Nuclear Nonproliferation And China Essay, Research Paper

This paper will examine Nuclear Nonproliferation and China. I will also discuss the land, climate, and history of China.

At 3,705,751 square miles, China is just larger than the United States. Because mountains or desert covers much of China, the majority of people live in the east, where rivers and plains allow for productive agriculture. While summers are warmer and winters are colder, China’s climate is much like the United States. Monsoons cause frequent summer floods. China’s geographic features are vastly different between regions, ranging from the Himalayan Mountains to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau (the “roof of the world) to subtropical islands (Peoples 65) (Geography 320).

The Chinese have one of the world’s oldest continued civilizations, spanning some five thousand years. From early on, China was ruled by a series of dynasties. Some were ruled by native Han (such as the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644), and some were established after nomadic tribes from the North (the Qing Dynasty, 1644-1911) conquered China. A revolution inspired by Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911. In 1912 Sun Yat-sen established the Kuomintang (KMT) political party in an effort to unify China (Peoples 65).

After Sun’s death in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek took control (1927) and ousted the once-allied Communist Party. The Communists, led by Mao Zedong, are famous for their Long March across China to regroup and fight the KMT for control of China. Mao ruled from 1946 to 1976 (Peoples 65).

While the Chinese initially welcomed communism, the periods of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) had disastrous effects on the country. More than 40 million people starved or were killed during Mao’s rule. After Mao died in 1976, Deng Xiaoping came to power and gradually moved away from Maoism. His more moderate policies led to foreign tourism, a more liberal economy, private enterprise, growth, trade, and education. However, the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 and a subsequent government crackdown derailed China’s open-door policy (Peoples 65).

By 1992, China was again focusing on economic reform and it quickly became one of the world’s fastest growing economies. When Deng died in 1997, his successor, President Jiang Zemin, reiterated Deng’s policy of a central government (Peoples 65).

In 1955, Mao Zedong’s Chinese Communist Party decided to proceed with a nuclear weapons program; it was developed with Soviet assistance until 1960. After its first nuclear test in October 1964, Beijing deployed a modest but potent ballistic missile force, including land and sea-based intermediate-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles (Background).

China became a major international arms exporter during the 1980s. Beijing joined the Middle East arms control talks, which began in July 1991 to establish global guidelines for conventional arms transfers, but announced in September 1992 that it would no longer participate because of the U.S. decision to sell F-16A/B aircraft to Taiwan (Background).

China was the first state to pledge “no first use” of nuclear weapons. It joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1984. They pledged to abstain from further atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in 1986. China acceded to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992, and supported its indefinite and unconditional extension in 1995. In 1996, it signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and agreed to seek an international ban on the production of fissile nuclear weapons material (Background) (Davis).

In 1996, China committed not to provide assistance to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. China attended the May 1997 meeting of the NPT Exporters (Zangger) Committee as an observer and became a full member in October 1997. The Zangger Committee is a group which meets to list items that should be subject to IAEA inspections if exported by countries which have, as China has, signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In September 1997, China issued detailed nuclear export control regulations. China is implementing regulations establishing controls over nuclear-related dual-use items in 1998. China also has decided not to engage in new nuclear cooperation with Iran (even under safeguards), and will complete existing cooperation, which is not of proliferation concern, within a relatively short period (Background) (Leventhal).

Based on significant, tangible progress with China on nuclear nonproliferation, President Clinton in 1998 took steps to bring into force the 1985 U.S.-China Agreement on Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation. Implementation of this agreement, which establishes a mechanism that will enable the U.S. and China to continue discussing export controls and China’s nuclear cooperation with other countries, will give the U.S. an effective basis for continuing to promote progress by China on nonproliferation (Background).

In conclusion, China has come a long way. The Chinese people still don’t have freedom of speech, and are still a communist country. But they are now introducing capitalism, an economic system where people and business owners have more freedom. Also, now that China has nuclear weapons, China is force to be reckoned with.

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