NMD AND ARMS CONTROL DEBATES AT THE 2000 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

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The outcome of the conference in concrete nuclear disarmament measures is very low, mainly because the four nuclear-weapon states did have a disincentive to proceed for substantive nuclear disarmament. The second is that the collapse of the ABM Treaty would undermine the entirety of disarmament agreements concluded over the last 30 years.(5)

Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle, the representative of France, told: “France attaches utmost importance to maintaining strategic stability, of which the ABM Treaty is an essential element. It is absolutely against the trend of the Conference to change the status of the Treaty. It is in China’s interest and in the interest of all nuclear weapon states to respect an existing agreement.”(6) Mr. Peter Hain of the United Kingdom did not so strongly criticize 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 EU wishes to see that Treaty preserved.”(9)

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 the importance of maintaining the ABM Treaty as an essential cornerstone of strategic stability, and de-emphasizing the role of states parties in preserving its integrity.” (10)

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 agreements.”(11)

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 the maintenance of strategic stability and the control of nuclear arms. The issue had a very negative impact on the proceedings and results of the conference.

Demand for Strategic Stability

In the context of strategic stability, the NMD/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 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 strategic stability” was added. In the case of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control, the phrase “for the promotion of arms control and disarmament” 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 strategic stability, the ABM Treaty played an essential role in maintaining strategic stability. Now, the ABM Treaty issue has been resolved, the role of the ABM Treaty in maintaining strategic stability is no longer needed. The ABM Treaty is the cornerstone of strategic stability and influential to the maintenance and promotion of strategic stability. That is, in almost future nuclear disarmament measures is conditioned by non-strategic disarmament for all, and in particular, in the nuclear arms control agreements for the first thirty years. 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 of 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 for the NMD. As a result, China's argument prevailed and the early commencement of the negotiations on a cut-off treaty becomes almost 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 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 non-NMD made program the U.S. made very passive in the discussion on nuclear disarmament, and the five nuclear-weapon states agreed the lowest common denominator. The most important is that the precaution for future nuclear disarmament measures is not the ABM Treaty. The main reason for their reluctance was the U.S. program of the ABM Treaty. 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 disarmament very equivocal.