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Limited nuclear-weapon-free zones: the time has come

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This paper focuses on the creation, development and current status of the concept of a "limited nuclear-weapon-free zone for Northeast Asia." While initial work was started in 1991 to develop a system to reinforce the South–North Korean nonaggression and denuclearization treaties, a more formal phase began in January 1995, when a panel of senior military officers met in Atlanta, Georgia. The original panel of general officer-rank specialists from China, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the United States grew in membership to eventually include Mongolia and North Korea, as well as observers from Argentina, Finland and France. The concept was refined in plenary meetings held in Buenos Aires; Bordeaux, France; Moscow; Helsinki; Tokyo; Seoul; Beijing; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Jeju-do, South Korea; Shanghai and Tokyo. The 12th Plenary will be held in Daejeon, South Korea, in October 2008. While the concept of a limited nuclear-free zone has been developed, the international nonproliferation system has come under significant strain, as described in Paul Bracken's book, *Fire in the East*. Picking up on the theme introduced by Bracken that the world has entered the "second nuclear age," this paper argues that in light of the changed international environment, nuclear-free zones should be redefined and given new missions. Those new missions are to form the basis for new cooperative security systems in areas where regional security systems have yet to mature.

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Introduction

As of October 2007, the new SolBridge International School of Business, part of Woosong University in Daejeon, South Korea, became the home of the interim secretariat for the Limited Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone for Northeast Asia (LNWFZ–NEA). SolBridge International is attempting to contribute to what we call "Neighborhood Asia." Stressing cooperative security and efforts toward regional integration, the process to realize a Northeast Asia free of confrontation that began 17 years ago—at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia, in the Center for International Strategy, Technology and Policy—will continue in Daejeon, South Korea. This paper is about efforts since 1991 to advance cooperative security concepts in Northeast Asia, and the need to reconfigure our notion of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Background: a personal journey

When the North and South Korean governments agreed to a non-aggression pact and to denuclearize the Korean peninsula in 1991, it became clear that such a

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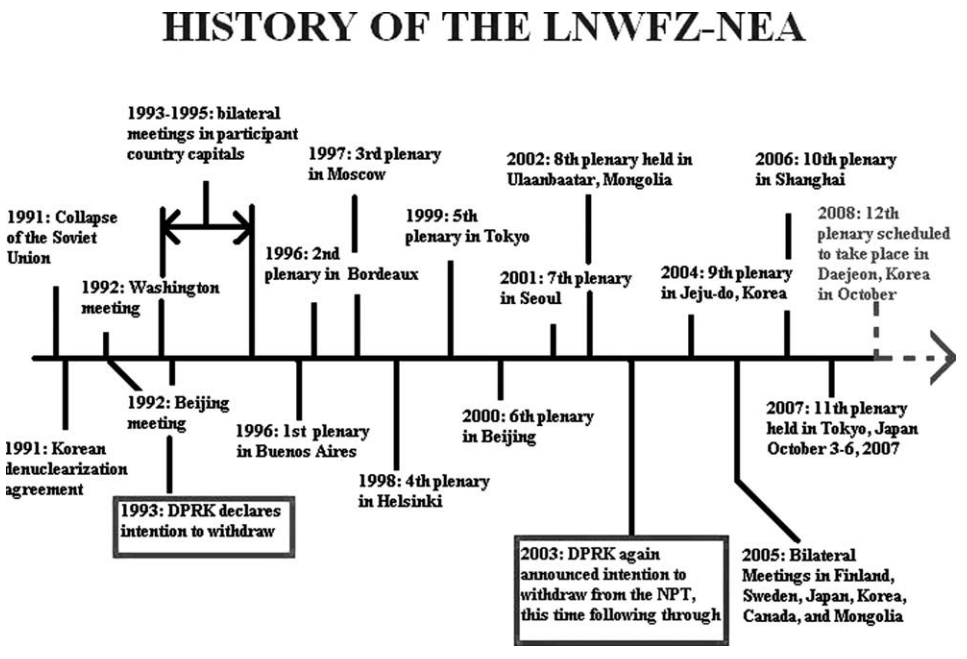

Figure 1. History of the Limited Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of Northeast Asia (LNWFZ–NEA). DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea); NPT: Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

bilateral agreement would need to be buttressed by a regional agreement involving all the neighboring states.[1] The best vehicle to obtain such reinforcement would be through a nuclear-weapon-free zone that would have a formal structure, including a secretariat, an inspection system, and an agency for dealing with the questions that would inevitably arise and need rapid attention. It was hoped that this "agency" could eventually become the heart of a new regional cooperative security framework.

