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## **International Nonproliferation Regimes after the Cold War**

MU Changlin and PAN Tao

China Institute for International Strategic Studies

## International Nonproliferation Regimes after the Cold War

It is always one of the main concerns of international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Since the end of the Cold War, international nonproliferation regimes have been enjoying continuous improvement and reinforcement, and promoted international security and regional stability in general. But some states strive to dominate the regimes and adopt double-standards, which leads to the intensification of various contradictions. At present time, the regimes are facing severe challenges because several countries are still outside the regimes and continue to develop WMD.

### A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL NONPROLIFERATION REGIMES

#### *The nuclear nonproliferation regime is facing severe challenges.*

The Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. In signing the NPT, non-nuclear weapons states pledged not to acquire nuclear weapons in exchange for a pledge by the nuclear weapons states to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and not to assist the development of nuclear weapons by any non-nuclear weapons states. Currently 187 nations are parties to the NPT and make it the most popular multilateral treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was opened for signature in September 1996. It is an important supplement to the nuclear nonproliferation regime and 149 nations have signed the treaty, including five nuclear weapons states.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established as early as in 1957. Its aim is to ensure that nuclear facilities and nuclear materials under its supervision are not used for any military purpose by reaching safeguard agreements with nations and other international organizations. The IAEA performs a dual mission: acting as the primary verification mechanism for NPT, and providing peaceful nuclear technology assistance to developing nations.

The Nuclear Exporters Committee (the Zangger Committee) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (the London Club) are informal groups of nuclear export control. Both groups compiled lists of nuclear export items. Any transfer of items listed to the non-NPT nations would trigger application of IAEA safeguards to assure that the items were not used to make nuclear explosives. While the Zangger Committee calls on recipient countries put the assisted nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, the London Club adopts somewhat more restrictive export control guidelines that demand recipient countries adopt comprehensive safeguards of IAEA.

The above-mentioned treaties and organizations have played a positive role in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons in some way, but the nuclear tests conducted by India and then by Pakistan this May dealt a heavy blow to the nuclear nonproliferation regime.

***The mission of chemical and biological weapons nonproliferation regime is implementation.***

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) laid a legal foundation for comprehensive prohibition and complete elimination of biological and chemical weapons. While the BWC played a certain role in restricting the use of biological weapons by states that have biological weapons capability, it has no executive and verification systems. An Ad Hoc Group was established by the 1994 Special Conference for the negotiation of a legally binding verification protocol of the BWC.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was established in April 1997 with the CWC entering into force. The OPCW is working out a broad range of collective measures in verification, ensuring compliance and levy sanctions. Currently about 25000 facilities of 120 countries are under the supervision of the OPCW.

***The missile technology control regime is regulated by informal government agreement.***

In 1987, seven Western industrial countries adopted the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to limit the export of missiles and missile technology. The original aim of MTCR is to restrict the acquisition of missiles, unmanned air vehicles and related technology for systems capable of carrying a 500-kilogram payload at least 300 kilometers. In Jan. 1993, the MTCR guidelines were expanded to cover delivery systems capable of delivering all NBC weapons. The MTCR has undergone a transformation from a small group of 7 Western industrial countries to a more inclusive group of 29 countries. The MTCR has no executive and verification organization. It is the responsibility of the individual governments to decide whether or not a given transfer should be approved.

## **MAJOR FEATURES OF INTERNATIONAL NONPROLIFERATION REGIMES**

***Strengthening international nonproliferation regimes becomes the key issue in international arms control and disarmament.***

With the end of the Cold War, the United States and Russia are reducing their massive nuclear arsenals in accordance with bilateral disarmament agreements, and the international security environment has been enjoying great improvement. But some nations are still intending to acquire WMD and their delivery systems, thus posing a direct threat to international security and regional stability as a result.

During the Gulf War, the allied forces enjoyed an absolute military superiority over Iraq, but they were under constant threat of missile's attack and possible use of chemical and biological weapons by Iraq. After the collapse of Soviet Union reports of nuclear material smuggling and the outflow of a large number of scientists from the former Soviet Union confirmed the fears of international community over the spread of WMD. Moreover, international terrorism as a transnational criminal activity is attracting more attention from the international community. If WMD falls into the

hands of terrorists, national security of some countries would be severely challenged.

