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OVERVIEW OF POST-COLD WAR NONPROLIFERATION DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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This paper, prepared for discussion purposes, addresses nonproliferation issues in the context of the Asia-Pacific Region (APR) in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Changing World Environment

With the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, an old security order has collapsed, but no new world order has yet taken its place. The new politico-military environment raises a number of issues for the nonproliferation and other weapons of mass destruction.

The changed international context has given way to more democratic forces and responsive governments and has created more favorable conditions for developing world-wide cooperation in

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almost every area of human activity, including international security. It has generated more opportunities for advancing the objectives of nonproliferation, but also has caused some new proliferation concerns. Thus, the new environment makes the evolution of the network of interdependence for the purpose of stemming proliferation both more promising and more pressing.

The important new factor is the disappearance of the immense ideological barrier that for decades gave rise to distrust and rivalry, which in a number of cases subordinated nonproliferation needs to the exigencies of competitive politics. The Cold War antagonism abetted laxity in dealing with proliferation risks as reflected, for example, in the U.S. policy of economic and military assistance to Pakistan, and USSR aid to India, such as the leasing of a nuclear-propelled submarine.

The other critical catalyst for increased international cooperation has become the recognition of the reality that in the changing world order, where regional and local conflicts have risen in importance and danger, there emerged additional risks of proliferation as states which are engaged in those conflicts and newly forming states have begun to search for new national identities and new answers to their real or perceived security concerns. The demise of the Cold War also has loosened, and in some cases completely eliminated, control or even influence of the "super-powers," in particular Russia, over their allies or satellites. The break-up of the Soviet Union has brought about additional proliferation risks.

When two principal nuclear-weapon states were able to play the fundamental and decisive role in mustering international efforts for constraining proliferation, other states could hold back and give the "super-powers" the opportunity to assume the leadership and the burden of pressing for a more comprehensive and stringent international nonproliferation regime. In the changed political context these countries feel more strongly the need to be more actively involved in such cooperative endeavors. That may have been one of the major reasons why France and China, the two long-term hold-outs, finally decided to join the NPT, and Germany started to play an ever increasing role in international nonproliferation efforts which culminated in the 10-point nonproliferation plan submitted last December by Klaus Kinkel, German Foreign Minister.[2]

Now that all five nuclear-weapon states, who are also permanent members of the UN Security Council, have endorsed the international norm of nonproliferation, it has become possible for the Security Council, for the first time, to adopt a unanimous declaration that "the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security." This creates an important prerequisite for invoking Chapter VII of the UN Charter in cases of proliferation and the consequent possibility of sanctions including the use of force.

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[2] Germany's initiative, in my view, amounts to a restatement of its government's belief that nonproliferation should be under political control, rather than becoming a military, "counter-proliferation," response to a perceived proliferation threat.

Another significant impetus to enhancing the efficacy of the nonproliferation regime was provided by the revelations of covert nuclear activities in Iraq and North Korea. And these disclosures and responses to them by the international community would hardly have been possible in the Cold War environment. The discovery of an intensive Iraqi nuclear weapons program previously unknown to the outside world brought about concerted international efforts to strengthen IAEA safeguards and to augment their credibility.

The advent of the post-Cold War era resulted in the growth in importance of regional interests which stimulate efforts to find solutions to regional security concerns, including nonproliferation, through regional approaches. Such approaches may provide a means of strengthening the overall nonproliferation regime in two ways: first, regional regimes can be more intrusive than the international system; and second, they would work toward creating transparency, security and confidence in the region, thus dissolving the motivation to pursue the nuclear option.

In some areas of the world there emerged a renewed interest in finalizing existing and creating new nuclear-weapon-free zones (Latin America, Africa, South-East Asia) or setting up other similar regional or even bilateral arrangements. This increased interest was reflected in the Guidelines and Recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security adopted by consensus by the UN Disarmament Commission in 1993[3] and endorsed by the UN General Assembly and recommended by

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[3] UN Doc. A/48/42, Annex II.

it to all UN members for implementation.[4]

Asia-Pacific Region

The end of the Cold War has brought about a dramatic change and its consequences will be felt for some time to come, but it is yet too soon to draw any definite conclusions as to what specific effect it produced on the evolving nonproliferation situation in the Asia-Pacific Region. It would, however, be safe to say at this time that the overall impact was in some respects reassuring and in others causing concern - as, for that matter, is the case anywhere else in the world.

