

# A LIMITED NUCLEAR WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN NORTHEAST ASIA: ITS LIMITS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

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The idea of establishing a nuclear weapon free zone in Northeast Asia has been flourishing for the last decade. Aspirations for making an enduring and peaceful NWFZ of this region have been partly encouraged by growing international interests and efforts for nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament. In the Asia-Pacific region, in particular, such aspirations have been materialized in several parts of the region. The forces of creating a NWFZ had started in South Pacific and have been gradually moving up toward the North. So it is natural and reasonable to envision that the next turn would be Northeast Asia.

Up until today, most international efforts on turning Northeast Asia into a nuclear weapon free zone have gathered under the initiative of John Endicott, a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Under Dr. Endicott's leadership, a group of specialists from China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States has held meetings every year since January 1995 to consider the feasibility of a limited nuclear weapon free zone for Northeast Asia. This group's proposal has been dubbed Limited Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Northeast Asia (LNWFZ-NEA).

This paper looks at the achievements and failures of the LNWFZ-NEA proposal and proposes some measures to support efforts for establishing the LNWFZ in Northeast Asia. First, the paper summarizes the process of the LNWFZ-NEA and its achievements. Second, arguing that the lack of clear-cut objectives is an important failure, the following three objectives for the LNWFZ-NEA are proposed: (1) enhancing transparency; (2) promoting prosperity; and (3) strengthening peace and stability. Finally, the paper emphasizes the significance of launching practical projects bearing tangible benefits for drawing sustained support of the LNWFZ-NEA from the international community and presents such policy measures.

## Introduction

The idea of establishing a nuclear weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia has been a topic of discussion for over a decade. Two prominent models have been proposed: one by John Endicott<sup>1</sup> and the other by Kumao Kaneko.<sup>2</sup> They put forward several important features: to cover a wide area of around 2,000 kilometers from the center of the Korean peninsula; to include the major nuclear powers in the region as members; and, in the case of Kaneko's proposal, to tackle the North Korean missile issue. Aspirations for the formation of an enduring and peaceful NWFZ in this region have been partly encouraged by growing international interest in and efforts toward nonproliferation and

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1 See *Background Data: Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for Northeast Asia*, 2nd Meeting of the Expanded Senior Panel, October 12-14, 1996, Bordeaux, France.

2 See *Outline of a "Northeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty"* by Kumao Kaneko, October 1999; Kumao Kaneko, "Japan needs no umbrella," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March/April 1996, pp. 46-51.

nuclear disarmament.

In the Asia-Pacific region, in particular, such aspirations have materialized in several different areas. As a harbinger of the current NWFZ movement, the Treaty of Rarotonga was signed in 1985 in an attempt to make the South Pacific nuclear free. In 1987, New Zealand unilaterally declared itself nuclear free. This declaration was followed by a similar announcement from Mongolia in 1992, whose nuclear free status later received formal recognition from the U.N. General Assembly. And most recently, the Bangkok Treaty was signed in 1995 making Southeast Asia a nuclear-free zone. The treaty formally went into effect in 1997. Thus, the forces in favor of creating a NWFZ began in the South Pacific and have been gradually moving toward North Asia. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the next stop for the movement would be Northeast Asia.

Seongwhun Cheon and Tatsujiro Suzuki made a third proposal to establish a NWFZ comprised of North and South Korea and Japan.<sup>3</sup> The motivation for the tripartite NWFZ (TNWFZ) is based on the recognition that previous proposals were too ambitious to produce fruitful results in the foreseeable future. By including states with nuclear weapons, these proposals put the sensitive security issues of re-deploying and dismantling nuclear weapons front and center of what might have to be a long cooperative process. Attempting to address these difficult issues at the start of the process will no doubt bring about many hurdles. With this in mind, the TNWFZ attempts to realize a NWFZ in Northeast Asia gradually-not necessarily belatedly-by taking into account the feasibility of such a zone and by avoiding

