

Achieving Mutual Reinforcement between High-Quality Development and High-Level Security

China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations Task Force *

Abstract: The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China further emphasized the importance of national security by specifying arrangements for modernizing China's national security system and capacity. It stressed the need to “ensure that high-quality development and greater security reinforce each other,” fully demonstrating China's commitment to and reflecting the natural requirement of balancing development and security on the new journey. To achieve this, China should coordinate the following four aspects. First, domestic and international imperatives. China should steadily advance its national rejuvenation based on an accurate understanding of the once-in-a-century changes taking place in the world, leading global trends with its governance. Second, China's new development pattern and new security architecture. China should accelerate the creation of a new security architecture that aligns with and safeguards its new development pattern. Third, new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities. To achieve high-quality development and high-level security, China must ensure that its new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities effectively integrate with and boost each other. Fourth, Chinese modernization and the path of national security with Chinese characteristics. China should accurately grasp the defining features of its modernization and the path of national security with Chinese characteristics, safeguarding Chinese modernization by modernizing its national security system and capacity.

* The task force is headed by Yang Mingjie, Research Professor and former President of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). Its members include Chen Xiangyang (Research Professor and Director of the Office of the Center for Studies on a Holistic Approach to National Security), Han Liqun (Research Professor at CICIR), Chen Qinghong (Research Professor and Executive Director of CICIR's Institute of World Political Studies), and Cheng Hongliang (Research Professor at the Center for Studies on a Holistic Approach to National Security).

Keywords: high-level security, high-quality development, new quality national security capabilities

The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) stressed that “national security provides a pivotal foundation for ensuring steady and sustained progress in Chinese modernization” and called for ensuring that “high-quality development and greater security reinforce each other.”¹ On May 12, 2025, the Information Office of China’s State Council issued a white paper titled “China’s National Security in the New Era.” The white paper proclaimed that “high-quality development is our primary task, and stagnation leads to insecurity.” It further emphasized, “High-standard security is the prerequisite for high-quality development, and development is impossible without security.”² Achieving mutual reinforcement between high-quality development and high-level security is crucial to balancing development and security on the new journey. It is also of decisive significance for advancing Chinese modernization. Toward that end, China needs to coordinate the following four aspects: domestic and international imperatives; a new development pattern and a new security architecture; new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities; advancing Chinese modernization and pursuing a path of national security with Chinese characteristics.

Pursuing National Rejuvenation amidst Once-in-a-Century Global Changes: A New Historical Stage

General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the ceremony marking the centenary of the CPC. He said:

On the journey ahead, we must demonstrate stronger vigilance and always be prepared for potential danger, even in times of calm. We

¹ “Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, July 21, 2024, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyxw/202407/t20240721_11457437.html.

² “China’s National Security in the New Era,” Foreign Languages Press, <https://flp.com.cn/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025-bai-pi-shu-xin-shi-dai-de-zhong-guo-guo-jia-an-quan.pdf>.

must adopt a holistic approach to national security that balances development and security imperatives, and implement the national rejuvenation strategy within a wider context of the once-in-a-century changes taking place in the world. We need to acquire a full understanding of the new features and requirements arising from the change to the principal contradiction in Chinese society and the new issues and challenges stemming from a complicated international environment. We must be both brave and adept in carrying out our struggle, forging new paths and building new bridges wherever necessary to take us past all risks and challenges.¹

At present, momentous changes not seen in a century are accelerating across the world. Meanwhile, the Chinese nation has made great strides toward its rejuvenation. China has embarked on a new journey to build a modern socialist country in all respects and advance toward the Second Centenary Goal. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the unprecedented world changes are closely intertwined and mutually shaping, presenting new opportunities as well as challenges for China to achieve mutually beneficial interaction between high-quality development and high-level security.

I. Once-in-a-century changes are accelerating worldwide, fraught with immense uncertainties

First, a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is rapidly reshaping the world. Throughout history, every round of scientific and technological revolution has triggered epochal changes. For instance, the First Technological Revolution brought the world into the Age of Steam; the Second Technological Revolution took humanity into the Age of Electricity; the Third Technological Revolution ushered in the Age of Information. Presently, a new round of scientific and technological revolution is well underway. Frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology, and biotechnology, are pushing humanity toward the Age of Intelligence. Compared with its predecessors, the ongoing technological