On the optimistic note, one should cite a significant increase, in recent years, in the membership of the NPT, which at the time of this writing has 162 parties, including such recent adherents from this region as China, Myanmar, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and some other former Soviet republics situated in Asia. The Chemical Weapons Convention, opened for signature on January 13, 1993, has been signed by 154 states including a very solid number of APR countries (China, India, Pakistan, Japan, Iran, Indonesia, Australia, etc.). Last year was also marked by a substantial progress in devising some potential verification measures that could strengthen the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention. There is a good chance that a special conference of BWC parties will be held later this year to consider these measures, in which APR countries, hopefully, would play an active and constructive role. Yet another welcome development was

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[4] A/48/75G.

the launching of the UN Register of Conventional Arms to which 83 countries submitted replies, including many APR states (China, India, Pakistan, Japan, Australia, Kazakhstan, etc.)

The 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held in Singapore in July 1993, agreed that conditions in South-East Asia today approximate those envisaged in the 1971 Declaration on a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), and endorsed the "Programme of Action for ZOPFAN" aimed at maintaining and strengthening these conditions in the new geo-political environment. The ASEAN foreign ministers noted the significant progress made in resolving the outstanding issues related to the draft treaty on a South-East Asian Nuclear-Free Zone (SEANFZ). According to Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, the drafting process had reached its final stage.[5]

These developments were made possible by radical changes in the situation: the Cold War is over; the U.S. has quit its bases in the Philippines; the Russians have left their bases in Vietnam; as a result of the UN peace plan, there is now a government in Cambodia considered legitimate by ASEAN; Laos and Vietnam have become observers at ASEAN.

The annual ASEAN forum, which involves regional "dialogue partners" from outside ASEAN, plus the US, Canada, Australia and other countries, as well as the European Union, has become the most important official-level forum for security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific Region. In 1993, ASEAN Regional Forum was created which

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[5] International Herald Tribune, July 29, 1993.

will deal in depth with specific security issues.

As to the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone (SPNFZ), it has played and continues to play a modest but beneficial moral and political role in enhancing the security of the Pacific Forum states and also in providing a precedent and model for other zone proposals such as for SEANFZ and NWFZ in Africa. The French moratorium on nuclear testing announced in April 1992 and followed by similar decisions by the U.S. and Russia was, at least to some extent, influenced by the anti-testing climate created by the SPNFZ. I think it is a matter of principle and of practical import (the French, after all, only suspended their tests in the Pacific) to continue to press for the accession to the Treaty of Rarotonga protocols by those nuclear-weapon states which have not yet done so. The 24th South Pacific Forum, held in Nauru last August, did the right thing to call upon France, the UK and the U.S. to join these protocols.

The CTBT negotiations initiated recently in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament and renewed efforts to find a solution to the complex problem of a verified cut-off or cessation of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes might open new prospects for nuclear de-emphasis in the APR. If successfully negotiated and supported by all nuclear-weapon and threshold states, both propositions would introduce a very significant positive element into the security environment of the APR.

Let us now look at those parts of the Asia-Pacific Region which continue to give rise to security concerns.

South Asia

The end of the Cold War has removed the main driving force from the process of nuclear arming, and is leading most if not all the nuclear-weapon states to question the role that nuclear weapons can play in the new world. In this region, however, it has not markedly influenced the nuclear landscape. Here traditional perceptions of the role of nuclear weapons seem to prevail.

It appears, nevertheless, that some rethinking of various dimensions of their nuclear policies has for some time been going on both in India and Pakistan, at least among non-governmental political and strategic analysts.

