

2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Nuclear disarmament

Working paper submitted by China

1. The complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and the ultimate realization of a world without nuclear weapons, serve the common interests of mankind and constitute a shared aspiration for all countries. In his speech at the United Nations Office at Geneva in January 2017, President Xi Jinping stated that “nuclear weapons, the Sword of Damocles that hangs over humankind, should be completely prohibited and ultimately destroyed over time to make the world free of nuclear weapons”.

2. Today, the international security landscape is undergoing complex and profound changes, and the existing international arms control system is facing severe challenges. Hegemony, clique politics and the new “cold war mentality” are going rampant. Regional security issues stay in a deadlock, and new threats and challenges keep emerging. The international arms control process is now at a critical juncture. The international community is deeply concerned about the deteriorating international security environment and calls for maintaining world peace and development.

Certain countries, stubbornly holding on to the cold war mentality, have been constantly hyping up major-power competition, advancing military capabilities and strengthening military alliances. A certain nuclear-weapon State, in the pursuit of absolute advantages over others in both offensive and defensive military capabilities, is making significant investment in upgrading its nuclear triad, developing and deploying low-yield nuclear weapons, seeking to deploy land-based intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific and Europe that are far away from its homeland, developing and deploying global missile defence systems, planning to place weapons in outer space. All these negative moves have posed severe threats to regional security, undermined global strategic balance and stability, and seriously hindered the global nuclear disarmament process.

3. Under the current circumstance, it is more pertinent than ever for the international community to practise true multilateralism, firmly resist the cold war mentality and zero-sum game, uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and maintain and strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including



the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, jointly address the major security challenges, eliminate potential security threats and build a world that enjoys lasting peace and universal security. For that purpose, China wishes to propose the following.

First, nuclear disarmament should be pursued in a fair and reasonable process with gradual and balanced reduction of nuclear weapons. The basic principle of “maintaining global strategic stability” and “undiminished security for all” should be strictly observed. The two countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals should, in accordance with relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions and documents, bear the special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and continue to make drastic and substantive reductions in their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner, so as to create the necessary conditions for general and complete nuclear disarmament. When conditions permit, all nuclear-weapon States should join the multilateral nuclear disarmament process.

Second, the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime with the Non-Proliferation Treaty as its cornerstone should be maintained and strengthened, and any exclusive blocs and small circles that may undermine its authority should be resisted. All parties should promote nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a comprehensive and balanced manner, firmly oppose double standards and pragmatism, and categorically reject nuclear cooperation based on narrow-minded geopolitical calculation and cold war mentality in contravention of the object and purpose of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Third, the role of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines should be diminished. All nuclear-weapon States should reaffirm the principle that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”, abandon the policies of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons, conclude a multilateral treaty on mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and provide negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States in a legally binding manner. The United States should stop provoking major-power confrontation, redress the wrong moves to seek overwhelming military advantages, abandon development or deployment of the global missile defence system, refrain from deploying land-based intermediate range missiles in the Asia-Pacific and Europe, so as to contribute its share to preventing nuclear arms races and maintaining strategic stability.

Fourth, nuclear-weapon States should commit themselves to the effective implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, abide by all consensus on nuclear disarmament reached in the previous Review Conferences, and openly declare that they have no intention to seek permanent possession of nuclear weapons. Relevant nuclear-weapon States should abandon the policy and practice of nuclear umbrella and nuclear sharing, and withdraw all nuclear weapons that are deployed in other countries. Nuclear-weapon States should actively support the efforts by non-nuclear-weapon States to build nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, and sign and ratify the relevant additional protocols to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties as soon as possible.

Fifth, the international community should maintain constructive communication and promote the nuclear disarmament process in a rational, pragmatic and effective manner. China understands the aspirations and eagerness of non-nuclear-weapon States to promote the international nuclear disarmament process. As far as the ultimate goal of the total and complete

destruction of nuclear weapons is concerned, China shares the objective of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. However, the nuclear disarmament process cannot be cut off from the reality of international security. In this regard, a step-by-step approach must be taken and the principles of “maintaining global strategic stability” and “undiminished security for all” should be followed. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons does not reflect or constitute customary international law, and is not binding on countries that are not member States of the Treaty.

4. As a nuclear-weapon State, China has proactively advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and striving for a world without nuclear weapons. China has never evaded its responsibility, and has been earnestly fulfilling its obligation of nuclear disarmament and made sincere contributions to promoting nuclear disarmament through concrete actions.

China remains committed to the path of peaceful development, adheres to the independent foreign policy of peace, pursues a national defence policy that is defensive in nature, and upholds a nuclear strategy of self-defence. China has the most stable, consistent and predictable nuclear policy among all nuclear-weapon States.

China undertakes not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and unconditionally commits itself not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free-zones. China is the only country among the P5 that has made such a commitment. This policy will not change.

China always keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security, and does not seek parity with other countries in terms of its nuclear-weapons investment, quantity or scale. China never participates in arms race in any form, never provides a nuclear umbrella for any country and never deploys any nuclear weapons abroad.

China attaches great importance to the role of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament regime. China takes an active part in the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process, earnestly fulfils its obligations, and solemnly abides by the consensus reached in the previous Review Conferences. China has submitted an updated version of its national report.

China supports the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and has strictly observed its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear testing. China is making steady progress in domestic preparation for the implementation of the Treaty. A batch of monitoring stations in China has been certified by the Provisional Technical Secretariat and started real-time data transmission, highlighting China’s firm support to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

China maintains that the Conference on Disarmament is the only appropriate venue for negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and supports the early commencement of fissile material cut-off treaty negotiation within the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in accordance with the Shannon Report ([CD/1299](#)) and the mandate contained therein.

China upholds the authority and effectiveness of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament and other multilateral arms control mechanisms, and supports all sides to have frank, practical and

meaningful dialogues on the international security environment, global strategic stability and reduction of risks of nuclear war, etc., within the existing regimes.

China has taken an active part in P5 cooperation, and is committed to advocating a P5 joint statement on the prevention of nuclear war, reaffirming that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”. The second phase of the P5 Working Group on the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms led by China has yielded substantive results. China has actively coordinated the resumption of dialogue between P5 and Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries on the issue of signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. China will continue to promote P5 discussions and cooperation on all major issues related to strategic security and stability, including nuclear policies and doctrines, reduction of strategic risks, and peaceful use of nuclear energy, etc.

China highly values the constructive dialogues with non-nuclear-weapon States, and fully understands the goodwill of non-nuclear-weapon States to promote international nuclear disarmament. China stands ready to maintain communication with non-nuclear-weapon States with a view to preserving and strengthening the current nuclear disarmament mechanism, and to achieving the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons with a step-by-step approach.

5. China will continue to make unremitting efforts to enhance international solidarity and cooperation, promote the international nuclear disarmament process, and achieve the ultimate goal of complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.
