

## PROPOSED OUTLINE OF APLN SESSION, JEJU 29 May, 1520-1650

### TOPIC AND PANELISTS

#### **Setbacks to Nuclear Arms Control and the Asia-Pacific: INF and JCPOA**

In 2017, alarmed at growing nuclear risks and threats and exasperated at the glacially slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament under the NPT framework, two-thirds of UN member states voted to adopt a Nuclear Ban Treaty as an alternative normative framework. In 2018, the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA, 2015) that had mothballed Iran's alleged nuclear weapon program. In 2019, the US and Russia suspended the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF, 1987) and announced plans to invest in new ground-based missiles. In 2021, New START will expire unless renewed, leaving the world without any nuclear arms control agreement to regulate US and Russian arsenals that make up over 90 per cent of global nuclear stockpiles. This APLN session will address the following key questions: What are the implications of these developments for the Asia-Pacific? What can Asia-Pacific countries do to reinvigorate regional and global nuclear arms control? How can Asia-Pacific nuclear-armed states, nuclear umbrella states, and non-nuclear weapon states work together to reduce nuclear risks and eliminate nuclear threats?

*Moderator:* Gareth Evans (Australia)

*Panelists:* Moon Chung-in (ROK)

Zhao Tong (China)

Tatsujiro Suzuki (Japan)

Ramesh Thakur (Australia)

Des Browne (UK)

### INTRODUCTION (GE)

1. Role of APLN
2. Heightened nuclear risks and threats. Nuclear armed state weapon numbers and deployments. Nuclear Ban Treaty (TPNW) negotiated, but crumbling nuclear arms control architecture, including imminent non-renewal of New START treaty. NPT RevCon (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary) – gloomy expectations.
3. This session about regional implications of two biggest recent nuclear arms control setbacks - US exit from JCPOA (2018) and US & Russian suspension of INF. How will these impact on Asia-Pacific; and what, if anything, can regional players do to revive and reinvigorate global nuclear arms control architecture?

### ROUND ONE (Impact of INF/JCPOA setbacks on region and beyond)

**Des Browne:** Des. Let's start with you because, as a former UK Defence Minister and initiator of the European Leadership Network on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, you have been intimately involved from the outset in the debate on the INF, on New START renewal, and the future of the Iran JCPOA. What, if anything, can be done to be done to rescue any of them?

**Moon Chung-in:** Chung-in, you are the most directly involved of our panelists on the issue of greatest interest to this audience, and indeed to many around the world. Do you see any implications at all of the JCPOA and INF developments for the denuclearisation/peace process on the Korean Peninsula?

**Zhao Tong:** Tong, the direction taken by China on nuclear arms control – as Asia’s only NWS under the NPT, Asia’s only P5 member, and the most consequential global power among us – is going to matter enormously. Can you give us China’s take on the JCPOA/INF and indeed New START developments – and in particular your understanding of how China is likely to react to the Trump Administration’s apparent desire to bring China into any new arms control framework it might (Mr Bolton willing...) be willing to negotiate with Russia?

**Tatsujiro Suzuki:** Tatsu, you are a scientist, you head RECNA, you are active in the Pugwash movement, and of course you are Japanese. I’d like your comments from a Japanese perspective on what you have heard from Chung-in and Tong Zhao about the regional impact of the JCPOA and INF setbacks – will they make the task of bringing nuclear weapons under control in this part of the world even harder, or have only a marginal impact?

I’d also ask you, to open up a related issue, how you see these developments impacting on the Nuclear Ban Treaty: do you see them validating the premise of the TPNW, that those with the bomb have simply refused to pursue nuclear disarmament seriously and that is why others have to take the initiative?

**Ramesh Thakur:** Ramesh, you’re the multilateralist in the group. You’ve been a UN official. Where, if at all, does the United Nations come into the picture? Is the Nuclear Ban Treaty, negotiated through the UN, just an empty virtue signalling exercise by those who do not have the bomb? Do you see the JCPOA and INF setbacks as validating the criticism of the TPNW to this effect by the nuclear-armed states?

## **ROUND TWO (Risks of further nuclearization in the region)**

**Chung-in Moon, Tatsujiro Suzuki, Ramesh Thakur :** All three of you are from states sheltering to some extent – or at least believing that you are – under the United States nuclear umbrella. You will be aware that there is speculation in each, of varying degrees of intensity, about the desirability of moving yourselves to acquire nuclear weapons – in an environment where not only are global arms control disciplines apparently weakening, but where there is concern both about China’s growing capability, and America’s relative decline – and in the case at least of the Trump Administration, its disposition to treat allies as encumbrances rather than assets.

Can the three of you comment briefly on the motivations behind the discussion and how serious the prospect is?

**Zhao Tong:** What role can China play in defusing any moves toward nuclearization elsewhere in the region? What leadership can China play – as a country which at least until now has adopted a minimal nuclear deterrence posture, and a prima facie credible ‘No First Use’ stance – take in meeting the challenge of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament?

**Des Browne:** What is your response, from a European and NATO perspective, to possible new moves toward nuclearization in East Asia? Do you see this as generating any momentum toward nuclear hedging by European players who may be getting increasingly edgy about US commitment to extended deterrence?

### **ROUND THREE (Strategies for nuclear risk reduction)**

**All panelists:** In this final round before we throw it open for participation by the audience, can each of you discuss your country’s, and your individual, views on how best to achieve nuclear risk reduction, in the region and globally?

You will be aware of a fairly fundamental difference of approach between (a) disarmament advocates who have little tolerance for talk of anything other than ‘Global Zero’ elimination - with the Nuclear Ban Treaty the big normative standard-bearer, and (b) those (including most of us associated with APLN) who believe that only a step-by-step approach will ever bear fruit, and put the emphasis on ‘minimisation’ measures like doctrinal change (No First Use), dramatically reduced deployments, de-alerting and big decreases in overall numbers (the ‘4 D’s). Is it possible to bridge this gap, and get unanimity around the desirability of these and other risk reduction measures, even if they fall well short of achieving Global Zero?

**Gareth Evans**

**Moderator**

**22 May 2019**