The initial design for the nuclear-weapon-free zone was a simple circle 1,200 km in radius centered on the middle of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea. Removing all nuclear weapons activity from that area, in line with existing guidelines for nuclear-free zones, was the first idea. Special attention was paid to ensure that Russia would be able to maintain its nuclear bastion in the Sea of Okhotsk, and that the other nuclear-weapon-possessing states in the proposed zone (China and the United States) would see the real benefits of such a zone. In February 1992, the author traveled to Washington, DC, where the concept was vetted among 24 top members of the United States executive, including representatives from the Department of Defense, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the State Department, the CIA, the armed services, several research organizations and recognized academics. After a vigorous, four-hour exchange, featuring some serious concerns voiced by more than several participants, permission was given to proceed on an informal basis—in the essential recognition that perhaps a window of opportunity was opening and there might be some merit in an initial trial balloon.

The first public presentation of this concept was to an international conference in Beijing the following month—March 1992. Seventy-five participants from all the

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states of Northeast Asia, including South Korea, North Korea, Mongolia, China, Japan, Canada, and Hong Kong, as well as Russia and the United States, heard the presentation, and all but one country's participants were positively excited. The one delegation unhappy with the idea was that of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Approximately 60% of its deployed nuclear assets were in the original zone, and the delegation leader made it patently clear that the nuclear-weapon-free zone would never be accepted.

Discouraged but undaunted, the Beijing meeting was followed by a more focused trilateral meeting in Atlanta the next March (1993) between unofficial representatives from China, Japan and the United States. Astonishingly, the Chinese delegation presented a united front—this time in favor of "positive consideration" of the concept. The senior delegate, a member of the People's Congress, raised a toast to "further examination" of this interesting notion. A week later, it was clear why this sudden and unexpected change of view had occurred; North Korea had announced that it was about to leave the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). No nation in Northeast Asia, including China, wanted a North Korea armed with nuclear weapons. The Chinese delegates had probably known in advance that such an announcement was coming and thus showed a new interest in nonproliferation.

Over the next few years, the author traveled to all the capitals of the Northeast Asian states, and held discussions with ministries of defense and foreign affairs, with the exception of North Korea, which was kept informed through its official representatives at the United Nations. North Korea's position, never hostile in actual fact, was always contingent on full normalization of relations with the United States.

After senior officials in China, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, Russia and the United States had been briefed, a meeting was convened in Atlanta, in January 1995, to determine whether a general, initial, unofficial agreement could be reached. Five retired general officers were invited to work on a basic draft agreement. A general from South Korea, a lieutenant general from Japan, a major general from Russia and China each, and the author made up the invited senior panel. (Due to his illness, the Chinese officer was replaced by a very talented academic.)

The panel met for five difficult weeks that were marked by almost as much disagreement as agreement. However, what finally emerged was a consensus document that called for a *limited* nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia. A total ban in the area was unrealistic, and this group of seasoned pragmatists agreed that "the perfect is the enemy of the good" (an old Russian saying). Only tactical weapons would be subject to control, and each country that possessed such weapons was to determine the number subject to control. The area within the zone included some U.S. territory and not so much Chinese. The heart of the agreement, the establishment of a regional agency charged with inspectorate duties as well as overall administrative responsibilities, was endorsed; and, overall, the concept was an endorsement of starting small, so at least a beginning could be made. A document titled "The Agreed Principles" was the final product. As a group, the panel took the idea to Washington, DC, New York, Boston and San Francisco, and, collectively, as a team, briefed the arms control communities and other interested parties in those cities. Briefings were given at the National Press Club and the Institute for National Strategic Studies in Washington; at the Japan Society and the North Korean Mission to the United Nations in New York; at *The Boston Globe* and the Fletcher School of

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Law and Diplomacy in Boston; and at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Ploughshares Fund in San Francisco. Only at the National Press Club in Washington was there any negative reaction, and that was from an Indian journalist, who questioned the patriotism of one of the senior generals for agreeing to such a limitation on his government.

Generally speaking, then, the reception from those who heard the proposal was sympathetic, but somewhat skeptical. They saw the legacies of colonialism, World War II, the Cold War—and the Korean War, specifically—as too difficult to overcome in the near term; and they did not see the international system as "mature" enough in East Asia to support such an endeavor.[2] Most did not seem to understand the confidence-building nature of the entire enterprise. As small steps are made and general trust develops, progress toward resolving more demanding and complex issues could be encouraged, ultimate nuclear disarmament being the goal.