The states of South Asia are engaged in a process of state-building, and their principal security concerns often involve ethnic and minority conflicts, rather than interstate disputes (to a large extent, it is also true for the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union). This raises the question of whether the nuclear situation in the region is related to issues of state-building or has acquired a dynamic of its own. From the official Indian standpoint, however, there are, in addition, some other perceived security concerns stretching beyond the subcontinent.

This mixed picture has always made the resolution of existing nuclear issues in this particular region extremely difficult. In my view, a global, rather than exclusively regional, approach to their disposition offers a better chance for dealing with these issues. From this perspective, the post-Cold War situation creates additional opportunities for progress since it can provide a more

favorable global nuclear arms control environment (potential agreements on CTB, cut-off, plutonium management, etc.)

However, the global approach should not only exclude, but on the contrary, should encourage and complement any regional efforts at confidence-building measures in South Asia such as the 1988 agreement between India and Pakistan not to attack each other's nuclear sites, which was finally implemented in January 1992. In 1993, both sides again exchanged lists of installations covered by the agreement. Though the effectiveness of the nuclear non-attack pact is diminished by the unwillingness of New Delhi and Islamabad to accept the legitimacy of the exchanged lists, the agreement is certainly a positive step.

The two countries also simultaneously signed the CWC, which was done in accordance with the bilateral agreement concluded in 1992 that provided for "the complete prohibition of chemical weapons" and committed both governments to become regional signatories of the CWC. The significance and effectiveness of this agreement would be greatly enhanced if the two countries come to a common decision to ratify the convention.

Another regional confidence-building measure worth pursuing could be a bilateral agreement to reduce the risk of accidental war which could lead to a nuclear exchange. Little, if anything, is known publicly about the safety and security of military nuclear activities in India and Pakistan; but one should fear the worst. Recently the Indian government suggested a set of measures with the announced objective of reducing the danger of a nuclear attack.

While regional arrangements aimed at nuclear de-emphasis in South Asia should be pursued systematically by both countries themselves and encouraged from outside the region, one should be very cautious about attempting to impose on any of the states of the Indian subcontinent any "paternalistic" regional schemes that might be viewed by any of them as more favoring one of the countries against the other. Thus, the five-party regional nuclear arms control proposal (China, India, Pakistan, Russia and the U.S.), initially put forward by the U.S. and supported by Pakistan, has been perceived by India as an effort to design a regional arrangement more advantageous to Pakistan and not taking into account the Indian vision of its role and position in the world concert of nations. A conference with a much wider participation would be more productive.

Bilateral restraint and regional confidence-building measures are of the essence in any adversarial relationship, especially of the kind that has been prevalent on the Indian subcontinent over the years. However, in this particular region, in view of the uniqueness of the Indian subcontinent due to many compelling historical, geographic, demographic and other factors, nuclear arms control is more susceptible to meaningful progress and eventual solution if approached at the broader level - in the APR or global context.[6]

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[6] This view has been gaining increasing support in the arms control community. Cf. e.g. James F. Leonard and Adam Scheinman, "Denuclearizing South Asia: Global Approach to a Regional Problem", Arms Control Today, June 1993; "Nuclear Arms Control: The U.S. and India," Washington Council on Nonproliferation's Working Paper #2,

Korean Peninsula

The Korean nuclear standoff is also a result of the Cold War confrontation and of the ideological and strategic division of the world into power blocks. Mutual enmity and suspicions between the Soviet Union, China and the United States undoubtedly contributed to the current situation when the world is faced with a serious challenge to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Conflicting reports about the North Korean nuclear potential (zero, one, two or more nuclear weapons) confuse the situation still more and only continue to exacerbate the situation and complicate efforts to defuse it.

I believe that the only credible route to a long-term solution of this nuclear stalemate lies in the implementation of the Joint Declaration for a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula of February 1992 and in a step-by-step movement towards closer relations between the two Koreas and their rapprochement and eventual reunification. This Declaration, going as far as to prohibit the possession on the peninsula of facilities for reprocessing and uranium enrichment, has established a forward-looking legal framework for further action. However, in view of the present tensions between Pyongyang and Seoul, the implementation of the Joint Declaration has so far been stalled.

