NUCLEAR SECURITY ISSUES IN THE EAST ASIAN REGION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

J.Enkhsaikhan*

First of all I would like to thank the organizers of today's conference for inviting me to participate in its work. With all the shifts and changes underway in this post Cold War era, it is timely to exchange views on where we are and where the world, and in this case the East Asia is moving to, what challenges and opportunities are there that would affect the situation and what practically can be done to promote nuclear security in the region.

Changing strategic environment

In the post Cold War decade, especially after the tragic 9/11 events of 2001 and the 2003 war in Iraq, international security environment is substantially changing, especially the strategic landscape in the Asia-Pacific region. Predominance of today's only hyper-power is not only demonstrated and felt strongly in international relations, but is leaving its imprint on tackling the major international issues. As of today the predominant position of U.S. is indisputable. It has not yet been affected by the shifts that are underway in the world, including in Europe and Asia. Expansion of NATO to the East (reaching 26 members), expansion of the European Union (reaching 25 members) and the steps undertaken to adopt a common EU Constitution that would coordinate even closer foreign, trade and economic policies of its members, are yet to make themselves felt in the Transatlantic relations and in international relations in general.

In the East, globalization and the rise of China as the regional pre-eminent power are forcing the regional States to work closer politically and economically, with the ASEAN

* *Ambassador, Sc.D*

Regional Forum (ARF) serving as their multilateral venue, if not as the negotiating or decision making fora. As a result of increasing American pre-eminence on the world stage, Russia and China are stressing the need to multi-polarize the world and to that end they have declared forging a strategic partnership. However, the realities of power and imperatives of geo-economics demonstrate the limits of Russian-Chinese strategic collaboration, with each one following its economic and other interests and acceding to U.S. demands.

Introduction by the U.S. of the doctrine of pre-emptive strikes is raising legitimate questions as to where all this could lead, what if other States would follow U.S. example, what, if any, role the United Nations Security Council would be left to play on questions pertaining to maintaining international peace and security, what the gradual expansion of NATO's sphere of activities would entail and what would look like the strategic map, especially in the Middle East and adjacent regions.

With the above changes, security perceptions and policies of many States are undergoing reappraisals and substantial adjustments. At the strategic level, many States are making fighting terrorism at the regional and global level, if not their security, then foreign policy priority, with all the ensuing consequences. Some regimes are using the fight against terrorism as a pretext to crack down on their political opponents and adversaries. Ad hoc coalitions are formed to deal with emerging security related issues, while the existing UN based international security mechanism is either being brushed aside or turned to when surpassing it does not yield the expected results.

Realities of nuclear age

In the field of nuclear security, contrary to the expectations, the end of the Cold War did not bring "nuclear peace dividends". The unfolding international events, including the recently busted nuclear-supply chain that had been operated by Pakistan's top nuclear scientist Abdul Qader Khan, demonstrates that XXI century might prove even more dangerous than the previous one, unless resolute collective measures are taken to stop the spread of nuclear weapons or its technology. Whether that is possible depends on the collective will and actions of the members of the international community.

Recent positive developments

In January 1992 the UN Security Council has adopted a Presidential Statement which qualified proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as a threat to international peace

and security and called upon members States to prevent proliferation. The role of the five nuclear-weapon States (the P5) in this regard is of crucial importance. U.S. and the Russian Federation are taking steps to reduce their nuclear stockpiles, which is being welcomed by the international community, though more resolute steps could be undertaken by both of then. Efforts are also being made lately to check the smuggling in nuclear weapons technology and uncontrolled sale of dual-use nuclear technology and equipment, and to secure radioactive resources[1], etc. A concrete step in this direction has been the creation of the Proliferation Security Initiative, which is intended to stop the flow of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials at sea, in the air or on land.

