

21ST ASIA SECURITY SUMMIT
THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE

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CHINA'S APPROACH TO GLOBAL SECURITY

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ADMIRAL DONG JUN

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, CHINA

Admiral Dong Jun, Minister of National Defense, China

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, good morning. When the fragrance of orchids permeates the air in June, I am very glad to come to Singapore and join you at the 21st Shangri-La Dialogue to discuss ways of promoting security cooperation and long-term peace and stability.

Being here in this beautiful Lion City, where East meets West and different cultures blend with each other, we see Singapore's remarkable transformation, which tells so much about the development and advances of the Asia-Pacific. And the very purpose of us to gather here today is to promote the well-being of our people and contribute our share to global security.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, in today's turbulent world, people of all countries have a strong desire for peace and development. Decades of peace and prosperity in Asia-Pacific and the remarkable Asia-Pacific miracle have injected a strong impetus into world development and served as an anchor for global security. It has taught us a lot of things. People in Asia-Pacific are committed to harmony and peace.

For thousands of years, countries with different cultures, religions, ethnic groups and social systems have lived in a close community. Exchanges and mutual learning among countries has created a culture of harmonious coexistence. In modern times, most countries in Asia-Pacific suffered from aggression and oppression committed by imperialism and colonialism. With a shared memory of devastating wars and turbulence, our people cherish peace more than anything else.

Despite problems and differences that have occurred from time to time, dialogue and consultation have always been our favourite choice for resolving differences and disagreements. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence initiated by China and other regional countries 70 years ago remains highly relevant today as a fundamental norm governing state-to-state relations. And safeguarding peace and stability in our region is an important mission for us militaries in Asia-Pacific countries.

People in the Asia-Pacific are independent and self-reliant. The majority of countries in our region gained independence only after going through hard struggles and making great sacrifices. Therefore, we place great value on independence, and our people are against any attempt to turn our countries into vassal states or draw us into bloc confrontations. We hope to live in an equal and orderly multipolar world.

In the course of pursuing development and national renewal, we have chosen social systems and paths suited to our respective national conditions. We have taken independent foreign and defence policies and achieved development and progress with our dedicated efforts. Our people have firmly rejected infiltration, sabotage and coercion by outside forces.

We countries in the Asia-Pacific have the ability and confidence to resolve issues in our region. Our people despise those who attempt to bolster themselves by taking orders from hegemonic powers. We are confident that some countercurrents in one area or another can never block the overriding trend of our times. We, the militaries of countries in our region, will always serve as a pillar for boosting our independence and self-development.

People in the Asia-Pacific have always supported each other through thick and thin. Being close neighbours bound together by mountains and waters and common interests, the Asia-Pacific countries are naturally a community with a shared future. We have worked in solidarity to resist aggression, fight disasters and pursue development. We wish each other well as neighbours, just as members of a family do to each other.

In the face of common security challenges, no country can stay unaffected, and there is no such thing as absolute security or exclusive security. Regional countries have a fine tradition of reaching out to neighbours who are in need.

Despite twists and turns in the past decades, the pursuit of common development and win-win cooperation has remained the prevailing trend. Attempts at decoupling, cutting supply chains, or building a small yard with high fences will find no support here. Our people long for unity, cooperation and a peaceful life. And we, militaries, should provide strong support for such aspirations.

We owe the hard-won stability and prosperity in Asia-Pacific to the vision and concerted efforts of our people, and we should cherish such stability and prosperity. We will not allow hegemonism and power politics to undermine the interests of the Asia-Pacific countries. We will not allow anyone to bring geopolitical conflicts or any war, whether hot or cold, to our region. We will not allow any country or any force to create conflict and chaos in our region.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, as we are reaching a crossroads in a world full of challenges; countries are exploring ways to promote peace and development. China, as a responsible major country, is ready to share its practices that have proved successful and work together with other countries to embrace a bright future.

President Xi Jinping has articulated the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and he has put forward the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative. His vision and initiatives echo the trend of history and respond to the longing of people around the world for a better life.

China has always honoured its statements with action. The Chinese military stands ready to work with other counterparts to pursue these major initiatives in Asia-Pacific to deliver more benefits to our people. This is consistent with China's defence policy and guidelines.

Firstly, we value peace and harmony. China's strategic culture is anchored on universal love and non-aggression. Ever since the founding of the People's Republic of China more than 70 years ago, we have pursued a national-defence policy that is defensive in nature. Peaceful development is an integral part of China's constitution and represents the commitment of the Chinese state.

Since the launch of reform and opening up, China has cut the number of its military personnel by over four million. This is a solid step which honoured our commitment of never seeking hegemony or expansion.

China's nuclear policy is a highly stable, consistent and predictable one. Despite once being subject to nuclear blackmail and threat, China is committed to a nuclear policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapons states or nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally.

We have solemnly stated that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. China is willing to take the lead in signing the protocol to the treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. We advocate settlement of disputes through dialogue and consultation and despise the law of the jungle. When addressing border and maritime disputes, we have never provoked incidents or easily resorted to the use of force.

