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CHINA

Some Viewpoints on the Cessation of the Nuclear  
Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament

China has always attached great importance to the question of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, because it has a direct bearing on the vital issue of eliminating the danger of nuclear war and maintaining international peace and security.

The people of all countries of the world entertain great apprehension and serious concern over the present situation with regard to world nuclear armaments. Having engaged in testing, development and production over a long period of time, the two Superpowers have in their possession the largest nuclear arsenals in the world, posing threats to international peace and the security of all countries. They are the only countries which have the capability to wage a nuclear war.

Moreover, in their contention for military superiority, the two Superpowers are now starting a new round in the nuclear arms race centred on qualitative improvement, which has given cause for added apprehension. Having attained numerical superiority in strategic weapons, that late-coming Superpower is now working feverishly to improve the quality of its nuclear weapons, with particular emphasis being given to the strengthening of its counterforce capabilities so as to achieve across-the-board nuclear superiority. Meanwhile, the other Superpower has also accelerated its pace of nuclear expansion and intensified its efforts to develop new types of strategic weapons. The fierce race between the two Superpowers for nuclear superiority constitutes the key factor which accounts for the lack of substantive progress in disarmament.

Motivated by their desire for the removal of the danger of nuclear war, many small and medium-sized countries have put forward a series of reasonable views and proposals. They call for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapon systems and cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, and the drastic reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible date. They have called upon the two Superpowers to implement in earnest the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which affirm the special responsibility in the task of achieving nuclear disarmament to be assumed by countries with the most important nuclear arsenals. They have also proposed that appropriate and reliable verification measures be provided for various stages and aspects of the nuclear disarmament process, so as to ensure the implementation of the agreements reached. The Chinese delegation considers that these views and proposals deserve our serious attention and close study.

China has consistently stood against nuclear war and against the nuclear arms race and has advocated the comprehensive prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. The Chinese delegation is ready to work with other delegations in the Committee on Disarmament in our common search for practical measures to halt the nuclear arms race and to attain nuclear disarmament. In our view, when exploring in a concrete

manner how to attain our common goal, we should identify approaches effective for the resolution of disarmament problems based on the salient features of world balance, or rather the world imbalance in matters of armaments. As was mentioned earlier, the two Superpowers at present have the largest nuclear arsenals. Added together, their nuclear warheads are far more numerous than those of the rest of the nuclear countries. The overwhelming majority of countries in the world have no nuclear weapons. Under such circumstances, it is impossible to talk about equal security among the countries of the world. Consequently, in order to remove the very real threats to world peace and to assure all the countries of equal security, it is necessary for the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals to take actions in advance of other countries by halting the nuclear arms race, ceasing the testing, production and development of all types of nuclear weapons and drastically reducing their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. To take such steps is their unshirkable responsibility. Here also lies the litmus test as to whether they are willing to reduce the danger of nuclear war by taking concrete actions. It goes without saying that on the question of nuclear disarmament, the other nuclear-weapon countries must bear their share of the responsibility. At a certain stage of the nuclear disarmament process, they should also take actions. But in our view, it is neither practical nor fair to make the same demands on the other nuclear-weapon countries as on the two Superpowers. This can only help the latter countries maintain and even increase their immense military superiority and hegemonic threats.

The cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament is a broad and complex issue which involves many specific questions requiring study and effective actions. We will join the other delegations in an exploration of this complex issue. In view of the existing difference of views on this issue, the Chinese delegation is in favour of the proposal made by the group of non-aligned and neutral countries at this session of the Committee that an ad hoc working group on nuclear disarmament be established to discuss the various stages of nuclear disarmament as envisaged in paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and other related issues. It remains the sincere hope of this delegation that progress conducive to nuclear disarmament can be made through serious discussions and negotiations.