Over the past fifteen years, and particularly since the end of the Cold War, Chinese non-proliferation and arms control policies have shifted significantly, moving closer towards established international norms and conventions. Moreover, owing to the reform era policy of openness abroad and the trends of pluralization and institution building at home, this transformation appears to be gaining strength within the Chinese foreign policy decision-making structure. China seems to have come a long way since the early 1980s to socialize itself into the multilateral regimes on non-proliferation and arms control, more acceptable and more in line with international consensus. It has now signed and acceded to most major multilateral arms control treaties including the NPT and CTBT, which it has unreservedly condemned in the 1980s, its approach to arms control at the international fora is marked now more by adherence than opposition. It has acquiesced in its special responsibility as a nuclear-weapon state in the process of multilateral arms control. Even where the controversies are raging, such as arms transfer control, China and other major players have been engaged in consultations in an effort to reach some broad consensus. China’s behaviour in arms control has already been constrained by the existing regimes as in the case of the MTCR, and its commitment to CTBT further suggests that it is prepared to work within the constraints of arms control treaties.

However, in recent studies, China is often portrayed as an unscrupulous arms merchant, or as a vicious proliferator of missile and nuclear materials and technologies. As an alarming gap still exists between China’s verbal commitments to arms transfer control and non-proliferation regimes and its actual compliance with the norms and regulations of these regimes, it is difficult to negate the fact that China’s policies towards international arms control and disarmament are still full of ‘inconsistencies and ambiguities’. Therefore, it is important to understand what
Chinese arms control and non-proliferation commitments mean to Asia and the world. This chapter would thus focus on Chinese participation in different regimes on the basis of three perspectives—legal standing, broad multilateral participation and the level of compliance and verification.

During the Cold War years, the rivalry between the two superpowers—the US and the Soviet Union—for world domination was so intense that it engulfed almost all fields underpinning the basic trends of the world situation. As it was mostly about achieving military dominance, it centered on acquiring superiority in terms of nuclear weapons and technology. In fact, it would not be wrong to characterize the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War years as the struggle for nuclear supremacy. Possession of nuclear weapons had become the most vital symbol of power. However, when other countries joined the race to acquire such weapons, the two superpowers were forced to realize the kind of catastrophe the proliferation of these weapons would create. Moreover, they were very much aware of the fact that any direct clash between them would eventually destroy both of them. Thus, while antagonism in their relations continued they started working upon some common interests that would help them. These common interests included the need to put their arms race on a more controlled and predictable track, preventing confrontation from escalating into a nuclear war and avoiding proliferation of nuclear weapons and technologies to other countries. The international community also put pressure on both the countries to stop the arms race and codify certain rules of nonproliferation so that nuclear war could be averted. As a result of which many arms control treaties like the ABM Treaty, the Antarctic Treaty (1959), the Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963), the Outer Space Treaty and the Latin American Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (1967) and the Seabed Arms Control Treaty (1971) etc (Zhenqiang 2005:121). Moreover, to prevent non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) from going nuclear, some rules were codified in the form of multilateral treaties like the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1967. Particularly with the NPT, an arms control regime was established which ensured the exclusion of the NNWS from the nuclear weapons states’ (NWS) club. For the first time it defined two categories of states, namely the NWS and the NNWS having different
rights and obligations. Against this backdrop we must look at the evolution of China’s policy on arms control and nonproliferation and especially how did it adapt itself to the arms control regimes starting from the Cold War years to the Post-Cold War period.

China’s Adaptation to Arms Control Regimes: A Historical Overview

As there have been many shifts in China’s non-proliferation and disarmament policies since its establishment as an independent country in 1949, it is both imperative and critical to have a look at the evolution of China’s nuclear doctrine for a comprehensive understanding of its contemporary policy on these issues. In other words, it would not be possible to fully appreciate China’s present position and its future direction without delving into the historical legacies. Taking these shifts as the defining aspects of different periods, we can posit three phases in the evolution of Chinese thinking on nuclear weapons and disarmament, each of which has distinct attributes and characteristics. The first period spans from the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 to the first successful test of a nuclear device in 1964. The second period is from 1964 to the end of the Maoist era in 1978, the third period covers the post-Maoist phase from 1978 to the end of the Cold War in 1991. And the final period stretches from 1991 to the present.

1949-1964: Assertion of the Right to Develop Nuclear Weapons

China’s nuclear policy and approach to arms control in this period was primarily shaped by Mao who, prior to 1949, belittled the importance of nuclear weapons, especially in the wake of worldwide anxiety and concern over the impact of nuclear weapons after the atom bombs dropped by the US on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945. These bomb attacks for the first time demonstrated the kind of devastation such weapons could inflict. Soon After these atomic attacks on Japan, on 15 August 1945, Mao made the following statement:

Can atom bombs decide war? No, they can’t. Atom bombs could not make Japan surrender. Without the struggle waged by the people, atom bombs by themselves would be of no avail. If atom bombs could decide
war, then why was it necessary to ask the Soviet Union to send its troops... (Ghosh 1975:21).

Subsequently, in an interview with the American journalist Anna Louis Strong, Mao reflected China's assessment of nuclear weapons. He said:

The atom bomb is a paper tiger with which the American reactionaries try to terrify the people. It looks terrible, but, in fact, is not. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass annihilation, (but) the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new weapons (Mao 1967:100).

After the establishment of the Peoples' Republic of China in 1949, its leaders did not formulate any nuclear policy as such and as the official documents suggest, they mostly toed the Soviet line on the issue of non-proliferation. China in its foreign policy adopted a diplomatic strategy of "leaning to one side", the Soviet Union. The nuclear policy of China was no exception (Zhu 1997:40-46). In 1957, after the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik into the space and tested its first long range missile, Mao made his famous pronouncement on the international environment: "The east wind now prevails over the west wind". This optimistic mood was expressed in a speech made in Moscow. Mao said, in a nuclear war:

even if one-half of the population in the world died, another half would survive. Moreover, imperialism would be destroyed and the entire world would be socialized. After some years, there would be 2.7 billion people again (Mao 1994:170-72).

Thus, the Chinese leaders consistently denigrated the military relevance of nuclear weapons, and based on their experiences in China's Civil War and Korean War stressed the importance of "men over machines" in warfare (Medeiros 2006:44-46). For example, as late as 1959, at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi said: "We hold that the new initiatives suggested by the Soviet government on arms control are fully in accord with the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and people of all other states in the world" (Zhu 1997:41). On the same day, this standing Committee
passed a resolution to support the "Soviet initiatives of complete and thorough disarmament."

Significantly, however, while Mao through these statements downplayed the importance of nuclear weapons, he nevertheless acknowledged the destructive nature of such weapons. Moreover, Mao's rhetoric could be construed more as an attempt towards self-assurance than anything else and it could not betray the feelings of concern and anxiety of the Chinese leaders over the impact of nuclear wars on the future conflicts with the western countries especially the US. Though the Soviet Union was already a nuclear power by 1949, China was not very sure as to what extent it can depend upon the Soviet power to counterbalance the US. There was a gradual recognition by Mao and other senior military leaders in the 1950s that not only did nuclear weapons play a decisive role in global politics as status symbols, but China also needed to have them to avoid being at the mercy of those who possessed them (Medeiros 2006:44-46). They were quick enough to grasp the far-reaching implications of the new weapons and they had come to realize that atomic bombs represented a major change in the warfare. International events in mid-1950s shaped this transformation in Chinese perceptions of the military and geopolitical value of nuclear weapons. As during the Korean War (1950-1953), and the Taiwan straits crisis (1954-1955), China received direct nuclear threats from the US, it decided to concentrate on developing nuclear capabilities on its own, so that the US could not threaten it with nuclear weapons without fear of reprisal. "Beijing's search was for a survivable, punitive second-strike capability" (Godwin 1999:261). Moreover, the intent to develop nuclear capability was related to China's ambitions to become a major power. In the winter of 1955, Mao finally decided to devote extensive national resources towards the development of nuclear weapons.

The inherent logic for the decision to develop nuclear weapons was clearly spelt out by the Chinese leadership: "Since many countries are developing them, surely China has to do the same. We would hope nuclear weapons could be banned, but until then we will still have to develop them" (Zhou 1990:319). Taking an idealistic stand, China also tried to portray its nuclear weapons programme as
support for the “oppressed people” of the third world. On 17 May 1960, Mao told a
delegation of the Algerian provisional government:

There are many people in our country, but only a very limited amount of
steel. France exploded two atom bombs and we do not even have one. It
is understandable for de Gaulle to look down upon us. The French can
only see money, steel, and atom bombs. Thank you for respecting our
position. We do not have atom bombs and can only send you lesser guns.
Ten years from now, when we have more steel and atom bombs, your
situation will also be changed accordingly (Mao 1994:420).