Aware of the growing threat of proliferation of high-risk nuclear and radiological material and equipment around the world, in February 2004 U.S. has announced the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI), which would establish a comprehensive global database to identify and prioritize nuclear materials and equipment of proliferation concern that are not being addressed by the existing threat reduction efforts. The initiative calls for repatriation of all Russian-origin highly enriched uranium fuel by the end of 2005 and accelerate and complete the return of all Russian-origin spent fuel by 2010. To better address the removal efforts, the initiative creates a Global Materials Recovery Team that is expected to pre-position equipment and designate personnel for urgent nuclear materials recovery operations.

Just recently, on 21 June the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) has presented to the world a report entitled "Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security", which is intended to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. "Universal compliance" is addressed to all countries, parties to NPT and those that have not joined it. The gist of the proposals is to prevent emergence of new nuclear weapon states, ensure security of all fissile materials, prevent illicit nuclear technology transfers, devalue nuclear weapons and commit States to resolve regional conflicts that prompt others to seek WMD. With respect to the three "hold-out" States (i.e. India, Pakistan and Israel) it is proposed that the international community recognize the reality and promote their gradual integration in the non-proliferation regime by allowing them to accept the same non-proliferation obligations as the *de jure* nuclear powers without providing them with that status. To prevent the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States, the report calls upon countries not to develop uranium enrichment and/or plutonium reprocessing capabilities. In exchange the countries that abide by the IAEA requirements would

[1] *See Group of Eight joint statement of 3 June, 2003*

be provided access to fuel for civilian nuclear facilities on a "guaranteed" and cost-effective basis.

Addressing specifically the growing issue of illegal transfers of nuclear technologies, the report proposes creating an "obligatory" system to declare all transfers of controlled nuclear technology, based on the information exchanges between the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the IAEA. Under such a system the undeclared exports would be "illegal on their face", while declared transfers would be subject to national export control systems. In keeping with the spirit of the "universal compliance" principle the report calls on the nuclear-weapon States to act in the spirit of the NPT and proposes that the U.S. disavow the creation of new nuclear systems, such as the new low-yield "bunker-busting" warheads, reaffirm the nuclear test ban moratorium and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The constructive and balanced ideas proposed in the report would surely provoke a wide debate in the international community, which could result in practical actions aimed at strengthening nuclear security of States.

Some regional developments

The recent eastward expansion of NATO, that brought it at the borders of Russia, could impel the latter to accept NATO's own *cold war* era doctrine that superiority in conventional arms of the adversary needs to be countered by more robust nuclear arsenal with all the ensuing doctrinal and practical consequences[2]. Absence of any commitment by the new member States of NATO not to allow stationing of nuclear weapons on their territories would only add validity to proponents of the nuclear deterrence doctrine within the Russian military and national security elite.

In West Asia, the fight against terrorism will surely result in changing of the regional strategic landscape with its broad geo-political implications for the Middle East and adjacent regions. The question is still open as to what kind of change will it bring – more radicalization of the region, its democratization or a mix of both. The transfer of sovereignty to the Interim Iraqi Government on 28 June marks an important step that hopefully would lead to bringing stability to Iraq and the region. The Middle East Road Map seems to be at an impasse,

[2] *Though NATO has repeatedly indicated that it had no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territories of new member States, it has also nevertheless ruled out the possibility of abandoning the option of doing so.*

overtaken by violence and the unfolding events on the territories of the Palestinian Authority and Israel's policy of erecting wall and taking steps to eventually keep the West Bank.

In South Asia, the recent talks in Delhi between the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan are helping to create an atmosphere of confidence and full normalization of relations between the two *de facto* nuclear-weapon States. Due to discovery of enormous oil reserves in the Caspian Sea region and global focus on Afghanistan and Iraq, the Central Asian region is acquiring greater strategic importance. Iran's recent decision to speed up cooperation with the IAEA and resolve the outstanding issues[3] and be fully transparent in its future dealings with the Agency are being welcomed not only in the region, but well beyond it. At the same time Iran's experience demonstrates yet again the flaws and weaknesses of the NPT regime that need to be addressed and "fixed".