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3 Seongwhun Cheon and Tatsujiro Suzuki, "A nuclear-free zone in Korea and Japan," *Korea Herald*, June 13, 2000, p. 6. The idea of creating a NWFZ among the three nations was first put forward by Hiromichi Umabayashi at INESAP Conference in Sweden in 1996. See Hiro Umabayashi, "A Northeast Asia NWFZ: a realistic and attainable goal," *INESAP Information Bulletin*, No. 10, August 1996. The proposal was called "A Trilateral Treaty with NSA Proposals" and was renamed as "A Three plus Three Nations Arrangement" in 2000.

difficulties posed by larger NWFZ proposals. In fact, the TNWFZ can be seen as an intermediate, practical, and hopefully, faster step to reach a full NWFZ in Northeast Asia.

### **Achievements of the LNWFZ-NEA**

Until now, most international efforts to turn Northeast Asia into a nuclear weapons-free zone have been put forward under the initiative of Dr. John Endicott, a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Under Dr. Endicott's leadership, a group of specialists from China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, and the United States has held meetings every year since January 1995 to consider the feasibility of a limited nuclear weapons-free zone in Northeast Asia. Over time, interested parties from other nations including Argentina, Canada, Finland and France have joined the original core group. This group's proposal has been dubbed the Limited Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Northeast Asia (LNWFZ-NEA).

The initiative for the LNWFZ-NEA was prompted by the significant changes in the structure of the international system that have taken place since the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>4</sup> The need to create a cooperative security infrastructure became visible in a region with the enduring legacies of colonialism, World War II and the Cold War. Therefore, many believed that it was clearly the right time to move toward recognizing that the security environment in the region could be made increasingly positive by multilateral action, which could later move to a new level of regional interaction. The idea of a LNWFZ-NEA was put forward as a means to change the region from one of confrontation to

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4 John Endicott, "Existing criteria for nuclear weapons-free zones and the limited nuclear weapons-free zone concept for Northeast Asia," *A Report by the Chairman of the Interim Secretariat Regarding Efforts to Create a Cooperative Security Regime in Northeast Asia* at Hakone Japan in October 1999, p. 5.

cooperation.

At a meeting held in Buenos Aires on March 21, 1996, the participants agreed on the following positions as important guidelines for the international effort to establish the LNWFZ-NEA<sup>5</sup>:

1. A LNWFZ for Northeast Asia could become an important step in the creation of a new cooperative security system in the region;
2. Such a LNWFZ would not be oriented against any one state;
3. The geographical extent of the zone would need to be examined further, but the concept involves the following countries: China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States;
4. A time-phased approach to the implementation of weapons included for relocation or removal from the zone would have to be allowed;
5. Emphasis would be placed on nuclear weapons not associated with strategic arms;
6. The LNWFZ would not place restrictions on peaceful applications for power generation, but safeguard inspections would continue;
7. Membership should include all interested states of the region with original members inviting others in the region to join as well as all nuclear weapon states. It is envisaged that the following states would be original members: China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States;
8. The creation of a specific nuclear weapons free zone was not seen as the ultimate goal, only the first step toward major reductions in nuclear armaments worldwide.

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5 Final Statement of the Buenos Aires Group: Findings and Recommendations of the Buenos Aires Group Regarding a Limited Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (LNWFZ) for Northeast Asia. *The Bordeaux Protocol of the Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for Northeast Asia*, Center for International Strategy, Technology and Policy at the Georgia Institute of Technology, March 1997, pp. 79-81.

A year later in 1997, an Expanded Panel meeting was held in Bordeaux, France. The Bordeaux meeting reached agreement on an action agenda. In particular, the following items are noteworthy<sup>6</sup>:

1. Endorse the creation of national working groups, who would complete studies in concert with applicable government circles, concerning individual components of the LNWFZ concept, including zone size and shape, specific weapon systems to be contained, verification system, agency structure and appropriate confidence building measures;
2. Establish formal contact-point relationships with government representatives;
3. Examine the concept of reciprocity to insure proportionality in any actual weapons reductions;
4. Inform the two non-regional nuclear powers (the United Kingdom and France) of the activities and, as developments advance, prepare to offer them observer status in preparation to full adherence;
5. Adopt an overall concept with regard to the notion of a cooperative security regime that stressed how the regime activities would not be harmful to any of the states and would improve or add to mutual trust.