It is unfortunate that highly unpredictable tactical moves by the DPRK leadership and badly coordinated responses to them by the

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May 1993. These studies contain a number of constructive ideas on nuclear arms control in South Asia.

other major actors have actually pushed aside from the settlement process the international organizations - UN and IAEA which are sometimes asked to intervene only when this is considered to be expedient. The International Atomic Energy Agency acted in a speedy and responsible way when it was confronted with a situation in which it could not verify the correctness and assess the completeness of the DPRK's nuclear inventory. Efforts to find a political settlement of the problem through diplomatic negotiations between parties concerned should of course be encouraged, in particular when they are directly involved (like the U.S. which has kept a strong military presence in South Korea). But this avenue should be pursued in such a way as not to inflict any damage to the credibility of the existing multilateral mechanisms.

We are witnessing today a steadily growing interest in building up regional security mechanisms which may prove to be more effective in solving regional issues than through other means. If the Asia-Pacific Region had some sort of a consultative mechanism for handling security issues, even if it were activated only on an ad hoc basis, that would substantially increase chances of settling conflicts and disputes in the region. The problem of North Korea's nuclear ambitions (regardless of whether they are real or perceived) cries out for regional dialogue and negotiations.

East Asia

Now, let us consider the East Asian region in a wider context, comprising all major players having security interests in this area - China, Japan, both Koreas, Taiwan, U.S., and Russia. Multilateral

security cooperation in East Asia has long been thought by many observers to be impractical, given the historical, political, economic, religious and cultural differences and long-term animosities that exist in the region.

During much of the Cold War era, and persisting to some extent today, confrontation was more the order of the day than cooperation. Bilateral relationships and bilateral arrangements were the most effective mechanism possible.

Two new important factors are capable of changing this perception - the end of the Cold War and emerging regional economic cooperation. The absence of the superpower rivalry, on the one hand, and the continued economic growth and developing economic cooperation, on the other, may help to make the difference. To give just one example, the fact that Beijing helped facilitate initial talks between Washington and Pyongyang on nuclear issues seems to indicate that at least some prerequisites are emerging for regional dialogue and negotiations on security matters.

The need for multilateral political cooperation is great, since regional tensions and misperceptions can best be understood and then reduced on the regional level.

Central Asia

The emergence of Central Asia as a new factor in the security context of the Asia-Pacific Region is a direct result of the USSR's disintegration. It is yet to be seen what role this factor would be playing in the overall security picture in the APR. The newly independent former Soviet republics of Central Asia would first

have to determine their security requirements and establish their security priorities, and this is inevitably a long process.

For the moment, it seems that most of the Central Asian states would continue to rely on Moscow as their principal security partner. At the last summit meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States' heads of states and governments, that was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, in December 1993, some progress, however modest, was made in the direction of developing collective security arrangements in the CIS framework, in which most of the Central Asian republics would participate.

Kazakhstan which inherited over 1300 Soviet nuclear warheads, as well as other Soviet nuclear assets, joined the Lisbon Protocol to the START I Treaty and ratified both this treaty and the NPT. Under the protocol and the accompanying letter signed by President Nazarbaev, Kazakhstan undertook to guarantee the elimination of nuclear weapons located on the Kazakh territory within seven years. The U.S. government provides $70 million of the Nunn-Lugar money to help dismantle SS-18 silos in Kazakhstan.

As to the other former Soviet assets in Kazakhstan, the nuclear test site in the Semipalatinsk region was closed by the order of President Nazarbaev. The Russian and Kazakh governments are negotiating a long-term agreement under which Kazakhstan would lease the Baikonur cosmodrome to Russia.

In the new post-Cold War environment, the Asia-Pacific Region

is beginning to develop a process of consultations on a wide range of security issues, including those relating to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, with the U.S., China and other major actors increasingly showing signs of interest in continuing and further developing the dialogue. This may still be a halting process, but it is a welcome start.