In our Northeast Asian region, the hopes of further normalization of relations between the Koreas have not been realized and the situation on the peninsula, despite three rounds of six party talks aimed at resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, is still fraught with complications.

The post 9/11 world realized that nuclear weapons ambitions are not limited to States only, but that terrorist groups also have such ambitions. It was revealed that attempts had been made to obtain nuclear weapons or their components (as well as of chemical and biological weapons); some groups had even declared that acquiring nuclear weapons was their "religious duty". Easy access to nuclear technology, including technology for enriching uranium and processing plutonium, coupled with the existence of demand for such weapons on the black market make the matter more dangerous and the situation more volatile. In summing up the situation Mohammed ElBaradei, Director-General of IAEA has recently pointed out at the conference hosted by the CEIP that there was a danger of uranium or plutonium falling into the wrong hands, that "we are actually having a race against time which I don't think we can afford".

Nuclear capability is not a privilege for those that possess them, but rather an added responsibility. The changing political realities and new circumstances demand new thinking, first and foremost from the P5, thinking in much broader terms, in terms of the long-term interests of the international community as a whole.

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[3] *these issues include the origin of the highly enriched uranium (HEU) discovered recently and the purpose of nuclear centrifuges which could be used to produce weapons-grade material*

Role of non-nuclear-weapon States

The NNWSs, constituting the overwhelming majority of the international community, also have an important role to play in promoting nuclear non-proliferation through various international mechanisms and arrangements. Their vast territories represent arenas of possible proliferation and the use of nuclear weapons. Moreover, violators of the NPT regime do not necessarily have to be NWSs only. Although the NPT is the sole global mechanism in promoting and strengthening nuclear non-proliferation, the revelations of the last few years have amply demonstrated that both NWSs and NNWSs need to take tangible steps to strengthen the NPT regime by addressing its weaknesses and dis-balances, and ensuring strict implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty. Accession of States to the IAEA Additional Protocol is important in this respect, though by far not sufficient. The question of violations of the treaty obligations needs clear response and action on the part of the international community, without distinguishing whether the violators are NWSs, nuclear-capable States, major non-nuclear powers or others. No one stands to benefit from the unraveling of the regime. It is to be hoped that the 2005 NPT review conference would focus on this issue as one of its priorities.

The de facto emergence of additional nuclear-weapon States such as Israel, India, Pakistan and DPRK (all in Asia) complicates the equation. At the same time it also underlines the urgency of addressing this question in all it's seriousness and in all its aspects.

Nuclear weapons cannot be des-invented, though the existing ones can be destroyed or, as temporary measure, they could be placed under an agreed international control. However, the question of nuclear weapons would not go away. There is thus an imperative need to restrain nuclear-weapon proliferation, both vertical and horizontal. Vertical proliferation, which is continuing, is inducing some nuclear-capable NNWSs to go-nuclear and is thus promoting horizontal proliferation. The above measure could be coupled with withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from the territories of NNWSs[4] or by excluding the use of nuclear weapons from the protection given in military alliances. It should be noted that all the above measures are within the exclusive power of NWSs which are the owners of nuclear weapons and some are even leaders of military alliances.

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[4] *Today U.S. nuclear weapons are still remain deployed in Belgium, Britain, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.*

Growing importance of NWFZs

A few decades ago, at the height of the Cold War, the question of creation of NWFZs was still more of a hypothetical and theoretical nature. Today it has become a reality. By their very nature, NWFZs are called upon to play an important supportive role in promoting non-proliferation[5]. They parallel and complement the NPT. According to the latter, States parties have pledged not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, not to receive the transfer of or control over such weapons as well as not to receive or seek assistance in their manufacture. On the other hand, the States forming part of NWFZs also undertook not to permit testing, use, storage, installation or deployment of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices on their territory. According to NPT a NNWS party to the treaty is not prohibited to allow nuclear weapons to be stationed and deployed on its territory, and thus pose a security threat to other States, including to NWSs. On the other hand, the States parties to NWFZs cannot pose such a threat because of the total absence of nuclear weapons on their territory or on the territory of the zone. Moreover, the scope of the verification regime of NWFZs goes beyond the application of IAEA safeguards, which is empowered to insure only that NNWSs do not divert nuclear material to build nuclear explosives. The IAEA does not monitor such activities as clandestine import of nuclear weapons or the use of territory by third States for manufacturing or testing of nuclear weapons in NWFZs. Moreover, the regional control mechanisms, set up in accordance with NWFZ treaties not only oversee and review the application of IAEA safeguards system within their respective zones, but also provide additional control measures reflecting the specifics of the zone (which can be considered as peer pressure).