In the general agreement that was ultimately reached in Atlanta in February 1995, the original circle-shaped zone had become more elliptical, hugging the coasts from Taiwan to Alaska and reducing the amount of Chinese territory involved, but including some U.S. territory that was absent from the first concept (see maps in Figure 2 below). However, the obvious weakness of this work was that it involved only five individuals. Admittedly, these individuals had all known war and were dedicated to finding a framework for peace—but steps had to be taken to enlarge the participant base.

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The next steps: phase I

Once the "Agreement of Principles" was reached, it was agreed to begin to expand the number and type of participants to include retired diplomats, scientists, academics and peace activists. This ever-increasing group met first in Buenos Aires, where the group of five was enlarged to include several retired ambassadors, retired generals and an admiral, the chief executive officer/president of a major international bank, the former director of the primary national nuclear laboratory in the United States, and a peace activist. The Argentine government matched our group of 25 with an equal number of experts in the nonproliferation and disarmament field, and provided a tutorial on the construction of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. As it had great expertise in the Latin American Nuclear-Free Zone and ABAC, the intrusive bilateral agreement between Argentina and Brazil to ensure both states engage only in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the Argentine government proved to be the most constructive source available.

After our first meeting in March in Buenos Aires, the enlarged body met in Bordeaux, France, in October. At that meeting, the Bordeaux Protocol was published and the Interim Secretariat established. An Action Agenda for future efforts was included. Over the next 13 years, additional meetings were held in Moscow; Helsinki; Beijing; Tokyo; Seoul; Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Jeju-do, South Korea; Shanghai and Tokyo for plenary meetings, and Shanghai and Vancouver for planning sessions. At each meeting, some new development or refinement was added to the formulation that represented the maturation of the idea and reflected the growing willingness by all parties to improve the product.

It went forward in the face of determined opposition by the U.S. arms control community, which doggedly opposed, at that time, any multilateral treatment of the

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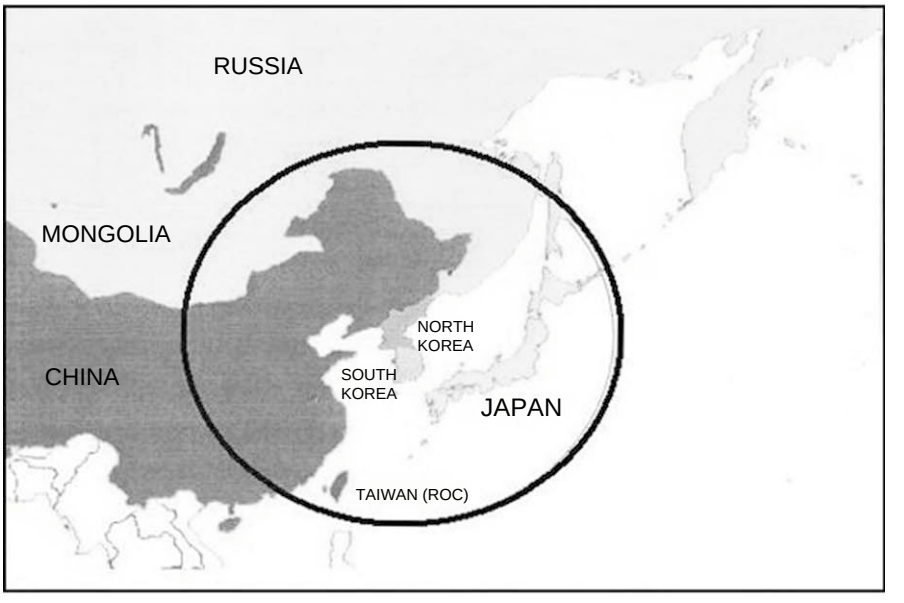
Areas Involved:

North Korea
United States of America
People's Republic of China
Mongolia
South Korea
Russia
Taiwan (ROC)
Japan



