched plutonium that it had possessed.
- Mexico announced that it will use lightly enriched uranium instead of highly enriched uranium to fuel its nuclear reactors, and the US, Canada, and Mexico signed a declaration to support this effort.
- Malaysia, which was used as a base for nuclear trafficking by the Pakistani scientist Dr. Khan, pledged to strengthen its export controls to prevent illegal leaks and theft of nuclear technology.
- Italy signed a Megaport agreement with the US to install nuclear detection facilities in its major ports
- Japan pledged to establish a regional center to support action on the items pledged at this nuclear summit, and to promote research and development into nuclear detection and nuclear fingerprinting.

## Implications for the ROK/US Alliance and the North Korean Nuclear Issue

The fact that South Korea was selected at this 1st Nuclear Security Conference as host of the next conference holds great importance for the ROK/US alliance. As host country of this international summit tasked with preventing nuclear terrorism, an issue which the US president and the American people recognize as a real threat, this signifies that South Korea stands on the front line in stopping nuclear terrorism and, together with the US, is playing a leading role in the global movement started by President Obama. In the current environment of change in the international security paradigm, with the diminishing of the risk of all-out nuclear war between nations and the rise of nuclear terrorism as a new security threat, South Korea is taking joint steps with the US and playing a central role in this environment.

In addition, hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Security Summit will be an opportunity to demonstrate, both domestically and internationally, that South Korea has transformed from its position as a beneficiary of US security protection to an active contributor to US security. As a symbolic event comparable to the participation in the Vietnam War during the Park Chung Hee era in the 1960s, this will help to create conditions for an even more solid ROK/US alliance for dealing with major pending challenges such as the North Korean nuclear issue. Ultimately, South Korea's hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Security Summit will stand out in the 60-year history of the ROK/US alliance as a landmark event which, amid the new international paradigm of regarding nuclear terror as the gravest security threat, will play a central role in constructing a solid base and casting ROK/US relations in a new mold.



North Korea, Iran, and Syria were not invited to this conference. North Korea deceived international society in developing nuclear weapons, Iran is pursuing a similar path, and Syria's attempts to smuggle in a new model 5MWe nuclear reactor from North Korea were thwarted by an Israeli air strike. These three countries are linked together in a nuclear proliferation food chain. With regards to North Korea, which, despite the earnest entreaties of the international community over the past 20 years, has disregarded all its promises and developed nuclear weapons, the UN Security Council has applied the strongest economic sanctions since the end of the Korean War. Syria is still under investigation by the IAEA, and Iran is likely to be subjected to stronger additional sanctions in the near future.

The current North Korean regime is a target of vigilance for the Nuclear Security Summit and could certainly not be extended an invitation. The North Korean nuclear issue has long ago extended beyond the Korean peninsula and become a global concern. North Korea stands at the center of global nuclear proliferation; its secret nuclear cooperation with Pakistan and Syria have been exposed, and recently suspicions have arisen that it is engaged in nuclear trafficking with Myanmar. Even if North Korea were to make pledges to the US that it would not engage in nuclear terrorism itself, there are abundant fears that nuclear materials from its Yongbyon reactor might be used by terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.

On this point, South Korea's hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Security Summit holds special significance for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Hosting this conference in South Korea, which is directly threatened by the nuclear proliferator North Korea, can be seen as a strong warning to North Korea from the international community. For North Korea it is a diplomatic and political sanction which will bite more painfully than economic sanctions. At this point the Kim Jong Il regime needs to correctly interpret the international trend towards nuclear disarmament. As President Obama made clear, North Korea must understand that as long as it holds on to its nuclear weapons, it will only deepen its sanctions and isolation, and will have no future. The regime must wake up to the fact that the foreign capital and economic revival upon which they are staking their fate will not be possible as long as they possess nuclear weapons.

It would be wonderful if the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Security Summit could become an opportunity for North Korea to reestablish itself as a normalized nation. As President Lee Myung Bak made clear, if North Korea rejoins the NPT by 2012 and takes real steps towards denuclearization, it will be invited with the warm welcome of international society. South Africa, which worked to develop nuclear weapons in the 1980s but subsequently abandoned them, was greeted with a warm reception from the conference participants in Washington. We eagerly look forward to the possibility that, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nuclear Security Summit, the leaders of North and South Korea might join hands as North Korea declares it has carried out complete denuclearization, and we can declare that the Korean peninsula has achieved a new milestone towards "a world without nuclear weapons."