Today almost 2/3 of the members of the United Nations form part of nuclear-weapon-free regional arrangements as arms control measures. They cover the vast spaces of the Southern Hemisphere, including Latin America, the entire continent of Africa, South-East Asia and the Pacific and have contributed to development of a body of norms of international law on keeping vast territories nuclear-weapon-free. This is a big and an important achievement. However, still much more needs to be done not only to strengthen the regime, but also to exclude the vast remaining territories of the planet from nuclear weapons or their

[5] *Today 115 States with a combined population of 1.7 billion people covers, together with Antarctica, over 50% of the world's landmass*

infrastructure[6], especially regions of tension or potential conflicts, including the Middle East, South Asia and the Korean peninsula.

Asian nuclear challenges

Besides the fact that in 1945 Japan was subject to devastating effects of the then rudimentary nuclear weapons, Asia is the region where nuclear proliferation concerns are rising. Asia is a continent which witnesses rivalries among regional powers and lacks both regional arms-control mechanisms and adequate transparency. The only existing arms control regimes are the Rarotonga and Bangkok NWFZs, while the region is also home to 2 *jure de* and 2 *de facto* nuclear-weapon States, to an aspiring State and a number of nuclear capable States. Though the threat of Iraqi WMDs seems to be have been exaggerated in 2003, the questions pertaining to Iranian nuclear-weapon program is still the focus of attention of arms control experts. The developments on and around the Korean peninsula demonstrate the urgency of taking effective measures to address the question of de-nuclearization of the peninsula which, if allowed to continue, could destabilize not only the peninsula, the Northeast Asia, but the entire non-proliferation regime. The six party talks are seen today as a possible mechanism for tackling this issue. Though the first two rounds gave the impression that the major parties were more poised to mark time and score propaganda points than negotiate in earnest, the third round, held a few weeks ago, has seen parties advance concrete ideas and proposals to address the major stumbling blocks, including the U.S. detailed proposals to resolve the issue. It is to be hoped that the parties would be able to make some progress before their next round to be held in September.

Economic and environmental nuclear issues

When tackling the nuclear issue one should bear in mind its economic dimension and prospects of peaceful nuclear development as well. Today nuclear power generates almost one-sixth of the world's electricity and it is expected that by 2030 it will meet about 25% of the world's electricity needs. Thus of the last 31 reactors to come on line 22 were in Asia and of 27 reactors being constructed 18 are being built in Asia. The role of nuclear energy in Northeast Asia has the tendency to increase. If by mid 1990s the share of nuclear energy in ROK was 36%, in Taiwan 28.8% and in Japan 33.8%. It is estimated that by 2010 almost 1/2 of the

[6] *Theoretically territories of over 75 States (excluding those of de jure and de facto nuclear-weapons States)*

world's nuclear energy will be produced and consumed in this region. Therefore along with the question of nuclear weapons, the questions of nuclear wastes, especially high level radiological waste (HLW), and other nuclear related questions need to be addressed[7]. Already the issue of nuclear wastes is raising many questions and activities in those and adjacent countries.

Mongolia's nuclear environment, national security concept

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament processes are not the responsibility of NWSs alone, as mentioned above. If in bilateral disarmament processes NNWSs cannot play a direct role, in multilateral negotiations on non-proliferation and creation of NWFZs they can play a very important role. With respect to the latter even the States that due to their geographical location cannot form part of regional NWFZs can nevertheless contribute to consolidation and expansion of NWFZs, and set positive precedents, including in addressing nuclear and other security related issues simultaneously or in package.