Since the development of nuclear weapons was seen as the legal right of sovereign
states, Chinese leaders treated cooperation among socialist countries in this field as a
kind of manifestation of proletarian internationalism. China received extensive
assistance from the Soviet Union during this period to develop its strategic forces. A
series of Sino-Soviet pacts signed in 1954 provided scientific and technical
cooperation, and the establishment of a Sino-Soviet Scientific and Technical
Commission. They also provided for the transfer of nuclear technology to China, in
January 1955, of the Russian share in the Sino-Soviet Non-Ferrous Rare Metals
Commission in Sinkiang, which had been set up under joint Sino-Soviet control in
1950. In 1957, China signed the “Agreement on Producing New Weapons and
Military Technological Equipment and Establishing Synthetic Atomic
Industry” in which the Soviet Union promised to assist China in its efforts to develop nuclear
weapons. This agreement marked the culmination of Sino-Soviet nuclear
cooporation. Also, at that time, some Soviet technical experts on atomic bombs and
missiles went to work in China. This cooperation on nuclear weapons was highly
praised by Chinese leaders. At the April 1959 session of the National People’s
Congress, Premier Zhou Enlai said that “the help of the Soviet Union” had played “a
tremendous part” in the development of China (Borisov and Koloskov 1975:140).

However, the Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated soon after for various
reasons and remained frozen for a long period. The Soviet Union withdrew all its
technicians and engineers from the PRC and renounced its earlier agreement to help
China develop its own nuclear weapons. China condemned this as a naked betrayal
of the friendship and determinedly moved forward to developing nuclear weapons
on its own. Ironically, while China made great efforts to create its own nuclear weapons capability as deterrence against the nuclear powers, it kept up its rhetoric against nuclear proliferation and strongly advocated for striving towards complete nuclear disarmament at the global level. As early as 1958, China called for a conference of the heads of the big powers to stop nuclear weapons tests on the high seas and to ban the manufacture, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons (Liu 1972:26). In July 1963, China came out with a comprehensive nuclear disarmament proposal, in which it suggested that:

All countries in the world, both nuclear and non- nuclear solemnly declare that they will prohibit and destroy nuclear weapons completely, thoroughly, totally and resolutely. Concretely speaking they will not use nuclear weapons, nor export, nor import, nor manufacture, nor test, nor stockpile them; and they will destroy all the existing nuclear weapons and means of delivery in the world, and disband all the existing establishments for the research, testing and manufacture of nuclear weapons in the world (Peking Review 1963:8).

However, China made it very clear that as long as the imperialist countries reign supreme in the world, no general disarmament would be acceptable. Instead it called for complete destruction of nuclear weapons:

We are in favour of general disarmament and hold that the imperialists can be forced to accept certain agreements on disarmament through the unremitting struggle of the people of all countries. We are of the opinion that complete and thorough prohibition of nuclear weapons can be achieved while imperialism still exists, just as poison gas was prohibited. The reason is that the use of such a weapon of mass destruction is completely contrary to the will of the people and would, moreover, subject the users to destruction. However, universal and complete disarmament can be realized only after imperialism, capitalism and all systems of exploitation have been eliminated (Peking Review 1963:6).

Thus, while on the one hand China tried very hard to achieve parity with the existing nuclear powers in terms of weapons capability, it made efforts to emerge as the champion for the cause of complete nuclear disarmament on the other ostensibly to end the “nuclear monopoly” of the superpowers. It was part of well thought out
Chinese strategy so that the international power relations could be altered for its own benefit.

1964-1978: Emergence of China as a Nuclear Power

The year 1964 was a turning point in the evolution of China’s nuclear doctrine. On 16 October, China successfully carried out the test of first atom bomb and thus graduated to become a nuclear weapon state. China’s first nuclear test brought a cataclysmic transformation in the Chinese thinking and perception about the nuclear weapons and national security. Immediately after the test, the Chinese government came out with a long statement, which apart from spelling out China’s nuclear policy for the first time, tried to explain and rationalize the necessity for China acquiring its own nuclear force. There are three main assertions in this statement: (a) China’s development of nuclear weapons is entirely for self-defence and China’s aim is to break the nuclear monopoly of the nuclear powers and to combat the American nuclear blackmail; (b) at no time and no circumstances, China will be the first to use nuclear weapons; and (c) the Chinese government stands for complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons through broad based international consultations (Peking Review 1964:9). This pronouncement also for the first time advocated concrete arms control measures as suggested that all the countries “should reach an agreement to the effect that that the nuclear powers and those countries which will soon become nuclear powers undertake not to use nuclear weapons...against non-nuclear countries and nuclear free zones (or) against each other”(Peking Review 1964:12). This statement was followed up with a letter from Premier Zhou Enlai to all heads of government calling for a summit conference to:

reach agreement...that the nuclear Powers and those countries which may soon become nuclear powers undertake not to use nuclear weapons, neither to use them against non-nuclear countries and nuclear- free zones, nor against each other...It is the common aspiration all peace-loving countries and people of the world to prevent a nuclear war and eliminate nuclear weapons (Zhou 1964:13).
Through these statements and pronouncements, China tried to minimize the possible negative impact on China's external relations, both with the superpowers and the non-nuclear states. In fact, China's arms control position harmonized well with its incipient nuclear capability (Clemens Jr. 1967:113). As China still lacked an effective nuclear capability, it was quite prudent for it to maintain a defensive posture and call for a worldwide consensus for achieving complete nuclear disarmament.

All along during this period, China had maintained that it would never endorse any disarmament pact or agreement proposed by the superpowers. As a new NWS, China opposed the “Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Underwater”, signed by the United States, the USSR and Britain in 1963. So when the NPT was signed in 1968, China condemned it as it established a nuclear monopoly of the five declared nuclear weapons states and relegated other countries to permanent non-nuclear weapons status and refused to adhere to it. Seeking to lead the Third World countries on this issue and chart an independent foreign policy course, China repudiated such discrimination and advocated the overthrow of the NPT regime (Davis 1995: 1682). China declared it would not export nuclear weapons to non-nuclear weapons states, but it would neither condemn nor interfere with other nations trying to acquire nuclear arsenals. Deng Xiaoping himself proclaimed China's strong opposition to NPT saying that “the nuclear powers have no right to prevent non-nuclear countries from possessing nuclear weapons”, unless the nuclear weapons nations disarmed (Deng 1991:1). It was on these grounds that China protested the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) of 1963, the January 1967 the peaceful use of outer space and the February 1971 treaty to curtail the proliferation of nuclear weapons from sea-bed. It was again on this plea that China refused to participate in a conference of five nuclear powers to “discuss nuclear disarmament of all states in possession of nuclear weapons”, proposed by the CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev on 30 March 1971 (Ghosh 1975:71). Vice-Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua, in his speech in the UN General Assembly on 15 November 1971 said that “China’s nuclear weapons are still in the experimental stage and China would never take part in the so called nuclear
disarmament talks behind the backs of the non-nuclear powers” (Chiao 1971:9). In a subsequent debate on the Soviet disarmament proposal in the UN General Assembly on 24 November 1971, Chiao Kuan-hua reiterated, “Chinese nuclear experiments are only carried out within the territory of our own country and confined within necessary limits” (Chiao 1971:14-16).

Thus while China accepted the norm of nonproliferation, it remained vigilant and adopted an attitude critical of nonproliferation talks and agreements initiated by the two major superpowers; China was unwilling to participate in the international nonproliferation regime centered on the NPT. This refusal was the main factor that differentiated China’s nonproliferation policy at this stage. Ten years after the NPT was signed, the Chinese government, in a document submitted to the United Nations, made the following statement:

The so-called NPT is a conspiracy concocted by the USSR and the U.S. to maintain their nuclear monopoly. By it, they not only try to restrict other countries in their efforts to develop nuclear force for self-defense, but limit their peaceful uses of nuclear energy. While the two superpowers are further intensifying the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, they seek to limit the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. They praise the NPT as a major measure in overcoming the threat of nuclear war. This does not convince others. There is no reason to impose the NPT on other countries arbitrarily (Zhu 1997:43).

In fact, Chinese leaders were very sensitive to any suggestion made by the two superpowers on nonproliferation and other arms control issues. In November 1977, the Soviet Union made some suggestions on a comprehensive nuclear test ban and consolidation of the nonproliferation regime. Chen Chu, the Chinese delegate, said in the United Nations:

Everyone knows that the Soviet Union has conducted several hundred nuclear tests. After enough nuclear tests in the atmosphere had been made, then it suggested a limited nuclear test ban. Now, after enough underground nuclear tests have been conducted, it suggests a ‘temporary’ ban of any nuclear test. Actually, it went ahead boldly with nuclear tests when they were needed, and would not let others conduct such tests after it has done enough (Zhu 1997:44).
Thus in the case of lack of consensus on how to achieve complete nuclear disarmament and any binding international convention to that effect, China firmly stood for the sovereign right of peace-loving countries to develop their own nuclear weapons in order to break the nuclear monopoly and end the nuclear threats and nuclear blackmail carried out by the major nuclear powers. According to Chinese leaders, it was the nuclear monopoly and corresponding behavior of the nuclear powers that had seriously endangered peace, security, and stability in the world. China tried to emerge as the champion of the developing countries on the issue of non-proliferation and led the campaign on their behalf to end the nuclear monopoly of the Western powers. This explains why China chose to remain outside the various arms control regimes including the NPT, which the Chinese leaders viewed as 'discriminatory and imperialistic'. China’s stand on nonproliferation and arms control during this period also reflected Mao’s insistence on China maintaining its ideological orientation while dealing with the outside world.


