NMD AND ARMS CONTROL DEBATES AT THE 2000 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

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In essence, the conference could adopt the final document as they shelved this controversial issue of NMD/ABM Treaty. However, the issue still alive after the conference, and the issue made means the NMD program made the U.S. very passive in the discussion on nuclear disarmament, and the five nuclear-weapon states agreed the lowest common denominator.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference succeeded in adopting almost 30-page final document by consensus. It means prima facie a great success of the conference from the viewpoint of many experts thought it would be difficult to adopt a final document because of these double confrontations. Among some reasons behind the confrontations, the most serious one was the issue of the NMD/ABM Treaty.

The Nuclear-weapon States
The United States, the only state which defended the NMD program at the conference, tried to mitigate concerns and defined itself by emphasizing their consultation with Russia and China, justified its program by stating: "the world has changed dramatically in the almost three decades since the ABM Treaty was signed. That Treaty has been amended before, and there is no good reason it cannot be amended again to reflect new threats from three quarters outside the strategic deterrence regime." Secretary of State Ms. Madeleine Albright also made it clear that it was not intended to degrade Russia’s deterrent and nor would it have that result.4 Moreover, the U.S. program from two aspects. The first is that further reduction in strategic offensive weapons can only be considered in the context of the preservation of the ABM Treaty which is the cornerstone of strategic stability and the compliance with the ABM Treaty in its present form without any modification is a prerequisite for further negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The second is that the collapse of the ABM Treaty would undermine the entire disarmament agreements concluded over the last 30 years.5

Ambassador Mr. Sha Zukang of China, citing the speech of President Jiang Zemin that so-called missile defense program will inevitably exert an extensive negative impact on international security and would make a new round of nuclear arms race and neutralizing international efforts of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation," harshly criticized the intention of the U.S. as follows: "Relying on its overwhelmingly superior strength in economy, science and technology, a certain military power, not recognizing by large nuclear arsenals with overkill capability, is vigorously pursuing the development of national missile defense (NMD) system in an attempt to seek absolute security for itself.6"

Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle, the representative of France, told: "Franca attaches the utmost importance to maintaining strategic stability, of which the ABM Treaty is an essential element. It is an international consensus that the Treaty played a major role in the disarmament efforts and the control of arms, and every nation went in this direction. Mr. Peter Hain of the United Kingdom did not strongly criticized as others did, but he referred to the importance of the ABM Treaty, saying: “We have made clear to both sides (the U.S. and Russia) that we continue to value the ABM Treaty and wish to keep it as is.”7

Non-Nuclear-Weapon States
The statement by Portugal on behalf of the European Union also mentioned the issue by saying: "We reaffirm the importance of the ABM Treaty, as one of the pillars of strategic stability. The European Union is firmly committed to preserving it.8"

The statement by Mexico on behalf of seven NAC (New Agenda Coalition) states had no mention to the issue, but the working paper submitted by them included the following phrase: "Stressing that the ABM Treaty remains a cornerstone of strategic stability and underlining the responsibility of its states parties to preserve its integrity."9

The statement by Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries said: "The movement is also concerned over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defense system and the weaponization of outer space which have contributed to the further erosion of the international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, it calls for the preservation of the provisions of the ABM Treaty."10

From these statements, it is obvious that almost all states except the U.S. strongly argued for the preservation of the ABM Treaty and pointed out that the NMD would have negative influence on universal nuclear disarmament and the arms control and the control of new weapons. The conference, in fact, agreed for the last thirty years.

Under this circumstance, during the first week of the conference, it was highly afraid that the conference would fail because of this sharp confrontation on the issue of NMD/ABM Treaty between the U.S. and other states in the western and the U.S. and other countries in general and between the U.S. and other nuclear-weapon states in particular.

Common Statement by Five Nuclear-weapon States
On the first day of the second week, May 1, the five nuclear-weapon states submitted a common statement, which was a compromise among the five. It dealt with many issues from universality to nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, safeguards and others. The NMD/ABM Treaty was dealt with in the context of START III, stating: "We look forward to the conclusion of START III as soon as possible while preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty as a cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons, in accordance with its provisions."11 This phrase was adopted as it was in the final document.12

The other four nuclear-weapon states naturally accentuate the importance of the word "preserving" in order to justify their position. On balance, the U.S. can be said to be able to preserve its position. On this issue, the U.S. could extract a concession from the other states. As the price for it, the U.S. had to made concessions in another area. The experts thought it would be a cut-off for the U.S. to insist on maintaining the ABM Treaty.

Demand for Strategic Stability
In order to prevent the phrase "the ABM Treaty issue had been settled among the five on the first day of the second week, the issue continued to be very hot during the last three weeks.

One argument is that strategic stability, whose main element is the ABM Treaty, should be maintained when discussing future measures for nuclear disarmament. In the case of further efforts to reduce nuclear armaments unilaterally, the phrase "for the maintenance of strategic stability" was added. In the case of further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, the phrase "in the context of further reduction of strategic defensive systems" was added. In the case of missile defense systems, the phrase "in the context of the maintenance of strategic stability" was added. Finally, in the case of a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies, the phrase "to enhance strategic stability" was added.(14)

In the context of these changes, the phrases for the enhancement for nuclear disarmament measures were found into one and the same paragraph, which has a common phrase for these measures.(15) The phrase contains the phrase "based on the principle of undiminished security of all." The phrase "strategic stability" was replaced by "undiminished security" at the last stage, but the meaning is almost the same. That is, any future nuclear disarmament measure is conditioned by undiminished security for all, and many nations, in particular Russia and China, interpret that modification and abandonment of the ABM Treaty is tantamount to the diminished security.

The other argument is that the prevention of arms race in outer space (PAROS) is more urgent and important than a cut-off treaty. This is the argument by China. There has been a general consensus that the first priority after the CTBT would be the negotiations on a cut-off treaty. The Shanghai mandate was once adopted at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, it was widely expected that a clear direction to the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a cut-off treaty would be agreed in a final document. However, the U.S. sacrificed the clear commitment to a cut-off treaty for its demand on the NMD. As a result, China’s argument prevailed and the early commencement of the negotiations on a cut-off treaty becomes impossible.

Conclusion
The 2000 NPT Review Conference succeeded in adopting almost 30-page final document by consensus. It means prima facie a great success of the conference from the viewpoint of many experts whose forecast was very pessimistic. However, we have to judge the success of the conference by examining the contents of the final document. The U.S. attitude to save by any means the NMD program made the U.S. very passive in the discussion on nuclear disarmament, and the five nuclear-weapon states agreed the lowest common denominator.

The experts thought it would be difficult to adopt a final document because of these double confrontations. Among some reasons behind the confrontations, the most serious one was the issue of the NMD/ABM Treaty.