We have worked with ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] countries to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, the DOC; accelerate consultations on the

Code of Conduct, the COC, in the South China Sea; and have maintained peace and tranquillity in our region.

Secondly, we are committed to pursuing common security. China champions a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Different countries have different security interests and goals, and there is no one sweeping solution to complex issues. What we need is solidarity. Seeking bloc confrontation can only exacerbate tension and provoke war and conflict.

On the Ukraine crisis, China has been promoting peace talks with a responsible attitude. We have never provided weapons to either party of the conflict. We have put strict control on export of dual-use items and have never done anything to fan the flames. We stand firmly on the side of peace and dialogue.

On the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, we adhere to a just and impartial position and work together with the international community to push for a ceasefire. On issues such as those concerning the Korean Peninsula, Afghanistan and Myanmar, we have actively sought political settlement and thus played a constructive role. On international security issues, the Chinese military has actively shouldered more responsibilities by extensively participating in UN peacekeeping, vessel protection, counter-terrorism and rescue operations, thus providing a large number of public-security goods.

Regional countries has long been an indivisible one. We stand ready to work with all of you to build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future, and share the benefits of security and development.

Thirdly, we are committed to equality and mutual respect. China hopes that all countries are equal regardless of their size, and all militaries are equal regardless of their strength. And countries and their militaries should act in good faith and treat each other with mutual respect. The Chinese military never acts from the so-called position of strength in its relations with foreign militaries. At the same time, others should not expect to impose their will on us.

China pursues the common good and shared interests above anything else in our defence cooperation with other countries. We are committed to engaging in extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefits, and building trustworthy security partners among us.

The Chinese military has always reached out to those in need. We have also received strong support from a lot of friends, for which I wish to express my deep appreciation to you.

On international and regional security issues, China has never coerced others into taking sides or interfered in the internal affairs of other countries. We are committed to promoting equal rights, equal rules and equal opportunities for all countries.

Fourthly, we are committed to openness and inclusiveness. The Chinese military upholds openness and cooperation. Today, we have military exchanges with more than 150 countries, we are open and above board, and we strive to pursue mutual benefit and common progress.

I know many of you follow with great interest the China–US military-to-military relationship, because whether such relationship is stable matters to global security and stability. China’s position is consistent and clear. We stay open to exchanges and cooperation with the US military. But this requires efforts from both sides. As we see it, it is because the two militaries have differences that there is a greater need for communication.

Even though we have different development paths, we should not pursue confrontation with each other. The Chinese and US militaries should value peace, uphold stability, act in good faith and find the right way to get along with each other. This will instil more confidence in the world and our region.

On multilateral security cooperation, China calls for inclusiveness for peace and opposes building exclusive military alliances. Various small circles targeting other countries cannot make our region safer and can only cause more tension. The Chinese military will take a more open approach and work with the militaries in countries of our region to build a new type of security partnership featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation.

Fifthly, we are committed to safeguarding our core interests. China always respects the legitimate concerns of other countries, and China's core interests are sacred and inviolable. To safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity is the sacred mission of the Chinese military.

The Taiwan question is at the core of China's core interests. Hence, the One China principle has long become a universally recognised norm governing international relations. But what we are seeing now is that the DPP [Democratic Progressive Party] authorities in Taiwan are pursuing separation in an incremental way. They are bent on erasing the Chinese identity of Taiwan and severing social, historical and cultural links across the Taiwan Strait.

Those separatists recently made fanatical statements that show their betrayal of the Chinese nation and their ancestors. They will be nailed to the pillar of shame in history. At the same time, some external interfering forces keep hollowing out the One China principle with a salami-slicing strategy. They have cooked up Taiwan-related legislations and continued to sell arms to Taiwan and have illegal official contacts with it. In fact, what they are doing is to embolden Taiwan independence separatists in an attempt to contain China with Taiwan. These malicious intentions are dragging Taiwan into a dangerous situation.

China's handling of Taiwan-related issues in accordance with its laws is entirely an internal affair of China, which brooks no foreign interference. China stays committed to peaceful reunification. However, this prospect is increasingly being eroded by separatists for Taiwan independence and foreign forces. The danger of national division is still there.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army will remain a strong force for upholding national reunification. We will take resolute actions to curb Taiwan independence and make sure such a plot never succeeds. Anyone who dares to separate Taiwan from China will only end up in self-destruction.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, in a world that is far from peaceful, can we, Asia-Pacific countries, continue to shield ourselves against war and enjoy lasting peace? Can we follow our own path of development and achieve common prosperity? Can we reject the Cold War mentality and maintain our big and harmonious family? To answer these questions of our times, every country needs to spring into action with a strong sense of responsibility, credibility and sincerity to achieve win-win outcomes.

Amid the profound changes, we need to build a framework of regional security cooperation that is open, transparent and based on equality, one that features equal participation, friendly exchanges and is free from bloc confrontation. We should strive to make the Asia-Pacific an anchor for global stability and development. With this in mind, I believe that it is imperative for us to do the following.