In the post-Mao period, Deng emphasized on “reform, openness and modernization policies” which undermined to a great extent, various elements of the Maoist legacy and paved the way for new thinking on a number of issues including its security parameters. Under Deng’s leadership, China’s military strategists began to explore the strategic rationale and concepts underlying China’s possession and use of nuclear weapons (Mulvenon 2004:248-49). This phase marked the beginning of systematic thinking, theorizing, institutionalizing, and, eventually, operationalizing a nuclear doctrine for China’s strategic forces (Medeiros 2006:48).

Several important changes in China’s approach to nuclear weapons began in the late 1970s. First, the new leaders of China were much more open and blatant about the national security rationale for possessing nuclear weapons. In 1983, Deng Xiaoping declared: “You have some [nuclear missiles] and we also have some. If you want to destroy us, then you yourself will receive some retaliation” (Deng 1983:55). Deng also confirmed China’s adherence to limited nuclear deterrence as he
stated, "We will continue to develop nuclear weapons in one way or another, but, in any case, on a limited scale" (Medeiros 2006:50).

Second, during this period, changes in China’s attitude towards international nonproliferation arrangements also began to emerge. On March 4, 1985, in a meeting with a Japanese delegation, Deng said:

> For many years, we have always emphasized the danger of war. Now there have been some changes in our views. We feel that forces, which can restrict the danger of war, have made encouraging progress in spite of its continuous existence (Deng 1983:56).

With this recognition, China not only opened up its doors to foreign traders and foreign investors gradually but also became more willing to cooperate with the outside world on political and security issues including nonproliferation. Also, since 1985, a widespread and thoughtful exchange of views was promoted between Chinese officials and scholars and their Western counterparts. This exchange played a very positive role in bringing about a kind of consensus between China and Western countries on the negative effects of nuclear proliferation on global and regional stability and on the approaches for preventing nuclear proliferation. At this stage, China promulgated a policy, in unequivocal language, of not helping other countries in their efforts to develop nuclear weapons. In January 1984, when the Chinese premier visited New York City, he told leaders of The New York Times: "We neither support nor encourage nuclear proliferation and we do not help other states to develop nuclear weapons."(Survey of International Affairs 1985:296). In 1987, Wu Xueqian, China’s Foreign Minister, said to the 42nd Session of the U.N. General Assembly: "We do not stand for, encourage, or engage in nuclear proliferation"(Survey of International Affairs 1988:283) This statement expressed the so-called policy of "three nots." Especially since the late 1980s, the Chinese government has reiterated this "three nots" policy again and again in response to criticisms of China's position on nuclear exports.

More significantly, after a long period of caution and hesitation, China gradually started developing its overall cooperation with the international non-
proliferation regime. In 1984, China joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Since then, China has undertaken to fulfill the obligations stipulated by the IAEA Statute, including the obligation to apply IAEA safeguards as a condition for its nuclear exports. In 1985, China declared that it would submit part of its civilian nuclear facilities to IAEA safeguards. In 1988, China and the IAEA signed an agreement on voluntary safeguards under which China provided the IAEA with a list of facilities subject to such safeguards. Beijing continued to oppose the discriminatory aspect of the NPT but coupled with occasional praise for the objective of nonproliferation. However, reflecting a significant departure in its position on NPT, in August 1990, a delegation from China attended the Fourth NPT Review Conference, as observers, held in Geneva. In its “Document on Basic Positions” submitted to the conference, the delegation admitted that “the NPT has played a certain positive role in the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the maintenance of world peace and stability” (Zhu 1997:45). Then, one year later, on August 10, 1991, Premier Li Peng announced, “the Chinese government has, in principle, decided to accede to the NPT in order to promote the goal of achieving the comprehensive prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons” (Zhu 1997:45). China finally signed the NPT in 1992.

During the four decades of the Cold War, China seriously engaged itself in developing a meaningful nuclear capability to remain at par with other major powers. The Chinese aim was to project herself equal with other nuclear regimes such as the United States and Soviet Union to prevent the possibility of intrusive diplomacy through nuclear coercion (Nair 1992:217). The primary purpose of China’s nuclear strategy was to secure an autonomous position while interacting amongst the global community. China was also fearful of the foreign policy goal of the United States of containing communism. President Reagan’s Directive 59 went so far as to identify 100 targets in China for possible nuclear strikes (Nair 1992:217).

Thus, a number of factors influenced China in shaping its proactive nuclear policy during the Cold War period.
1. Extant territorial disputes with powerful neighbours on the country’s periphery.

2. Secessionist movements in Tibet and Xinjiang, which were helped by external forces.

3. Attempts by super powers to contain China through military alliances.

4. A highly intrusive and hostile international system dominated by two major powers and their allies.

1991 to the Present: The Post-Cold War Shift - From “Detachment” To “Active Participation”

After the Cold War came to an end with the collapse of Soviet Union, in the light of changed international scenario, Chinese government made a timely adjustment in its policy toward international arms control and disarmament from one of “detachment” to that of active participation”(Yuan 1996:211). China now looked forward positively towards the issue of disarmament. “One indication of this change was China’s position on arms control and disarmament from an earlier one of dismissal to one of guarded approval, as long as such arms control and disarmament measures imposed only obligations on the superpowers (Ling 1997:13). But the question arises what were the international conditions and realities that turned China into one of the most vociferous campaigners for the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and global disarmament.

1. To facilitate its nuclear and missile trade, China had to be part of the NPT, the MTCR, and other mechanisms like the Nuclear Suppliers’ Group, which provide a political and legal cover for nuclear sales by and among the nuclear powers and their allies (Kapur 1998:405).

2. As the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation became clearer to policy makers and military planners in Beijing, China began to realize the benefits of security interdependence (Kapur 1998:405).
3. Without being a part of universal non-proliferation arrangements, China could not possibly have exerted its influence as a major power in the emerging multipolar world order.

4. China’s interest lay in strengthening UN-sanctioned more universal nonproliferation arrangements based on the principle of “comprehensiveness and equality” against the U.S. dominated discriminating non-proliferation regimes.

5. After the Tiananmen incident in June 1989, several countries imposed economic sanctions on China, including a ban on nuclear exports, which seriously impeded economic development in China. To get back its credibility in international arena, China started actively participating in arms control negotiations.

All these factors pushed China to ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1992. It supported the decision to extend the NPT indefinitely at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. As a party to the treaty, China pursues the policy of not endorsing, encouraging or engaging in nuclear weapons proliferation, not assisting other countries in developing nuclear weapons and placing nuclear exports under the three principles of exclusive use for peaceful purposes, acceptance of IAEA safeguards and nontransfer to any third state without China’s prior consent. China also committed itself to the obligations set out by the IAEA for exports of nuclear reactors and other major facilities covered under the NPT/IAEA system. In a detailed policy statement, China asserted that:

Beijing is keenly aware of its responsibility toward international arms control and disarmament. ... It shares the major concern of the world community over the danger of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and wants to work with other nuclear-weapons states toward non-proliferation (Shao 1995:135).

Since its accession to the NPT in 1992, China has strictly abided by the treaty’s provision and has been untiring in its efforts to realize three major objectives of the NPT- prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons, promotion of nuclear

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China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and maintained the policy of not endorsing, encouraging or engaging in the proliferation of nuclear weapons on assisting other countries in developing such weapons. At the same time, China maintains while preventing nuclear weapons proliferation, one should not be oblivious of the legitimate rights, interests and demands of states, particularly the vast number of the developing countries (Yuan 1998:43).

China believes that the safeguards system of the IAEA is an important means to ensure the effectiveness of the NPT. It had committed itself to the obligations set out by the IAEA statute including that of safeguards even before acceding to the NPT. After its accession in 1992, China has earnestly fulfilled all its obligations under the Treaty safeguards and cooperated fully with LAEA in this regard. China adheres to three principles on nuclear exports. First, the exports should be exclusively for peaceful purpose. Second, the exports should be subject to the IAEA safeguards and third, such exports should not be retransferred to a third country without the consent of China. In addition, only companies specially designated by the government of China are permitted to engage in such exports and the export applications are subject to approval by the competent government departments on a case-by-case basis. Any nuclear material or equipment exported by China is subject to the IAEA safeguards. China has never exported such sensitive technologies or equipment as those for uranium enrichment, reprocessing and heavy water production (Government of the PRC 1995).

To support the IAEA safeguards, China made an official announcement in November 1991 that it would notify IAEA of its exports to and imports from non-nuclear weapon states of more than one effective kilogram of nuclear material on a continuous basis. It further undertook in July 1993 to notify IAEA of “all its imports and exports of nuclear materials and its exports of nuclear equipment and related non-nuclear materials on a voluntary basis” (Government of the PRC 1995). With
regard to transfer of military equipment and related technology, China respects the right of every country to self-defence aimed at safeguarding: its own security in accordance with the relevant principles contained in the charter of the United Nations, but at the same time it is very concerned about the adverse effects on world security and regional stability arising from excessive accumulation weaponry (Government of the PRC 1995).

