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Nuclear Risk Reduction

Working paper submitted by China

At present, major power competition has reemerged in the field of international strategic security, the international nuclear arms control regime is put under strain, and nuclear risk reduction has attracted worldwide attention. China maintains that the discussion on nuclear risk reduction should follow the following principles:

First, to uphold the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Countries should make joint efforts to reject and oppose cold-war mentality, hegemonism and power politics, uphold the UN-centered international system and the international order based on international law, safeguard the international nuclear arms control and non-proliferation regime with the NPT as its cornerstone, and stay committed to the lasting peace and universal security of the world. These are significant premises for nuclear risk reduction.

Second, the basic principles of maintaining strategic stability and undiminished security for all should be upheld in the efforts to reduce strategic risk. There are no universally applicable measures to reduce nuclear risks, due to the vast differences in the nuclear capabilities, nuclear policies and the security environment of nuclear-weapon States. All parties should respect each other's sovereignty, security and development interests, strengthen strategic mutual trust, strive to maintain global strategic stability, and engage in dialogue and cooperation on a voluntary basis and in accordance with the principle of consensus.

Third, crisis prevention should take precedence over crisis management. Countries should oppose the hypocritical approach of instigating confrontation and creating crisis on one hand while calling for the reduction of nuclear risks on the other, and prioritize crisis prevention measures.

Forth, nuclear risk reduction requires joint efforts of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Non-nuclear-weapon States participating in the so-called nuclear sharing and extended deterrence arrangements should take concrete measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national and collective security doctrines.

Fifth, to properly handle the relations between nuclear risk reduction and nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament is the most effective measure to reduce nuclear risks. Countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should fulfill the special and primary responsibilities and further reduce their nuclear weapons substantively and significantly in a verifiable, irreversible and legally-binding manner. Nuclear risk reduction measures are no substitute for nuclear disarmament efforts.

China advocates that the international community should promote nuclear risk reduction dialogue and cooperation in following aspects:

1. Nuclear-weapon States should adopt a responsible nuclear strategy and conduct discussions on adopting the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, issuing a joint statement on mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and negotiating and

concluding a treaty on the mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

2. Nuclear-weapon States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security policies, commit not to targeting nuclear weapons at any country, lower the alert status of nuclear weapons, refrain from formulating nuclear deterrence policies tailored against certain countries, avoid accidental or unauthorized launches of nuclear weapons, and eliminate the risks of accidents on nuclear weapons.

3. Nuclear-weapon States should strictly control the scope of use of nuclear weapons. Discussions should focus on reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the collective security policies of certain countries, ceasing “nuclear sharing” and extended deterrence arrangements, not conducting nuclear exercises or exchanging nuclear information with non-nuclear-weapon States, and withdrawing nuclear weapons deployed overseas.

4. Nuclear-weapon States should provide credible security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Discussions should focus on supporting the Conference on Disarmament in negotiating a legal instrument providing negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States as soon as possible, supporting the efforts of regional countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of consultations among themselves and voluntary agreement, and signing and ratifying protocols to relevant nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties at an early date.

5. Nuclear-weapon States should make their utmost endeavors to prevent nuclear wars. Discussions should focus on implementing the *Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races*, reaffirming that none of their nuclear weapons are targeted at each other or at any other State, maintaining dialogue and communication on strategic risks reduction and nuclear policies and doctrines, and avoiding military confrontation and arms races.

6. Efforts should be made to maintain the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Discussions should focus on not to transfer weapon-grade nuclear materials, technology and equipment for military purposes to non-nuclear-weapon States, and promoting political and diplomatic solutions to regional hot-spot issues.

7. Efforts must be made to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities for peaceful uses. Discussions should focus on maintaining the safety and security of nuclear power plants, opposing armed attacks on nuclear power plants and other peaceful nuclear facilities, complying with the *Convention on Nuclear Safety*, resolutely avoiding man-made nuclear accidents, and supporting the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in playing a positive role in promoting the safety and security of peaceful nuclear facilities.

8. Efforts should be made to maintain global strategic stability. Discussion should focus on ceasing the development and deployment of global missile defense system, withdrawing missiles and missile defense systems deployed overseas, committing not to deploy additional weapon systems abroad that undermine strategic stability, committing not to place weapons in outer space, not to use or threaten to use force against outer space objects, and supporting the Conference on Disarmament in negotiating a legally-binding instrument of outer space arms control.

9. There should be a comprehensive assessment on security challenges brought by emerging technologies. Countries should discuss the impact of military application of emerging technologies on strategic stability and international security and support making international rules through discussions under the framework of the United Nations.

10. There should be active research of nuclear disarmament verification. Countries should discuss feasible measures for nuclear disarmament verification, which provides technical support for international nuclear disarmament process in the future, and support the ongoing work of the United Nations Governmental Groups of Experts on nuclear disarmament verification.