For most of the post World War II period Mongolia has been an active, if not enthusiastic, participant in two ideological cold wars: East-West and Sino-Soviet. The latter led to the stationing of Soviet troops in Mongolia which were equipped not only with a conventional arsenal but also with some weapons of mass destruction. At the height of the Sino-Soviet confrontation, when a "limited" nuclear exchange appeared a possibility, Mongolia faced the danger of being involuntarily drawn into the nuclear standoff, if not something more ominous. That Cold War experience prompted Mongolia – when the Soviets/Russians withdrew their troops and their weapons in the early 1990s – to declare its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The National Security Concept of Mongolia, adopted in 1994, declared that thenceforth Mongolia's foreign policy would be based on political realism, non-alignment, pursuit of its own national interests, and participation in international efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

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[7] *At present HLW is put into interim storage which it has to sit for 30-40 years for its radioactivity and heat production to decline. Being still highly hazardous HLW then needs to be stored somewhere permanently. Most HLW, the most dangerous kind, is spent fuel from over 400 nuclear power reactors in more than 30 countries. The question of permanent nuclear waste repositories is the most controversial nuclear issue after the question of nuclear-weapon proliferation.*

Mongolia declares itself a NWFZ

The first step in turning Mongolia into a NWFZ was made at the United Nations. In his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1992 Mongolian President P. Ochirbat formally declared Mongolia's territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone, adding that his country would work to have that status internationally guaranteed.

In 1993 and 1994 Mongolian signed treaties on friendly relations and cooperation with Russia and China respectively in which its neighbors pledged to respect Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free policy and status. The other three nuclear-weapon States, that is the United States, France and Britain, also expressed their support for the initiative[8].

It is obvious that political support, however broad, cannot in itself create a credible regime or zone. The discussions and negotiations that Mongolia held bilaterally with members of the P5 in 1993-97 on the ways and means of institutionalizing its status led it to table a UNGA resolution for its consideration. As a result of negotiations the Assembly adopted resolution 53/77D entitled "Mongolia's International Security and Nuclear-Weapon-Free Status", which welcomed Mongolia's initiative and invited Member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen its nuclear-weapon-free status.

Having consulted among themselves in year 2000, the P5 made a joint statement at the United Nations General Assembly[9] on Mongolia's status. The statement reaffirmed P5 commitment to cooperate with Mongolia in implementation of resolution 53/77D and declared that the general positive security assurances (SAs) provided in Security Council resolution 984(1995) as well as their unilateral negative SAs provided in April 1995 applied to Mongolia and that the two immediate neighbors confirmed their legally binding commitments undertaken with respect to Mongolia "through the conclusion of bilateral treaties with Mongolia regarding these matters". Mongolia welcomed the joint statement as a first step towards institutionalizing its status at the international level.

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[8] *Their support was both expression of their support for Mongolia's bold policy and at the same time a way of getting Mongolia's support for the indefinite extension of NPT in 1995.*

[9] *see UN document a/55/530 – S/2000/1052 of 27 October, 2000*

The Sapporo spirit

Bearing the above in mind the United Nations, with the support of the Sapporo prefecture of Japan, sponsored in Sapporo city in September 2001 an independent expert group meeting of representatives of the P5 and Mongolia to try to identify the "status" and the ways of strengthening it. At the meeting the experts agreed that "Mongolia did not ... enjoy legally defined international nuclear-weapon-free status"[10] and they concluded that the best way to strengthen the status would be to conclude a trilateral (Mongolia + two immediate neighbors) or multilateral (Mongolia + P5) agreement that would define both the international status and the content of SAs to be provided by the P5. As a follow-up to those recommendations, in 2002 Mongolia approached its immediate neighbors and presented them the draft elements of a possible future agreement, to which the neighbors in principle responded positively.

