

What is a nuclear weapon free zone?

A nuclear weapon free zone is an international law system in which nuclear weapons are removed from a certain region, and includes the following three important elements.

- (1) The production, acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons are prohibited.
- (2) A negative security assurance (NSA) is given by the nuclear states to the non-nuclear states of the region that they will not use, threaten or attack those nations with nuclear weapons.
- (3) The system maintains the functions of verifying the observance of the treaty and entering into consultation in the event of problems.

Thus far such treaties have been concluded regarding Antarctica, outer space, the sea beds and the five international regions of Latin America, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central Asia, with the participation of over 110 countries. The land area of Southern Hemisphere is almost entirely a nuclear weapon free zone. Antarctica is also a sort of nuclear weapon free zone. In addition, Mongolia's single state nuclear weapon free status has been recognized by the United Nations.

Earnest efforts are also being made to extend these zones to other regions. With regard to the Middle East, the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference adopted the Resolution on the Middle East, and the establishment of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in which there are not only no nuclear weapons but no chemical and biological weapons is being pursued.

① Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)

- Opened for signature: February 14, 1967
- Entered into force: April 22, 1968
- States Parties: 33 nations (all concerned nations)
- Response of nuclear weapon states: All five nuclear weapon states signed and ratified Protocol II providing NSA

② South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga)

- Opened for signature: August 6, 1985
- Entered into force: December 11, 1986
- States Parties: 13 nations and regions
- Response of nuclear weapon states: The four nuclear weapon states other than the US signed and ratified Protocol 2 providing NSA. The US has signed the treaty but not ratified it.

③ Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok)

- Opened for signature: December 15, 1995
- Entered into force: March 27, 1997
- States Parties: 10 nations (all concerned nations)
- Response of nuclear weapon states: All five nuclear weapon states are yet to sign or ratify a protocol providing NSA.

④ African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)

- Opened for signature: April 11, 1996

- Entered into force: July 15, 2009
- States Parties: 51 nations have signed, of which 40 have ratified the treaty
- Response of nuclear weapon states: The four nuclear weapon states other than the US signed and ratified Protocol II providing NSA. The US has signed the treaty but not ratified it.

⑤ Treaty on a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia (CANWFZ)

- Opened for signature: September 8, 2006
- Entered into force: March 21, 2009
- States Parties: Five nations (all concerned nations) have signed and deposited the instruments of ratification
- Response of nuclear weapon states: The four nuclear weapon states other than the US signed and ratified Protocol II providing NSA. The US has signed the treaty but not ratified it.

⑥ The Nuclear weapon free status of Mongolia

- A resolution on Mongolia's single state nuclear-weapon free status was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 4, 1998
- The relevant domestic law was established on February 3, 2000

⑦ Antarctic Treaty

- Opened for signature: December 1, 1959
- Entered into force: June 23, 1961
- States Parties: 54 nations including the five nuclear weapon states

FAQ

FAQ on the Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ)

Q1.

Will Japan no longer need to be under the US' s nuclear umbrella if it participates in the NEA-NWFZ?

If the NEA-NWFZ becomes a reality then the nuclear threats Japan perceives will dissipate under the treaty, and the nuclear umbrella will be rendered unnecessary. On the other hand, nuclear deterrence will continue to exist among nuclear weapon states in the region, and there is a school of thought suggesting that if some nuclear weapon state would violate the treaty, the nuclear umbrella would once again become necessary. Nonetheless, it almost goes without saying that in the light of the root objective of aiming for the continuous peace and stability of the region, it is highly desirable that Japan withdraws entirely from the nuclear umbrella and contributes to strengthen nuclear prohibition norms.

Q2.

If Japan withdraws from the nuclear umbrella, will the Japan-US Security Treaty be annulled?

No, it will not. As there is no mention of nuclear weapons in the Japan-US Security Treaty, even if Japan withdraws from the nuclear umbrella the ally relationship could be maintained. If Japan and the US are able to reach an agreement, Japan will still be able to rely on the deterrence of the US' s conventional weapons. However, as mentioned above, if the NEA-NWFZ becomes a reality the threat will diminish and it is thought that the need to be dependent on conventional weapons will also decrease.

