



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
PERMANENT MISSION AT GENEVA

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador HU Xiaodi
at the 2rd Part of the 2005 Session of
the Conference on Disarmament

(23 June 2005, Geneva)

Mr. President,

The Chinese Delegation congratulates you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and believes that your efforts can help facilitate the work of the CD. You can count on our full cooperation in your endeavour.

Today, the Chinese Delegation will respond to your decision by sharing with you and other delegations some of our thoughts on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

I. What Has Led to the Present Stalemate in the Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Process?

Nuclear disarmament matters to international peace and security. In recent years, nuclear disarmament has been a hotly debated issue in multilateral fora while it embodies a variety of contradictions and differences, which again find their reflection in the following areas:

The Conference on Disarmament has not yet carried out any substantive work on nuclear disarmament. The recently concluded Seventh NPT Review Conference did not produce any substantive proposals on three pillars of the NPT including that of the nuclear disarmament. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, for its part, could not agree on the need for discussing the nuclear disarmament issue. SSOD IV could not be held also with nuclear disarmament as one of the contentious points.

What has caused such a situation?

On the one hand, the United States and the Russian Federation has made some progresses in their bilateral reduction of nuclear weapons. On the other, what we are witnessing are, the abolition of the ABM Treaty, once regarded as the cornerstone of the international strategic balance and stability, the failure of the CTBT to enter into force, the absence of the FMCT negotiation and a rising danger of the weaponization of outer space.

Coupled with these, there is now a growing tendency to stress non-proliferation while playing down nuclear disarmament. Traditional non-proliferation regime with export control as its center-piece is gradually giving way to counter-proliferation characterized by such military means as pre-emptive strikes and interdictions. Demand for an international legally-binding legal instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear weapon states has been rejected. The right of non-nuclear weapon states to the peaceful use of nuclear energy is being curtailed. A missile defense system undermining international strategic stability has reached the initial stage of deployment. Important principles and measures on nuclear disarmament adopted at previous NPT Review Conferences have been called into question.

Obviously, unilateral, bilateral, plural-lateral and multilateral approaches and objectives now encompass broad differences rather than complement to each other. Indeed, the above phenomena are also indicators of a deepening conflict between those who favour disarmament and those who are focused on non-proliferation.

II. How to Advance the International Nuclear Disarmament Process?

Firstly, a secured international environment and strategic stability is the foundation.

To advance nuclear disarmament, one must deal with both the symptoms and the root causes of the problem. Nuclear disarmament cannot take place in a vacuum. Creating a healthy and positive international security environment and maintaining international strategic balance constitute the very basis for progress in nuclear disarmament.

It should be stressed that efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space and those on nuclear disarmament go hand in hand. In this perspective, it is of crucial importance for nuclear disarmament that a missile defense system undermining strategic stability should not be developed, and that no weapons should be deployed in outer space. It is hard to imagine that once a full-fledged missile defense system is put in place or weapons have been introduced into outer space there can be business as usual in nuclear disarmament. At best, such moves would never be conducive to nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, a balanced approach to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons is the condition.

Efforts on nuclear disarmament and those to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons are mutually complimentary. The indefinite extension of NPT does not mean that nuclear-weapon states can hold on to their nuclear weapons for ever. The fulfillment of obligations in good faith on nuclear disarmament by nuclear-weapon states is an indispensable guarantee for the maintenance of international nuclear non-proliferation regime. By the same token, the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons is a major aspect of the global nuclear disarmament process.

Only if nuclear-weapon states thoroughly destroy their nuclear weapons at an early date and that non-nuclear weapon states stick to their pledge not to acquire such weapons, while both groups of countries make steady efforts in nuclear disarmament and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, can we achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, observance of the basic principles in nuclear disarmament is the guarantee.

Nuclear disarmament should be a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction towards a downward balance. Countries with the biggest nuclear arsenals bear special responsibility for nuclear disarmament and should take the lead in drastically reducing their arsenals.

The Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference adopts a number of principles and measures for nuclear disarmament which contains that the reduction of nuclear weapons should be carried out in an “effectively verifiable”, “legally-binding” and “irreversible” manner; all measures for nuclear disarmament, including various intermediate measures, should be guided by the principles of “promoting international strategic stability” and “undiminished security for all”, and should contribute to international peace and security.

The Final Documents of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences are still highly pertinent today. A pick-and-choose attitude towards their contents is not desirable. Those principles should still guide the efforts in nuclear disarmament.

Fourthly, the implementation of appropriate intermediate measures of nuclear disarmament is a supplement and improvement.

Under the present circumstances, the implementation of the following practical intermediate measures of nuclear disarmament will be a supplement to and improvement of multilateral nuclear disarmament process, and is conducive to increasing trust among countries.

- The nuclear-weapon states should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies, abandon the nuclear deterrence doctrine based on the first use of nuclear weapons, and give up the policy of lowering the threshold for using nuclear weapons;
- Every nuclear-weapon state should honor their commitment not to target its nuclear weapons against any country, nor to list any countries as targets of nuclear strike;
- To withdraw and return home all the nuclear weapons deployed outside their own territories;
- To abandon the policy and practice of “nuclear umbrella” and “nuclear sharing”;
- Not to develop easy-to-use low-yield nuclear weapons.
- Nuclear-weapon states should take all necessary steps to avoid accidental or unauthorized launches of nuclear weapons;
- All nuclear-weapon states undertake that at any time or under any circumstances, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and conclude relevant international legal instrument thereupon. This is the most practical and reasonable intermediate measure of nuclear disarmament.

Although the above measures cannot replace concrete reduction of nuclear weapons, they can serve to increase trust among nuclear-weapon states and between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, reduce the risk of a nuclear war, so as to create necessary conditions for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.

Fifthly, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is the platform.

In order to promote international nuclear disarmament efforts, it is imperative to break the deadlock in the CD. China favors an early agreement on the programme of work on the basis of the "Five Ambassadors' Proposal", so as to start substantive work on the nuclear disarmament, FMCT, PAROS and negative security assurances. Concerning the mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Disarmament, China supports the reasonable positions of the G21.

Mr. President,

China's nuclear weapons are purely for self-defense. Over the decades, we have exercised great restraint in the development of nuclear forces, have never taken part in nuclear arms race, have deployed no nuclear weapons abroad, and have kept our nuclear forces at the minimum level necessary for self-defense. China stands for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, pursuing the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons and undertakes not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones under any circumstances. China supports the entry into force of the CTBT at an early date, is committed to early ratification of the Treaty, and agrees to negotiate a FMCT within a comprehensive programme of work of the CD. China's relevant policies have positively contributed to the process of international nuclear disarmament.

As always, we will make unremitting efforts together with the international community so as to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons and to realize at an early date the noble objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.