LIMITED NUCLEAR FREE ZONE FOR NORTH EAST ASIA

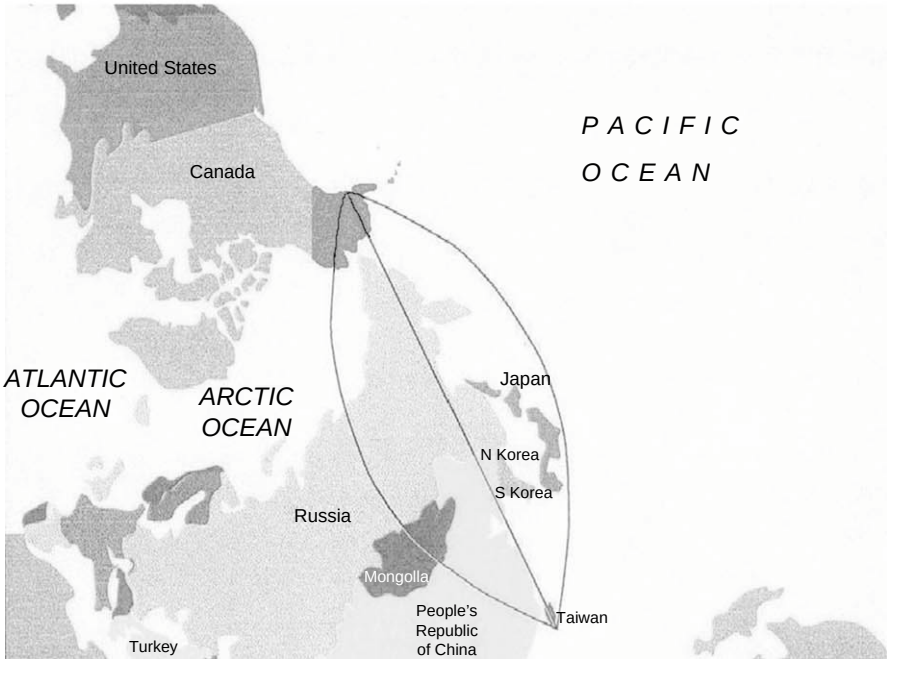


Figure 2. Northeast Asia.

issue with so many verification problems. They insisted that the issue was to be solved in a bilateral context and in the terms of criteria that had become dogma that was not subject to review. Some other sectors of the U.S. government, however, especially the East Asia Bureau of the State Department, appreciated what was being attempted, and the effort went forward. By the Helsinki meeting, official advisers had been incorporated into the meetings, so all ideas—good and bad—got back to the respective governments. Mongolia was added to the talks, as it had much to provide from past experiences and its present nuclear-free status. The Helsinki meeting was also significant, as a "basket structure" was added to the deliberations in the meeting there. Thus, future discussions were divided into basket I subjects that focused on the specifics of a limited nuclear-weapon-free zone; basket II subjects that stressed the items that would contribute to confidence-building throughout the Northeast Asian region; and basket III items that were suggestions to help ensure the active participation of North Korea in the process. These were mostly economic incentives.

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While victory cannot be claimed yet, in light of the recent progress in the Six-Party Talks, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic. Pointing to the current Six-Party Talks reveals many of the items the team struggled over in the almost 16-year process of keeping an idea alive. For example, the notion that the issue should be addressed multilaterally, not bilaterally; the endorsement of a nuclear-free peninsula; the need for a security forum; and, ultimately, the need to resolve the issue regionally have been embraced. However, it is the regional development or formulation of a concept from the very beginning to its present state in which we take greatest pride. The appreciation of each member's particular security situation was fundamental to the progress that was made. It is clear that it is with the full participation of the states of the region involved that meaningful progress can be made.

The LNWFZ–NEA team took great pride in the March 2006 10th Plenary Meeting that was held in Shanghai, China. All seven states of its process—including two representatives from the North Korean Foreign Ministry—were present, plus an official observer from the U.S. State Department. (Unofficial observers from Argentina, Finland and France also attended, as they have for almost the entire effort.) Flexibility on all sides was noticeable, but a week later, at a meeting in Tokyo, U.S. and North Korean officials failed to meet in a bilateral setting. The "right" moment had not come. Since then, there has been an appreciable change in the U.S. position, and the multilateral process has gained a certain degree of momentum. All sides now wait for the complete disclosure of North Korean nuclear assets, which was scheduled to be forthcoming at the end of 2007. However, as 2008 began, a complete resolution of the issue had not been realized.

Amidst a meeting of the Six-Party Talks and the Second Bilateral Summit between South and North Korea during the first week of October 2007, the 11th Plenary Meeting was held in Tokyo, Japan. All participating states attended except North Korea. As a result of sanctions applied against it for the abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, North Korea was unable to have participants present. But the meeting took note of that and adopted a "Tokyo Protocol" that captured the consensus of the body at this particular point in time.

The meeting was held in Tokyo's Nippon Toshi-Center Kaikan and concentrated on the current progress of the Six-Party Talks, discussions to develop confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) for the region, and economic incentives for

North Korean progress on denuclearization. All attendees of this track II or unofficial meeting acted, as usual, in their personal capacities. Some of the participants traced their involvement in this process back to March 1992, when the idea of the LNWFZ–NEA was first presented in Beijing.

