

**Countering WMD Proliferation:
Recent Developments in Asia Pacific**

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**Remarks at the Asian Export Control Seminar
Tokyo, 7 February 2012**

The Strategic Context

The shifting patterns of international relations have a great bearing on efforts to contain and reverse WMD proliferation.

Relative stability amongst the major powers remains a positive feature of the international environment, and should be conducive to further efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals and minimise the temptation of proliferation. However, it cannot be ignored that despite that generally positive framework, some countries continue to grow their strategic nuclear capabilities, and a small number of countries continue to violate their international non-proliferation commitments.

Also, we must remain alert to the potential of non-state actors, terrorists, seeking to acquire WMD capability. Tragically terrorist activity continues in a number of countries with huge impacts on civilian populations. Our nightmare remains that one of these groups might acquire WMD - or possibly more likely, 'dirty bombs' utilising radioactive materials – underlining the vital importance of nuclear security and the second Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul next month.

Over the last year, we have witnessed dramatic political change in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa, the full consequences of which continue to emerge. But we might reasonably hope that greater political openness in the Arab world will be accompanied by greater transparency in strategic intentions. However, it is far less certain that these changes will help curb Iran's nuclear activities and threat they pose to regional security and beyond.

In our Asia Pacific region, we can identify two major characteristics. First is the ever firming commitment of countries in the region to the highest non-proliferation standards through safeguards and enhanced national export control practices. The second critical factor is the continuing North Korean defiance of the international community: North Korea's growing nuclear and ballistic missile programs together with its active proliferation of WMD and missile technology undermines regional security and global non-proliferation norms.

The International Legal Framework of Counter Proliferation

Let me briefly note some key developments over the last twelve months and challenges ahead.

NPT Review Conference Follow Up

The 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference agreed on a set of measures, a blueprint, for progress over the next five years, on non proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We all have a responsibility to help give effect to that blueprint. Progress is imperative to pave the way for another successful review in 2015 – the first Preparatory Meeting for that review will be held in May this year in Vienna (under the Chairmanship of Australia's Ambassador to the CD, Peter Woollcott).

To those ends, Australia with Japan, have brought together a number of countries with diverse interests (some with nuclear power, others not, some aligned, some not) and spanning the world, to push forward these ambitions – called the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). The Initiative brings together 10 countries: Australia, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. All are committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and are active in addressing the dangers associated with their further proliferation.

NPDI foreign ministers have agreed to focus initially on a small number of priority projects:

- First, they seek to secure greater transparency in the way nuclear weapons states declare their disarmament efforts: nuclear weapons states have agreed to report on their progress towards disarmament and the NPDI is contributing to the development of a standard reporting form.

- Second, they will work towards a treaty to stop the growth in stocks of the material used to make nuclear weapons – it is for us unacceptable that these negotiations have been blocked for so long by a tiny minority.
- Third, the NPDI will work to bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force – with Indonesia’s most welcome commitment to the Treaty, we now await the decisions of China, DPRK, Egypt, India, Iran Israel, Pakistan and the USA.
- Fourth, we are working to get wider adherence to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Additional Safeguards Protocol: the AP is now widely recognised as *the* international standard for international verification, allowing enhanced IAEA access to states’ nuclear programs thereby allowing states to better demonstrate their compliance with safeguards obligations.
- Fifth, the NPDI will also continue to work to strengthen the expanding global framework of nuclear-weapon-free zones, to make export controls more effective and to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education.

I trust that over the next three days we will hear more about the efforts of NPT parties to implement the decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Biological and Chemical Weapons

The other two critical pillars of the global non-proliferation regime are the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The **Biological Weapons Convention** held its seventh five-yearly review last December. The review considered proposals for strengthening the intersessional program of work; a mechanism to ensure more timely consideration of developments in biological sciences relevant to the Treaty; measures to enhance confidence in compliance; and enhanced cooperation under the Treaty. Agreement was reached on a modest set of provisions to advance these goals.

While some, including Australia, would have preferred more robust outcomes in certain areas, it is reassuring that States Parties to the Treaty demonstrated their commitment to cooperate to address the ongoing biological threat – especially the attractiveness of this technology to non-state actors. The task now will be to maximise the utility of the Convention’s strengthened intersessional processes – and for the international community to remain active in its ongoing efforts to prevent biological and toxin agents falling into the wrong hands.

