

25X1-

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

1 September 1983

China and Arms Control

25X1

China's position on arms control is dictated by its interests in: 1) maintaining a free hand to expand its nuclear deterrent capabilities; 2) exercising some influence over US-USSR strategic arms talks that could adversely affect Chinese security; and 3) enhancing China's status and influence in the Third World. The Chinese also have sought to promote their commercial interests through the sale of conventional arms

25X1
25X1

The Chinese have rejected most nuclear arms control agreements, including the Nonproliferation Treaty, as devices designed to maintain the superpowers' nuclear dominance. They remain highly suspicious of any attempt by the United States and USSR to draw them directly into arms control negotiations. Beijing, for example, rejected a Soviet call last spring for a nuclear freeze among the United States, USSR, France, Britain, and China, calling it an attempt to prevent the deployment of new US missiles in Western Europe and to perpetuate the Soviet Union's present strategic advantage over China in the Far East.

Indeed, the Chinese doubt that either superpower is serious about arms control, and cite the failure of previous agreements to restrain the arms race. In catering to the Third World, moreover, China continues to accuse both the United States and USSR indiscriminately of fueling the arms race and cynically posturing for political advantage in the struggle for world public opinion.

Over the past year or so, however, the Chinese have generally been tougher on the Soviets. In an apparent effort to reinforce the US commitment to a global approach to the INF talks, Beijing publicly listed arms control, along with

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of East Asian Analysis

25X1
25X1

SECRET

25X1

Afghanistan and Kampuchea, as areas of close agreement with the United States at the conclusion of Secretary Shultz's visit last February.

Beijing subsequently joined Japan in denouncing the Soviets' INF proposal to redeploy many of their European based SS-20s to the Far East if the United States would agree not to deploy Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe. Beijing demanded that these SS-20s be destroyed rather than redeployed to Asia where they would pose a threat to China. The Chinese reportedly also injected the SS-20 issue into the Sino-Soviet bilateral talks last March, insisting that Moscow include some of those SS-20s already deployed in the Far East in any general reduction of Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet border as a precondition for normalizing relations.

Mainly to enhance their own image on arms control, the Chinese presented a comprehensive disarmament proposal at the UN special session on disarmament last year--the first in such a forum. We have no reason to believe Beijing expected its plan to win approval. The proposal calls for:

- A pledge by all nuclear states not to use nuclear weapons.
- The United States and USSR to cease testing, improving or manufacturing nuclear weapons and to reduce by 50 percent their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems.
- A simultaneous move by all states to negotiate a conventional weapons disarmament accord.

The Chinese pledged not only to join this process, but reiterated their longstanding pledge of "no first use."

Since then China has voted for a number of US-supported arms control resolutions at the UN, including proposals to reduce the size of military budgets and to extend the life of the special UN chemical weapons expert group. Beijing also has recently applied for membership in the IAEA.

It is unclear, however, whether the Chinese are prepared to comply with IAEA safeguard standards on the export of nuclear materials.

25X1

25X1