After its accession to the NPT in 1992, China in succeeding years joined a number of other major international treaties. In 1992 itself, China signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which its National People’s Congress approved in December 1996. In 1994, China declared to abide by the guidelines and parameters of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and would not export MTCR controlled ground-to-ground missiles. Beijing played a constructive role with North Korea in promoting the October 1994, Agreed Framework, under which North Korea agreed to eliminate its nuclear weapon programmes. Also in 1994, China joined with the U.S in calling for the negotiation of a multilateral agreement banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (Government of the PRC 1995). In 1995, China supported the successful efforts to make the NPT permanent. In 1996, China announced a moratorium on its nuclear tests and signed the CTBT. The CTBT is the first multilateral arms control treaty in which China took a full part in the negotiations on its own initiative. For the conclusion of a fair reasonable, verifiable and everlasting valid treaty, the Chinese representative not only repeatedly enunciated the country’s position on a number of major issues like the scope of the test ban on site verification, conditions for the treaty’s validity but also put forward a number of constructive proposals (Ling 1997:13).

On 26 March 1999, speaking at the conference on Disarmament in Geneva, President Jiang Zemin reiterated Chinese commitment to the objective of the NPT. He said:

The NPT is both the basis of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the prerequisite for progress in the nuclear disarmament process. The NPT must be observed in full and in good faith. Otherwise’ international efforts for
nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be seriously harmed. The prevention of nuclear-weapons proliferation and the complete and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons are mutually complementary. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the objective that we are all striving for, while the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation is an effective means and a necessary stage to that end. It was in line with this understanding that China supported the indefinite extension or the NPT (News from China, 5 May 1999).

**China's Adaptation to Arms Control Regimes in the Post-Cold War Period**

Although China has consistently maintained that there should be thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons, both before and after it became a NWS, it has undergone a process of transformation and adaptation to take part in international arms control regimes. That is, China has moved from partly resisting, to partly joining, to finally completely adapting to the international regimes. The process of transformation has corresponded to changes in the international environment toward China; it also reflects the extent of change in China's attitude to the international regimes. Before analyzing China's adaptation to arms control regimes in the post-Cold War period, we must examine separately the policy changes made by China to fulfill its obligations to arms control regimes and in practice how far has China actually complied with the commitments towards disarmament.

**China's Basic Position on Arms Control and Non-proliferation**

At the 51st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1996, China put forward five positions on nuclear disarmament:

1. The nuclear powers should abandon their policies of nuclear deterrence and the NWS with the largest arsenal should continue to reduce their nuclear weapons;

2. All NWS should accept the no first use principle completely and also pledge unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the
NNWS or in the nuclear-free zones and should file an international law to this effect as quickly as possible;

3. All NWS deploying nuclear weapons abroad should withdraw and all NWS should promise to support the building of nuclear-free zones, respect the status of such zones and assume all duties concerned;

4. No country should deploy space arms system and missile defence systems that would endanger strategic security and stability;

5. All countries should sign an international convention to negotiate to completely prohibit and thoroughly destroy all nuclear weapons (News from China 2002).

These positions were reiteration of China's stand on the issues of arms control and non-proliferation that it had consistently maintained since the 1960s. While consistently upholding its positions, China also began a process to adapt itself to the nuclear arms control and disarmament regimes. In 1970, China had signed 10 to 20 percent of all arms control agreements and by 1996, this figure had jumped to 85 to 90 percent (Economy and Oskenberg 1999:101). According to Sha Zukang, by 1999 China had joined almost all the multilateral legal instruments in the field of arms control and non-proliferation.2

At various points of time, China has issued white papers responding to the calls by the Western powers, especially the US and other Asian countries for concrete transparency measures. These white papers, though reflects China's commitment towards faithfully carrying out its international obligations on nonproliferation and disarmament, but to do so within conservatively circumscribed limits. In November 1995, China issued a thirty-four-page document entitled China: Arms Control and Disarmament (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 1995). This white paper focused on nonproliferation, arms control and disarmament matters and was designed to promote and publicize Chinese views and contributions in these areas (Gills and Medeiros 2000:72). It had

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an important symbolic meaning in indicating a limited Chinese appreciation of transparency as a worthwhile arms control and confidence building measure. However, some sections include limited information on numbers of troops, force structure, military equipment and facilities, military spending and defense conversion in line with traditionally defined defense white papers. And most of the information in the document was already publicly stated in various forms; thus as a form of military transparency, the document had limited utility.

In contrast to the arms control white paper (1995), the white paper on national defense that China issued in July 1998 covered a wide range of issues, including the international security situation, national defence policy, national defence construction, international security cooperation and arms control and disarmament. It described China’s new concept of regional security, explains the intent behind some elements of Chinese military modernization, broadly outlined China’s defence organization, provided some information on China’s defence budget and arms trade, and spelled out official positions on arms control and non-proliferation. Most of the information in this document could be found in Beijing’s previous official statements and documents on these issues. In that sense, this white paper was rather a compilation of Beijing’s official positions on various defense related issues in one place (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 1998).

The next white paper China’s National Defense, 2000 explained that China’s nuclear forces would be kept at a small size and the forces are developed solely for deterrence purposes (Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China 2000). China’s white paper on National Defense, 2002 reaffirmed China’s commitment to its no first use policy and further notes:

China has always exercised utmost restraint on the development of nuclear weapons, and its nuclear arsenal is kept at the lowest level necessary for self-defense only. China holds that countries having the largest nuclear arsenals bear a special and primary responsibility towards nuclear disarmament, and that they should take the lead in drastically reducing their nuclear arsenals and destroy the reduced nuclear weapons. China welcomes the new treaty signed by the US and Russia on the reduction of their
offensive strategic weapons, and hopes that these two countries will adopt effective measures to ensure the “verifiability” and “irreversibility” of nuclear disarmament, and continue to further the process of nuclear disarmament, so as to genuinely promote world peace and stability (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2002:6).

In December 2003, China published a special white paper describing in detail its policy on nonproliferation. This document reiterated the Chinese emphasis on complete prohibition and throughout destruction of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and its opposition to proliferation of such weapons and their means of delivery. The significance of this white paper lied in the fact that for the first time, it enunciated the concrete mechanisms that China had put in place and various laws and regulations it had enforced to control the export of nuclear material, equipment and technologies to other countries. The report also talked about severely dealing with all cases of violation of export related laws and regulations. The report noted:

The international non-proliferation effort is inseparable from the policies and measures of the countries involved, and the building of the domestic mechanisms in various countries is inseparable from the establishment of international non-proliferation standards. China will continue to take an active part in international non-proliferation endeavours, and exert great efforts to maintain and strengthen the existing non-proliferation international law system within the UN framework. It will constantly increase consultations and exchanges with the multinational non-proliferation mechanisms, including the “Nuclear Suppliers’ Group”, the MTCR, the “Australia Group” and the Wassenaar Arrangement”, and continue to take an active part in international discussions related to non-proliferation (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2003).

In October 2004, China submitted a report on Chinese government's implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on nonproliferation to the Security Council Nonproliferation Commission. Finally, the Defense White Paper released in December 2004, among other things talked about “settlement of issues such as
terrorism and WMD, radioactive weapons and observance of international treaties on disarmament, arms control and nonproliferation within multilateral arms control framework” (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2003).

All these white papers and documents were issued essentially to convince the international community about China’s genuine and sincere efforts to implement all the global norms and conventions on nonproliferation and disarmament which it has adhered to, and dispel the notions about China being the ‘least transparent’ and non-responsive country. Thus, China used these white papers and documents as essential tools to buildup its image as a responsible and concerned global player.

**Nuclear-free Zones**

When China made the initial moves to join the global regimes on arms control and non-proliferation, it supported the efforts of the NNWS to establish nuclear-free zones in line with their regional situations. Proceeding from this position, China signed and ratified relevant protocols to the treaties of Tlateloco (1973), Antarctica (1983), Outer Space (1983), Rarotonga (1987), Sea-Bed (1991), Pelindaba (1996) etc. It has also undertaken to sign the amended protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Sha 2000:8). In April 1995, China issued a statement pledging to help any NNWS in case of a nuclear attack and committing to bring the aggressor state to the task under the auspices of the UN Security Council. This is called positive security assurance (PSA) and China’s PSA policy is contained in the UN Security Council Resolution No. 984. China maintains that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zone should be in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nation Charter as well as the internationally accepted norms of international law. Addressing the 1999 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Chinese Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs Li Changhe said:

China has all along respected and supported the efforts by non-nuclear-weapon states to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among themselves. China had
undertaken unconditionally not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and China supported the efforts by the Southeast Asian countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. (SWB 1999:3508/3509).

