NMD AND ARMS CONTROL DEBATES AT THE 2000 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

Recommended Citation


"East Asian Regional Security Futures: Theater Missile Defense Implications"
The United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, June 24-5, 2000
Just from the beginning of the conference, the NMD/ABM Treaty has been one of the most controversial issues.

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 its 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 third countries 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)

Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle, the representative of France, told: "France attaches the utmost importance to maintaining strategic stability, of which the ABM Treaty is an essential element. It is absolutely essential for the future of the Treaty to change the ABM Treaty in its current form to safeguard the balance of power. France has not considering a breakaway from the Treaty." Mr. Peter Hain of the United Kingdom did not see 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 see it preserved." (8)

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 U.S. must respect the non-nuclear-weapon states' security. "(9)

The five nuclear-weapon states dealt with many issues from universality to nuclear disarmament, new and non-proliferation issues, and others. The NMD/ABM Treaty was dealt with in the context 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."(12) This philosophy was adopted as it was in the final document.(13)

The phrase "preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty" is irrelevant. The U.S. could justify its position by emphasizing the word "strengthening", because the U.S. could understand that strengthening the Treaty meant strengthening the ABM Treaty. The other five nuclear-weapon states naturally accentuate the importance of the word "preserving" in order to justify their position. On balance, the U.S. could be said to be able to preserve the position. On this issue, the U.S. could extract a concession from the other side. As for the price, the U.S. had to made concessions in other issues. The conference trickled down because the U.S. had to yield to Russia's demands in the cut-off area.

Demand for Strategic Stability
In my paper, the phrase "preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty" issue was settled between 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 arsenals 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 non-strategic defensive systems" was added. In the context of reduction of nuclear offensive weapons, the phrase in the context of non-strategic defense and promotion of non-proliferation 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)

On the second day of the second week, the conference agreed that the first concern for nuclear disarmament measures were focused and fixed on the arms control and the non-control area. 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 future arms control and the arms control and disarmament measures. The conference agreed for the last thirty years.

From these circumstances, during the first week of the second week, it was highly of 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 general and between the U.S. and other four 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, new and non-proliferation issues, and others. The NMD/ABM Treaty was dealt with in the context 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 provision.(12) This philosophy was adopted as it was in the final document.(13)

The phrase "preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty" is irrelevant. The U.S. could justify its position by emphasizing the word "strengthening", because the U.S. could understand that strengthening the Treaty meant strengthening the ABM Treaty. The other five nuclear-weapon states naturally accentuate the importance of the word "preserving" in order to justify their position. On balance, the U.S. could be said to be able to preserve the position. On this issue, the U.S. could extract a concession from the other side. As for the price, the U.S. had to made concessions in other issues. The conference trickled down because the U.S. had to yield to Russia's demands in the cut-off area.

Conclusion
The 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 observers 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 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 main reason for their reluctance was the U.S. program of the NMD. In essence, the conference could adopt the final document as they showed this controversial issue of NMD/ABM Treaty. However, the issue still alive after the conference, and the issue made the future of nuclear disarmament very equivocal.

(3) "Secretary-General Address to the NPT 2000 Review Conference," 24 April 2000, p.3.
(7) Intervention of H.E. Mr. S. Hubert de La Fortelle, of France on the Francais a la presidents from the French of the Credit de the Delegation of the Department of Proliferation, Conference d'Emun des TNP, 25 avril 2000, p.6.
(11) Mr. Peter Hain of the United Kingdom did not see 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 see it preserved." (8)
(12) H.E. Mr. Igor S. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, April 22, 2000, p.7.
(13) Statement by H.E. Mr. Igor S. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, April 22, 2000, p.7.