Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your continuing support and attention to our work at the Arms Control Program (ACP) of Tsinghua University's Institute of International Studies.

In the last year, the international arms control suffered serious strikes but has also left new opportunities. It is up to us to avoid greater losses and make new progress (this newsletter contains the translation of an article which I wrote for the People's Daily assessing the situation of international arms control for the new year). The staff of ACP believe that arms control is still important for maintaining international peace and stability and is still in the interest of the Chinese people.

In the new year, ACP will continue to conduct research on fissile material control, missile defense, and Chinese arms control policy. We will continue to promote mutual understanding among Chinese and foreign security experts through public debates, and education of arms control. We hope for more dialogue and substantial cooperation with you in the new year.

With my best regards,
Li Bin, Director

Program Participated Activities

- November 30 - December 2
  "Moving Beyond Missile Defense"
  Conference held by Fudan University, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP); Shanghai, PRC.

- December 4
  “The Present and Future Situation of United Nation’s Department of Disarmament Affairs,” Conference held by Institute of International Relations and Center for Arms Control and Disarmament, Peking University.

- December 7
  Meeting with Tom Sanderson, Henry Stimson Center Fellow, on US National Missile Defense, US-China relations.

- December 14

- December 14
  Interview with Reuters television regarding US withdrawal from the ABM treaty and implications to security and US national missile defense.

- December 14

- December 14
  Interview by Eric Baculinao, NBC Television, regarding implications of US withdrawal from ABM Treaty.

- December 14

- December 19

- December 19-20

- December 21
  Meeting with Christian Lotz, Political Counselor, Royal Danish Embassy.
Arms Control in 2002
By Dr. Li Bin
Translated from Chinese, first appeared in People's Daily

Global arms control suffered heavy blows in 2001, especially from the US. The most serious blow was given when US President George W. Bush announced a unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the treaty widely considered the cornerstone of global arms control.

The implications for US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty are more political than technical. The real reason behind President Bush's announcement was his lack of confidence in the sustainability of the development of national missile defense (NMD). The development of strategic missile defense in the US has been an unstable one and the program has already been stopped and restarted twice. A future Democrat administration could again stop NMD development. To reduce this probability, President Bush removed the legal obstacle for NMD deployment by withdrawing from the ABM Treaty. The next step could be to deploy some NMD components - a few interceptors, for example - to make the deployment irreversible. If the American economy can be substantially recovered within the next year or so, and President Bush feels that he will win the next presidential campaign, his administration may focus on the development of NMD technologies rather than its deployment. If the American economy does not rebound from its downturn soon, the Bush administration will have to focus on synthesizing the existing NMD technologies and deploying a "trail" NMD system that obviously cannot work in the real world.

The abrogation of the ABM Treaty also undermines the confidence of the international arms control community. In the future, countries around the world will have to rely on self-help in dealing with security threats instead of arms control and other cooperative approaches. If we do rebuild this shattered confidence, the long-term effect will be an increasingly unstable and unpredictable international security situation. The US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty indicated that the US no longer recognizes a nuclear parity with Russia and a moderate Russian response to it showed that Russia has accepted that fact. It seems that reciprocal treaty-based US-Russian nuclear arms control will be replaced by informal arrangements to ensure a smooth and stable shrink of the Russian nuclear arsenal.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the main negotiation forum for multilateral arms control treaties, has failed to launch any formal negotiations in the last few years. Some previously concluded multilateral treaties, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, cannot be strengthened or implemented because of US boycott. The development of international arms control treaties has entered a difficult period. We may not be able to see any substantial progress in promoting global arms control treaties in the year 2002.

Although treaty-based arms control has come to a standstill, it does not suggest that arms races will proliferate around the world. If the US deploys an NMD system, other nuclear-weapon-states will undoubtedly take technical measures to maintain the effectiveness of their nuclear deterrents. However, it looks like they will limit their technical responses to the scope of mere effectiveness and not make retaliatory responses for a while. Most of the world, except in some hotspots such as South Asia and the Middle East, are concentrating on economic development and avoiding involvement in arms races. So, global arms control will continue on a basis of self-constraints. For example, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will not be able to enter into force in 2002, but the five nuclear-weapon-states will still abide by their commitments to a moratorium. Some declaratory arms control will have some new progress. For example, the US and Russia will take linked unilateral actions to cut their deployed strategic nuclear arsenals. The other three nuclear-weapon-states will constrain their nuclear arsenals respectively. As China becomes more fully involved in the international economic community, there will be greater transparency in the institution of and practice in Chinese export control over dual-use technology.

The development of arms control based on national security consideration is being blurred. However, some "green" consideration including the environmental, humanitarian, economic, and human security considerations are gaining more and more attention in discussions by the international arms control community. The non-governmental arms control organizations are transmitting the new ideas of "green" concern to different governments around the world. This could become the new incentive for advancing future arms control.

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