¹ “Speech by Xi Jinping at a Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the CPC,” Consulate-General of the People’s Republic of China in Frankfurt, July 1, 2021, http://frankfurt.china-consulate.gov.cn/det/zt/KPCh100/202107/t20210701_9007489.htm.

revolution has been characterized by an accelerated pace of innovation. Science and technology are rapidly translating into industrial applications, boosted by breakthroughs in multiple fields and across various dimensions. Burgeoning technological innovation has created numerous new industries, business models, and drivers of growth, contributing to the formation of new quality productive forces. They have become the frontline and main arena of international competition, profoundly reshaping the global order and development pattern. However, rapid technological innovation may bring with it unforeseen risks. As Xi noted, “Science and technology are a sharp weapon for development, and may also become the sources of risks.”¹ In particular, “tech accelerationism” is gaining currency in Western countries, with increasing calls for deregulation. Uncontrolled AI, irreversible gene editing, the threat of quantum technology to encryption systems, and social polarization caused by technological advancements have all emerged as risks and challenges that cannot be ignored amidst the current world changes.

Second, Donald Trump’s second term has sent shockwaves across the world. Today, the United States remains the world’s strongest power. Inevitably, its domestic and foreign policies have significant global implications. Trump’s “America First 2.0” has exacerbated the volatility and instability that plague the world. On the one hand, the second Trump administration has severely damaged the existing international norms, institutions, and mechanisms. Trump has defied the international order forged after World War II by saying that he would not rule out the possibility of using military force to “get Greenland,” annex Canada, and seize control of the Panama Canal, demonstrating an outright disregard for the sovereignty of other nations and attempting to push humanity back into a “jungle world” where might makes right. Moreover, Trump has continued his “America First” agenda and adopted a “use it when it serves American interests and abandon it when it doesn’t” approach to international organizations, withdrawing the United States from the World

¹ Xi Jinping, “Zai zhongguo kexueyuan di ershi ci yuanshi dahui, zhongguo gongchengyuan di shiwu ci yuanshi dahui, zhongguo kexie di shi ci quanguo daibiao dahui shang de jianghua [Speech at the 20th General Assembly of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the 15th General Assembly of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and the 10th National Congress of the China Association for Science and Technology],” May 28, 2021, https://www.xinhuanet.com/2021-05/28/c_1127505377.htm.

Health Organization, the Paris Agreement, and the United Nations Human Rights Council, undermining global governance. He has turned his back on international trade rules and launched a massive “tariff war” against the world, upending the global economic, trade, and financial order. On the other hand, the second Trump administration has accelerated the tectonic shifts in global geopolitics. Trump once directly talked with Russia, without the participation of Ukraine and Europe, on how to end the conflict in Ukraine. This move heightened tensions between the United States and Europe, weakened transatlantic ties, and catalyzed significant adjustments in both United States–Russia and United States–Europe relations. In addition, Trump’s pro-Israel stance and his proposal to “take over” Gaza and relocate Palestinians to neighboring countries have added to the chaos in the Middle East. Instead of preserving the postwar international order, the United States is deliberately destroying it, eroding and endangering the existing order.

II. China is steadily advancing toward its rejuvenation, with a long and rocky road ahead

Under the firm leadership of the CPC, China has achieved its First Centenary Goal as planned and embarked on a new journey of building a great modern socialist country in all respects and advancing toward the Second Centenary Goal.

As Xi said, “The most fundamental and universal desire of our people is to live in a safe and peaceful nation.”¹ To realize national rejuvenation, China needs to satisfy its people’s aspirations for a better life, ensuring that they work and live in contentment. China has made historic achievements in these two respects. To ensure that its people work in contentment, China has withstood external pressures and overcome domestic difficulties. In 2024, China’s gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 5% year on year to 134.9 trillion yuan; it created 12.56 million new urban jobs; its foreign trade reached a record high, and foreign exchange reserves surpassed 3.2 trillion US dollars; per capita disposable income grew by 5.1% in real terms; grain output hit a new high of 1.4 trillion *jin* (700 million metric tons); the value added of

¹ “Xi Jinping: Huiju qi weihu guojia anquan qiangda liliang, buduan tigao renmin qunzhong anquangan, xingfugan [Xi Jinping: Come Together as a Mighty Force for National Security and Enhance People’s Sense of Security and Happiness],” Xinhua, April 14, 2016, https://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-04/14/c_1118625785.htm.