From the beginning, the focus has been on the two specific points: the creation of a specific circular zone from which all nuclear weapons would be removed. And second, the creation of a regional agency to verify that nuclear weapons had indeed been removed, and nuclear weapons were not in the possession of non-nuclear nations within the zone.

In any nuclear weapon free-zone proposal, a key issue is how to define the zone of application. The Expanded Senior Panel, a core

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6 *The Bordeaux Protocol of the Limited Nuclear Weapon Free Zone for Northeast Asia*, Center for International Strategy, Technology and Policy at the Georgia Institute of Technology, March 1997, pp. 23-24.

discussion group of the LNWFZ-NEA has identified the following four designs to delimit the zone in which the agreement will be implemented<sup>7</sup>:

- **Circular Zone:** A zone in which the center is placed in the middle of the DMZ on the Korean Peninsula. The radius of the zone would be about 1200 nm and would involve the following areas: China including Taiwan, Japan, Mongolia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. Here the United States is not physically within the zone but it will be expected to actively participate within the system;
- **Ellipse Zone:** This zone would have its western border located in Northeast China and its Eastern border in Alaska, thus visibly involving three major nuclear weapon states. North and South Korea, Japan and Taiwan are within the ellipse zone. While the exact boundaries crossing Russia, China, Mongolia and the United States have yet to be defined, the concept would include some territory of all members in the zone;
- **North-Pacific Zone:** This zone is based on the notion that while certain areas within the North-Pacific, i.e. a portion of or the entire territories of China, Russia, Alaska in the United States, Japan, the Korean Peninsula and Mongolia would initially be in a non-nuclear zone, but the oceans and seas between the territories affected would be excluded. This is designed to remove the difficult verification issues involving SLBMs of the three nuclear member states;
- **NEA League of Non-Nuclear States and Prototype Plan for Involvement of Regional Nuclear Weapon States:** This NEA League proposes that Japan, North and South Korea and Mongolia would join in the formation of a league of non-nuclear states. This could be realized immediately or upon the agreement of the nuclear weapons states to each identify one military base with tactical nuclear weapons present. These steps would form the basis to create an

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7 Expanded Senior Panel's Deliberations at the Meeting of Expanded Senior Panel for *Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for Northeast Asia* held On October 8-9th, 2001 at Swiss Grand Hotel, Seoul, Korea.

inspection system, agency structure and other features for an initial demonstration system.

Regarding the nuclear weapons permitted within the zone, the Expanded Senior Panel noted that although it is the ultimate goal of this agreement to realize the removal of all nuclear warheads from the areas included in the zone, such an objective can only be reached after a period of confidence building, dialogue and developing a record of success in this area among the states in the region.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the Panel has focused on identifying nuclear weapons appropriate for reduction in the initial steps. It recommends that during the initial stages of LNWFZ-NEA, the emphasis be placed on nuclear warheads applicable to non-strategic missiles and other nuclear warheads or devices with tactical applications.

### **Limits of the LNWFZ-NEA Proposal**

In the discussion on creating a nuclear weapons-free zone, two questions are typically raised: whether the idea is desirable and whether it is feasible. For the issue of desirability, no objection could be made against the necessity and objectives of a nuclear weapons-free zone. The ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons-free zone—to eliminate all nuclear weapons and achieve stable peace in the region—is worthy of sincerely pursuing. On the other hand, there exist many reservations as to the question of feasibility. The idea of tripartite NWFZ mentioned above draws on such reservations.

There exist two very practical reasons behind these reservations. First, LNWFZ-NEA mixes two categorically different status of membership of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT): nuclear weapon states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). This is a unique fea-

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8 *Ibid.*

ture of LNWFZ-NEA and what makes its implementation most challenging. With the mixture of NWS and NNWS status, LNWFZ-NEA brings about a doubly heavy burden; that is, it not only creates a NWFZ among non-nuclear weapon states (a traditional mission of any NWFZ) but also makes part of the territory of NWS nuclear-free, thus reducing the number of tactical nuclear weapons. It is doubtful whether nuclear arms reduction among the three nuclear weapon states in Northeast Asia can be negotiated and conducted in parallel with a nuclear weapons-free zone among the other non-nuclear states. It seems possible theoretically, but upon further review it becomes apparent how difficult it would be to combine the two immensely difficult jobs. It is more plausible that either a nuclear reduction or a nuclear weapon-free zone among non-nuclear weapon states should come first.