This meeting took place in the midst of both the release of the phase II actions for the implementation of the joint statement of the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear programs and the 2007 inter-Korean summit. All participants of the 11th Plenary emphasized the need for further CSBMs in Northeast Asia to help support the Six-Party Talks and advance the peace, prosperity, and security of the region and the global community.

While individual members of the meeting took exception to some of the specifics of the 2007 inter-Korean summit, the members of the plenary session endorsed the overall spirit of the agreement and saw it as contributing positively to the political environment in Northeast Asia. The 11th Plenary Session emphasized the following points:

- continued support for positive exchange and dialogue between South and North Korea;
- endorsement of progress made thus far in the Six-Party Talks;
- the need for rapid resolution of the abduction issue and improved bilateral dialogue between Japan and North Korea;
- the need for positive reinforcement of the global arms control regime and awareness that traditional concepts of deterrence must be expanded to take into consideration the role of nonstate actors;
- the need for clearer recognition of the principles of step-by-step nuclear arms reduction in the region;
- balancing of economic incentives and progress on denuclearization by North Korea, in tandem with the progress of the Six-Party Talks;
- encouraging further development of special economic ventures with North Korea, both public and private;
- increasing global awareness of the Mongolian single-state, nuclear-weapon-free zone concept by other nations, and in other cases where appropriate;
- completely dismantling the North Korean nuclear program and facilities in order to maintain peace and prosperity in the region.

It was noted that the current period is one of great transition in many of the countries in the region, which thus presents an opportunity for advancing the concept of the LNWFZ–NEA.

The 11th Plenary was made possible through the combined efforts of Teikyo University; Delta Airlines; Woosong University; the Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy and the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Institute of Technology; the Carnegie Corporation of New York; and the Council for Global Partnership.

As is customary, the conference in its final session decided on the venue for the next meeting. In Tokyo, after briefings from several Daejeon organizations, it was decided to meet in Daejeon, South Korea, probably during the first two weeks of October 2008.

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In the meeting scheduled for 2008, it is hoped to expand the number of participants to include representatives from the Central Asian Nuclear-Free Zone, the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Free Zone, India, Pakistan, and Australia. Discussions to date have not included observers from these areas, and there may be much to gain from their critique as well as their possible support in the formal disarmament organizations within the United Nations structure. In the 2010 NPT review conference, their participation could be critical indeed.

With regard to the final point of the Tokyo Protocol, it may be appropriate to use the 12th Plenary Meeting as a preparatory session for a major five-year review conference to be held in 2009. At the 2009 LNWFZ–NEA review conference, the plenary meeting will be given an opportunity to send a message to the 2010 NPT review conference. Specifically, can the criteria for nuclear-free zones be expanded to permit "limited" regimes, as in the LNWFZ–NEA? Observers from the Central Asian Nuclear-Free Zone, the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Free Zone, India, Pakistan and Australia could be helpful in this regard, and the LNWFZ–NEA membership could benefit from their critique as well as their possible support in the 2010 NPT review conference.

Finally, with the current positive environment between South and North Korea, the 2008 Daejeon meeting could take place with the largest North Korean delegation to participate so far.[3] While it does not have to be huge, its presence ensures a full exchange that would otherwise not be possible.

As the events since 2006 with respect to North Korea are considered, and the shock to the nonproliferation world in 1998 when India and Pakistan joined the "club," it is clear that the world has entered a "second nuclear age"—and the propositions designed to deal with the first nuclear age are not necessarily fit to handle the requirements of the second. Permit the author to turn to a discussion of this new age, using as a tool the excellent book by Paul Bracken.

The second nuclear age

Is it not time to create a nonproliferation system for the second nuclear age that addresses specifically the needs of the regional hot spots of the world, and brings all states back into a positive interaction with such a system? Ultimately, states will resort to nuclear weapons when their own security interests cannot be met by alliances and global reassurances. Until fundamental security concerns are addressed, how can we expect to stem the tide of proliferation? The North Korean nuclear test of October 9, 2006 was only the most recent manifestation of the problem in its boldest form.

The current system is in need of some repair—indeed, overhaul. What might be used to address the extreme variances faced in today's international security system? It is perhaps time to undertake a closer examination of regional nuclear-free zones. If Asia is considered, there is the possibility of interlocking zones starting in central Asia, running through Mongolia, then joining with the LNWFZ–NEA, and finally coming to rest in the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Free Zone. Is it not time to urge south Asia to consider the limited nuclear-weapon-free zone model? Especially in light of the tragic assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the need for stabilizing institutions becomes all too clear. Any means to lessen the danger of unauthorized access to nuclear weapons should be examined positively. The five permanent members of the

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Security Council should encourage the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones that improve transparency, place caps on existing nuclear assets, create cooperative inspection regimes and security forums, and incorporate some military-to-military engagement to enhance regional respect, but above all regional restraint.

