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CUI TIANKAI

**FORMER VICE MINISTER, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS, CHINA**

Cui Tankai, Former Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister, for your important speech. Maybe first of all, a word of congratulations to IISS for the 20th anniversary of the Shangri-La Dialogue. I am very honoured to be here sitting on the same panel with the distinguished Minister and Governor, and Madame Chair, yourself.

Let me try to make a few points within my time limit. We have the topic 'Managing Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific Security'. The first thing I want to say is that in today's world we are really interdependent. Despite all the growing divisions that are very worrisome, we are still living in a more or less globalised and interdependent world. Thus, a security situation in one region could have an unexpected impact on another region far away.

Last year, I came here for the Shangri-La Dialogue and my friend in Singapore told me that the crisis in Ukraine was affecting the supply of chicken and rice here in Singapore. This is a very good example of how what is happening in one region could have an unexpected impact on the food supply in a region far away. It tells us that we really have to adopt a new security concept which is focused on common security, comprehensive security, cooperative security and sustainable security. We really have to work together on the basis of mutual respect to build a community of nations for a shared future and hopefully a better future. This is the first point I want to make.

Number two, the situation, the circumstances in Euro-Atlantic and in Asia-Pacific are, in fact, different. Maybe different approaches to security have been followed and we are seeing different outcomes. So, we have to think hard. What is the right approach in today's world to achieve common security, security for everybody? We are very saddened to see fighting going on and killing going on in Ukraine. Destruction continues. We have great sympathy for the people there. And before we started, the Minister and I were having a conversation about how to distinguish the sound of the thunder from the sound of a missile, which was very impressive indeed. Therefore, I appreciate very much the efforts being made by our friends in the region, like our friends from Indonesia and also, I understand, from South Africa. And we in China have also put forward our own position paper.

Our purpose is not to impose any specific solution on the crisis, but to facilitate the process of peaceful negotiations and try to get a political solution to a very complex problem. Hopefully, everybody could join us in this genuine effort. And honestly, I do not think, with all due respect to our European and Atlantic friends, I do not think you are managing effectively and constructively your own security situation. Maybe a better word would be mismanagement. You see the outcome which is hurting everybody. It is very unfortunate.

By contrast, we in Asia-Pacific, I think we have followed a right approach. We are focusing on open and inclusive regionalism. We show respect for each other's core interests. And we have these very important principles of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) centrality, consideration of comfort level of everybody. And we try to address our differences and possible disputes through consultation and communication. And we put priority to economic cooperation, economic growth, and try to improve the daily life of our people. I think our approach is working. It has good results. Now, East Asia is one of the main engines of global economic growth. And on the whole, despite still existing hot spots here and there, the region has enjoyed overall peace and stability over the decades. This is a fact for everybody to see.

We used to look to Europe for their experience in regional integration. However, nowadays, maybe people in Europe, in Atlantic could look to us. We do not want to impose our ways on you, but maybe you could learn something useful from our experience, from our success. And we should also learn

something very important, something from your lack of success. I do not want to use the word failure, but lack of success.

So, let me make in conclusion, let me make this very clear. We will continue with our Asian ways of managing our security situation and managing all the regional issues. We do not need an Asian NATO. We do not want to see extension of NATO's role in our region. Let me conclude here. Thank you.

Lynn Kuok, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow, IISS–Asia; Editor, Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment

Thanks very much. I was very struck by your comment about the Asian success in managing its security situation, and perhaps Europe might be able to learn something from Asia. Do you see the dispute in the South China Sea as something, perhaps, Europe might be able to learn from as well? Or is that also a negative example in terms of, is that something that we should be avoiding rather, or learning what not to do?

Cui Tiankai, Former Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China

Well, I think this is a very complex issue again, and it has a long, long history behind it. However, I think so far, between China and other countries, we have engaged in serious communication and negotiations. We already had the DOC (Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea), and we are now working on the COC (Code of Conduct). Hopefully, we will conclude it. I think we will continue with this kind of approach. No country, no regional country wants to resort to force on this issue, and we will continue our search for a political and diplomatic solution.

If others, if our European friends, or if our American friends want to help us, you are most welcome. The best you can do is to refrain from interfering into our regional affairs. Leave it to ourselves. We know how to address it. The best thing you can do for us, is do nothing on that. Thank you.

Lynn Kuok, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow, IISS–Asia; Editor, Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment

We certainly hope to be able to strike a Code of Conduct in the region on the South China Sea because it has been two decades in the making. It would be great if we could finally conclude that.

Before I move on to Governor Widjajanto, I was wondering whether I could quickly return to Minister Reznikov again. Ambassador Cui mentioned earlier China's position paper on Ukraine, on the conflict there, and he also highlighted how China desires to, or hopes to, facilitate negotiations and it was not seeking any particular outcome. However, what we have seen is that China has failed to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine or the violation of its territorial integrity. Would Ukraine accept China as a mediator or as a facilitator of negotiations, given the lack of strong position condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine? Is this something that Ukraine would accept, or would it like to see more of a response from China first in that respect?

Oleksii Reznikov, Minister of Defence, Ukraine

I think that we do not need a facilitator right now because in our country, still conducting war. It is a war with the army of murderers, looters and rapists. They have to go out of my country and after that, they can invite their lawyers, their advisers, we will find best solutions. Maybe we will not need the facilitator or maybe, but we will sit at the table together with our partners. Because I do not need a facilitator. I'm a negotiator with good experience, believe me. So if they will be ready to negotiate, they will send the signal to us. Because Russians are not ready. They have to withdraw all their armed forces from our country. After that, we will need to facilitate somebody. Singapore is a good facilitator. This forum could be good facilitator. Invite them.

Lynn Kuok, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow, IISS–Asia; Editor, Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment

So in principle, if Russia were to leave your country, you would be accepting, even though you might not need them, but you might be accepting of countries like Singapore, China as potential mediators.

Oleksii Reznikov, Minister of Defence, Ukraine

Just short metaphor.

Lynn Kuok, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow, IISS–Asia; Editor, Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment

Sorry?

Oleksii Reznikov, Minister of Defence, Ukraine

Short metaphor. For example, you are sitting at your house. In your kitchen, was killed your grandma and some rapist forces with your sister. And after that, somebody says, would you like to negotiate in your house, killer, rapists and murderers? So, you will not negotiate it in this moment with the rapist, killers and murders.

Lynn Kuok, Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow, IISS–Asia; Editor, Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment

The question was more, if Russia were to leave, would you in principle accept, say, China as mediator or another country as mediator? Then yes.

Oleksii Reznikov, Minister of Defence, Ukraine

We have a queue with a desire to facilitate our war. But I think it is in the interest of Russia to stop this war. We have a lot of leaders of different countries to help us. But we need tools to finish this job. We need to win this war. After that, we will negotiate with the Kremlin regime or the new leaders in this country.