

The Relationship between Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Nonproliferation

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The history of nuclear weapons development since the end of World War II is also one of nuclear arms control. There are two major aspects that represent the global efforts of nuclear arms control, which include limiting on nuclear weapon development in quantities and qualities, and limiting on the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the relevant research and development technologies. The limitation on the nuclear weapons development constitute the primary content of nuclear disarmament efforts, while the limitation on proliferation of both nuclear weapons and the relevant research and development technologies is the substance of nonproliferation. The efforts in these two directions are the major undertakings in arms control.

1. The Historical Process of Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Nonproliferation

In the Cold War period, there existed a great risk of nuclear war between the United States and the former Soviet Union as a result of the severe political and military confrontation and a fierce nuclear arms race. Therefore, the emphasis on arms control was placed on nuclear disarmament between the two countries. The fear of nuclear war paved the way for both countries to embark on the cooperation on bilateral nuclear arms control in the wake of Cuban missile crisis. In 1963, the United States and the former Soviet Union

signed a hotline agreement to improve communications between the two countries, in the hope to prevent accidental nuclear war. Since the end of 1960s, the United States and the former Soviet Union started dialogues on strategic weapons limitation, thus shaping a bilateral regime on limitations and reductions of their nuclear weapons. Since then, both sides have reached certain censuses on maintaining strategic stability, which include principles such as limiting ballistic missile defense, improving nuclear force survivability, and prioritizing limitations and reductions of first strike nuclear capabilities.

Since the end of Cold War, there are considerable changes in international geopolitical environment. The confrontations between the East and West are brought to a end, the relations among major powers are undergoing profound transformation. The risks of global nuclear war between great powers are reduced significantly and the United States and Russia have made progress in nuclear arsenals cuts. However, the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals still exceed their requirements of nuclear deterrence. Meanwhile, the situation of nuclear proliferation has become increasingly severe. More de facto nuclear powers have emerged and the contradiction between nonproliferation and proliferation has become more apparent, making nuclear proliferation a challenging issue affecting regional and

international security. Therefore, the importance of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation weigh equally on the current nuclear arms control agenda, which should be promoted in parallel.

2. The Relationship between Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Nonproliferation

In order to better promote nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation process, the relationship between disarmament and nonproliferation is needed to be explored. According to the article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs) should undertake to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. It is evident that nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation are the two important pillars of the NPT's three. Actually, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation are inter-related and mutually promoted. Active efforts on nonproliferation could lay the foundation for further nuclear disarmament, and meanwhile the continuous progress of nuclear disarmament also offers one of the preconditions to promote nonproliferation.

The decades-long history of nuclear proliferation, especially the recent 20 years' proliferation dynamics have demonstrated that two motivations catalyze a country to pursue nuclear weapons program, i.e. national security concerns, and the pursuit of national prestige and great power status. Security concerns constitute the primary motivation for a country to develop nuclear weapons especially in the context of confronting severe military threat but possessing no alternative solution. Some countries, although in the absence of evident nuclear and conventional threats, remain determined to pursue nuclear weapons for the purpose of great power status.

Generally speaking, to prevent nuclear proliferation driven by the first motivation

requires NPT regime to provide more definite security assurances to Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWSs) and other measures including regional security cooperation regime to ease their security concerns. While for nuclear proliferation driven by the pursuit for great power status and national prestige, special efforts of NWSs are needed especially in reducing the role of nuclear weapons. The so-called a "four-man team" -- George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn -- put it well: the "continued reliance on nuclear weapons as the principal element for deterrence is encouraging, or at least excusing, the spread of these weapons and will inevitably erode the essential cooperation necessary to avoid proliferation."

In the NPT review conference process, NNWSs have expressed considerable discontent with NWSs in fulfilling their nuclear disarmament obligations. And the relationship between NWSs and NNWSs in this regard becomes more strained. Two reasons cause this discontent as follows. Firstly, the existence of nuclear weapons incubates various risks such as nuclear war, dangers of accidental or inadvertent nuclear use, nuclear proliferation and threats of nuclear terrorism. Unfortunately, the process of nuclear reductions and risk reductions remain slow-going. Secondly, the current international nuclear order is imbalanced. NNWSs have constantly raised complaints on the discriminatory rights and obligations within the NPT regime. Therefore, NNWSs call for speeding up the nuclear disarmament process, including reducing the number of nuclear weapons and decreasing reliance on them in national security.