Q3.

Isn' t the NEA-NWFZ unnecessary because of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?

They are both necessary. The concept of the NEA-NWFZ Treaty includes the important element of a legally binding negative security assurance (NSA), which is a promise by the nuclear weapon states that they will not launch nuclear attacks on the Intrazonal States. This is not stated in the TPNW. Subsequently, even if for the sake of argument Japan, South Korea and North Korea participated in the TPNW, until all the nuclear-weapons states participate in the TPNW and the complete disposal of nuclear weapons becomes a reality, the NEA-NWFZ would continue to play a vital roles in securing NSA.



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NEA-NWFZ

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TOWARDS THE
ACHIEVEMENT OF
REGIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY

A Door to diplomacy has opened

North Korean nuclear issue

Since the first nuclear crisis in the early 1990s diplomatic efforts to seek a solution to the North Korean nuclear issue have continued. However, the deeply entrenched mistrust between North Korea and Western countries has not been overcome, and the situation deteriorated to the extent that the US and North Korea stood on the brink of war in the year 2017.

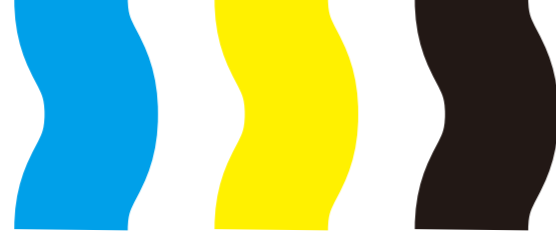
But as we entered the year 2018 the situation surrounding North Korea changed dramatically. On April 27, 2018, Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the Workers' Party of North Korea and South Korean President Moon Jae-in took part in the inter-Korean summit, which resulted in the announcement of the historical Panmunjom Declaration. After that, on June 12 the first US-North Korea summit was held in Singapore between President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim Jong-un, who signed a joint declaration that specified the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and made assurances regarding the North Korean regime.

However, the second US-North Korea summit held in Vietnam on February 27 and 28, 2019 finished without any results. The third summit on June 30 of the same year was held in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) on the military border of South and North Korea, but the path ahead remains unclear.

With the improvement of the relations, as well as the flow of dialog, between South and North Korea, and between the US and North Korea, this opportunity must be seized now. The key to ensure that the Korean peninsula does not once again fall back into a negative cycle of mistrust and conflict, and to realize the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, is the Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ) and the Comprehensive Approach.

Chronology of North Korean nuclear development

Dec. 1985	North Korea joins the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state
Dec. 1991	South and North Korea sign the Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula
Oct. 1994	The US and North Korea sign the Agreed Framework
Jan. 2003	North Korea declares it will withdraw from the NPT
Aug. 2003	First round of the Six Party Talks held
Sep. 2005	First joint declaration of the Six Party Talks adopted
Oct. 2006	North Korea's first underground nuclear test (estimated yield of 1 kiloton)
May 2009	North Korea's second underground nuclear test (estimated yield of 2-6 kilotons)
Feb. 2013	North Korea's third underground nuclear test (estimated yield of 15 kilotons)
Jan. 2016	North Korea's fourth underground nuclear test (estimated yield of 15-20 kilotons)
Sep. 2016	North Korea's fifth underground nuclear test (estimated yield of 20-25 kilotons)
Jul. 2017	North Korea successfully launches an intercontinental ballistic missile(ICBM)
Sep. 2017	North Korea's sixth underground nuclear test (estimated yield of 140-250 kilotons)



Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and The Comprehensive Approach

The need for the comprehensive approach

The comprehensive approach is a methodology that does not only pursue the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, but also seeks to solve simultaneously and in parallel various other sources of anxiety about peace and security in Northeast Asia. In 2015 RECNA proposed the following four policy options: **1)** a final peace settlement of the Korean war; **2)** the assurance of equal rights to access to all forms of energy, including nuclear energy for peaceful use; **3)** the conclusion of a treaty to establish a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NEA-NWFZ); and **4)** the establishment of a permanent Northeast Asia Security Council.

