

Outlook on China's Comprehensive Security

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I. Outlook on China's comprehensive security

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of New China. The outlook on China's security in the past six decades can be divided into two historical phases. In the first 30 years, China held what we call traditional security outlook, which took war and revolution as the dominant theme of the world and focused on the country's national defense and political security, or in other words, on safeguarding territorial and sovereign security and consolidating the regime. Over the recent three decades China holds the view that the world's dominant theme is peace and development. While still focusing on traditional security, China has extended the concern for security to many non-traditional fields such as economy, finance, information, energy, food and public health, as well as the anti-terrorist issue which has become more challenging since the September 11 terrorist attack. In this sense, an outlook on both traditional security and non-traditional security has come into being, which we call comprehensive outlook on security.

II. Traditional security threats should not be underestimated

Traditional security issues concentrate on political and military fields. Hegemony and power politics remain the traditional security problems in international security after the Cold War. From the perspective of the comprehensive security outlook, current international traditional security problems fall into three aspects:

First, local wars and armed conflicts around the globe appear to be "in large numbers, clustering in a few areas and with complex reasons." The world saw 46 local wars and armed conflicts in 2008, a sharp increase over the 33 events in 2007. It showed that such wars and conflicts were in high occurrence. Moreover, many of the post-Cold War conflicts adopted high technology, and even resembled some features of information-based local wars.

Secondly, the world's major countries have stepped up new information-oriented military reforms with constant adjustments. They have kept raising military budgets to meet the demands of such reforms. We should see that military expenditure of the United States still ranks the first in the world, with 481.4 billion U.S. dollars in 2008 (excluding war expenses). China, as a developing country, only earmarked about 60 billion U.S. dollars to the military last year, or one-eighth of that in the United States, of course a much lower per capita figure. We need to increase military investment in the

course of modernizing the country and training professionals in the preparation for information-based wars. At present, China has only mechanical or semi-mechanical military forces. Our goal is to accomplish mechanization of the armed forces on the basis of informationization by 2020, when China becomes a moderately prosperous society in all respects. Then we will use another 30 years to fully informationize our armed forces and make them ready for winning information-based local wars by 2050, when China becomes a moderately developed country.

Thirdly, nuclear issue is posing as a more acute problem. The proliferation of nuclear weapons is becoming a hot topic in the world. In particular, the nuclear issues in the Korean Peninsula and Iran are obviously prominent in international security.

China follows an independent foreign policy. We have not achieved the full reunification of the motherland, we are facing problems of secessionism and subversion, and we have not resolved all disputes over territorial sovereignty. Therefore, we need to broaden our view on security in a wider sense without neglecting traditional security problems.

III. Non-traditional security problems are emerging

The emerging of non-traditional security problems can be dated back to a long time ago.

At present, non-traditional security threats with terrorism as a major form have become more prominent and posed as major problems affecting international security. Non-traditional security problems in the world in 2008 not only included serious terrorist events, but also covered the fields of finance, energy, grain, climate, information, food and public health. These factors are exerting more remarkable impacts on the security of our country.

First of all, we think of the international financial crisis, which has spread rapidly around the world. As the most prominent non-traditional security problem, the crisis has raged from the United States to Europe and Japan, and has affected China's economy, too.

This year is the most difficult one for our economic development in the new century, but big opportunities also lie ahead. We should follow the principle of "securing economic growth, expanding domestic demand and adjusting economic structure" to cope with the difficulties. We should unite people all across the country, and talk to other countries about major issues and jointly deal with current problems, and strengthen potential international collaborations. Regarding the unreasonable international financial order, we should discuss with other countries and promote reforms step by step. We should not take radical approaches, because "haste makes waste", which might do harm to both other countries' economy and our own.

China will not practice trade protectionism, and we are against any forms of trade protectionism in the world. Of course, we will not sacrifice our country's interests at all costs. We need to learn how we can improve our economic situation while strengthening the principles and policies of international economic and trade collaboration.

Secondly, anti-terrorist campaign faces a grave situation.

Terrorist events still cluster in the Middle East, central Asia, South Asia and some African regions, with a high occurrence in central and southern Asia. From January to October 2008, more than 380 terrorist events happened in South Asia, the most shocking of which was the terrorist attacks in Mumbai of India on November 26.

Thirdly, energy security becomes more pressing with the violent fluctuation of international oil prices. To cope with the challenges of energy security has become one of the strategic issues concerning China's sustainable development. The decline of oil price was mainly caused by bad economic expectation, but it is an essential problem for the world's economic security with the fact that there is less and less fossil fuel with petroleum as a major form to drive global development. We have to turn our eye on renewable, clean and sustainable energy, such as hydropower, marsh gas and other biotic energy, wind power, and nuclear power. Although we are against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the extensive use of nuclear energy has been put on agenda. Nuclear energy only accounts for 1.2 percent of our country's total energy supply, which shows a great potential for its development.

Fourthly, the problem of food security is emerging with the fluctuation of international grain prices. In the first half of 2008, the prices of major agricultural products in the world rose drastically. The futures prices of rice and soy bean hit historical highs in 20 years and 34 years respectively, and the price of wheat also struck a historical high. This triggered grain crisis and turbulence in more than 40 countries. Grain prices began to drop in the third quarter of 2008, but the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization said grain prices in the future will generally maintain comparatively high levels due to the unbalanced relationship between supply and demand.