In *Fire in the East*, Paul Bracken notes that the world has indeed entered the second nuclear age. The first lasted from 1947 to 1991. But it was the period 1947–67 that was the most dangerous. Certainly, this is correct. He argues that deterrence did work during this early stage, but it was marked by some very close calls—Berlin, Panmunjom, Taiwan, Beirut and Cuba. Ultimately, after the Cuban missile crisis, both sides realized the magnitude of an error and began the steady process of developing the restraining infrastructures that made the period from 1968 to 1991 so much more predictable.

The number of nuclear weapons reached extremely high levels in the latter part of the first nuclear age. Vertical proliferation reached astounding levels with 125,000 warheads and more coming on the scene, just from the United States and the Soviet Union. (The United States produced approximately 70,000 and the Soviet Union about 55,000.) But because of the arms control and eventual arms reductions efforts, the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union was stable.

The thesis of Bracken's book stresses that the nonproliferation regime that was put in place in 1968 was remarkably successful. Most experts believed there would be 25 proliferators by the 1970s. He notes that the first "outlaw bomb" was the Indian test in 1974—unless we count the Israeli capability, which he puts as being realized in 1969. While this did occur along with that of South Africa, it was the events of May 1998 that he marks as actually ending the first nuclear age. The nuclear age marked by a competition between two superpowers was replaced by a nuclear age which "seemed to emerge out of a hodgepodge of unrelated regional issues."[4]

Other characteristics of this second nuclear age were identified as an era less Eurocentric in nature and more nationalistic—in fact, reflecting "national insecurities that are not comprehensible to outsiders whose security is not endangered."[5] Nuclear warfare during the first nuclear age between the United States and the Soviet Union was approached with a certain "detachment and rationality." Bracken opines that the Western model is certainly less than satisfactory as the world charts a new course into a twenty-first-century nonproliferation regime. We all can recall the surprises International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors received in Iraq in the early 1990s; the failed 2005 NPT review conference, where not even an agenda could be agreed upon; and the most recent wake-up call on October 9, 2006 when North Korea claimed to have tested a nuclear device.

It is clear that our answers to a new regime for the second nuclear age must be based on responsible and able regional groupings enabled by a redefinition of the criteria for nuclear-weapon-free zones, associations that can address regional security issues with a familiarity and commitment unmatched by globally oriented institutions, but where consensus and multilateral agreement become the watchword, not unilateral dictum or arrangements reminiscent of Western posses of the mid-nineteenth century. Such associations can be found in a well-known corner of the nonproliferation experience—nuclear-free zones. However, these zones of the twenty-first century will take on a new life with concomitant new missions.

In the twentieth century, nuclear-free zones were defined quite rigidly. All such zones had to be pristinely pure. They had to meet certain criteria, and there could be

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no exceptions or moderations. For example, all zones had to be nuclear weapon free, with no exceptions. No storage, no transit, and no production would be permitted, and all the territory of the states involved would need to be included—all of it. Also, any new agreement must not upset existing security arrangements. This set of rules served the nonproliferation community well when we worked on the "easy" areas, that is, areas that had no weapons in the first place. Thus, the first such zone, the Latin American Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, came into existence, fully abiding by these guidelines. Others that followed included the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa, and, most recently, central Asia zones. In 1992, Mongolia announced that it would seek to become a one-state nuclear-weapon-free zone, but called upon the states of the region to form a nuclear-free zone. By February 28, 2000, this one-state exception, but authorized, nuclear-free zone, was officially recognized within the United Nations nonproliferation regime.[6]

On September 8, 2006, another nuclear-free zone was realized—the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ), consisting of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Finding its origins in the Mongolian call for a regional zone in 1992, President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan at the UN General Assembly of 1993 proposed this CANWFZ. The call was well received, until differences arose over how the agreement would treat the transit of nuclear weapons through the zone, and what relationships previous security treaties would have in the new arrangement. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were in favor of flexible provisions, but Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan desired a more restrictive regime.

