

withdrawal from the ABM Treaty so as to facilitate missile defence has complicated the prospects for trust based upon clear mutual understandings.

The possibilities for mutual trust and understanding were, for example, explored in the “Track 1 ½” Third and Fourth US-China Conferences on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation” in Beijing in September 2000 and Washington, D.C., March 2002. At the Third Conference, US commentators had insisted that limited missile defence is not destabilizing and rejected Chinese critical assessment of “rogue” missile threats and linkages between non-proliferation cooperation and the state of Sino-US bilateral relations as it relates to US arms sales to Taiwan and the general content and tone of Sino-US ties. The US side objected to the Chinese preference for the linkage of non-proliferation initiatives to bilateral Sino-US relations, and hence: “By contrast, US participants universally argued that nonproliferation should not be viewed through the prism of bilateral cooperation and it should not be used as ‘the whipping boy’ of the Chinese to demonstrate their displeasure with US foreign and national security policies.”²⁷

While the reported Chinese commentary did not refer directly to the “new security concept”, it drew from the underlying principles of this concept, hence the Chinese again rejected alliance-based politics and called for cooperation based upon dialogue, equal treatment and mutual trust rather than “coercive techniques such as pressure and sanctions”.²⁸ And indeed, the Chinese side certainly did express its displeasure with American desire for “absolute security” (*juedui anquan*) and the American “tendency of arms expansion to the neglect of arms control”.²⁹ Furthermore, Sino-US bilateralism was contingently linked to arms control particularly as it related to any attempt to foster Taiwan’s perpetual independence through the inclusion of Taiwan in TMD. For their part at least, the Chinese could see no reason why their national interests ought not to be legitimately linked to specific positions on arms control, and they reiterated the importance of a healthy Sino-US bilateralism to international arms control cooperation.

²⁷ Evan S. Medeiros, “US-China Arms Control and Nonproliferation Cooperation: Progress and Prospects”, 3rd US-China Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Relations, October 2000, p. 10.

²⁸ Medeiros, 3rd Conference on Arms Control, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁹ Medeiros, 3rd Conference on Arms Control, op. cit., p. 12.