high-tech manufacturing and equipment manufacturing rose by 8.9% and 7.7%, respectively.¹ To ensure that its people live in peace, China has applied a holistic approach to national security, and the Peaceful China Initiative has entered a new stage. In 2024, China witnessed a 25.7% decline in criminal cases compared to the previous year. Cases of public security remained largely unchanged, and the overall public safety situation stayed stable.² The sense of security among the Chinese people rose from 87.55% in 2012 to 98.62% in 2021, and stood at 98.2% in 2023. China is widely considered one of the safest countries in the world.³

Building on existing successes, the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the CPC called for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization, laying out more than 300 reform tasks, which are to be completed by 2029. Xi urged, “Advancing Chinese modernization is a whole new endeavor. On the journey ahead, we will inevitably be confronted with problems, risks, and challenges.”⁴ The world today has entered a period of turbulence and change. On the new journey toward national rejuvenation, China must face obstacles and difficulties head on while staying confident.

III. China’s rejuvenation and the once-in-a-century global changes are closely interconnected and mutually shaping

The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the most significant factor driving the changes that shape the world today. Meanwhile, China’s rejuvenation is deeply influenced and constrained by global changes. The two are mutually influencing and closely interconnected. There is a need to coordinate them effectively, ensuring that they reinforce each other.

¹ Li Qiang, “Report on the Work of the Government—Delivered at the Third Session of the 14th National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China on March 5, 2025,” State Council of the People’s Republic of China, March 12, 2025, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202503/12/content_WS67d17f57c6d0868f4e8f0c0d.html.

² “China Sees 25.7-pct Drop in Criminal Cases in 2024,” State Council of the People’s Republic of China, January 11, 2025, https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/statistics/202501/11/content_WS6781af58c6d0868f4e8eeb6c.html.

³ “Pingan zhongguo chengwei yizhang liangyan ‘guojia mingpian’ [The Peaceful China Initiative has become a shining ‘business card’ for China],” Ministry of Justice of the People’s Republic of China, September 16, 2024, https://www.moj.gov.cn/pub/sfbgw/zwgkztzl/2024nzt202400102/fjqglkxzt0925/fzcj20240925/202409/t20240929_506925.html.

⁴ Xi Jinping, “Explanation of the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization,” https://wb.beijing.gov.cn/en/center_for_international_exchanges/headlines/202407/P020240723343342956125.pdf.

First, the momentous changes we witness today have ushered in a period of high risks for global development and security. Currently, the established international order is unraveling, while a new one is far from being created. Changes are accelerating worldwide, reshaping major-country relations, international norms, and institutional frameworks. Bilateral conflicts, regional hotspots, and global challenges have become more acute. The world has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation. Destabilizing, unforeseen factors and uncertainties are on the rise. China's external environment and national security situation are getting increasingly complex. A pressing challenge China faces is the intensification of US containment. Trump has launched a large-scale tariff war since his second term began. On April 9, 2025, his administration announced a 90-day pause on "reciprocal tariffs" for most nations—but not China, which put China's economic resilience and trade diplomacy to the test. *The Wall Street Journal* reported, "The idea is to extract commitments from U.S. trading partners to isolate China's economy in exchange for reductions in trade and tariff barriers imposed by the White House."¹ Although China and the United States agreed to roll back some of the heavy tariffs imposed against each other after talks in Switzerland on May 12, the 90-day suspension was merely a temporary truce—rather than an end to their trade war. In addition, China faces more security challenges that may hinder its development and cooperation. The return of power politics has eroded international norms and undermined the hard-earned mutual trust between nations, as competition and confrontation rise. As a result, China has experienced significantly increased difficulty in promoting international cooperation and safeguarding its security and development interests. Worse still, extreme weather events, epidemic diseases, and other global threats have become more frequent. These, combined with a series of global governance setbacks, have aggravated the external challenges confronting China. The country faces a daunting task of pursuing high-quality development while maintaining high-level security.

The ongoing transformations, divergences, and restructurings shaping

¹ Gavin Bade and Brian Schwartz, "U.S. Plans to Use Tariff Negotiations to Isolate China," *Wall Street Journal*, April 15, 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/u-s-plans-to-use-tariff-negotiations-to-isolate-china-177d1528>.

our world today also imply unprecedented opportunities. The emerging technological revolution is well underway. For the very first time, China is standing on the same starting line as developed countries, including the United States. In many fields, China is “running abreast” with Western countries or even “leading the pack,” spearheading industrial innovation through technological innovation. This has enabled it to cultivate and develop new quality productive forces in the pursuit of high-quality development. Moreover, China is a natural member of the Global South. The rise of the Global South has effectively checked hegemonism and power politics, contributing to a more multipolar world and more democratic international relations. Global governance is at a historical turning point. China, along with other developing countries, finds new opportunities to make the global governance system more just and reasonable.