Other nuclear-related issues

Besides being completely surrounded by two great powers with nuclear arsenals, Mongolia is also surrounded by "silent" nuclear threats, i.e. by over two dozen nuclear installations and facilities (which, if mismanaged, could be potential "Chernobyls[11]") and nuclear waste repositories (where the neighbors are storing spent nuclear fuel). Thus Russia has officially confirmed possession of 200 mln. tons of national nuclear waste, from low to highly toxic ones. Moreover, according to Russia's Minister for Nuclear Industry, it is planning, on commercial basis, to become an international repository for radioactive nuclear wastes. The largest repository would be in the area of Krasnoyarsk, on the north of Mongolia[12]. According to the recent GTRI mentioned above, it is expected that Russia would repatriate of all Russian-origin fresh highly enriched uranium fuel by the end of 2005 and accelerate and complete the return of all Russian-origin spent fuel by 2010. Though the idea is welcomed as such, still the questions of their safe disposal and the sites of disposal are open.

With respect to Mongolia's southern neighbor, it should be noted that not only its nuclear industry is producing its "own" nuclear wastes, but it has displayed high interest in becoming a commercial importer of nuclear wastes from abroad. Thus in mid-1980s it was

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[10] *see UN document A/57/59 of 20 March 2002*

[11] *In 1986 accident at Chernobyl nuclear power station (in Ukarine) has led to death of over 10.000 people and had disastrous effects on the environment and the health of millions of people.*

[12] *see "Russia Sees Payoff in Storing Nuclear Wastes from Other Nations". The New York Times. 26 May, 2001. Also "Will Russia be nuclear waste dumping ground?" Argumenty y Fakty. No. 17, 2002*

seeking to import nuclear wastes from Western Europe. In 2000 it was negotiating commercial arrangements of accepting 200 000 drums of radioactive waste from Taiwan's nuclear power plants[13], most probably to be deposited in the Gansu province, that borders with Mongolia. Since the P5 do not have agreements with IAEA on strict and rigorous inspection of their nuclear facilities, the question of safety of facilities and repositories in Russia and China acquire special significance for Mongolia.

The third neighbor that does not directly border with Mongolia - Kazakhstan - has 233.000 tons of its own radiation waste to be made safe and large quantities of contaminated equipment. Kazakhstan, following the example of Russia, has openly expressed interest, on commercial basis, to store on its territory low or intermediate-level nuclear waste from other countries[14].

Mongolia's case in the regional context

Mongolia is the world's first UN-recognized State with a special nuclear-weapon-free status that also bans transit of nuclear weapons through its territory[15]. However it is not the first attempt in Asia by individual States to officially ban nuclear weapons on their territory. In the Asia-Pacific region, in early 1980's the Government of New Zealand adopted a legislation[16] that banned nuclear weapons on its territory. However, no follow-up measures have been taken by New Zealand to institutionalize the status at the international level.

In 1983 Australia proposed the establishment of a NWFZ in the South Pacific and as a result of negotiations among the South Pacific Forum members the Roratonga treaty was signed in August 1985.

Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region, the Philippines have reflected in its Constitution the goal to be nuclear-weapon free. This desire of the Philippines and of other ASEAN countries materialized in 1995 when the SEANWFZ treaty was signed. In 1970s Nepal tried to turn its territory into a zone of peace, while Ceylon (Sri Lanka) proposed to turn the entire Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. Since mid-1970s some of the countries of the Middle East have been proposing to turn that volatile region, which is partly in Asia, into a NWFZ. The five Central Asian states are finalizing the draft treaty that would turn that vast region in the heart of

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[13] *see "China and Taiwan Pursue Secret Nuclear Waste Deal" The New York Times, 14 March, 2000*
[14] *It is believed that it would take 200.000 years for intermediate-level waste to decay to be sufficiently to be safe*
[15] *Sarah J. Diehl and James Clay Moltz "Nuclear Weapons and Nonproliferation". 2002*
[16] *New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act, 1987*

Asia into a NWFZ. Proposals have also been made to create a NWFZ in South Asia, though with its proponent – Pakistan – becoming a de facto nuclear-weapon State, the proposal seems to have been abandoned, at least for now.