Of course, nuclear disarmament could not be achieved overnight. The balance in nuclear deterrence between major powers serves an important role in maintaining international strategic stability and no other alternative is available currently. Therefore, in the

foreseeable future, the demand for nuclear weapons is hard to be eliminated and the complete nuclear disarmament could not be achieved overnight, which means the step-by-step approach is the only solution. This is the current reality.

The step-by-step approach could include: cut the nuclear weapons exceeding the basic need for nuclear deterrence, reduce the reliance on nuclear weapons in national security, and adjust deployment posture to enhance the nuclear weapons safety. Only by these efforts, can we mitigate the discontent and distrust of NNWSs and advance the NPT regime.

In summary, the nonproliferation requires not only strengthening the IAEA safeguards, but also addressing NNWSs' security concerns and furthering the nuclear disarmament process.

3. Building a Stable and Constructive Nuclear Order

Although complete nuclear disarmament and elimination of nuclear proliferation could not be achieved in near future, various nuclear risks could be well managed and controlled through some efforts. The following is some ideas helpful in managing and controlling the nuclear risks:

A. Pursue further bilateral nuclear cuts between the United States and Russia

In 2013, the United States expressed the will to further reduce one third of its deployed strategic nuclear weapons, which deserves welcome and expectation. However, it is a pity that Russia responded negatively due to some concerns such as ballistic missile defense system building. However before New START Treaty expires in 2021, it is still necessary for both sides to reach a new treaty through negotiations. Hopefully, the United States and Russia could find solutions to the concerns thus achieving deep cuts. Further reductions will not only save spending of the U.S. and Russian

forces maintenance and modernization, but also lay the foundation for multilateral nuclear disarmament.

B. Define deterring nuclear attack by other states as the only purpose of nuclear weapons

Defining deterring nuclear attack as the only purpose of nuclear weapons is the most significant demonstration of reducing the role of nuclear weapons in national security, but also an effective measure to reduce the tension between nuclear deterrence policy and nuclear nonproliferation policy. And furthermore, under this strategic principle, it is unnecessary to have nuclear forces at launch-on-warning status, thus the risks of accidental or inadvertent nuclear launch can be greatly decreased.

C. China's Responsibilities

Since 1964, China sticks to the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and is committed to the principle of building a lean and effective force without participating in nuclear arms race with other countries. Currently, the major goal of China's nuclear modernization is to increase the survivability of nuclear forces, and the nuclear building is still an effort responding to the challenges to its nuclear deterrent. We believe that Chinese Government's adherence to the self-defensive nuclear strategy itself is a contribution to nuclear disarmament process. It is China's responsibility to continually stick to this nuclear policy.

D. Promote nuclear disarmament through nuclear weapon states' cooperation

Although it remains immature for UK, France and China to participate in substantial nuclear reductions, those countries could still conduct strategic dialogues through P5 process and series of track 2 or track 1.5 dialogues, which could enhance mutual understanding of each other's nuclear strategy and nuclear arms control policies, and provide venue for discussing issues related to nuclear deep cuts

and the approach to maintain strategic stability with low numbers of nuclear weapons and verification for nuclear disarmament. All these exchanges would be helpful for promoting the multilateral nuclear disarmament process.

E. Enhance security arrangement in NPT regime and regional security cooperation

NWSs should enhance the security assurances for NNWSs and reach legally binding international instruments, and substantially help to address the regional security concerns and establish regional security cooperation regimes. Only by solving security concerns, could the motivations of countries' pursuing nuclear weapons are eliminated fundamentally.

Nuclear weapon is the most destructive weapon in the weapon family. The assessments of its roles and values are always contradictory. On the one hand, it provides countries with effective measure to defend national security

and global strategic stability while its very existence catalyzes various risks and threats. The international community, incapable of achieving the goal of complete nuclear disarmament in the foreseeable future, has to learn to coexist with nuclear weapons. It cannot be denied that imbalance of rights and obligations exists between NWSs' and NNWSs' in current international nuclear order, and tension remains between nuclear deterrence and nuclear nonproliferation. What we should do is to develop the cooperation of international community of all states through active nuclear disarmament policies and other cooperative regime arrangements, and jointly manage and minimize nuclear proliferation and other nuclear risks. It's hard to eliminate the nuclear weapons currently, but we can have a more stable and constructive nuclear order through joint efforts.