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

In December 1998, China concluded with the IAEA the voluntary-offer safeguards agreement. Based on this offer, some civilian nuclear installations are placed under the IAEA safeguards. Under the provisions 1(b) and 34 (a) in the agreement, China will continue to incorporate some of its nuclear installations onto the list of the installations subject to the safeguards. China supports the programme to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing safeguards system (the 93+2 programme). As per the obligations in the Article 1 of the NPT, the principles of the third paragraph in the preface to the Model Protocol Addition to the Agreement (s) between state(s) and the IAEA for the application of safeguards. China concluded with the IAEA the protocol addition to the voluntary -offer safeguards agreement with legal binding force. China, abiding by the protocol in its capacity as NWS, has adopted a series of similar measures like submitting information to the IAEA on improvements in the effectiveness and the efficiency of the application of the safeguards in the NNWS; making supplementary statements and clarifications to the submitted information within the scope of the objectives of the safeguards; and exerting every reasonable effort to identify the information as provided by the NNWS to the IAEA for solution of any discrepancy.3

Apart from maintaining nuclear safeguards as per the provisions of the IAEA China has implemented a number of measures to monitor and control nuclear exports. The Chinese government issued the “Notification on Issues Related to the Strict Implementation of China’s Nuclear Export Policies” in May 1997 and the “Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Control of Nuclear Exports” in September 1997. On 10 June 1998, the Chinese government issued the “Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on the Control Nuclear Dual-Use Items and the Export of Related Technologies”. Again, on 22 August 2002, “Export Control List

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3 http://www.caesa.gov.cn/english/nuclear1.htm
of Missiles and Missile-related Items and Technologies” was issued by the government (Li 2003:64-65). In addition, the Foreign Trade Law, the Customs Law, the Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on the Administration of the Import and Export of Commodities and of Technologies also provide a legal basis for China’s nonproliferation export control. The issuance of all these regulations indicated that China has seriously taken up the task of maintaining strict control over the export and transfer of nuclear weapons and related technologies. Moreover, to ensure these laws and regulations are properly implemented and enforced, the Chinese government has taken a series of matching measures such as establishing export control institutions, strengthening publicity and education on the legal system, creating awareness to abide by the laws and establishing export review system to intensify the investigation and punishment for the violators of law (Genxin and Jinzhong 2007:11-15).

The Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)

China actively participated in the negotiation and conclusion of the “Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty” (FMCT) as it believes that this is a very important step towards nuclear disarmament. On 4 October 1994, China’s Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher issued a joint statement promoting the “earliest possible achievement” of FMCT. At the US-China summit meeting in October 1997, both countries stated in a joint statement that they “agree to pursue at the UN Conference on Disarmament the early start of the formal negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material Use in Nuclear Weapons and Other Nuclear Explosive Devices” (Li 2003:65).

Commitment to No First Use

After acquiring the status of a NWS, China has consistently reiterated its commitment to the principle of ‘no first use’ (NFU) of nuclear weapons. One of China’s main nuclear arms control initiatives has been the proposal for an NFU agreement with the four other NWS. China invited the other NWS to deliberate upon
the issue in 1993 and 1994, but only Russia agreed to take part. China presented a
draft treaty on the no first use of nuclear weapons to the four other nuclear weapon
states in January 1994. These initiatives resulted in a Sino-Russian NFU a
detargeting agreement in September 1994 in which both countries signed a joint
statement on no first use and detargeting of nuclear weapons. Thereafter, China
signed a detargeting agreement with the United States in 1998.

**Multilateral Export Control Regimes**

China joined the Zangger Committee in 1997, and signed the “93+2”
protocol aimed at strengthening the IAEA safeguards system in 1998 (Sha 2000:8).
It entered into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2004. It has also strengthened
contacts and exchanges with the Australia Group having conducted two rounds of
consultations in 2004 and 2005 respectively, though it has not joined it yet. China
has pledged to abide by the original 1987 MTCR guidelines, but it has not joined the
regime. China’s general position on multilateral export control regimes is that the
current ‘small club’ regimes of export controls are unfair, irrational and ineffective.
The only way to resolve this problem is to universalize relevant international
regimes under the prerequisites of equality, rationality and non-obstructed normal
scientific and technological exchanges among all countries.4 China insists the rules
and regulations of different arms control regimes should be uniformly applied and
enforced for all the countries so that a framework of cooperative security could be
established.

**China’s Compliance with the Arms Control Regimes**

In the post-Cold War period, China has consciously moved towards
embracing most of the widely accepted international norms and practices regarding
arms control and nonproliferation policy. This remarkable transformation can be
linked to its overall policy of ‘opening up’ to the outside world essentially for the
purpose of economic modernization. Since 1992, China, apart from signing major

arms control treaties (like the NPT, the CTBT, the CWC), has continued to improve on and classify many of its previous nonproliferation commitments (Gills and Medeiros 2000:66). It has also adopted new domestic regulations governing exports of nuclear, chemical and dual use materials, equipment and technologies. In short, there was a significant and dramatic shift in China’s perspectives and policy: from accusation and suspicion in the 1970s and 1980s to more active participation and guarded endorsement of the international norms and conventions in arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation in the 1990s (Yuan 2002:210). However, China is still regarded as the “least transparent nuclear power” (Roberts, Manning and Montaperto 2000:53-63), as there are continuing controversies over Chinese transfers of nuclear, chemical and missile components and technologies to other countries. Moreover, Beijing puts forward different perspectives on arms control and non-proliferation and tends to interpret its commitments narrowly in name of safeguarding its national interests. Here we attempt to understand China’s changing perspectives on disarmament and nonproliferation during the recent times and explain the discrepancy (if any) that exists between Beijing’s policy declaration and its actual practices.

China, in the post-Cold War period, has undertaken specific steps to dispel concerns over its past proliferation activities and to promote its image as a responsible member of the international community. Since joining the NPT in 1992, China has supported the treaty’s indefinite extension (1995) and actively participated in NPT Review Conferences. Beijing also played a positive role in defusing the North Korean nuclear crisis and facilitating the conclusion of the October 1994 Agreed Framework between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States (Carter and Perry 1999:92-122). After the south Asian nuclear tests of May 1998, China, exercising its authority as the rotating chairman of the United Nations Security Council at the time actively sought and coordinated the P-5 consultation leading to the adoption of the UNSCR 1172 that condemned the tests and demanded that India and Pakistan unconditionally sign the CTBT and NPT, and refrain from weaponisation and nuclear arms race. During President Clinton’s visit to China in June 1998, before the NATO bombing of the
Chinese embassy, Beijing reportedly had been actively considering MTCR membership. Besides, China promised in a statement in November 2000 that it would not assist states in developing 'ballistic missiles that can be used to deliver nuclear weapon's and that it would not issue 'at an early date' a 'comprehensive' list of missile related and dual-use items that would require government licenses for export'(Yuan 2002:211-217).

China has put forward a number of specific proposals in recent years. At the second session of the Preparatory committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Sha Zukang, head of the Chinese delegation made a number of proposals:

- Nuclear-weapon states should conclude a treaty on mutual no first use of nuclear weapons
- Nuclear-weapon states should abandon the policy of nuclear deterrence and conclude a legally binding international instrument on no use or threat to use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones;
- The quantity and quality of the nuclear weapons possessed by the USA and Russia have brought them special responsibilities on nuclear disarmament;
- Countries concerned should stop immediately research on and development of advanced strategic missile defence systems and outer space weapons;
- And, negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should be initiated and a pact be concluded as soon as possible. (SWB 1998: 3213).

At this meeting, Sha insisted that two conditions must be fulfilled before China would participate in any negotiations on nuclear arms control. "The first was to ensure that negotiations and associated treaties and agreements should not undermine the global security balance and global stability. The second was that such
negotiations and agreements should not jeopardize China's own national security” (SWB 2000:3845). Speaking at the 49th United Nations General Assembly, Chinese Foreign Minsiter Qian Qichen proposed that a convention be negotiated along the line of the conventions banning all chemical and biological weapons (under which all nuclear weapons states make a commitment to destroy completely their nuclear weapons under the effective international supervision and verification) (Yuan 2002:215). China and the US issued a joint communiqué on South Asia that called on India and Pakistan to ‘stop all further nuclear tests and adhere immediately and unconditionally to the CTBT… and to enter into firm commitment not to weaponise on display nuclear weapons on the missiles capable of delivering them’ (Yuan 2002:215). The post-test situation thus provided a unique opportunity for China to present itself as a major, responsible player on the world stage protecting the integrity and sanctity of the international non-proliferation regimes.

Moreover, in the post-Cold War period, China has assumed leadership in resisting any move by the big powers towards arms proliferation. When the US proposed to create Nuclear Missile Defence (NMD) system, China was one of the first countries who vehemently opposed it. Along with its adherence to global nonproliferation treaties and conventions, China also entered into a number of bilateral agreement and understanding with the US to address its proliferation concerns. While remaining outside the MTCR, Beijing has made a number of pledges committing to abide by the regime’s original 1987 guidelines on missiles transfers. In November 1991, China gave its verbal pledge to adhere to the MTCR Guidelines and Parameters, which was reaffirmed in a classified February 1992 letter to the Bush Administration. In October 1994, China announced in a joint statement with the United States that it ‘[would] not export ground to ground missiles featuring the primary parameters of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)… inherently capable of reaching a range of at least 800 km with a payload of at least 500 kg’ (Associated Press 2000). Prior to the May 1999 weapons state, negotiate a treaty on NFU prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons against each other and more importantly against non-nuclear weapons state (Beijing Review 1994:29-30). To demonstrate its support of prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons,
China has ratified the protocols of the Treaty of Rarotonga (also called the South Pacific nuclear – free-zone treaty (SPNFZ), and the Treaty of Tlateloco (Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America) (Yuan 2002:3).