Second, the current LNWFZ-NEA proposal lacks a clear-cut objective. In the Expanded Panel's deliberations, there are some phrases that reflect what the LNWFZ-NEA is trying to achieve; for example, "to create a new cooperative security system," "to support enhanced transparency, dialogue and confidence between all the parties," and "the ultimate goal to realize the removal of all nuclear weapons."<sup>9</sup> These are, however, just expressions of principles with no practical details. In order to draw as much support and interests from regional countries as possible, it is important that any proposal for NWFZ harbors very clear-cut and realistic objectives that could provide some tangible benefits to member states.

Each country has its own individual objectives, and they are not necessarily overlapping. Therefore, the question becomes "how much common ground is shared by the countries working for the LNWFZ-NEA?" If there exist significant differences between their objectives, prospects for the LNWFZ-NEA would dim. The Beijing Summary

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9 *op. cit.*

Report categorizes various proposals in three categories and demonstrates the wide spectrum of issues expected to be covered within the context of the LNWFZ in Northeast Asia.<sup>10</sup> In consequence, this report manifests the fact that the objectives of the LNWFZ-NEA are not well defined and members' interests are diverse and dispersed.

### **Objectives of a NWFZ in Northeast Asia**

Whatever a format of the NWFZ in Northeast Asia will take as a first-step, it is important to build a consensus on what objectives are to be made in the first place. Unless the participants share a common understanding of the role and function of a NWFZ in this region, it will not be easy to realize a successful result from the ongoing efforts to institute nuclear weapon-free norms and principles in Northeast Asia. With the limitations of the current efforts to create a LNWFZ-NEA in mind, this paper will present three objectives that should be shared by member states of the LNWFZ-NEA.

These objectives are not mutually exclusive, but they are more or less interrelated. The three objectives are: 1) to enhance the transparency of participating countries' nuclear intentions and activities in the region; 2) to promote prosperity by allowing active cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and 3) to strengthen peace and security with a verifiable NWFZ supported by firm security assurances from nuclear weapon states to increase confidence in the peace building process in Korea. The first two objectives are characteristically important in the fact that Japan and South Korea are heavily dependent on nuclear energy, and that North Korea will be in a similar situation in its industrialization process in the coming years. The third objective also has the added benefit of guaranteeing a more stable peace and security

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10 "Beijing Summary Report," Sixth Expanded Senior Panel on the Limited Nuclear Weapon Free Zone for Northeast Asia, September 16-20, 2000.

atmosphere in a region where both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states co-exist. A NWFZ can be an effective option to achieve peace not only by preventing non-nuclear weapon states from possessing nuclear weapons but also by acquiring firm security assurances from nuclear weapon states.

### ***Enhancing Transparency***

Establishing a NWFZ in Northeast Asia should be a reliable and solid measure to demonstrate the anti-nuclear will of non-nuclear weapon states in the region, in particular, North and South Korea and Japan. In 1991, North and South Korea signed the Denuclearization Declaration, which has not yet been implemented. The declaration is moribund since neither party has paid any attention to it since the spring of 1993. The initiative to resolve North Korea's nuclear issue was transferred from the Declaration to the Geneva Agreed Framework. Suspicions have been raised intermittently regarding North Korea's hidden nuclear activities, and most importantly, North Korea is trying to bypass a package of agreements signed with South Korea in the early 1990s including the Declaration.

