

The presentation was opened by Deputy Director of the IMEMO RAN, Academician **Vladimir G. Baranovsky**. In his brief opening remarks he highlighted the importance of the joint project of the IMEMO and the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the topicality of its general subject – the Prospects for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament.

This work entitled “Korean Nuclear Crisis: Prospects of De-escalation” is based on the materials of a conference held at IMEMO RAN. The authors present an in-depth expert analysis of the incentives for, as well as causes and possible consequences of the crisis around North Korea and its nuclear missile programme. Academician Baranovsky went on to summarize the main issues underlying nuclear non-proliferation.

Head of the Center for International Security Academician **Alexei G. Arbatov** conveyed deepest appreciation of the project on behalf of Academician Alexander A. Dynkin, Director of the IMEMO RAN, who could not attend the presentation due to a business trip abroad. Alexei G. Arbatov acknowledged the vulnerability of the non-proliferation regime, noting that as far as Russia’s politics is concerned, the present stage of arms control is unprecedented, as it is the first time that the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons has been relegated to the background. Many arguments have been offered to explain such a change, including the threat of deployment of missile defenses, the development of conventional precision-guided strategic weapons capabilities and the militarization of outer space. However, none of such excuses may spare Moscow the severe blows that this situation deals to its public image, both among third nuclear countries and non-nuclear-weapon states.

From this perspective, the proposals voiced by the US President Barack Obama in Berlin present Washington as the mover of further nuclear arms reductions and limitations, with Moscow as all but the main naysayer. Therefore, Russia should first and foremost clearly articulate a long-term approach to arms control that maintains the traditions of the previous years.

Vladimir Z. Dvorkin, head of the IMEMO-NTI project pointed out that this was the tenth brochure released under the joint project. It deals with the North Korean nuclear crisis, a most important issue as North Korea’s nuclear programme has been one of the two major factors (the first being the Iranian nuclear programme) undermining the robustness of the non-proliferation regime and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as its cornerstone. What makes this brochure different from many other quite competent publications released in Russia and abroad is that it presents a comprehensive and rather deep analysis of the DPRK’s domestic and foreign policy, its missile and nuclear programmes and offers conclusions and proposals of practical importance.

Pyongyang’s actions have been a number of lessons to be learned. They have highlighted the natural weaknesses of the non-proliferation regime. Though there is no way the Treaty itself can be changed, further steps will be required to enhance the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Such steps may include the universalization of the 1997 Additional Protocol, tightening of its guidelines by the Nuclear Suppliers Group and strengthening the missile non-proliferation regime.

Sergey K. Oznobishchev, member of the project and Head of Sector at IMEMO RAN who has contributed to the brochure, pointed out that “the North Korean precedent” is a glaring example of how powerless the international institutions and non-proliferation mechanisms may be when they are faced with a cynical, deliberate and opportunistic policy pursued by a country’s leadership. With due correction, the same may be said about the situation around Iran’s nuclear programme. Pyongyang’s policy has repeatedly put the region on the verge of a conflict which, given the specific nature of the current situation, may easily escalate to a nuclear conflict. Immediate collective

actions are required to prevent future recurrence of such situations. This paper contains a number of relevant practical proposals.

A representative of the Embassy of Iran in Moscow made a brief statement on the peaceful orientation of Iran's nuclear programme.

The presentations of the key contributors were followed by a heated expert discussion. Both the brochure and the subject of discussion drew exceptional interest – the presentation was attended by around 70 experts, diplomats and media representatives.

Among those contributed to the discussion were **Alexey A. Gromyko**, Deputy Director, Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences; **Leonid F. Ryabikhin**, Deputy Chairman, Committee of Scientists for International Security; **Evgeny K. Silin**, President, Association for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation; **Georgy D. Toloraya**, Director for Regional Programs of Asia and Africa, Head of Regional Projects Department of the Ruskiy Mir (Russian World) Foundation; **Efim L. Zhigun**, Director, Institute of the Middle East; **Vladimir I. Sazhin**, senior researcher, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, as well as several other experts.

Commenting on the presentations of other participants and answering the questions, the key contributors focused on the vital necessity of strengthening the non-proliferation regime at large and of adopting urgent and specific measures to that end. Some of such measures are proposed in this brochure.