

Press Release

The 10th Plenary Meeting of the Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for Northeast Asia was held in Shanghai, China from 19 – 22 March 2006. It was co-hosted by the Shanghai Institute for International Studies and the Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy of the Sam Nunn School and Ivan Allen College of Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

Diplomatic, military, and academic specialists from China, Japan, North and South Korea, Mongolia, Russia, and the United States and special observers from Argentina, Finland, and France met to continue in-depth discussions on the concept for a limited nuclear weapons free zone for Northeast Asia. This forum is seen as a means to support and reinforce the Six Party Talks for settling the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. The attendance and active participation of a delegation from the DPRK (North Korea) ensured that a candid, lively, and fruitful exchange of views was held on a wide range of security and economic issues.

The meeting was held in Shanghai's Pine City Hotel and concentrated on discussions to develop confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) for the region ; all attendees of this Track II or unofficial meeting acted in their personal capacity. Some of the participants can trace their involvement in this process to March of 1992 when the idea for a NEA nuclear free zone was first presented to a meeting in Beijing.

At this important meeting all participants emphasized the importance of reviving the Six Party Talks in Beijing and urged especially the US and the DPRK to resolve the current situation. The most important CSBM for Northeast Asia under current conditions is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the parallel normalization of relations among all the relevant countries. Progress on these issues would not only help lay a good foundation for the countries concerned, but also could be a crucial first step toward a limited nuclear weapons free zone for Northeast Asia. The relaxation of tensions across the Taiwan Strait would also be extremely conducive to peace and security in the world at large and in Northeast Asia in particular.

The forum urged that all countries in NEA:

- Abide by international law, with major powers playing active roles;
- Work within their own countries to develop renewed mutual understanding and solidarity in the region;
- Endorse the efforts of the Six Party Talks;
- Seek to further Track One official talks through greater coordination with Track II unofficial dialog.

The forum discussed the idea of an organization to promote security and cooperation in Northeast Asia, and further discussed the possibility of the Six Party Talks evolving into such an organization.

It was hoped that the continuing progress being made in North-South relations on the Korean Peninsula could be matched by parallel advances in the settlement of issues between North Korea and the US and North Korea and Japan. Not expecting overnight dramatic results, the forum stressed repeatedly the need for step-by-step progress as well as long-term dedication and commitment to mutually beneficial outcomes. Seeking a cooperative security environment in the region , the group emphasized the need for win-win thinking and an end to the search for unilateral advantages. Understanding and meeting the security concerns of all states in the region was seen as key to ultimate success. All participants were encouraged by the September 19, 2005 joint statement issued at the Six Party Talks.

The members of the forum also paid particular attention to the need for strengthening the NPT non-proliferation system, and will address this and other critical issues at the next plenary which will be held in Japan, Russia, or the US in 2007. The 10th Plenary was made possible by generous assistance from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the MacArthur Foundation, Korean Air, SIIS, and Georgia Tech (CISTP).

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This meeting was dedicated to the memory of General Richard Freytag, long-time participant in the forum who passed away in 2005.