In the end, and reflecting the new geopolitical situation in central Asia after the 9/11 terror attacks, all five states agreed to wording that was more flexible with regard to transit issues and former international agreements.[7] With regard to transit, the treaty read: "Each Party, in the exercise of its sovereign rights, is free to resolve issues related to transit through its territory by air, land or water."[8] With regard to existing agreements, the treaty noted: "This Treaty does not affect the rights and obligations of the Parties under other international treaties which they may have concluded prior to the date of the entry into force of this Treaty."[9]

These entries became extremely important when the draft was submitted to the five permanent members of the Security Council for comment, as their endorsement of such a nuclear-weapon-free zone would become a commitment not to attack its signatories with nuclear weapons. The United States, France and the UK ultimately have indicated that they would not support protocols that would activate negative security assurances for the CANWFZ states. China and Russia have sent such assurances. It became clear that while United Nations guidelines for nuclear-weapon-free zones are specific on the right of member states to set the terms governing the zone, the five permanent members still have the prerogative of withholding the desired assurances. There are now several nuclear-weapon-free zones where the five permanent members do not necessarily provide negative security assurances: the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the CANWFZ, for example.

If the object is to reinforce the worldwide nonproliferation regime, is it not possible to consider that modified nuclear-weapon-free zones that permit, but restrict, the presence of nuclear weapons might also be useful as regional confidence-building measures and embryonic cooperative security institutions?

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The experience gained in Northeast Asia during the 17 years of examining the concept of a limited nuclear-weapon-free zone for that region demonstrates that the time may have come for an official look at the possible roles limited nuclear-weapon-free zones could play in regional stability. Certainly, with regard to South Asia, the dangers of a nuclear-armed state becoming incapable of maintaining control over its nuclear weapons have become obvious to all. One is reminded of the turmoil during the Cultural Revolution in China from 1965 to 1975. Observers in the West could not be sure whether or not zealots of the Red Guard might take control of the country's nuclear arsenal and threaten all of East Asia with nuclear warfare that could lead to a devastating exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States. So, today, the world is concerned with developments in Pakistan. The notion of a spark that would set off an exchange between the United States and Russia is not our concern, but we are concerned with the possibility of loosely controlled nuclear weapons finding their way into the hands of al-Qaeda and the general international terrorist network.

It is time to complete the denuclearization of North Korea and to move to other methods to ensure that nuclear weapons in the newly possessing states (India, Pakistan) are effectively controlled and made impervious to threats of unauthorized use. Of course, the long-term goal would be to remove the weapons completely, but let us be willing to take the small steps first.

The 2010 NPT review conference might be an opportunity to promote new missions for nuclear-weapon-free zones. The real mission that should be proposed would be to use them as regional confidence-building measures. Agreements that would not come close to meeting the seven criteria for such zones in the twentieth century, but agreements that recognize that all the easy nuclear-free zones have been achieved, will ensure that the rest come in stages after confidence and trust are developed. It is time to start to think out of the box.

Are we not caught in the "perfect is the enemy of the good" dilemma? Why should we be calling for the total absence of nuclear weapons when they already exist, and the formation of regional security organizations could ultimately lead to the total absence of all desire to use these weapons?

These regional organizations could function as joint command centers for the exchange of critical information at times of high crisis or tensions among member states. They could also serve as valuable points of information exchange about nongovernmental organizations operating within the area, but not sanctioned by any official body. As far as South Asia is concerned, the sharing of correct information is crucial; the mistaken interpretation of available data almost led to an outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan. What was an exercise by one state was seen as a hostile operation by the other.

The regional institutions created around a limited nuclear-weapon-free zone agreement should have additional responsibilities. They should not be debating societies that meet quarterly, but should be preferred assignments for the best military personnel in the region. They should be in operation 24 hours a day and possess the best communications equipment available. Ultimately, the personnel assigned to such duty would represent their own countries, but at the same time would begin to function as members of a regional team.

The new organization for the second nuclear age should have no outliers. The regime should be universal in scope, allowing all the existing nuclear-free zones to

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interact with the IAEA and the Security Council. It should include additional regional organizations in Northeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. Just as the League of Nations gave way to the United Nations and, in the experience of the United States, the Articles of Confederation gave way to the Constitution, the NPT system needs to be fashioned anew to meet the requirements of a new day and a new age. The existing treaty need not be opened; it just needs to be added to in a form that is constructive and reflects the changed international environment—after all, 2008 is 40 years since the NPT's initial formulation.

The five permanent members of the Security Council collectively must recognize that the world did not stand still after July 1968. The fundamental requirement for a successful international security system is the need to adjust to change—to face realities—even though they may not be pleasant. There certainly are more than five nuclear powers in the world today. It is time to update our international institutions to recognize this very critical fact.