Firstly, we should protect the legitimate security interests of all countries. One of the deep-rooted causes of the ongoing wars and conflicts is that the security concerns of some countries have long been

ignored. What this tells us is that the security interests of all countries should be upheld and their legitimate concerns addressed.

China supports countries in our region in pursuing strategic autonomy and keeping their security firmly in their own hands. We will, as always, uphold fairness and justice for other developing countries and create more opportunities for them to engage in security governance on an equal basis. China will endeavour to build the Beijing Xiangshan Forum, the China–Africa Peace and Security Forum, the Middle East Security Forum, and the China–Latin America and the Caribbean States Defense Forum into platforms for addressing the interests of different parties and enhancing security cooperation.

Secondly, we should build a more just and equitable international order. There is only one international system, namely the international system with the United Nations at its core. There is only one international order, namely the international order underpinned by international law.

The ongoing Palestinian–Israeli conflict has created a humanitarian catastrophe. International fairness and justice is severely undermined by double standards. The painful lesson we should learn is that the authority of the UN must be strengthened, not weakened, and the international law must be upheld, not violated. The Chinese military will enhance policy coordination with foreign defence authorities under the UN framework. We will make greater contributions to UN peacekeeping, build high-standard standby forces and dispatch new types of forces for peacekeeping.

Regarding the disputes on the sovereignty over islands and reefs and maritime rights and interests, I want to say that the authority of international law is based on the principles of respecting facts and upholding justice. On behaviours of fabricating historic facts, spreading false narratives, attempting to enforce the illegal arbitration award and confusing right with wrong, we are very much concerned that such behaviours of pretending to uphold fairness and justice, and blackmailing others under the guise of international law, will severely damage international rule of law.

Thirdly, we should give full play to regional security architecture. China upholds true multilateralism in regional security affairs. The ASEAN-centred architecture for regional security cooperation is widely recognised as a viable and effective one. China will continue to firmly support ASEAN's centrality and oppose any act to weaken it. We hope other major countries will also express their support for ASEAN's centrality.

The Chinese military will strengthen coordination with ASEAN on strategic planning in the defence field and deepen cooperation under the ADMM [ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting]-Plus. This will improve our capabilities to safeguard security in our region.

Fourthly, we should advance open and substantive defence cooperation. We should promote mutual benefit and win–win cooperation. Relevant countries should abandon their zero-sum mindset, arrogance and bias, and treat regional countries with sincerity.

The Chinese military welcomes cooperation with the militaries of all other countries which have sincerity and goodwill towards us. We will make further efforts for openness and cooperation. For countries with which we have engaged in cooperation, we will deepen and expand our cooperation with them on joint exercises and training, equipment and technology, and logistic support, so as to improve the performance of such cooperation.

For our new cooperation partners, we are ready to start with areas such as military culture, disaster relief and medical service, and advance our cooperation with them step by step. We have a well-

established system of military education, and we are ready to provide greater support to other countries in personnel training and offer tailored courses to meet different needs. Through close personnel exchanges, we can enhance mutual understanding and strengthen our friendship.

Fifthly, we should set an example of maritime security cooperation. The ocean serves as a natural bond for promoting win-win cooperation among countries in our region. Peace at sea is vital for our region's prosperity. We should draw strength from our unique Asian wisdom to build consensus and seek common ground while shelving differences. We should not allow disputes or differences to stand in the way of development and cooperation. The Chinese military is ready to conduct more extensive maritime interactions and exchanges with the militaries of other countries to deepen mutual trust and cooperation.

I know you have followed closely the South China Sea issue. Thanks to concerted efforts made by countries in the region, the South China Sea has seen overall stability. However, a certain country, emboldened by outside powers, has broken bilateral agreements and its own promises, made premeditated provocations and created false scenarios to mislead the public. Moreover, it has ignored the overall interests of our region and violated the ASEAN Charter by allowing an outside country to deploy a mid-range missile system. This act will endanger the security and stability of our region, and it will eventually backfire. I am sure that the international community is clear-eyed about this.

China has exercised great restraint in the face of such infringements and provocations, but there is a limit to our restraint. We hope this country could see where its true interests lie, return to the right track of dialogue and consultation, and work with other countries in the region to make the South China Sea a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation.

Sixthly, we should strengthen security governance in emerging areas. Emerging areas should create new opportunities for promoting common development for mankind, rather than becoming a new ground of arms race. In the face of security and development challenges in emerging areas, countries should jointly respond to them early, and we should share the benefits created by new technologies. We should reject the behaviours of overstressing the concept of national security and preventing other countries' technology development by imposing technology blockades.

Major countries should set an example in this regard. China stays committed to peace, development, inclusiveness and shared governance. It will actively pursue the Global Initiative on Data Security and the Global AI [artificial intelligence] Governance Initiative. We will engage in extensive security dialogues in emerging areas with other countries, and jointly establish rules of governance that fully meet developing countries' interests and deliver benefits of new technologies to all.

Ladies and gentlemen, the trend of our times towards peace and development is surging ahead and unstoppable. The Chinese military stands ready to work with the militaries around the world to deepen security cooperation and make greater contributions to bolster common prosperity and enduring peace in Asia-Pacific.

Thank you.