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Concepts, Challenges and Ways Forward***

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***Session I: National Security –
Concepts and Threat Perceptions***

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China's National Security Concepts and Threat Perceptions

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Xi Jinping's Overall National Security Outlook

Within China, the decision making process is always criticized as “strong at control, weak at coordination”. In order to address this weakness at foreign policy making, Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, which was held from Nov. 9 to 12, 2013, decided to establish a central national security commission to improve systems and strategies for national security.

The main responsibilities of the national security commission include construction of the rule of law system concerning state security, research, resolving major issues of national security, setting principles and policies, as well as stipulating and implementing strategies.

April 15, 2014, Chinese president Xi Jinping chaired the first meeting of the newly established national security committee, and he delivered a speech about China's security. In this speech, he pledged a path with Chinese characteristics to ensure the country's national security, urging efforts to adhere to an **"overall national security outlook"**. Xi Jinping specified a national security system that covers safety in 11 fields - **politics, territory, military, economy, culture, society, science and technology, information, ecology, nuclear and natural resources**. Some of the definitions, namely nuclear safety and information security, echoed with Xi's insights revealed in his speeches at the third Nuclear Security Summit during his European trip in March 2014 and a meeting on China's Internet security and informatization in February 2014. Chinese observers believe that after Xi's remarks signaled a clearer and more specific national security strategy of China (BEIJING, April 16, 2014, Xinhua).

Putting in a short way, first, Xi Jinping expanded the definition of China's national security, covering all the international and domestic, traditional and non-traditional issues. Second, there are more concern about the domestic challenges than international ones. Third, the national security commission is a very powerful body. Fourth, there will be more issues between China and West World.

China's New Asia Security Concept

On May 21, 2014, delivering the keynote speech at the fourth summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in

Shanghai, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security strategy for Asia. Chinese media defines his proposal as “**New Asia Security Concept**”.

According to Xi, Asia has come to a crucial stage in security cooperation. With 67 percent of the world's population and one third of the global economy, the region needs to build on the past achievements and strive for new progress. "We need to innovate in our security concept, establish a new regional security cooperation architecture, and jointly build a shared, win-win road for Asian security," Xi said. (SHANGHAI, May 21, 2014, Xinhua)

The new Asia security concept includes the following key points:

- Taking into account the historical background and reality of Asia's security issues, adopt a multi-pronged and holistic approach, and enhance regional security governance in a coordinated way
- Equal security for every Asian country, and each has an equal right to participate in regional security affairs and equal responsibility to uphold security.
- No country should seek absolute security of itself at the expense of others.
- A military alliance which is targeted at a third party is not conducive to common regional security.
- Should abide by the basic norms governing international relations, such as respecting sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; non-interference in internal affairs.
- Respecting member country's social systems and chosen development paths.
- Diversity and differences should be turned into energy and a driving force for security cooperation.

By raising the New Asia Security concept, China tries to establish a consensus among Asian countries on security. But China's effort inevitably leads to some concern from outside power, USA in particular.

Threat Perceptions: Interwoven Threats

China stressed the importance of security in both traditional and non-traditional fields. Chinese government pledged "zero tolerance" for terrorism, separatism and extremism. From Chinese perspective, Asia's security challenges are extremely

complicated, including hotspots, sensitive issues, ethnic and religious problems. While tackling immediate security challenges, Asia should plan for the future, and avoid a fragmented, palliative approach that only treats the symptoms. In his speech at CICA last year, Xi Jinping believe that security problems in Asia should be solved by Asians themselves through cooperation. Based on new Asia security concept, Asia should work for sustainable and durable security, focused on both development and security. Development is the foundation of security and security a precondition for development. For most Asian countries, development means the greatest security and is the master key to regional security issues. Calling the CICA the largest and most representative regional security forum with the largest number of participants, China will try to make the CICA into a security dialogue and cooperation platform covering the whole of Asia.

The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs: “A distinctive diplomatic approach befitting its role of a major country”

On 28-29 November, The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs was held in Beijing. Xi Jinping delivered another important address to the conference.

He underscored the importance of holding high the banner of peace, development and win-win cooperation, pursuing China's overall domestic and international interests and its development and security priorities in a balanced way, focusing on the overriding goal of peaceful development and national renewal, upholding China's sovereignty, security and development interests, fostering a more enabling international environment for peaceful development and maintaining and sustaining the important period of strategic opportunity for China's development. These efforts will ensure the realization of the "two centenary goals" (doubling the 2010 GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents and finishing the building of a society of initial prosperity in all respects when the CPC celebrates its centenary and turning China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious when the People's Republic of China marks its centenary) and the Chinese dream of the great renewal of the Chinese nation.

In his address, Xi Jinping pointed out that since the 18th CPC National Congress, the central Party leadership, bearing in mind China's domestic and international interests, has maintained continuity and consistency of China's foreign policy, strengthened overall planning and taken bold initiatives, thus achieving notable progress. Keeping in mind new tasks that should be carried out under new conditions, we have worked hard to creatively pursue China's diplomacy in both theory and practice, highlight the global significance of the Chinese dream and enrich the

strategic thinking of peaceful development. We have advocated the building of a new type of international relations underpinned by win-win cooperation, put forward and followed a policy of upholding justice and pursuing shared interests and championed a new vision featuring common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. We have endeavored to build a new model of major-country relations, and put forward and practiced a neighborhood policy featuring amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness as well as the guideline on China's relations with Africa featuring sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith.

“We should, on the basis of summing up our past practice and experience, enrich and further develop principles guiding our diplomatic work, and conduct diplomacy with a salient Chinese feature and a Chinese vision. We should uphold the CPC's leadership and socialism with distinctive Chinese features, and stick to our development path, social system, cultural tradition and values. We should continue to follow the independent foreign policy of peace, always base ourselves on our own strength in pursuing the development of the country and the nation, and follow our own path unswervingly. While we pursue peaceful development, we will never relinquish our legitimate rights and interests, or allow China's core interests to be undermined. We should promote democracy in international relations, and uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. We are firm in our position that all countries, regardless of their size, strength and level of development, are equal members of the international community and that the destiny of the world should be decided by people of all countries. We should uphold international justice and, in particular, speak up for developing countries.”
(Beijing, Nov.29, 2014, Xinhua)

Xi Jinping put forward requirements on expanding and broadening the agenda of China's diplomatic strategy under new conditions. (1) China should promote neighborhood diplomacy, turn China's neighborhood areas into a community of common destiny, continue to follow the principles of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness in conducting neighborhood diplomacy, promote friendship and partnership with our neighbors, foster an amicable, secure and prosperous neighborhood environment, and boost win-win cooperation and connectivity with our neighbors. (2) Manage well relations with other major countries, build a sound and stable framework of major-country relations, and expand cooperation with other major developing countries. (3) Strengthen unity and cooperation with other developing countries and closely integrate our own development with the common development of all developing countries. (4) advance multilateral diplomacy, work to reform the international system and global governance, and increase the representation and say of China and other developing countries. (5) Actively advance the building of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, work hard to expand the converging interests of various parties, and promote

win-win outcome through results-oriented cooperation. (6) Uphold justice and pursue shared interests and do a good job in providing foreign aid. (7) Protect China's overseas interests and continue to improve our capacity to provide such protection.

The most important part of the speech is that Xi Jinping stressed that China should develop a distinctive diplomatic approach befitting its role of a major country, and promote a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation.