Tracking International Efforts Preventing WMD & Missile Proliferation and North Korea

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Abstract

WMD is defined as nuclear explosive weapons, radiological weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and those that will be equal to the above mentioned weapons in terms of destructive effects and will be developed in the future. It has included high explosives. This paper tracks international efforts to prevent the spread of WMD, missiles, and their technologies and draw policy implications. After introducing the historical definition of WMD, the paper focuses on less strict but powerful norms and rules arranged by advanced industrial nations to reduce the chance that their export might be diverted to military purposes. Then, it investigates how the further efforts have been forged to counter possible use of WMD by terrorists or rogue regimes. With due consideration of the importance of missile proliferation by North Korea, the paper also presents political and security implications of North Korean missile proliferation.

Key Words: International Security, Missile, North Korea, Proliferation, WMD

I. Introduction

Since the first nuclear weapons were dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, proliferation of such weapons that can wreak havoc on human beings has been an enduring concern of the international community. Historically, there have been enormous efforts to prevent the spread and use of these weapons, often
called weapons of mass destruction (WMD). During the Cold War, a few international treaties were signed to thwart proliferation of relevant technologies useful for manufacturing WMD as well as the weapons themselves. In the post-Cold War era, voluntary norms and rules were created among the technologically advanced countries to strengthen their export control and thereby, to reduce the risk and danger of WMD proliferation. Concerns about the spread of WMD technologies were heightened by the terror attack on September 11, 2001. The terror incident stirred up both public and bureaucratic apprehension of what might happen if terrorists obtain WMD in the future. In response, a series of further efforts were launched with the mainly American initiatives to counter WMD proliferation and thwart possible use of such weapons by terrorists or rogue regimes.

This paper will track international efforts to prevent the spread of WMD, missiles, and their technologies and draw policy implications. After introducing the historical definition of WMD in the beginning, this paper focuses on less-strict but powerful norms and rules arranged by advanced industrial nations to reduce the chance that their export might be diverted to military purposes. Then, it investigates how further efforts have been forged to counter possible use of WMD by terrorists or rogue regimes. Considering the importance of missile proliferation by North Korea, the paper will also present political and security implications of North Korean missile proliferation.

II. Definition of WMD

In 1948, the Commission for Conventional Disarmament (CCD) characterized what WMD means for the first time in history. In order to distinguish its role and function from those of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, the CCD defined WMD as nuclear explosive weapons, radiological weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and those that will be equal to the above mentioned weapons in terms of destructive effects and will be developed in the future.1 Nowadays, high-

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1 According to the author’s discussion with Jozef Goldblat on October 10, 1996; “New Weapons of