

The Arms Race Between China and the US

(Translated)

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The term “arms race” became widespread during the Cold War era between the Eastern and Western blocs. It can be defined as: “a relationship of competition and hostility existing between two countries or a group of countries, with the aim of increasing the quantity and quality of weapons.”

China was aware of the danger of being drawn into a new arms race and refused to participate. The spokesperson for its Ministry of Defense, Senior Colonel Geng Yansheng, explained that China’s defense spending is reasonable and appropriate, emphasizing that his country does not seek hegemony, and has no intention of ever entering any global arms race.

China also affirmed that it will not pursue a nuclear arms race and opposes the deployment of US offensive missiles in Asia, according to the latest white paper issued by Beijing on nuclear policy. The document, titled “China’s Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation in the New Era,” includes an update to the previous version issued in 2005.

Beijing stated in its paper, “Keeping China’s nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security. China has always exercised the utmost restraint regarding the scale and development of its nuclear weapons. It never has and never will engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country in terms of level of expenditure, quantity, or scale of nuclear weapons,” reaffirming its no-first-use nuclear policy and its commitment to unconditionally refrain from using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states or in nuclear-weapon-free zones. It added that China has developed missiles and missile defense systems for its own protection, noting that these capabilities are intended to safeguard sovereignty, maintain security, and deter war, and are not directed against any other country or region, given its vast size and complex security environment.

The United States has sought to draw China into a new arms race, as it did previously with the Soviet Union, and has taken several measures to achieve this.

1. Exaggerating the Chinese threat: The US claims that China possesses more than 1,500 nuclear warheads, and in 2021 asserted that this number would reach 3,000 by 2035. To further fuel fears, the US claims that China has ballistic missiles with a range of up to 12,000 kilometers and that, starting in 2025, it will produce a giant flying wing, a tailless fixed-wing aircraft, as a bomber, designated as Xi’an H-20, capable of outperforming the American B-52 bomber.

2. Encouraging Asian Allies to Arm Themselves: The United States has worked to encourage Asian countries, especially its allies and partners, to strengthen their military forces and enhance their long-range strike capabilities. This is achieved through:

- **Missile Development and Increased Military Spending:** This occurred after the removal of all constitutional and legal restrictions that previously prevented this trend, as was the case with Japan. On August 29, 2022, the Japanese Ministry of Defense issued its budget request for fiscal year 2023, seeking a record figure of approximately \$40 billion, in addition to unspecified amounts for various systems, including long-range missiles capable of attacking land targets. The ministry also plans to develop drones for surveillance and attack, and Japan will build ships equipped with ballistic missile defense systems.

- **Arms Purchases and Deals:** This is evident in the US nuclear submarine deal with Australia. An Australian defense official stated that Australia’s nuclear-powered submarine program, in cooperation with the US and the UK, will cost up to \$245 billion

over the next 30 years, making it the largest defense program in Australian history. Similar measures were also taken with South Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan, and America also embarked on strengthening India and bringing it into the containment policy.

3. Forcing China to Change: These measures have forced China into an arms race against its will, preventing it from maintaining its policy of non-intervention.

- CNN reported that satellite imagery shows signs that more than 60% of the 136 facilities associated with missile production, or the Chinese military's missile force, which controls China's nuclear arsenal, have been expanded. The network stated that these sites, which house companies, research centers, and testing facilities, expanded by more than two million square meters of built-up area between the beginning of 2020 and the end of 2025, noting the emergence of new towers, bunkers, and barriers at these growing locations.

- In remarks on 9 June 2025, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong indicates the threat that the United States poses, saying, "at present, the biggest security challenge in the South China Sea comes from outside the region," explaining that its military buildup in the region is drawing it into "the whirlpool of an arms race." Sun Weidong said that America's move to deploy intermediate-range missile systems there "is dragging the region into the whirlpool of an arms race, placing the entire Asia-Pacific region under the shadow of geopolitical conflicts."

America's arms race aims to achieve two main objectives:

Firstly: Depleting economic capabilities: The immediate goal is to drain China's economic resources and draw it into proxy wars, such as space wars.

Military spending figures reveal the enormous gap that China must overcome:

Country: USA; Estimated defense spending for 2024: US\$997 billion; Percentage of the global total: Approximately 37%.

Country: China; Estimated defense spending for 2024: US\$313 billion; which is only a 6% increase over the previous year.

This massive spending reflects America's commitment to maintaining its military dominance. In this charged atmosphere, China will dedicate significant resources and squander considerable wealth on armaments, engaging in a frantic arms race to achieve its security goals, at the expense of its economic strength and prosperity. This race will consume economic savings and achievements, and preoccupy China with developing weapons that will not be used, as is the case with nuclear weapons.

Secondly: Securing its interests through neighboring countries: America has succeeded, through its policy of exaggerating China's capabilities, in instilling fear in all its neighbors, who are now vying to conclude mutual defense agreements with America and purchase more American weapons.

In conclusion: America, especially under Trump, has made China an enemy and demonized it in order to achieve its objectives related to the "leading from behind" policy. This involves strengthening the enemy's adversaries and pushing them to increase military spending and build up their capabilities, or to purchase those weapons and conclude defense agreements with them. This ensures that neighboring countries will contain China and preoccupy it with regional problems and conflicts, allowing allied countries to achieve America's interests without direct intervention in the war and the depletion of their own resources.