Studies are also being undertaken on the possibility of creating a NWFZ for Northeast Asia (NWFZ-NEA)[17] or a Limited-Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone for Northeast Asia (LNWFZ-NEA)[18]. In early 1990s in the Joint declaration on the De-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the two Koreas have pledged to de-nuclearize the peninsula. All these testify to the growing interest of the States of the Asian continent, like those of other parts of the world, to outlaw nuclear weapons on their territory or in their region.

Mongolia's case vividly demonstrates that given good will, determination and innovative approach, each State can make its unique contribution to strengthening nuclear non-proliferation and enhance predictability, and thus contribute to regional security and stability. The broad approach used in Mongolia's case, addressing simultaneously nuclear and non-nuclear aspects of security, could be useful in other "special" or "exceptional" cases, including when approaching the DPRK's nuclear problem.

De-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula

The North Korean nuclear problem is an issue that can determine not only the geopolitical landscape of Northeast Asia and of the Asian continent in general, but also the future and viability of the non-proliferation regime. Allowing the DPRK, party to NPT, to withdraw from it and pursue nuclear weapons and nuclear capability option would have serious consequences for regional arms race, including nuclear arms race. It would also surely affect the non-proliferation regime as the world knows.

The North Korean nuclear issue has a long history. One of the high points in the attempts to de-nuclearize the peninsula was the signing in January of 1992 of a joint North and South Korean Declaration on the De-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Adopted almost simultaneously with the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchange and Cooperation between the South and the North", it represented an important first step in turning the peninsula into a NWFZ. By its content, the joint de-nuclearization agreement went beyond

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[17] *see Andrew Mack. A Northeast Asia Nuclear-Free Zone: Problems and Prospects (in Nuclear Policies in Northeast Asia).*
1990. Also Xia Liping. Nuclear-weapon-free zones: Lessons for non-proliferation in Northeast Asia. 2001

[18] *Xia Liping, ibid.*

the provisions of NPT and of creation of a NWFZ, and was hailed as such. Thus the agreement banned both sides from possessing uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing facilities, and as such was seen by the international community, if implemented, as substantially strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Mongolia, like many other countries, welcomed the agreement and expressed the hope that its full realization would be followed soon. The modality of verification, the role of "challenge inspections" and some other issues needed to be agreed upon. The ensuing events and complications have not permitted implementation of the agreement. DPRK's membership of NPT as well as implementation in full by all its parties of the 1994 Agreed Framework provide a concrete roadmap for de-nuclearizing the peninsula. That is why the international community welcomed the businesslike atmosphere of the third round of the six party talks held last June in Beijing during which all the parties put forward their ideas and proposals on how best address this complicated issues.

The question of nuclear weapons and the threat that they pose to a region affect the interests of all the States of that particular region and thus cannot be considered a mere bilateral issue. Nor can other nuclear issues be taken lightly if they would somehow affect national security interests of other States. Withdrawal of DPRK from the NPT does not solve the proliferation problem. In fact it complicates the issue and could set a precedent for future would be proliferators. The only way out of the present situation is a political and diplomatic one, by focusing not only on the nuclear issues, but also the political context of de-nuclearization and addressing the non-nuclear aspects of security of North and South Koreas in conjunction with the wider security issues and implications. In Korea's case the negotiations would succeed only if they are accompanied by effective confidence-building measures.

Mongolia supports broad negotiated settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue on the basis of ensuring the nuclear-free status of the Korean peninsula, establishing normal relations with it and providing it with traditional security guarantees. Focusing solely on nuclear weapons aspects would not lead to a permanent solution. Nor would half-hearted solutions end in fully successful outcome. Though the talks directly involve only six parties, its outcome has regional and even global implications. Therefore other States or groups of States need to support indirectly the talks by indicating their position, and especially their readiness to actively promote realization of the agreements to be reached. On a number of occasions Mongolia expressed its readiness to support

any efforts and initiatives aimed at making the Korean Peninsula a region of peace, mutual trust and international cooperation[19].