North Koreans are not happy with the agreements. The agreements include the Basic Agreement, the Denuclearization Declaration and numerous follow-up sub-agreements in political, military, nuclear, economic and social fields. For example, in the joint statement of the June 2000 summit, not a word was mentioned about any of the agreements. North Korean officials ignore them intentionally and only emphasize the joint statement. The only time North Korea refers to the Basic Agreement is when it asks the United States to make a bilateral peace treaty, arguing that it has already signed a non-aggression arrangement with the South - the Basic Agreement. There are two possible reasons for North Korea's reluctant attitude. First, the agreements were made when North Korea was in serious economic trouble in the early

1990s and as a result, it had to concede too much to South Korea. Second, the North desires to create a new inter-Korean framework since Kim Jong-Il has emerged as the new leader succeeding his father. Summit meetings and ongoing ministerial level talks are not now carried out within the framework of the Basic Agreement or the Declaration.<sup>11</sup>

For South Korea, its confrontation with North Korea provides natural opportunities to draw external doubts about its nuclear activities. For example, as the U.S. Department of Energy observed, Seoul and Pyongyang have interacted “dangerously with painful energy vulnerabilities, storage problems and *political-military incentives to at least seriously consider nuclear weapons* [emphasis added].”<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Japan, despite three non-nuclear principles, Japan’s nuclear intentions and programs are also under international scrutiny. Four principal arguments provoking concerns are: 1) Japan’s non-nuclear principles lack full legality; 2) Japan stockpiles excessive plutonium, which is not justified in any sense; 3) Japan has the world’s second largest defense budget; and 4) conservatives are trying to amend the Constitution without a responsible acknowledgement of past behavior.

Any NWFZ in Northeast Asia, as a legally binding institutional mechanism, should be able to reduce real suspicions of the international community about the intentions of the countries in the region. Diminishing suspicions will lead to stronger international confidence that the countries’ nuclear policies are less dubious and more transparent. In consequence, non-nuclear weapon states are expected to get

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11 This does not mean that North Koreans are deliberately trying to nullify the Declaration. Hopefully, a new arrangement may succeed the Declaration if necessary. In any case, the new arrangement will have to decidedly incorporate the core spirits of the Declaration: the nuclear weapon free Korean peninsula.

12 U.S. Department of Energy, “Policy forum: energy futures,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 1996, p. 94.

more affirmative international recognition of their peaceful nuclear programs within a NWFZ than without it.

An internal verification mechanism will play a crucial role in cross-checking each other's programs. Permitting the parties to physically observe each other's nuclear activities is an effective way to enhance mutual transparency. Having an additional layer of safeguards will surely increase the chance to detect and deter any violation thus, increasing mutual confidence among the three countries.

### ***Promoting Prosperity***

A NWFZ in Northeast Asia should be an important measure to promote prosperity in the region by creating a more favorable environment for sustainable development and peaceful use of nuclear energy. This is especially attractive from South Korea's perspective. The international community will regard South Korea's nuclear programs as more transparent if they are closely engaged with and checked under a NWFZ regime than if the South acts alone. Thus, a higher level of transparency and upgraded credibility based on a NWFZ would mean fewer causes for suspicion and fewer barriers to operation. With a NWFZ, many of the visible or invisible obstacles to Seoul's nuclear R&D programs are expected to decrease and more active international cooperation is likely to take place.

With regard to rising concerns about Japan's reprocessing and enrichment activities, it should be clear that the possession of technologies itself cannot and should not be an object of criticism. As Wolfgang Reinicke has put it, "Dual-use technologies are not 'destabilizing' in themselves-their military application is."<sup>13</sup> So if a country has a solid democratic process that can overrule any malicious wishes of minor mischievous groups and makes its nuclear policies and programs

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13 Wolfgang Reinicke, *Global Public Policy: Governing without Government?* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1998), p. 198.

transparent and understandable to the outside, that country should not be treated as a cause of worry. Of course, since intentions are not visible and technologies are readily available, a constant watch on the country is necessary. But neither criticism nor blame is appropriate without clear evidence.