Second, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has become a source of stability and certainty in today’s unstable and uncertain world. In recent years, China has made remarkable achievements in various fields. The country is steadily advancing its modernization and has emerged as a force of peace, stability, and progress in the turbulent world. China’s five-year plans for economic and social development have been recognized as the most predictable and stable policy arrangements in a world of uncertainty. China’s high-level opening up has won it increasing confidence and trust from around the world. Amidst the slowdown of globalization and the surge of tariff barriers, China’s vast and ever-growing economy has provided the most dynamic source of development. In 2024, China’s GDP exceeded 130 trillion yuan for the first time. Its increment alone was equivalent to the annual economic output of a medium-sized country. China’s annual contribution to global economic growth has remained about 30%.¹ China has also been a provider of public goods to the international community. It has called for building a community with a shared future for humanity, proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), and the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), and promoted the Belt and Road

¹ “SCIO Briefing on China’s Economic Performance in 2024,” State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, February 25, 2025, http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/pressroom/2025-02/25/content_117731965_4.html.

Initiative, serving as a leader of peaceful development and an oasis of stability and certainty in a world shaped by changes unseen in a century.

Safeguarding China's New Development Pattern with a New Security Architecture: New Historical Achievements

Safeguarding China's new development pattern with a new security architecture is a concrete step toward ensuring both development and security. China has made progress in pursuing a new development pattern. Now, it needs to create a new security architecture commensurate with that development pattern.

I. Accelerating efforts to establish a new development pattern

In April 2020, during a meeting of the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs, Xi urged, for the first time, that China foster a new development pattern that focuses on the domestic economy while emphasizing positive interplay between domestic and international economic flows. This call came at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with protectionism, was wreaking havoc on the world economy and trade. The objective was to promote economic transformation and upgrading, and ensure independent and sustainable development. Over the past five years, China has made remarkable progress in fostering a new development pattern. Strategic consensus is gathering, accompanied by improvements in policies and institutions. China has achieved significant breakthroughs toward high-quality development.

First, building strategic consensus. At the fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, which was held in October 2020, Xi pointed out:

To sum up, entering a new stage of development, applying a new development philosophy, and building a new development dynamic are determined by the logic of China's economic and social development theory, history, and practices. These three elements are closely interrelated. Our entry into the new development stage clarifies the historic juncture that national development has reached, the new development philosophy makes clear the guiding principles behind our modernization drive, and the new development dynamic elucidates the

path that will take us to economic modernization.¹

Understanding the new development stage, applying the new development philosophy, and creating a new development pattern have become the guiding principles for all regions and departments in assessing the situation, devising plans, and advancing their work.

Second, improving policies and institutions. The CPC Central Committee's proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035, adopted at the fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, laid down strategic arrangements for creating a new development pattern. Part IV of the 14th Five-Year Plan was titled “A Robust Domestic Market and a New Development Paradigm,” which consisted of three chapters outlining specific measures to expand domestic demand—something China established as of strategic importance during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. 2025 is the final year of China's 14th Five-Year Plan. Over the past five years, China has introduced and implemented a series of key strategies, including the innovation-driven development strategy, the rural vitalization strategy, the coordinated regional development strategy, and the strategy to turn China into a manufacturing powerhouse. China has steadily expanded institutional opening up and completed a new round of reform in Party and state institutions. Moreover, China has taken reform measures to build a unified national market. Specifically, China has stepped up its efforts to cultivate a development system centered on domestic demand and advanced reforms in critical areas and key segments in an orderly way, thereby enhancing the creativity and competitiveness of various market entities, refining a high-standard market system, and optimizing the functions of Party and state institutions. China has consistently improved its financial management system, science and technology management system, social management system, data management system, and intellectual property management system, building capacity in macroeconomic governance. In 2024 alone, China launched a string of policies, including

¹ Xi Jinping, “Understanding the New Development Stage, Applying the New Development Philosophy, and Creating a New Development Dynamic,” *Qiusi*, July 8, 2021, https://en.qstheory.cn/2021-07/08/c_641137.htm.

gradually raising the statutory retirement age, eliminating all restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector, fully implementing the negative list system for cross-border trade in services, doubling down on unilateral opening up, and expanding unilateral visa-free entry.

