

Arms Control and Disarmament

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Recent years have witnessed a series of negative developments in the area of international arms control and disarmament, which have undermined the sound momentum international disarmament efforts had gathered following the end of the Cold War. The international community is confronted with grave challenges in its efforts to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and promote disarmament, and with the emerging danger of a new arms race, which has become a cause for serious concern.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the issue of arms control and disarmament, and works hard to promote the sound development of the international disarmament process. It believes that fair and rational arms control and disarmament efforts are conducive to the relaxation of the international situation, thereby constituting a vital means of safeguarding world peace and enhancing international security. At the same time, the Chinese government resolutely opposes the attempts of some countries to use arms control and disarmament as a tool to weaken other countries and reinforce their own military superiority for the purpose of seeking regional or global hegemony.

Nuclear Weapons and Missile Defense

China has consistently advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and has made unremitting efforts to this end. On the very first day it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China solemnly declared that it would not be the first to use such weapons, no matter what the time or the circumstances. Later, China undertook unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. In May 2000, China, together with four other nuclear-weapon states, issued a joint statement declaring that their nuclear weapons are not targeted at any country.

China vigorously supports the efforts of the countries concerned to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on a voluntary basis, and has undertaken to provide both positive and negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones. In July 1999, China reached an agreement with ASEAN on the text of the Protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and became the first among the five nuclear-weapon states to commit itself to signing the Protocol once its revised text is open for signature.

As the most universal international arms control treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has laid a solid legal foundation for international efforts to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons, promote nuclear disarmament and enhance the peaceful use of nuclear energy. China supports all efforts to consolidate and strengthen the international mechanism of nuclear non-proliferation, and has faithfully fulfilled its obligations under the NPT. This position of China's will remain unchanged. In December 1998, China signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) the Additional Protocol aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the IAEA safeguard system, undertaking to report to the IAEA China's nuclear cooperation with non-nuclear-weapon states.

The CTBT is an important milestone in the process of international nuclear disarmament. As one of the first countries to sign the CTBT, China has been actively participating in the work of the Preparatory Commission of the Treaty Organization, and earnestly carrying out preparatory work for the implementation of the Treaty in China. Being a nuclear-weapon state, China is fully aware of its responsibilities concerning the entry into force of the Treaty. Therefore, the Chinese government is still committed to the early ratification of the Treaty, despite such negative developments in the past two years as the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan and the US Senate's refusal to ratify the CTBT. Now, the Chinese government has already completed the necessary preparations and formally submitted the Treaty to the NPC for review and ratification.

China has all along adopted a positive attitude to the negotiation of a convention that prohibits the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons purposes, known as the FMCT. The Chinese government maintains that progress on the issue of the FMCT negotiations is, and will continue to be, closely related to the global peace and security situation. In view of the fact that the US is accelerating its efforts for the development and possible deployment of a national missile defense system and space weapons, and that the US and Russia still possess nuclear arsenals large enough to destroy the world many times over, it is China's position that continued nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are multilateral fora of arms control that should be given more priority than the FMCT negotiations. Therefore, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should not emphasize the importance of only the FMCT negotiations to the neglect of the issues of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and should, at the minimum, give equal attention to all three issues by carrying out its substantive work in a balanced manner.

The Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (hereafter referred to as the ABM Treaty) plays a very important role in maintaining the global strategic balance and stability, promoting nuclear disarmament and enhancing international security. However, in recent years the United States has accelerated its development of a national missile defense system in disregard of the relevant provisions of the ABM Treaty and the opposition of the international community. China expresses its strong opposition to such moves on the part of the United States, for they will undermine the global strategic balance, severely hamper the nuclear disarmament process and international non-proliferation efforts, jeopardize global peace and regional stability, and may even touch off a new round of arms race.

The Resolution on the Preservation of and Compliance with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, co-sponsored by China, Russia and Belarus, and adopted at the 54th Session of the UN General Assembly with an overwhelming majority, called upon the parties to the ABM Treaty to refrain from the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems for the defense of their territories. It also expressed support for further efforts by the international community to safeguard the inviolability and integrity of the ABM Treaty. The Resolution is a clear manifestation of the international community's opposition to US efforts to develop and deploy missile defense systems, and of its will to safeguard

the ABM Treaty. On July 18, 2000, President Jiang Zemin of the PRC and President Putin of the Russian Federation signed a joint statement on anti-missile defense. In the statement, the Presidents reaffirm that the ABM Treaty remains the cornerstone of global strategic stability and international security, and constitutes the basis for a framework of the key international agreements designed to reduce and limit offensive strategic weapons and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Emphasizing that it is totally untenable to press for amending the ABM Treaty on the pretext of so-called missile threats from some countries, the Presidents point out that to amend the text of the ABM Treaty is tantamount to an act of undermining the ABM Treaty and will inevitably bring about a series of negative consequences, and that the country which presses for amending this treaty will have to bear the full responsibility for all these consequences. The Presidents also reiterate that under the current strategic situation, it is of great practical significance to preserve the integrity and effectiveness of the ABM Treaty. The United States government should earnestly heed the appeal of the international community and stop the development and deployment of missile defense systems that may undermine global strategic stability.

