

Arms Control in the North Pacific: The Role for Confidence Building and Verification Third Annual Workshop Overview¹

The Third Annual Korea/Canada Co-operative Research Program workshop explored the potential for arms control, confidence building, and verification efforts on the Korean peninsula. This year, the main focus was on North Korean nuclear weapon and ballistic missile developments and the varieties of arms control and confidence building approaches that might help address these disturbing developments. A secondary and related focus was the broader problem of conventional weapon proliferation throughout the North- and South-East Asian security regions. Papers were presented (1) exploring the nature of the Korean security environment and its broader context as well as (2) discussing various dimensions of arms control experience, both practical and conceptual. As in previous workshops, the discussions following the paper presentations tended to be exploratory, with participants focusing on the complex nature of the Korean security environment. A serious effort was made to combine the largely Western-based experience of arms control approaches with an appreciation of security relations on the Korean peninsula and in the adjoining area, as understood by the people who live there.

The first paper, "The Emerging Security Balance in the North Pacific and the Nuclear Impasse on the Korean Peninsula" by Dr. James Boutilier, provided an excellent overview of the region's basic security relationships and their recent development. It also introduced the complex problem of North Korean nuclear ambitions and posed the question whether arms control could play a role dealing with this problem. This was a central concern throughout the workshop's deliberations. The paper touched sequentially on the security concerns and perspectives of China, Russia, Japan, the United States, and the Koreans. This treatment stressed the state of flux in relations within the region as China grows more powerful — but perhaps less stable; Russia recedes as a regional player; Japan approaches difficult economic, military, and domestic leadership problems; and the United States continues to grapple with its role in the region and its relations with both China and Japan. The last section of the paper focused on the problems on the Korean peninsula, particularly the threatened North Korean withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Dr. Boutilier explored North Korean motivations and the options available to South Korea and the international community.

1. This report concentrates on general summaries of the discussions following each paper presentation. Although the basic nature of each paper is noted, there is no detailed summary of its content because the papers are included in this volume.