China's grain security is basically guaranteed, with a self-reliance rate of 95 percent. However, we should prepare ourselves for possible crises and disasters, and always put food supply for our 1.3 billion people on top of agenda. Early this year, 15 provincial areas of the country suffered from drought, and the country for the first time mobilized the first-class anti-drought mechanism to ensure grain security.

In addition, the government has set the bottom line of 1.8 billion mu (15 mu equals to one hectare) of farmland to ensure grain security for the 1.3 billion people. China can not depend on other countries to resolve its own food problem.

Fifthly, climate change, information security, and food and public health security are also emerging problems.

IV. The military needs to deal with diversified security threats

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has to step up information-oriented fighting capability to deal with traditional security problems and make efforts to build up an informationized army. It is the essential part for promoting military reforms with Chinese characteristics, and also an essential capacity our military forces need to develop.

At the same time, the military needs to cope with non-traditional security threats under the guidance of the comprehensive security outlook. In fighting the savage spell of freezing weather, sleet and snowstorms in early 2008, the PLA and armed police sent 421,000 persons/time of soldiers and officers, 1.352 million persons/time of militiamen and reservists, and more than 40,000 vehicles/time. After the 8.0-magnitude earthquake struck Sichuan Province on May 12, 2008, troops of the military forces and armed police went to the disaster-stricken areas with the fastest speed. Our military forces mobilized the emergency mechanism at full scale only 13 minutes after the quake took place. About 12,000 armymen and police officers entered the disaster-stricken areas in less than 10 hours after the quake. The military and armed police sent 134,000 persons/time to the disaster areas in a month after the quake.

The PLA also offered large numbers of soldiers and officers for the security work during the Beijing Olympic Games. China focused on its promise to hold "safe Olympics" and finally realized that goal. The military forces mobilized 157,000 officers and soldiers, more than 30,000 of whom were directly responsible for Olympic security. The military also dispatched 33 ships and boats, 74 aircrafts, 38 helicopters and 39 anti-aircraft missile systems.

In addition, the Chinese army actively participated in international peacekeeping cooperation, and took an active role in the UN peacekeeping activities. From 1988 to December 2008, China sent 11,063 persons/time to participate in 18 UN peacekeeping operations, and eight of them died. At present, China has 1,952 military peacekeeping personnel serving in nine UN mission areas and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the largest number of peacekeeping troops among the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The country also stepped up international anti-terrorist cooperation. In August 2005, China and Russia jointly staged the anti-terrorist drill "Peace Mission 2005" in Russia's Vladivostok and in east China's Shandong peninsula and adjacent oceanic areas. On August 9, 2007, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held "Peace Mission 2007" anti-terrorist drill in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and in Russia's Chelyabinsk. The SCO will launch another anti-terrorist drill in Kazakhstan in 2010.

The Chinese military took an active part in international cooperation in fighting sea pirates. On December 20, 2008, China announced the sending of naval vessels to the Somalia Sea to protect civil ships. It was not only out of the need of the country's own shipping safety, but also an important move to strengthen international security cooperation with relevant countries.

In terms of the security outlook in a wider sense, the world needs more necessary collaboration to sustain the international security environment which is vital for every country's development. The PLA should play an important role in this aspect.

In short, interwoven traditional and non-traditional security threats require that the PLA improve its capacity to deal with various security threats and fulfill various military tasks. It has to make unswerving efforts to enhance the core capacity of winning information-based local wars. Meanwhile, the military has to adapt to the

situation of increasing non-traditional security problems and pay special attention to improving its ability of carrying out non-military missions.

Conclusion

China's outlook on comprehensive security was gradually formed in the 30 years of reform and opening up. In the first decade of the 30 years, the world was mired in the Cold War, and the other 20 years was the post-Cold War period. Major changes and adjustments have taken place in international strategic situation and international relations. The current international security situation features a general trend of peace and stability, but obviously there are factors of instability and uncertainty. With traditional security problems interwoven with non-traditional problems, we have to think of crises in peaceful time. Another characteristic of the current international security situation is that contradictions between countries do exist, but common interests in international security sphere are expanding and more chances of cooperation and win-win may arise especially in non-traditional security fields.

On the basis of this view, China has improved its capacity in dealing with various security threats, and strengthened security collaboration through the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other multi-lateral and bilateral mechanisms. Early this year, the China Institute for International Strategic Studies hosted an academic seminar in Shanghai. Participants from China, Russia and the United States believed that the major trend of international politics and economy was multi-polarization and globalization in the new post-Cold War era. In this sense, the "triangle relationship" of China, Russia and the United States featuring alliance and confrontation has ceased to exist. Now the three countries have different bilateral relations between them, and still have different opinions toward some international problems. Furthermore, China and Russia do not accept the U.S. strategy of "leading the world". However, the seminar is of the opinion that it will be beneficial to the three countries and the world's peace and development if the competitive "triangle relationship" is developed into a positively interactive "trilateral relationship". This indicates that it is both necessary and possible to strengthen cooperation in international security.

As to international security cooperation, we advocate the new outlook of "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and collaboration." This coincides with the "Shanghai Spirit" of the SCO: the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, coordination, respect for cultural diversity and desire for common development. Let's make concerted efforts to push forward this spirit!