One benefit of a NWFZ in Northeast Asia would be to foster favorable conditions for cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy between Japan and South Korea. So far, Japan has been less than willing to engage in technological cooperation with South Korea, partly because it is suspicious about Seoul's nuclear intentions.<sup>14</sup> A NWFZ in the region will provide Japan with a reliable tool to check South Korea's nuclear programs. It will effectively remove Japan's hesitation and pave the way for stronger nuclear cooperation between the two countries. Seoul and Tokyo could take a page from the excellent example of bilateral cooperation shown by Argentina and Brazil.<sup>15</sup> The two countries could establish an ABACC-type institution for technical cooperation and safeguards at first and later invite North Korea to join the organization. In the process, the IAEA may join at an appropriate time. In the long run, this Seoul-Tokyo collaboration could lead to a Northeast-Asiatom as a parallel apparatus to a NWFZ in the region.<sup>16</sup>

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14 It is observed in Japan that the Japanese plutonium program raises suspicions about its nuclear intentions and could encourage Korean leaders to develop nuclear weapons capability. See Hiromichi Umabayashi, "A Northeast Asia NWFZ: a realistic and attainable goal," *INESAP Information Bulletin*, No. 10, August 1996.

15 Paul Leventhal and Sharon Tanzer (eds.), *Averting a Latin American Nuclear Arms Race: New Prospects and Challenges for Argentine-Brazilian Nuclear Cooperation* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992).

16 Asiatom refers to the Asian Atomic Energy Community. For the reasons why Japan is interested in establishing Asiatom, see Hiroyoshi Kurihara, "Regional approaches to increase nuclear transparency," a paper presented at the 7th U.N. Regional Disarmament Meeting on Openness, Assurances of Security and Disarmament, Katmandu, Nepal, February 13-15, 1995.

### ***Strengthening Peace and Security***

As a member of a NWFZ in Northeast Asia, every non-nuclear weapon state has a right to be freed from the horrors of nuclear weapons. Thus, a NWFZ without proper support from nuclear weapon states is an insufficient tool to strengthen regional peace and security. One such measure to manifest the support of nuclear weapon states for a NWFZ is to reinforce existing security guarantees given to non-nuclear weapon states.

Nuclear weapon states currently provide two kinds of security assurances: positive and negative. Non-nuclear weapon states have asserted that these security assurances must be improved. Northeast Asia could be a model case for applying firmer security assurances, both positive and negative.

#### Positive Security Assurance

Just before the signing of the NPT, the United States, the former Soviet Union and Great Britain each declared to the U.N. Security Council “its intention, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, to seek immediate Security Council action to provide assistance, in accordance with the Charter, to any non-nuclear weapon state party to the NPT that is a victim of an act of aggression or the object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used.”<sup>17</sup>

The Security Council adopted this positive security assurance as Resolution 255 on June 19, 1968, just before the signing of the NPT. A number of non-nuclear weapon states expressed the view that a positive security assurance is nothing more than what is already contained in the U.N. Charter. Furthermore, the statements made by the three nuclear powers amount to only their intentions and are subject to veto

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17 Lewis Dunn, *Containing Nuclear Proliferation*, Adelphi Paper 263 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1991), p. 43.

by the Security Council.<sup>18</sup>

### Negative Security Assurance

Since the first NPT Review Conference in 1975, non-nuclear states, dissatisfied with inadequacy of the positive security assurance, have pressed for a specific negative security assurance that nuclear weapon states will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them.<sup>19</sup> Up to now, four of the permanent members of the Security Council, all except China, have made unilateral declarations to this effect with conditions, limitations and exceptions.

At the 1978 U.N. Special Session on Disarmament, the Soviet Union announced that it would never use nuclear weapons against states that “renounce the production and acquisition of such weapons and do not have them on their territories.”<sup>20</sup> However, in the 1990s, Russia backed away from its previous no-first-use promise. For example, the Russian Defense Ministry confirmed that a new Russian military doctrine adopted on November 2, 1993 abandoned the old Soviet pledge against the first use of nuclear weapons, which was made in 1982 by Leonid Brezhnev.<sup>21</sup>

The United States declared that it would not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear weapon state that is a party to the NPT or any comparable internationally binding agreement not to acquire nuclear explosive devices, except in the event of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies by a non-nuclear weapon state “allied to” or “associated with” a nuclear weapon state in carrying

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18 Aga Shahi, “Defense, disarmament, and collective security,” *Non-offensive Defense: A Global Perspective* (New York: U.N.IDIR, 1990), p. 184.