"Three plus Three" concept

One of the vital pillars of the comprehensive approach is the NEA-NWFZ. From the mid-1990s onwards an array of formats for an NEA-NWFZ was proposed by researchers and NGOs. The concept that RECNA advocates is the "Three plus Three" concept. Under this concept the three nations of Japan, South Korea and North Korea form a nuclear weapon free zone where the possession, deployment and use of nuclear weapons is prohibited, while the neighboring nuclear states of the US, China and Russia provide assurance (Negative Security Assurance (NSA)) that they will not use nuclear weapons to attack or threaten the three non-nuclear zone nations. With the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula having now been agreed upon, a "Two plus One plus Three" approach (North and South Korea first, then Japan, followed by the three neighboring nuclear states) is also feasible.

Unfortunately, the NEA-NWFZ concept has not been adopted as a formal proposal at national level. Nonetheless, the concept has drawn considerable support from the public both domestically and internationally. It has also been mentioned in the Nagasaki Peace Declaration read out by the Mayor of Nagasaki at the annual ceremony to commemorate the atomic bombing of the city on August 9.

A further contribution to global nuclear disarmament

The establishment of the NEA-NWFZ is significant in a number of ways. Not only would it provide the Intrazonal States (Japan, South Korea and North Korea) with safety and security, it would also make concrete contributions to global nuclear weapons abolition through the following points.

-It could reinforce nuclear prohibition norms in the region. In particular, due to the fact that it would be an exercise in leadership by the very region that knows the calamity of nuclear weapons, its international impact would be considerable.

-By making NSA legally binding, it would be able to present a paradigm for escaping from dependence on nuclear deterrence to nations dependent on the nuclear umbrella and nations attempting to become nuclear states. This would reduce the need for the nuclear states to possess nuclear weapons.

-It would link up with the creation of a sustainable and cooperative regional security system, which would in turn enable a heightening of the sense of trust regarding the security system in a nuclear weapons free world.

Towards achieving a NEA-NWFZ The Nagasaki Process

Establishment of an expert panel

RECNA has given the name of the Nagasaki Process to the political process of cooperation between the nations that are concerned and civil society towards the establishment of an NEA-NWFZ, and the securing of peace and security throughout the entire region. The organization that has been launched in order to play the core role in this is the Panel on Peace and Security of Northeast Asia (PSNA). The panel is currently participated in by members from the nine nations of Japan, South Korea, China, the US, Russia, the UK, Australia, Mongolia and Germany.

PSNA is deepening its collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN), the Pugwash Conferences and other prominent global expert bodies in the field of security and disarmament. It has held three conferences and conducted debate in Tokyo and Nagasaki (November 2016), Ulaanbaatar (June 2017) and Moscow (May 2018). At the Moscow meeting, a high official from the North Korean government participated for the first time. We are aiming to create a new wave towards the realization of an NEA-NWFZ from the atomic bombing site of Nagasaki.

Joint policy proposal of Japan and South Korea

Cooperation is also making progress between the Japanese and South Korean experts who hold the key to the establishment of an NEA-NWFZ. In June 2019, RECNA and South Korea's Sejong Institute co-organized a joint Japan-Korea workshop. Based on the results of this workshop the set of policy proposals entitled "From Peace on the Korean Peninsula to a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone" was drawn up. Based on the above-mentioned comprehensive approach, the proposal specifically illustrates a comprehensive regional security framework and short-term and long-term policy options towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.



Read the QR code for the full text of the policy proposal.

- A final peaceful settlement to the Korean War.
- A Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) to agree on cooperative security principles and approaches.
- The establishment of a permanent Northeast Asian regional security forum or organization.
- The establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) in Northeast Asia.
- The implementation of a regional energy security system to promote peaceful and sustainable energy development for all countries in the region.

In the future, there are plans for outreach activities involving domestic and overseas stakeholders including figures from the Japanese and Korean governments and diet members.

