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PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by H.E. Amb. Zhang Yan
Director-General of the Department of Arms Control
and Disarmament of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
the People's Republic of China
at the Thematic Debate
of the First Committee of the 60th Session of
the United Nations General Assembly
on
Nuclear Disarmament and
Non-proliferation

(New York, 10 October 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

The end of the Cold War and the new security situation have made possible the substantial reduction of nuclear weapons, and then complete prohibition and thorough destruction of such weapons. Pushing forward nuclear disarmament process and constantly reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international political affairs and national security policies is of great significance to improve international security environment and promote nuclear non-proliferation process. In this regard, nuclear-weapon states bear special and primary responsibilities. It is out of date to stick to the Cold War mentality, advocate pre-emptive strategy, list other countries as targets of nuclear strike, lower the threshold of using nuclear weapons, and develop new types of nuclear weapons for specific purposes.

It is regrettable that the Seventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to achieve substantial results. However, as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the NPT will continue to play an indispensable role in preserving international nuclear non-proliferation regime, reducing the threat of nuclear weapons and maintaining global peace and security. China will, as always, faithfully implement all its obligations under the NPT, and commit itself to enhancing the universality, effectiveness and authority of the treaty and promoting in a comprehensive and balanced manner the three goals of the NPT, namely nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. We will continue to take an active and constructive part in the NPT review process.

Mr. Chairman,

As a nuclear-weapon state, China has never evaded its due responsibilities and obligations in nuclear disarmament. China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. Since the first day when it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has committed not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and in any circumstance and undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. Whether confronted with the nuclear threat and nuclear blackmail during the Cold War, or faced with the great changes that

have taken place in the international security environment after the Cold War, China has always stayed true to its commitment. China's policy in this regard will remain unchanged in the future.

China maintains that the following measures should be taken to further promote nuclear disarmament process:

--- An international legal instrument on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons should be concluded at an early date.

--- Nuclear disarmament should be a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction towards a downward balance. The two states possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. They should earnestly comply with the treaties already concluded on reduction of nuclear weapons and further reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner so as to create conditions for achieving the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament.

--- Before the goal of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons is achieved, nuclear-weapon states should commit themselves to no first use of nuclear weapons and undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

--- Nuclear-weapon states should abandon the policies of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security.

--- Nuclear disarmament measures, including intermediate measures, should follow the guidelines of maintaining global strategic balance and stability and undiminished security for all.

--- The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should reach an agreement on its program of work at an early date so as to establish Ad Hoc Committees on nuclear disarmament, security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states, fissile material cut-off and prevention of an arms race in outer space, and start substantive work on these issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear weapons, and their means of delivery poses a grave threat to international peace and security. Preventing WMD proliferation is a pressing task facing the international community. The ultimate goal of non-proliferation efforts is to maintain international and regional peace, security and stability. In order to prevent WMD proliferation, an integrated approach must be adopted to address both the symptoms and the root causes. In this regard, we maintain:

Firstly, efforts should be devoted to creating a favorable international and regional security environment conducive to non-proliferation. Countries should respect each other's security interests and strive for a relationship based on mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality and cooperation so as to realize mutual security, thus eradicating the motivations behind proliferation.

Secondly, all states should resort to political and diplomatic means to solve the proliferation problem within the framework of existing international law. Non-proliferation measures should help promote and maintain international security. Proper solutions to proliferation issues should be sought out through dialogue instead of confrontation, and through cooperation instead of pressure, non-proliferation efforts should not in any way hamper peaceful use of science and technology.

Thirdly, existing non-proliferation regime should be strengthened and improved in light of the overall non-proliferation situation and the global economic, scientific and technological development. Any measures to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime should follow the principle of multilateralism and democratic decision-making through broad participation, so as to ensure the fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory nature of international non-proliferation system. The role of the UN and other international organizations should be brought into full play.

Mr. Chairman,

As a responsible member of the international community, China firmly opposes the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. China has joined all international treaties and relevant international organizations in the

field of non-proliferation and strictly fulfills relevant international obligations.

China attaches importance to and actively participates in international exchanges and cooperation in the non-proliferation field. We have made active efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation and support the efforts of parties concerned to seek proper settlement of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue and the Iranian nuclear issue through political and diplomatic means.

China attaches great importance to the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and is among the first to submit national report on the implementation of the Resolution. We will continue our active participation in the work of the UNSCR 1540 Committee and work with all parties to ensure the effective implementation of the Resolution. China is positively considering hosting a regional seminar on issues related to UNSCR 1540 and is discussing this matter with relevant body of the UN.

China also attaches great importance to non-proliferation export control. We have set up a comprehensive legal and management system on export control, and our relevant principles and practices are basically identical with international practices. We have been actively developing relations with multinational export control mechanisms. China has joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and is willing to join the Missile technology Control Regime. We also keep contacts and dialogue with the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group.

Mr. Chairman,

Disarmament and non-proliferation, complementing each other, is our long-term and arduous task. China will, as always, make unremitting efforts to promote these goals and realize lasting peace and universal security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.