

be used for "China bashing."

There are a number of distinct features about China's conditional multilateralism: (1) The multi-channel approach. Regional security issues should be dealt with by a variety of channels, including bilateral, multilateral, and sometimes unilateral approaches at governmental and non-governmental levels. Indeed, China's approach to regional security issues can be seen as distinctly bilateral, arguing that under certain circumstances bilateral approaches can be more appropriate in resolving security issues (e.g., Sino-Russian agreement on reducing military forces in the border areas); (2) The minilateral approach. Beijing continues to emphasize the importance of major powers in managing regional security issues; (3) A gradualist approach. The regional security building process should begin with bilateral dialogues, moving to sub-regional, and then region-wide ones. Issues should be dealt with from an order of ascendance, i.e., from the relatively easy to the more difficult; and (4) An Asia-Pacific approach. The region, because of its special characteristics—history, culture, economic development, political systems, religion, etc., should not blindly copy the CSCE model; substance is more important than form. Dialogues, confidence building measures should serve to enhance political trust, which is the basis of stable security relationships.

Arms Control and Disarmament

Chinese positions on arms control and disarmament issues have changed over the years. During the 1960s and 1970s, Beijing was highly critical of U.S./Soviet arms control and disarmament activities, regarding them as nothing more than schemes of superpower collusion aimed at maintaining their nuclear monopoly. Consequently, Beijing categorically rejected superpower NACD proposals and refused to accept any constraint on its own weapons development programs.³⁸ Since the early 1980s, Chinese positions have shifted from outright rejection of NACD measures to partial and guarded endorsement of selected NACD activities that would constrain superpower arms races. Beijing began to participate in UN-based arms control fora, in particular the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.³⁹ However, during most of the 1980s, China's NACD activities focused on issues important to its security interests such as chemical weapons, space weapons, and superpower nuclear disarmament while continuing put forth high-principled proposals at various international fora.⁴⁰ It is only since the end of the Cold War that Beijing began considering arms control and disarmament not just a game for scoring political points but an important policy area in which to balance a number of national security interests.

³⁸ Zhou Enlai, 'Wuomen Weishenmu Fandui Sanguo Bufen Jinzhi Heshiyan Tiaoyue [Why Do We Oppose the Partial Test Ban Treaty]', *Zhou Enlai Waijiao Wenxuan [Selected Works of Zhou Enlai on Diplomacy]* (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe (Beijing: Government Document Press, 1990), pp.335-39.

³⁹ Wu, "China's Policies towards Arms Control and Disarmament."

⁴⁰ Alastair I. Johnston, *China and Arms Control: Emerging Issues and Interests in the 1980s*. Aurora Papers 3 (Ottawa: The Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, 1986); Alastair I. Johnston, "China and Arms Control in the Asia-Pacific Region," in Frank C. Langdon and Douglas A. Ross, eds., *Superpower Maritime Strategy in the Pacific* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p.176.