The NPT system, as one of the successful instruments of the Cold War, now needs to be modified to reflect our changed international environment. Let us take that on with a resolve of immediacy, as it deserves. Perhaps after the NPT is updated, it would be appropriate to get serious about the Security Council—failure to adjust to changed realities cost the world dearly in the twentieth century. Let us not fail to meet this exciting challenge for a nearly nuclear-weapon-free future.

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A personal conclusion

The author has now spent some 48 years of his professional life involved in the study of Asian affairs—and almost that long participating in the debates, both inside and outside government, regarding the employment and then the control of nuclear weapons. After he completed a dissertation on Japan's nuclear option in 1973, many colleagues believed Japan would soon become a nuclear-weapons state. The United States, however, was able to meet its ally's security needs, and 35 years later the conclusion that Japan would not weaponize its nuclear capability is still valid. It is clear, when states can satisfy their security needs without nuclear weapons, that the drive for such capabilities can be dampened.

Each nation must base its decision regarding nuclear weapons on an evaluation of its strategic interests and the security situation it faces. Both India and Pakistan chose to pursue nuclear weapons, as did North Korea. The international community within Northeast Asia has responded collectively to address the security needs of North Korea. The Six-Party Talks have gone a long way to change the political environment in Northeast Asia. While North Korea has not completely reversed its policy of seeking a nuclear deterrent capability, the commitment to reverse it has been made, and realization will follow as confidence on all sides grows and commitments are kept.

In the light of such progress, it is time for a serious examination of what role a limited nuclear-weapon-free zone might play in providing the institutional framework to guarantee long-term success. It is time to look at the "next steps" to security in Northeast Asia. A limited nuclear-weapon-free zone for Northeast Asia not only would address the details of the zone itself, but also emphasize confidence-building

measures to help bind the region together, such as the trans-Asia rail network, educational exchanges and joint research on sustainable development throughout the area, and new concepts of conventional arms control to reduce tensions and increase reaction times among armies of Northeast Asian states. Finally, we must consider some of the economic incentives that would ensure North Korean integration into the economic system of Northeast Asia.

In October 2008, at the 12th Plenary Meeting of the LNWFZ–NEA to be held in Daejeon, the agenda will cover the items presented above. It will focus on the need to raise, to the international arms control community and the formal institutions within the United Nations structure, the fundamental issue of the need to modify the notion of nuclear-free zones. Can a time-proven concept be made better? Can the 2010 NPT review conference perhaps broaden the mission of nuclear-free zones? It should be possible. The concept of the limited nuclear-free zone may not be the magic solution to all the challenges we face in the arena of nonproliferation, but it will involve all countries of the region, and in the process help form "Neighborhood Asia."

"The time has come" to begin.

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Notes

1. Much of the description of the development of the LNWFZ concept is drawn from a presentation made at the J. Nehru University in New Delhi, India in November 2006 at a conference examining nonproliferation efforts in Asia.
2. The author had particular personal problems accepting this charge from Western observers, especially ones from states that looked to East Asia when trying to repair the intellectual ravages of the Dark Ages.
3. In March 2000, North Korea did send a delegation to Atlanta, Georgia, for a two-day meeting on nonproliferation issues after spending two weeks in New York to discuss diplomatic normalization between the United States and North Korea. That delegation, numbering 11, was headed by His Excellency Kim Gye Gwan. We did not expect that size group to join us in Daejeon in 2008.
4. Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 110.
5. Ibid., 111.
6. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolian_Nuclear-Weapons-Free_Status.
7. Scott Parrish, "Central Asian States Achieve Breakthrough," available at http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/020930.htm.
8. Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, p. 4, Article 4: "Foreign Ships, Aircraft, and Ground Transportation," available at http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/pdf_support/060905_canwfz.pdf.
9. Ibid., Article 12, "Other Agreements."

Notes on contributor

John E. Endicott studied at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University, where he obtained an M.A. in International Relations, a MALD (Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy), and his Ph.D. He also has an M.A. in History from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a B.A. from Ohio State University in Political Science. He had a 31-year career in the U.S. government, 28 in the Air Force and three years as a member of the Senior Executive

Service. During his government career, he was Director of the Institute for National Strategic Studies in Washington, DC, a government think tank that serves the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1989, he began an 18-year career at the Georgia Institute of Technology as a professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, and Director of the Center for International Strategy, Technology and Policy. In 1996, he became the Chairman of the Interim Secretariat of the Limited Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone for Northeast Asia. That organization and Endicott were nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. He has authored or co-authored five books, including *Japan's Nuclear Option* (1974) and *American Foreign Policy* (2005), and numerous articles. In August 2007, he became the Co-President of Woosong University and Vice-Chancellor of SolBridge International of Daejeon, Republic of Korea.

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