19 William Epstein, *The Prevention of Nuclear War: A United Nations Perspective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Gunn & Hain Publishers, 1984), p. 30.

20 *U.N. Document A/S-10/PV.5*.

21 Serge Schmemmann, “Russia drops pledge of no first use of atom arms,” *New York Times*, November 4, 1993, p. A8.

out or sustaining the attack.<sup>22</sup> A similar statement was made by Great Britain.<sup>23</sup>

The position of France was that it would give assurances of non-use of nuclear weapons, in accordance with arrangements to be negotiated, only to those states that have “constituted among themselves non-nuclear zones.”<sup>24</sup> The negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and other arenas have made no progress toward removing the conditions contained in the four nuclear weapon states’ negative security assurances.<sup>25</sup>

Only China has extended a non-use guarantee in unqualified terms. Since 1964, the Chinese government has solemnly declared that at no times and under no circumstances would China be the first to use nuclear weapons. It has also undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear-free zones. China strongly calls for negotiations by all nuclear weapon states aimed at concluding an international convention on unconditional no first use of nuclear weapons, as well as non-use and non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states and nuclear-free zones, possibly in conjunction with the negotiation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).<sup>26</sup>

#### Nuclear Weapon States’ Provision of A Comprehensive Security Assurance

In spite of China’s firm commitment to a negative security assurance, the Chinese government has never issued a positive security

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22 U.N. Document A/S-10/AC.1/30.

23 U.N. Document A/S-10/PV.26.

24 U.N. Document A/S-10/PV.27.

25 Aga Shahi, *op. cit.*

26 *The statement by the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Question of Nuclear Testing*, 5 October, 1993.

assurance, nor has the French government taken any position on that issue. Now that the two nuclear weapon states have joined the NPT (China in March 1992 and France in August of that year), it is possible that they will strengthen their positive security assurances. In particular, China's commitment to a positive security assurance as a member of the NPT would be very helpful in convincing North Korea not to develop nuclear weapons as a deterrent against external nuclear threats. Furthermore, a formula needs to be devised to address the nuclear have-nots' concerns regarding the incompleteness of the negative security assurance.

China could probably persuade the other four nuclear weapon states to support a comprehensive security assurance in which they would make the following promises:

- Never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons in a NWFZ under any circumstance;
- To take immediate Security Council actions to provide support and assistance to the parties of the NWFZ in case they are threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons by newly emerging nuclear weapon states.

#### Increasing Confidence for A New Peace Building Process in Korea

A NWFZ in Northeast Asia could also become an important confidence building measure (CBM) in the process of searching for a new peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula. Active political and diplomatic movements toward this goal in the region have been underway for the last few years. South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung unleashed Japan and the United States from a demand of "harmonization and parallel." The previous administration had linked the two countries' relations with North Korea to inter-Korean relations. Due to this de-linkage, active dialogue has been conducted, especially

between Pyongyang and Washington. Issues such as missile development and export, the return of the remains of American soldiers who died during the Korean War, and exchange of liaison offices are dealt with separately, and high-level political meetings have been held often. The U.S.-DPRK talks culminated with an exchange of visits between the two sides in late 2000, the first by Marshall Cho Myong-Rok of North Korea and later by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Tokyo also started resuming political talks with Pyongyang in December of 1999, the first since it abruptly stopped talks in November of 1992. The talks were interrupted by rumors that North Korea had kidnapped Japanese citizens.

A NWFZ in the region incorporating North Korea as a member country or merely the effort to create such a zone would be an important political confidence building measure. Such attempts undoubtedly would create an auspicious environment for strengthening and complementing the political dialogue between North and South Korea. On the other hand, a NWFZ in Northeast Asia could be a significant military confidence building measure as well. The NWFZ is a multilateral institution that checks nuclear intentions and activities of the two Koreas, thereby increasing mutual confidence in a sensitive security area. It would provide each country with greater confidence and less anxiety about the security policy of the other side.