There have also been significant developments on the domestic front with regard to export control regulations. Since May 1994, the Chinese government has issued a series of regulations, decrees and circulars, which taken together constitute an emerging export control system that is more rule-based, transparent and aims to match more closely the accepted international standards and practices, and strives for better coordination between various govt. agencies in charge of implementing these regulations (Karniol 1998:5). In addition, there have been significant changes in China’s decision-making apparatus that clearly suggest that arms control and nonproliferation have become prominent aspects of national security policy. As in the mid-to late 1980s, Chinese arms exports became more controversial and therefore raised complex foreign policy questions; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) became a more important and institutionalized participant in arms export decision-making, along with trade and military related organizations (Gill 2001:272-273). In case of highly sensitive exports, the MFA has to justify such transfer in a written form (Lewis 1991:87-109). A 1995 Chinese white paper on disarmament notes that the MFA, as a member of the State Administrative Committee of Military Products Trade plays a “leading role” in the development and implementation of regulations governing arms transfers (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China1995). Chinese export control regulations issued in the late 1990s also described a prominent role for the MFA in deciding military related exports (Wandi 1997:21-23). In April 1997, a new Department of Arms Control and Disarmament was established within the MFA, giving credence to the growing importance of arms control and nonproliferation issues in Chinese foreign policy

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decision-making. There has been increasing coordination among MFA, MOFTEC (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation), and CAEA (China Atomic Energy Agency) officials in implementing export control regulations. In recent years, there has been further government restructuring for proper distribution of arms control and nonproliferation responsibilities among various military and civilian agencies and smooth coordination among all the concerned departments.

Factors Influencing China's Nonproliferation and Disarmament Policies

Several factors have influenced the evolution of Chinese nonproliferation policy. These are security, image and bilateral considerations.

Security

Security concerns are a major factor in Beijing's calculation of its nonproliferation and disarmament policies. As the risks of nuclear warfare have become clear to the military planners in Beijing, China has gradually begun to realize that proliferation of WMD and delivery systems can affect its own security interests negative and hence they must strive for security interdependence. There is also increased understanding that past policies that ignored or undermined international arms control and nonproliferation initiatives must be radically altered to reduce the rapid diffusion of weapons and military technology worldwide, often on China's doorstep (in India, Pakistan and North Korea) (Gill 2001:281). In this regard, the existing international nonproliferation regime such as the NPT provides tangible benefits for China as this effectively prohibits countries like Japan, the two Koreas and Taiwan to acquire nuclear weapons. At the same time, while the CTBT imposes constraints on China's own nuclear weapons modernization programmes, Beijing is willing to pay the price of such mechanisms which would prevent countries such as India from joining the nuclear club (Yuan 2002:215). China's response to North Korea's nuclear programme provides an illustration. While Beijing insisted on alternative measures other than sanction as the more practical means of dealing with the issue, it understandably shared similar concerns with other
powers – South Korea, Japan and the United States – and assisted in averting a nuclear crisis (Yuan 2002:215).

There is a kind of cost-benefit analysis going on in China regarding China’s acceptance of international norms and practices on nonproliferation and arms control. While the strategic experts in China are concerned about the growing strategic dominance of the US and the possibility of China being specifically targeted by the Western-led disarmament arrangement, yet they recognize that many aspects of the present day international arms control and nonproliferation situation actually benefit China: US–Russia arms control and nonproliferation efforts reduce the relative threat to China; the control of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons proliferation among its neighbours reduces the threat to China; and China’s international position has been elevated with many arms control and disarmament questions requiring China’s participation and cooperation (Gill 2001:282). These ‘benefits’ also correlate to Chinese national security interests, but in recognizing them, China takes another step toward the realization that the promotion of multilateral arms control initiatives entails rich dividends for China as well. China’s initiative in leading the P-5 effort to condemn the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests is a case in point.

Image

China’s concern about its own international image is another factor that influences its nonproliferation and disarmament policies. After hitting the path to economic modernization and attaining effective nuclear capability, China did not want to remain on the wrong side of multilateral arrangements including the arms control ones. Moreover, the post-Cold War world order demanded that China play a more active and responsible role within the international community for better coordination and effective resolution of outstanding issues at the global level. So, in the changed scenario of the post-Cold War world, Beijing does not want to be seen as an impediment to international nonproliferation efforts. Events in the late 1980s and early 1990s created an atmosphere in which, China felt obliged to move closer to the international nuclear nonproliferation norms. The revelations of Iraq’s secret
nuclear weapons programme, the disclosure of China’s export of a nuclear reactor to Algeria, and France’s announcement to accede to the NPT helped to push China into announcing its own accession to the NPT (Davis 1995:591). China’s endorsement of the NPT extension and abandonment of delaying tactics in the final days of the CTBT negotiations also provide evidence of its concerns with its image as a responsible power.

**Bilateral Considerations and the US influence**

The United States played a very critical role in influencing Chinese nonproliferation and arms control decision-making. Several instances of such influence can be identified. One example is Sino-US nuclear cooperation during both the negotiation and implementation of the bilateral NCA (nuclear Cooperation Agreement), Beijing applied for membership and later joined the IAEA in early 1984. Subsequently, it declared that it would apply IAEA safeguards to all of its nuclear exports. As Michael Brenner has suggested:

*The negotiations with the United States of a nuclear cooperation agreement proved to be the vehicle through which the PRC came to terms with the wider implication of its growing, and seemingly unrestrained, program of nuclear commence. China had to move up a steep learning curve on proliferation matters* (Brenner 1990:254).

The US influence worked to a great extent in moving China towards the accession to the CTBT, which was a difficult decision for China to take. The United States was also vocal in encouraging China to be more transparent in its military affairs and urged it to release a defence white paper in 1994, which China eventually did in mid-November 1995, and this release of white paper significantly coincided with the arrival in China of US Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye (Gill and Medeiros 2000:72-73). The US most successfully pressurized China to suspend its export of nuclear arms and technologies to countries like Iran and Pakistan. On 22 October 1987, the Reagan Administration decided to freeze the further liberalization of technology sales to China in response to China’s Hy-2 “Silkworm anti-ship cruise missile exports to Iran (Gill 1992:99-100). In 1991 and 1993, the US imposed
sanctions on Chinese entities for transferring to Pakistan equipment and technology for the M-11 missile system. In October 1994, these sanctions were lifted, when China agreed to reaffirm its commitment to abide by the MTCR guidelines and parameters and to ban the export worldwide to MTCR controlled ground-to-ground missile (Einborn 1997:603). Thus halting or preventing the transfer to Iran of such items as Silkworm anti-ship missiles (1988) complete M-series ballistic missiles (1991-92), C-801 and C-802 anti ship cruise missiles (1997), and future nuclear related assistance (1997) came in the face of credible disincentives and inducements. These included the possibility of targeted sanctions against Chinese economic entities, of Chinese access to advanced US civil nuclear technology, of Chinese membership in international decision-making regimes (such as the Zangger Committee), of valued US - China summits, and of US statements on Taiwan, such as the “three-nos” (Gill 1992:28).

China’s Reaction to Nuclear Tests Conducted By India and Pakistan

China’s intention to remain the ‘dominant’ power in the Asian region was reflected in its strong reactions to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. Though China firmly stood for the rights of the sovereign states to acquire nuclear capability for the sake of justifying its own nuclear tests in the Cold War period, after assuming the status of a major player in the nuclear club, it completely abandoned its earlier position and opposed the nuclear tests conducted by other states more so by its neighbouring countries. It is also noteworthy here that China remained, in recent years, the only nuclear-weapons state not to pledge or follow a moratorium on nuclear testing. Thus China once again exhibited its utilitarian approach towards the issue of non-proliferation in its reactions to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

On 11 May 1998, India conducted three underground nuclear tests followed by two further tests on May 13. Interestingly, justifying its nuclear tests, India cited the threat to India’s security environment from China and accused China for the deteriorating security environment in the South Asian region. Reacting to Indian tests, Pakistan conducted five nuclear tests on May 28 followed by a sixth test on
May 30. Prime Minister Vajpayee’s letter to President Clinton provoked a strong condemnation from the Chinese government. A statement from China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs referred to India going against the international trend for nuclear disarmament. “This act of India is nothing but an (expression of) outrageous contempt for the common will of the international community for the comprehensive ban on nuclear test and a hard blow on the international effort to prevent nuclear weapon proliferation” (Mohanty 1999:59). The statement accused India of seeking hegemony in South Asia and triggering a nuclear arms race in the region (Mohanty 1999:59). “Thus, the characterization of India’s nuclear explosions as hegemonic definitely conveyed a strong Chinese denunciation” (Mohanty 1999:59). The statement insisted that “this gratuitous accusation by India against China is solely for the purpose of India finding an excuse for the development of its nuclear weapons” (Mohanty 1999:27). Though it is alleged that China has assisted Pakistan in developing its nuclear capability, nevertheless, China expressed its deep regret over Pakistan’s nuclear tests. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhu Bangzao in a statement said:

We here by call on countries concerned in South Asia to exercise the utmost restraint and to immediately abandon all nuclear weapon development programmes to avoid a further worsening of the situation and for the sake of peace and stability in the South Asian region (News from China 3 June 1998).