The joint research and development of the theater missile defense (TMD) system by the United States and Japan with a view to deploying it in East Asia will enhance the overall offensive and defensive capability of the US-Japan military alliance to an unprecedented level, which will also far exceed the defensive needs of Japan. This will touch off a regional arms race and jeopardize security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. China expresses its profound concern over such a development.

China is strongly opposed to the provision of the TMD system, its components and technology, and any such assistance to Taiwan. China is also strongly against any attempt to incorporate Taiwan in any form into the TMD system by any country.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

China does not possess chemical weapons and has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of such weapons. As a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), China has faithfully fulfilled all its obligations under the Convention. It has submitted its initial declaration and annual declarations in time and in their entirety, and accepted several inspections by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It has also participated in each session of the Executive Council and the Conference of State Parties. China has been active in supporting the work of the OPCW and has cosponsored, along with the OPCW, a regional seminar on implementation of the Convention, as well as several training courses for inspectors. In June 1998, the State Administration of the Petroleum and Chemical Industry of China added ten chemicals to the third category of the List of Controlled Chemicals.

It is the view of the Chinese government that the implementation of the Convention has been, on the whole, satisfactory, since it entered into force three years ago. However, there are problems which should not be ignored: The universality of the Convention leaves a lot to be desired; a certain State Party has made de facto reservations regarding the provisions of the Convention in the form of domestic legislation; and some State Parties have been very slow destroying their chemical weapons stockpiles. These problems should be put right as soon as possible.

China has been a victim of chemical warfare. Large quantities of chemical weapons abandoned by the Japanese invaders remain on Chinese soil to this day. These weapons still seriously threaten the lives of the local people and have caused serious damage to the ecological environment. In July 1999, the Chinese and Japanese governments signed the Memorandum on the Destruction of the

Chemical Weapons abandoned by Japan in China, in which the Japanese government explicitly admits the fact of the abandoning of chemical weapons, and undertakes to earnestly fulfill the obligation and duty of destroying these weapons. China urges Japan to start the substantive destruction conscientiously and at the earliest date possible, in accordance with the principles and provisions set forth in the Memorandum.

China does not possess biological weapons, and was once a victim of such weapons. China stands for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of biological weapons, and strongly opposes the development, production and stockpiling of biological weapons by any country, as well as the proliferation of such weapons and related technology in any form by any country. As a State Party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), China has fully and conscientiously fulfilled its obligations under the Convention and has, on an annual basis, provided the United Nations with information on confidence-building measures in this regard.

China supports the enhancement of the effectiveness of the BWC in a comprehensive manner. Upon its accession to the BWC, China pointed out the absence of concrete and effective measures for verification. China holds that, in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the BWC, a necessary verification mechanism should be established. In view of the complexity of biological weapons and bio-technology, the verification mechanism to be established must be rational, just and feasible. In order to protect the legitimate security and commercial interests of State Parties, concrete measures aimed at preventing the abuse of verification should be provided for. At the same time, there should be concrete measures to promote international cooperation and exchanges among State Parties in the field of bio-technology for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. These measures will be conducive to enhancing the universality of the Convention and the future Protocol.

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

China is strongly opposed to an arms race in outer space. China maintains that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be for the sole purpose of promoting the economic, scientific and cultural development of all countries, and benefiting all mankind.

Such activities as the testing, deployment or use of weapons, weapon systems or their components should be banned in outer space, in order to prevent the militarization of and an arms race in outer space. At present, there are intentions, plans and actions to pursue unilateral military and strategic superiority in, and control of, outer space. They are not only real but also growing. Therefore, it is realistic and urgent that the international community takes effective measures to stop such negative developments.

Over a period of years, the international community has, for the purpose of promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and preventing an arms race there, drawn up a series of multilateral or bilateral legal instruments regulating State Parties' space activities. However, these instruments have not reflected the development of the most advanced aerospace technology today, and therefore are unable to effectively prevent the militarization of or an arms race in outer space. China believes that the most direct and effective way to achieve this purpose in the new century is to negotiate and bring into being a new international legal instrument, in addition to continued strict compliance with the existing ones.