Under these circumstances, during the last few years the CWC and CTBT were reached, NPT was extended indefinitely, more negotiations are being held on the verification mechanism of BWC, and negotiation of Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty(FMCT) was formally started in Geneva. All these indicate that the focal point in international arms control and disarmament has turned from the prevention of nuclear war to that spread of WMD.

***The United States is making an effort to play a dominant role in the nonproliferation regimes.***

U.S. regards the spread of WMD as a major threat to its national security after the Cold War, and takes the prevention of WMD proliferation as one of the major goals of its national security strategy. U.S. attaches great importance to its “leading” role in the nonproliferation regimes, and has come to an conclusion that it is one of the effective approaches to prevent the spread of WMD by reaching multilateral arms control agreements. Therefore, U.S. has exerted itself to bring about the CWC and CTBT, and is pushing the negotiations of the BWC and the “FMCT” in attempt to build a international nonproliferation “system” that can guarantee the U.S. national security interests.

The United States also made a series of domestic laws that include wider ranges of prohibition than international norms to prevent the spread of WMD. In recent years, the U.S. government frequently imposed sanctions on other nations and companies which they claimed violating the U.S. laws. The U.S. Defense Department also worked out a “counter-proliferation strategy” to make military preparation for taking active action (including missile defense and counter-proliferation offense) against the rivalry WMD.

***Contradictions are still prominent on the issue of nonproliferation.***

On the issue of nonproliferation, the Western countries take the developing countries as the primary target while they are strengthening the international nonproliferation regime. They make discriminative rules and pursue different policies according to different regions and countries on their own merits. All these of course stir up discontent from the developing countries. Especially the U.S. adopts double-standards: while it forbids other countries to export missiles and technology to those so called “sensitive” regions or nations defined by America itself on one hand. It continues to sale military equipment to Taiwan and spread theater anti-ballistic missiles and technology to East Asia disregarding the strong opposition of related nations in the region on the other hand. Moreover, the issue of the prevention of spread of nuclear weapons becomes more urgent after the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. International community are exerting more pressure on India and Pakistan, demanding them to sign the CTBT and NPT.

***International nonproliferation regimes are becoming more compulsive.***

The CWC is the first multilateral arms control treaty that includes strict verifications

articles. Not only all known toxic chemicals and their precursors but also the whole chemistry industry are under the supervision of this treaty. Each State Party has the right to request on-site challenge inspection of any facility or location in the territory for the sole purpose of determining facts relating to the possible non-compliance. The BWC negotiation also suggests strict verification measures including declaration, field investigation, non-challenge visit and challenge investigation. The CTBT has not entered into force but the world seismic stations network that performs the mission of verification has almost been completed. With the development of science and technology and the implementation of these treaties, it is becoming a common concern of each state to prevent the abuse of inspection, and to protect business and security secrets without any connection with implementing the treaties.

## **BASIC VIEWS ON THE INTERNATIONAL NONPROLIFERATION REGIMES**

Generally speaking, international nonproliferation regimes play a certain positive role in stopping and delaying the spread of WMD, and are of benefit to the world and regional security and stability.

The current international nonproliferation regimes, however, are not perfect. Firstly, some countries refuse to join the nuclear nonproliferation regime and still develop WMD secretly or publicly disregarding the international treaties. And the current regimes are lack of solutions to such problems. This fault of the regimes was exposed by the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. Secondly, the trend of economic globalization makes nations more interdependent economically. Much of the exported civilian nuclear chemical pharmaceutical equipment and technology could also be used for military purposes. The export control for dual-use equipment and technology is hard to manipulate in practice. All these make the regimes much less effective. Finally, current nonproliferation regimes reflect more interests of western countries than others. Developing countries are often met with unfair treatment. Some export control groups enjoy no universal participation of the international community. Usually a small number of countries make control “rules”, and then demand the whole international community to abide by. Therefore the authority and effectiveness of the regimes are reduced.

In brief, strengthening international nonproliferation regimes benefit world and regional security, but the nuclear arms race caused by India nuclear tests in South Asia is a severe challenge to the regimes and probably causes chain reactions. For this reason, the top priority at the moment for the international community is to stop nuclear weapon program of India and Pakistan and prevent the collapse of nuclear nonproliferation regime. Meanwhile some practicable measures should be taken to reform and improve the current nonproliferation regimes in order to make them more fair and reasonable.