In a joint statement issued with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, China called for both India and Pakistan to sign the NPT and CTBT:

The parties express their grave concern over the growing tension in South Asia, following the nuclear tests in that region. The parties are willing to work with the international community for eliminating the distrust in South Asia, stopping the nuclear arms race there and upholding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this regard, the parties call for an unconditional entry into the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by all the countries which have failed to do so. (Beijing Review 1998: 9).
China: A Selective Proliferator?

Despite all its efforts and all the positive developments, serious concerns remain over China’s proliferation policy and activities. There are serious allegations, that China is still engaged in (nuclear) proliferation activities albeit selectively and thus is violating many of the international nonproliferation norms. These refer to both Beijing’s perspectives on non-proliferation and its continuing transfers of dual use nuclear, chemical and missile materials and technologies. China has shown different attitudes toward the existing international nonproliferation regimes. It has acceded to most international treaties and conventions that are broadly based with universal membership (NPT, CWC), and has mostly complied with their norms and rules. On the other hand it has been less than forthcoming and occasionally quite critical with regard to the largely Western-initiated supply-side multilateral export-control regimes. China has declined to join such arrangements as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Australia Group the informal organization for controlling the export of chemical and biological ingredients and technologies to end-users of proliferation concern), the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the MTCR(Wallerstein 1996:58-66). Thus not unlike other countries attempting to maintain an indigenous defence industrial base, China finds it necessary to balance its obligations under the international arms-control and non-proliferation regimes to which it adheres and its perceived need to use exports – including many that are WMD-related to sustain its domestic defence industries (Wallerstein 1996:60).

The serious difficulties with China on non-proliferation have arisen largely over Chinese exports of arms as well as sensitive materials and technologies, primarily to Iran and Pakistan. The United States has expressed growing concern about Chinese proliferation activities in South Asia and the Middle East. These alleged activities have included contrast to sell – M-9 and M-11 ballistic missile systems; missile related technology and infrastructure; CW precursor chemicals; and nuclear technology and assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities (Wallerstein 1996:63). China’s problematic record of exports can be attributed largely to decisions by Chinese leaders to pursue policies deemed to be in China’s national interest. In the case of Pakistan, this has involved decisions to enhance the defence
capabilities of a close and long-standing friend against the perceived threat from India. In the case of Iran, there has probably been more of a mixture of foreign policy and commercial considerations. Conscious governmental decisions in support of such policies explain China’s sale of conventional arms to Iran, its support for Pakistan missile programmes and even its nuclear weapons development programme (Einborn 1997:603).

Despite China’s active participation in multilateral arms control regimes, questions are still raised as to what extent it sincerely abides by its nonproliferation commitments mostly because of its role as a supplier of sensitive nuclear weapons technology to various countries. There have been allegations mainly by the US that China continues to supply nuclear materials to countries such as Argentina, Pakistan, South Africa and Iran without requiring the items to be placed under the IAEA safeguards. In 2001, American Intelligence (CIA) director George Tenet testified that “on the nuclear front, Chinese entities have provided extensive support in the past to Pakistan’s safeguarded and unsafeguarded nuclear programmes. In May 1996, Beijing pledged that it would not provide assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in Pakistan; we cannot yet be certain, however, that contacts have ended.” ⁶ Given China’s history of exports to weapons programmes, any sensitive nuclear exports by China are likely to be interpreted as contradicting its pledges to conform to international standards, even though the items in question are not intended for or were not diverted for non-peaceful ends. Of particular concern has been China's export of nuclear materials and technology to Iran and Pakistan, as these two countries were believed to be developing potent nuclear weapons.

As China’s military ties with Pakistan run very deep, it is believed that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme is mostly built upon the assistance from China in terms of both sensitive materials and technology. In 1996 for the first time specific allegation was made regarding violation of nuclear nonproliferation commitment by China. The US press reported that in 1995 a subsidiary of China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) had sold 5000 ring magnets to an

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unsafeguarded Pakistani nuclear facility at Kahuta. While Pakistan denied any such transfer occurred, China maintained that its nuclear cooperation with Pakistan was solely for peaceful purposes. However, after reports of such transfers came out, the US put intensive pressure on China not to allow any kind of nuclear supply to countries, which are outside the purview of the global arms control regimes. After several days of talks between the US and China in this regard, it was announced (in May 1996) that China had made a pledge to refrain from providing any assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. Before China had promised to ban only those exports that were covered under the provisions of the NPT. The 1996 promise extended that commitment to include virtually all sales to unsafeguarded facilities—nuclear items, nuclear material, dual-use items and even non-nuclear equipment and services. China followed these commitments by joining the Zangger Committee and there is no evidence of it supplying any new technology to Pakistan. Yet, US intelligence officials noted at the end of 2001, “We cannot rule out some continued contacts between Chinese entities and entities associated with Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program subsequent to Beijing’s 1996 pledge and during this reporting period.”

Similarly, it is alleged that China has been consistently supplying nuclear technology to Iran. China provided Iran reactors and other such equipments that are used in sensitive nuclear activities. Both the countries signed a ten-year nuclear cooperation agreement in 1990 and Iran agreed to purchase two (nuclear) reactors from China in 1992. The United States has been at the forefront of the international efforts to prevent the supply of nuclear technology to Iran and has placed pressure on China to cancel nuclear deals with Iran. International pressure ensured that China scale down its nuclear cooperation with Iran and finally in 1996 China announced cancellation of agreements with Iran. However, China continued until 1997 to assist Iran in constructing a plant to produce materials necessary for nuclear enrichment. Even the Chinese technicians were sent to help Iran in activities such as uranium mining and processing. In October 1997, China agreed to end cooperation with Iran on the uranium conversion facility and not to undertake any new cooperation with

7 Ibid
Iran. But the United States still believes that China has not yet stopped all interactions with Iran. Thus despite China's assurances to maintain strict control over its nuclear supplies as per the international norms, apprehensions and concerns persist as to how far China is complying with the international obligations.

There has been consistent pressure on China from the US to stop transferring nuclear weapons related materials, missiles and technologies to countries like Iran and Pakistan in the form of imposition of sanctions and otherwise (verbal warnings and unsure) as these exports to regions of tensions and instability have long term security implications. As has been mentioned earlier, in 1991 and 1993, the US imposed sanctions on China for transferring equipment and technology for the M-11 missile system to Pakistan. As a result of these sanctions, China decided to curb its M-11 and M-9 cooperation with Iran and pledged to adhere to the MTCR guidelines and parameters, in return for the lifting of US sanctions. However, in spite of these pledges and American pressures, China has continued to assist the indigenous development of Iran's ballistic missile programmes through technology transfers, scientific advice and assistance in the construction of a missile production facility (Gill 1997:26-28). Interestingly though, even the US admits that the Chinese cooperation with Iran is carried out under IAEA safeguards and is consistent with Beijing's international obligations. But the main allegation against China is that by using certain loopholes in the current formulation of its participation of the MTCR, it is continuing its missile technology exports to Iran, which could be used to build longer-range missile systems. In short, Chinese companies seem to be aggressively selling missile related equipment and materials the Iranian entities, while not technically violating any of China's nonproliferation commitments (Gill 1997:26-28). After the US decision to establish ballistic missile defence (BMD), there is apprehension in the strategic circles (of the US) that China will reverse its arms control and non-proliferation commitments as a response to BMD. The 2003 Pentagon report has argued that 'there are indications that some [Chinese] strategists are reconsidering the conditions under which Beijing would employ theater nuclear weapons against US forces in the [East Asian] region' (Urayama 2004:135). Although this issue is not widely discussed by Chinese analysts, some argue that
such a shift in the strategic theater balance as a result of BMD deployment is possible.

However, despite China’s strong commitment to the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control measures, the question that arises is has China completely abandoned its nuclear and missile trade'? Again is China not helping some non-nuclear friendly countries like Pakistan and Iran in developing their nuclear capabilities? Some analysts like Ashok Kapur and Gerald Steinberg hold the view that China is a selective nuclear weapons and missile proliferator (Kapur 1998:408). That means China is engaged in selective proliferation activity with some friendly states by exporting them nuclear reactors and other necessary equipment and assisting them in developing their nuclear capabilities. Even after committing itself to seek IAEA approval and safeguards on any exports of nuclear reactors and any other major facilities covered under the NPT/IAEA system, China has allegedly supplied missiles nuclear equipment and technology to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Syria and Iran (Kapur 1998:409).