The implementation of **Chemical Weapons Convention** is entering a new phase – moving from a focus on destruction of stocks, a task now well advanced, to verification of exclusively peaceful chemical production. And while the CWC has now some 188 parties, there remain some key gaps – in the Middle East (Egypt, Israel, Syria) and in North Asia (DPRK) – so the goal of universalisation remains a live ambition.

Countering Proliferation through Export Controls

There is a growing appreciation, particularly in our region, that effective export and transshipment controls on sensitive items are key tools for countering proliferation – and essential for maintaining a country’s international reputation and credibility in regional and global forums, including trade forums. A number of regional partners have in place, or are in the process of upgrading export control legislation and enforcement practices based on global best practice. Events such as this Asian Exports Control Seminar are valuable means of sharing experience and lessons learned in this area – and of course for encouraging others to adopt these best practices.

Underpinning many national control systems are the lists developed by the various export control regimes – the Australia Group for chemical and biological agents; the Nuclear Suppliers Group; the Missile Technology Control Regime; and the Wassenaar Arrangement for conventional weapons. It is very encouraging that countries outside these regimes are increasingly incorporating these lists, and their updates, into their national systems. Each of these four groups has a mechanism for regularly updating the lists in the light of technical developments and experience. They share information and experience on implementation and enforcement. And importantly, they offer outreach – briefings on the groups’ work, and in some instances, and where requested, can assist countries in the adoption of the control lists.

UNSCR Sanctions

UNSCR sanctions remain a critical part of the counter proliferation architecture. The critical thing is to promote greater regional coordination and cooperation in implementing the existing UNSC sanctions, with provision of technical support and capacity building where necessary – and these matters are on our agenda.

Over the past few years, the international community has recognised the increasing importance of targeting the financing of proliferation as an effective counter-proliferation tool. This is reflected in obligations directly related to proliferation financing in the United Nations Security Council sanctions regimes targeting proliferation sensitive programs in North Korea and Iran. In 2011, the Financial Action Task Force - the global standard setting body for anti money laundering and counter terrorism financing regulation - agreed to include measures implementing UNSC proliferation-related targeted financial sanctions regimes as a new standard. This is likely to dramatically improve the effectiveness of implementation of these obligations globally.

Proliferation Security Initiative

Another tool available to states in meeting their commitments to combating proliferation is the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Over the last 12 months the PSI has continued its activity in Asia Pacific and other regions of the world – including through the development of tools to assist states meet their counter proliferation commitments, and exercises to enhance national capabilities. Some 98 countries have already endorsed the PSI statement of interdiction principles, and there is welcome interest from a number of additional regional countries.

There will be excellent opportunities over these three days to discuss the advantages of PSI – and to dispel misconceptions. It is important to note that the PSI itself is not a mechanism for organising joint interdiction action. Rather, it is a cooperative mechanism for enhancing national capabilities and interoperability between countries with a shared commitment to countering proliferation within existing international and national legal frameworks.

Information and Cooperation - Counter Proliferation in Practice

I have outlined in some detail ongoing efforts to maintain and strengthen global and national counter proliferation structures. This certainly requires ongoing attention, and international collaboration.

Less visible is the ever expanding and complex web of country-to-country and agency-to-agency links which facilitate counter proliferation in practice. Cooperation between customs and border protection services, between coastguards and defence forces, through to

information exchanges via diplomatic channels, and between law enforcement agencies and intelligence services all add to the complex layers of activity which help us to identify proliferation threats and to counter them. These linkages and the practical activity resulting are possibly the fastest growing area of counter proliferation action. The breadth and depth of this engagement highlights the ongoing need for coordination at various levels and the desirability of transparency in our collaborative efforts.

Regional Collaboration

This brings me to my final point. Our regional environment is generally characterised by rapid economic growth, social development and the evolution of effective systems of governance. In parallel, supportive regional economic and security architecture continues to evolve - building on decades of work through ASEAN and its various linked processes, and APEC, which remains the preeminent economic forum. Since its creation in 2005, the East Asian Summit has grown in stature and has evolved to meet the changes in the region and to reflect the region's role in global affairs.

Participation in the 2011 East Asia Summit (EAS) meeting in Bali, in Indonesia, expanded to include for the first time the leaders of Russia and the USA.

The Summit affirmed support for the “efforts at the regional and international levels including through the East Asia Summit to promote nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy”. The EAS agreed to “continue to work together to ensure compliance and implementation of relevant United Nations non-proliferation commitments and to pursue cooperation through multilateral mechanisms”.

From the EAS, we have the highest level statement of the challenges. This seminar will surely contribute to meeting them.

Thank you for your attention.