The 54th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted once again the Resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, with an overwhelming majority. The Resolution stresses that the negotiation and conclusion of an international agreement or agreements on the prevention of an

arms race in outer space remains the top priority of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. This reflects a universal aspiration and an urgent demand of the international community for the prevention of such an arms race. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has an important role to play in this respect. It should immediately reestablish the Ad Hoc Committee with a mandate to negotiate a new international legal instrument on the prevention of the militarization of or an arms race in outer space.

Anti-Personnel Landmines

The Chinese government has always paid a great deal of attention to the accidental injuries to civilians caused by anti-personnel landmines (APL). Since its ratification of the Amended Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in 1998, the Chinese government and its armed forces have strictly complied with and earnestly implemented the provisions of the Protocol, and have stopped exporting APLs that are not in conformity with the standards set out in the Protocol. In October 1999, China submitted its national report on the implementation of the Protocol to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In addition, the Chinese government has made strenuous efforts in mine clearance, both domestically and internationally. From early 1992 to August 1999, the Chinese government launched two large-scale demining operations on Chinese territory along the Sino-Vietnamese border. Over 2.2 million landmines and explosive devices of various kinds were removed, and more than 700 tons of abandoned ammunition and explosive devices were destroyed. An area of over 300 square kilometers was cleared. Some 290 border trade paths and ports of entry and exit were reopened, and 60,000 hectares of deserted farmland, pastures and forests were restored to their original state. Thus, the threat posed to the local people by the landmines left over from the border conflict has been eliminated. The Chinese government has also, in conformity with the requirements of technological cooperation and assistance as prescribed in the Protocol, provided every possible assistance to mine-affected countries by contributing to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Mine Clearance Assistance and donating mine-clearance equipment directly to these countries. In 1998, the Chinese government donated US\$ 100,000 to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for mine clearance operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In October 1999 and May 2000, China sponsored two international mine clearance training courses in collaboration with the UN. Forty trainees from seven mine-affected countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Rwanda) attended the courses, the contents of which ranged from mine-clearance techniques to operational methods and organizational procedures, with satisfactory results.

The Chinese government is of the view that, in addressing the issue of accidental injury to civilians from mines, a two-pronged approach should be adopted, i.e., restrictions on the use of landmines and mine clearance. The Amended Protocol, if universally acceded to and effectively carried out, should be able to satisfactorily resolve the problem of abuse and control of landmines. As far as the humanitarian aspect of the issue is concerned, the most urgent task, and the most effective approach, is to clear the landmines scattered in many parts of the world.

The UN Register of Conventional Arms and the Issue of Small Arms

China participated in the UN Register of Conventional Arms from 1992 to 1997. However, since 1996, a certain country, in disregard of relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly, began to register its arms sales to Taiwan in the form of a footnote to its national report. It is obvious that the arms sales to Taiwan are not arms transfers between sovereign states. Furthermore, they constitute infringements upon China's sovereignty and interference in China's internal affairs. To place arms sales to Taiwan on the Register is inconsistent with the nature of the Register as a record of

legitimate arms transfers between sovereign states. It can only politicize the Register, and as a result, seriously undermine its integrity and authority. This has forced China to suspend its participation in the Register since 1998. It is China's hope that the party concerned can take immediate and feasible measures to rectify its erroneous practice, so that the seriousness and integrity of the Register can be restored and maintained.

China actively supports international efforts to address the issue of small arms. It is in favor of taking necessary measures to combat illicit activities related to small arms, and prevent the proliferation and excessive accumulation of such arms, so as to mitigate the armed conflicts and turbulences in the countries concerned and curb the further spread of terrorism and drug trafficking. Meanwhile, the Chinese government is of the view that small arms by themselves are not the root cause of the problem. For most countries, small arms are still an indispensable means of safeguarding their national defense and social order. In addressing the issue of small arms, the sovereignty of the relevant countries should be fully respected, and the specific conditions of different countries and regions should be taken into consideration. It should also be noted that the right of countries to the legitimate possession of and normal trade in small arms should not be affected.

China participated in the 1998 UN Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. It supports the convening of the International Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Aspects in 2001. China also took part in the negotiation of the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition at the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crimes with a view to joining the international efforts to combat transnational organized crimes of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in firearms.

China takes a responsible attitude toward the manufacture and transfer of small arms, having strict laws and administrative control measures in this regard. The Law of the PRC on the Control of Firearms and The Regulations of the PRC on the Administration of Arms Exports contain detailed stipulations on the manufacture, transportation, sales, equipment and entry and exit of firearms and ammunition, and stipulate stringent penalties for violations.

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