A multilateral approach is effective on the Korean peninsula, as demonstrated by the Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Overall, KEDO has been successful, despite occasional setbacks. A regional NWFZ could function as an umbrella under which North and South Korea could move closer to one another, as in KEDO. When disputes occur, other members of the NWFZ could play the role of a mediator.

## **The Road Ahead**

To successfully conclude the ongoing efforts to create a LNWFZ-NEA, two actions need be taken in the future course of activities. The first is related to the lack of clear objectives. In any multilateral gathering, a country aims to further its own overall strategy and strategic goals. In the case of LNWFZ-NEA, the nuclear and deterrence strategies of China, Russia and the United States matter most. It is surprising that there has been very little discussion on the nuclear doctrines and deterrence strategies of the three nuclear weapon states in the gatherings of LNWFZ-NEA. It is only natural to observe the lack of common understanding on the necessity and objectives of the LNWFZ-NEA both at academic and policy levels.

Therefore, it is imperative to hold a forum with the purpose of discussing nuclear policies and deterrent strategies of the nuclear weapon states and of coordinating their policies. Without an agreement on a NWFZ at the national policy level, no efforts for creating the LNWFZ-NEA can be successful. For example, in order to have a comprehensive security assurance as proposed in this paper, nuclear weapon states have to adopt a no-first-use policy against non-nuclear weapon states as a primary nuclear policy measure. Only China has such a policy at the moment. It is necessary to check whether NWS are willing to modify their nuclear policies in an attempt to accept a LNWFZ-NEA and, if not, push them to move toward that direction.

Second, some measures are also necessary to demonstrate that a multilateral gathering such as the Expanded Panel is beneficial in itself for regional peace and stability. Without tangible evidence that multilateral gatherings are achieving some success, however modest, external support and interests would diminish in the future. One way to bring about positive evidence is to launch a practical and easy-to-implement project, symbolizing cooperative security in the region. For example, multilateral monitoring of seismic activities or regional moni-

toring of environmental pollution can be launched as small-scale technical projects.<sup>27</sup> That is, a simultaneous move in the LNWFZ track and in the cooperative project track should be the road ahead to be taken by the Expanded Panel of the LNWFZ-NEA.

A NWFZ in Northeast Asia is not an end in itself. It is merely a beginning and opens a new way to strengthen peace and prosperity in the region. Regional endeavors to establish a NWFZ are a useful part of cooperative security.

Cooperative security in the 21st century, as opposed to collective security of the Cold War era, envisions cooperative engagement as a strategic principle and emphasizes the importance of institutionalized consents.<sup>28</sup> At the practical level, cooperative security seeks to devise agreed-on measures to prevent war, and to do so by preventing the means for successful aggression from being assembled. Regional security cooperation, international arms control treaties and international measures to enhance transparency and to increase openness in nations' military postures and strategies are all means to achieve cooperative security. That is, cooperative security is a model of international relations in which disputes are expected to occur but within the limits of agreed upon norms and established procedures.

A NWFZ in Northeast Asia is an effective arrangement to carry out the following principal aims of cooperative security in this region: 1) to prevent large-scale military offensive capabilities; 2) to engage cooperatively with internationally accepted norms and rules; and 3) to foster regional security cooperation. Successful achievements of a NWFZ will

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27 The Cooperative Monitoring Center at Albuquerque, New Mexico, which is a branch of the Sandia National Laboratories, has focused on launching small-scale technical projects among adversarial regional parties for the purpose of building mutual trust and maintaining stable peace. Its works are available at <http://www.cmc.sandia.gov>.

28 See Janne Nolan, "The concept of cooperative security," in Janne Nolan (ed.), *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994), pp. 3-18.

and should be followed by extending membership and broadening coverage.

In the long run, it is hoped that a NWFZ in Northeast Asia would become a basis for a Pan-Pacific nuclear weapon free zone (PPNWFZ), encompassing East Asia, South Pacific and Latin America. In the future, the PPNWFZ could be turned into a Pan-Pacific Peace Zone (PPPZ), signaling the end of the long journey towards peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.