

Briefing on P5 Beijing Conference

By Ambassador LI Song

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Mr. President,

On 30th of January, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, or the P5, held the 8th formal P5 Conference in Beijing. It is the first time over the past two years that the P5 has held a formal conference. The conference was presided over by H.E. Mr. Zhang Jun, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, Deputy Minister Sergey Ryabkov of Russia, Under Secretary of State Andrea Thompson of the United States, Director for Strategic Affairs, Security and Disarmament Mr. Nicolas Roche of France, Mr. Philip Barton, Director General for Consular and Security, Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Wood, Ambassador Liddle, Ambassador Fu Cong, who is now Director General of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, and myself participated in this conference. Focusing on the theme of “Strengthening the P5 Coordination and Safeguarding the NPT Regime”, we had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on nuclear policies and doctrines, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and other issues. Since China was hosting this conference in its capacity of the coordinator of the P5, I have the pleasure to share with distinguished colleagues the following important consensus we reached during the Beijing Conference.

First, the P5 undertook to jointly fulfilling the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The P5 recognized that the current international security environment is facing severe challenges, and maintaining sound relations with each other is of crucial importance to global strategic issues. The P5 agreed to have an objective assessment of each other’s strategic intentions, enhance dialogue on nuclear policies and doctrines, promote strategic trust and common security, and make utmost efforts to prevent nuclear risks, in particular resulting from miscalculation and misperception. The P5 also recalled the importance of

maintaining the existing international arms control architecture, emphasized the importance of compliance with all international arms control agreements, and reaffirmed their commitment to existing negative and positive security assurances. The P5 expressed their readiness to renew engagement with the parties to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and continue to work towards the establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Second, the P5 undertook to jointly safeguard the NPT regime. The P5 emphasized that the NPT constitutes the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime as part of the international security architecture, and reiterated their commitment to abiding by all provisions of the NPT and promoting its universality. The P5 agreed to work to make the international security environment more conducive to further progress on nuclear disarmament, and to achieve a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all, through a gradual approach. The P5 hold the view that the TPNW contradicts, and risks undermining the NPT, and reaffirmed their opposition to the TPNW. The P5 undertook to make maximum efforts in seeking peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the challenges facing the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and support the IAEA to strengthen the safeguards system within its mandate. The P5 will promote international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and enhance coordination and cooperation on nuclear safety and nuclear security. As previously agreed, the P5 reiterated their commitment to submitting their respective national implementation reports by the 2020 NPT Review Conference, and to working together to make the Review Conference a success.

Third, the P5 agreed to enhance coordination and dialogue through the P5 process. At present, the international security situation is undergoing complex and profound change. Interaction among major countries has a bearing on the international security environment, the evolution of the international order and the confidence of the international community. The P5 agreed to maintain their strategic dialogue on nuclear policies and doctrines, strengthen their coordination in the NPT review

process, and in this regard to explore follow-up measures through Ambassador of Disarmament in Geneva. The P5 will continue to call upon all members of the international community to engage in an open and constructive dialogue. The P5 reaffirmed their support to China to lead the efforts to advance the work of the second phase of the P5 Working Group on the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms. The P5 welcomed the offer by the UK to host the next formal P5 Conference in 2020. The P5 is also proactive in having open and constructive dialogue with the international community. On 31 January, the P5 had a dialogue in Beijing with representatives from international academia, the media and embassies of some non-nuclear-weapon states. My briefing here today is also a new attempt to this end. The P5 stand ready to further interact with the international community in various venues, particularly under the framework of the NPT.

As the permanent members of the UN Security Council and the nuclear-weapon states recognized by the NPT, the P5, despite some differences on specific issues, were able to have an in-depth exchange of views in the spirit of mutual respect and in a frank and pragmatic manner, reached consensus on many issues, and identify the direction for future cooperation. This demonstrates the positive attitudes taken by the major countries to address international security challenges through cooperation and coordination, thus reinforcing the international community's positive outlook on the international security environment.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the other P5 countries for their support and cooperation in making the Beijing Conference a success. China will continue to work with the other P5 countries in building consensus and managing differences in the field of strategic security, and call for major-country coordination to replace major-country competition, and win-win cooperation to replace zero-sum game, so as to make positive contributions to world peace and stability.

Thank you, Mr. President.