Conclusion and looking ahead

The nuclear landscape in the Asian heartland, like in the rest of Asia and the world, is rapidly changing. The NPT regime has not been able to adequately freeze horizontal or vertical proliferation. If not addressed properly, the regime could gradually unravel with all the ensuing consequences for world peace, stability and security. It is difficult to address today's nuclear-related issues based on the thinking or mindset of 1970s or even of 1990s. The stark realities demand new, much broader thinking, especially from the P5. The recent initiatives, including the proliferation security initiative, the global threat reduction initiative, and "universal compliance" are all aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime; they are more practical and realistic, and their success will depend on the position of nuclear and near-nuclear States on the one hand and on the common position of non-nuclear weapon States. With respect to the latter, strengthening further of nuclear-weapon-free zones and creation of new ones, including on the Korean Peninsula, would contribute to the non-proliferation regime. All these issues need to be discussed prior to and at the 2005 NPT review conference so that the conference could adopt clear policy guidelines for the international community on these issues.

This author believes that the 13 practical steps to advance systematically and progressively towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, the recommendations of the Canberra Commission and of the Tokyo Forum in themselves (concerning CTBT, FMCT, TMD and other issues), together with the recent initiatives mentioned in this paper already represent broad possible road-maps to address the nuclear non-proliferation and related issues. What is needed is a realistic, practical and forward-looking approach and agreement on concrete follow-up measures.

This paper tried to show that the threat of nuclear proliferation in the post Cold War world, especially in the Asian region, is real and to some extend increasing. Unless the *de jure* nuclear-weapon states adopt a new thinking with regard to nuclear-weapons and take steps to honor their commitments undertaken in the NPT in 1968, that has been reiterated in 2000 at the NPT Review Conference by their unequivocal commitment to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal, the problem of the nuclear-weapon proliferation will both expand geographically and become entangled with other related and non-related issues.

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[19] *see Statement of the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia dated 13 August, 2003*

The role of IAEA, which is responsible for promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy and ensuring that nuclear technology is not exploited for military purposes, is increasing rapidly. With the increase in the number of nuclear capable States, increased access of non-State actors (including potential terrorists) to nuclear technology, existence of already thriving black market in nuclear-weapon technology, and the prospect of rapid increase in the uses of nuclear energy and thus increase with it the availability of nuclear material that could be used to make nuclear weapons and of nuclear wastes, it would be almost impossible for the Agency alone, with a budget of $ 0.27 bil. and a staff of 2200, to address all these issues simultaneously, in greater depth and provide practical solutions. Geographically, a great deal of effort would be needed to focus on the vast Asian continent. Therefore the Asian continent needs setting up of a regional information center that would raise awareness of the regional nuclear-related issues as well as provide IAEA with the information and assistance needed to addressing the Asian nuclear-related issues within the Agency's competence. There are also nuclear issues that are beyond the reach or competence of the Agency.

The author believes that bearing in mind the positive experience in some parts of the world (including in Latin America and the Europe), creation of an East Asian regional consultative or coordination mechanism on nuclear issues with close ties to IAEA and tailored to the particular circumstances and practical needs of the region is called for. It could address such issues as exchange of nuclear-related information, promotion of non-proliferation, strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones, discussion of policy and practical issues of nuclear energy and nuclear waste management. It could start with an agreement on regular exchange of information and awareness raising. Such a measure at the East Asian region could be the first step in developing in the future of an Asia-Pacific nuclear regulatory mechanism. Mongolia, with its recognized credentials of commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and its unique nuclear-weapon-free status could host such an East Asian regional coordination arrangement. For a start this idea could be flagged at ARF and the IAEA general conference.