Especially, Sino-Pakistan military trade includes Chinese transfer or sensitive nuclear test data, verification of Pakistan’s bomb design, M-11 and M-9 missile technology and nuclear reactor (Yuan 2002:49). Ashok Kapur puts his view regarding China’s non-proliferation policies in these words:

China’s behaviour reveals two tracks. The first one shows the skilled use of semi-transparent nuclear and missile proliferation in the development of its alliance politics in regional zones of conflict. The second track reveals the skilled use of non-proliferation in public international; conference diplomacy to enhance China’s credentials as a responsible global Power. By using both tracks, china is able to function simultaneously is a proliferator as well as a non - proliferator and to satisfy other policy aims namely, to make a case for global and regional (sub-regional) multipolarity that includes China as an essential actor while challenging the US-Soviet /Russian dominance of the proliferation and nonproliferation agendas (Kapur 1998:414).
Chinese views on military transparency measures typically run counter to those of the West and emphasize the potential destabilizing effects that transparency can generate under certain conditions. Sha Zukang, while serving as China’s ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, argued that it is “impossible to have absolute military transparency” and that the PRC “opposes the pursuit of military transparency that disregards a nation’s real conditions” (Sha 1996:2). Nevertheless simple transparency measures – such as part visits, officer exchanges and regularized military-to-military meetings have developed quickly in the last few years as the PLA has expanded its military diplomacy. Yet, during downturns in relations, such as in US-China ties following the May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade; these simple transparency measures are the first to be cut off. “Such reactions indicate general wariness towards military transparency, regardless how of begin and innocuous” (Gill and Medeiros 2000:71). Thus, as the Chinese export of sensitive military and dual-use technologies continues, the country’s compliance with certain international, bilateral and unilateral commitments often comes into question. Of special concern is not the quality of Chinese exports but their nature and the degree to which they consequently contribute to the development of weapons of mass destruction and advanced conventional weapons in recipient countries. In addition, it is not clear that China’s stated adherence to regimes necessarily equates to full acceptance of the norms, concepts, rules, and details that govern them. For example, although China officially associates itself with the MTCR and the Zangger Committee, it also argues that “existing discriminatory and exclusive export control mechanisms and arrangements should be overhauled and rectified” (Gill 2001:266). So, critics argue that “the real framework of China’s policies is not the declaratory shift it publicizes, that is, from the rejection of arms control to its acceptance but the real framework is to develop its bilateral relationship in important secondary zones of conflict, it develop points of pressure against its regional adversaries, and most importantly, to create situations which require the US and Russia to take China seriously, and to develop interdependent bargaining relationships with it.... And China’s proliferation behaviour,
despite the public line and cry that it has joined the mainstream of arms control, is actually subversive” (Kapur 1998:410).

However, China strongly refutes all the allegations of selective proliferation with some friendly states. It does not deny the transfer of missile technology and systems as well as nuclear aid to Pakistan and some other countries. But it insists that all its nuclear exports and assistance to non-nuclear countries are well within the MTCR guidelines. In May 1997, China’s State Council issued a statement entitled “Circular on Strict Implementation of China’s Nuclear Export Policy” which covered the export of nuclear Lind nuclear related dual-use items. In this detailed and unprecedented statement the council declared that this directive

1. applies to all governmental and non-governmental entities in China

2. states that, nuclear materials, nuclear equipment and related technology, non-nuclear materials for reactors, nuclear related technology, non-nuclear materials for reactors, nuclear related dual-use equipment material and technologies on China’s export list may not be supplied to or used in facilities not under IAEA safeguards.

3. covers technology in all forms including exchanges of personnel and information.

4. requires exporters of nuclear related dual use items to non-NPT countries: a) to seek prior confirmation from China’s Atomic Energy Authority of the IAEA safeguard status of nuclear facilities in the recipient country and b) to seek end-user certificates from the importing govt. along with assurances that the relevant equipment or co-operation will not be re-transferred to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities” (Steinberg 1998:38).

Again, in June 1998, China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesman Zhu Banzao reiterated China’s commitment to MTCR obligations. He said, “China has promised to observe some criteria and indices of the MTCR and will never go back on its words. We hold a clear-cut position on this issue. The so-called proliferation of Chinese missiles and related technology is out of question” (News from China, 3 June 1998).
China Calls for Cultivation of New Security Concept

China in its defence policy has emphasized the development of a new security concept taking into account the changing dynamics of the international system. The Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian noted in a speech:

The security system based on military alliance and military buildup during the cold-war has proved incapable of securing peace. Under the new situation, neither expanding military blocs nor strengthening military alliances is conducive to world security. This should rely on mutual trust and common interests (Beijing Review 1998:11)

While entering into the 21st century China denounces “the old security concept based on military alliances and build up of armaments and calls for cultivation of a new security concept that meets the need of the times” (News from China 5 May 1999). In March, 1999, speaking at the conference on Disarmament in Geneva Chinese President Jiang Zemin put forward his proposal for establishing a new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. This new security concept is based on certain assumptions. These assumptions are as follows:

1. All countries, regardless of their size, strength and wealth should have an equal right to security. Disarmament should not become a tool for stronger nations to control weaker ones, neither it should be an instrument for a handful of countries to optimize their armament in order to seek unilateral security superiority.

2. Multilateral disarmament treaties should be reached at only through open negotiations reflecting the common will of the international community.

3. China like other developing countries feels that the US and Russia should effectively implement the nuclear reduction treaties, they have concluded and should substantially cut down their respective nuclear arsenals.

4. Nuclear weapon states should declare unconditionally and in a legally binding manner, that they will not be the first to use nuclear weapons nor
will use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states (News from China, 5 May 1999).

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, China was one of the first countries to publish a Position Paper on 31 July 2002, which reiterated the demand for revisiting the concept of security in the wake of growing threat of global terrorism. This paper advanced the following principles:

- To conduct cooperation on the basis of the UN Charter, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and other widely recognized norms governing international relations, and give full play to the leading role of the United Nations.

- To peacefully resolve territorial and border disputes, and other controversial issues through negotiations.

- To reform and improve the existing international economic and financial organizations, and promote common prosperity in line with the principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit, and common development.

- To place emphasis on non-traditional security areas such as combating terrorism and transitional crimes, in addition to the traditional security areas like preventing foreign invasion and safeguarding territorial integrity.

- To conduct effective disarmament and arms control with broad participation in line with the principles of justice, comprehensiveness, rationality and balance, prevent the proliferation of weapons of massive destruction, uphold the current international arms control and disarmament regime, and refrain from and arms race (News from China, 1 August 2002).

Hu Xiaodi, Chinese Ambassador in Charge of Disarmament addressing the Disarmament and International Security Committee of the UN General
Assembly called for security based on international cooperation, arguing that the events of 11 September had shown that:

In the 21st century when security challenges are increasingly diversified with the rapid development science and technology and the steady deepening of economic globalization, only international cooperation can bring about real security (China Quarterly 2002:273).

The Chinese position on arms control clearly encompasses cooperative security and common security based on the cardinal principles of equality and mutual understanding.

An Analysis of the Post-Cold War Shift in China’s Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Policies

There has been a significant shift in China’s non-proliferation and disarmament policies in the post-Cold War period. This is reflected in its gradual acceptance of the core elements of the international nonproliferation norms, rules and code of conduct. China has also pledged adherence to the MTCR’s original guidelines governing missile transfers, and introduced elements of a domestic export control system. The factors that have contributed to these positive developments include China’s concern over its international image, a growing awareness of the danger that WMD proliferation can pose to its own security, and its interest in maintaining a stable – US-China relationship.

In the post-Cold War period, China had never missed any opportunity to be part of the universal consensus on issues of nonproliferation and disarmament. Since 1990, every time China has faced the possibility of being isolated-at the UN Security Council, at the Conference on Disarmament- the Chinese have joined the community of nations to agree on, sign and in some cases, ratify major arms control and nonproliferation accords. The NPT, the CTBT, and the CWC are illustrative cases. Other examples include the Biological Weapons Convention, the Register of Conventional Arms, the Convention on Conventional Weapons, and the UN campaign to address the problem of illegal arms and light weapons transfers (Frieman 2004:173-187). Despite reports to the contrary, the Chinese have a decent
record of living up to their commitments as defined by these international agreements. The Chinese have not withdrawn from any treaties. They have not violated them in a way that has resulted in widespread censure. They have not used their influence during the negotiation process to significantly dilute provisions of the treaty. They have not precipitated crises on challenge inspections. Though questions remain about some Chinese technology transfers but, overall, China's record has been acceptable to the international community (Frieman 2004:177).

The concrete benefits that flow to China from joining and complying with most arms control regimes are few in comparison with the costs the regimes entail. China receives no direct economic benefit from being a member of the nonproliferation club, marginal access to new technology and very few symbolic rewards. Among the regimes China has joined are several that entail real costs. The Chinese leadership was willing to incur costs and take risks in the 1980s and 1990s, which would have been unthinkable in earlier periods. China has joined agreements that will curtail exports, limit military options, require disclosure of previously secret information, and subject Chinese facilities to inspections by international teams. Many involve at least the perception that Chinese sovereignty is being violated (Frieman 2004:182). Thus, there is a growing recognition among Chinese leaders that the country's interest in achieving stable relations with leading members of the international system can be assisted through constructive engagement in global nonproliferation and arms control regimes. Also, the pluralization and institution-building process in China's nonproliferation and arms control sectors offer new opportunities for Beijing to bring its practice more in line with international norms (Gill 2001:273-275). China surely does not want to miss these opportunities.