Third, steadily pursuing high-quality development. The drastic changes taking place in the world over the past five years have posed enormous challenges to China's achievement of its 14th Five-Year Plan targets. Faced with a complex and challenging situation characterized by mounting external pressures and internal difficulties, the Chinese economy has, overall, maintained stability while making progress. With the steady advancement of various indicators measuring high-quality development, new quality productive forces are rapidly growing in China. For example, China's new energy vehicle production exceeded 13 million units in 2024. The country has made significant achievements in such fields as integrated circuits, AI, and quantum communications. The breakthrough of Chinese AI models typified by DeepSeek, in particular, has driven a systematic leap in China's overall AI strength and laid a solid foundation for future development.

II. Steady progress in building a new security architecture

A new security architecture is urgently needed to ensure security in the pursuit of development; it is also essential to safeguarding China's new development pattern. The CPC Central Committee has urged building a new security architecture that aligns with a new development pattern. Significant progress has been made both theoretically and practically in the 14th Five-Year Plan period.

First, the CPC Central Committee has consistently refined its general design for national security work. On November 18, 2021, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee met to deliberate the National Security Strategy (2021–2025). The meeting emphasized the need to firmly implement a holistic approach to national security under the new circumstances and, for the first time, called for accelerating the creation of a new security architecture. Previously, on December 11, 2020, while presiding over the 26th group study session of the Political Bureau of the 19th CPC Central Committee, Xi stressed

“building a holistic national security architecture.”¹ The shift from “a holistic security architecture” to “a new security architecture” reflects the adjustment in China’s approach to national security in the new era—i.e., safeguarding national security in all areas and stages of the work of the Party and the country and designing systemic plans on an overall basis. The shift also represents higher requirements—a new security architecture entails new requirements for modernizing China’s national security system and capacity, as well as for the means and goals of its national security work, with greater emphasis on proactive shaping. More importantly, the shift bears testimony to the historic leap in the role of national security work and the new responsibilities and missions entrusted to it, as China enters a critical stage of national rejuvenation.

Second, China has constantly improved its institutions, mechanisms, and capacity for safeguarding national security. The third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, convened in November 2013, decided to establish the National Security Commission (NSC). As Xi said:

Currently we are challenged by pressure from two sources: Internationally we must safeguard state sovereignty, national security and our development interests, and domestically we need to maintain political and social stability. All kinds of foreseeable and unforeseeable risks are increasing significantly, but our security system is not good enough to meet the demands of ensuring national security. We need to establish a strong platform to coordinate our national security work. For this purpose, establishing the National Security Commission to strengthen unified leadership of national security at the central level has become an urgent matter.²

Almost 12 years on, China has established a centralized, high-performing,

¹ “Xi Stresses Building Holistic National Security Architecture,” State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, December 13, 2020, http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2020-12/13/content_77006930.htm.

² Xi Jinping, “Explanatory Notes to the ‘Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Continuing the Reform,’” *Qiushi*, November 9, 2013, https://en.qstheory.cn/2020-10/12/c_1004934.htm.

and authoritative leadership system for national security. China's national security work has undergone a historic transformation from fragmentation to centralization, inefficiency to efficiency, and passivity to proactivity. Its national security system has taken shape, with national security capacity significantly improved and public national security awareness strengthened. Sustained social stability has made China one of the safest countries in the world, providing firm foundations for establishing a new security architecture. Guided by the principle of ensuring both development and security, the CPC Central Committee has urged pursuing high-level security to safeguard high-quality development. At the 26th group study session of the Political Bureau of the 19th CPC Central Committee, Xi put forward 10 requirements for pursuing a holistic approach to national security. One of the requirements was "balancing development and security," which stressed the need to "achieve mutually beneficial interaction between high-quality development and high-level security." High-level security has thus become the overarching goal of China's new security architecture.

Third, China has achieved many victories in its struggle to safeguard national security. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi at its core, China has engaged in a series of practical struggles to safeguard and shape its security, achieving significant results. Examples include the China–United States trade friction in 2018, the turbulence over the amendment bill in Hong Kong in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020, and the tariff war Trump has launched since returning to power in 2025. Simultaneously, China has devoted unprecedented efforts to national security legislation and education. It has developed more legal tools to safeguard national security and significantly raised public readiness regarding national security. In short, China has accelerated the creation of a new security architecture that tackles both domestic and international challenges, addresses both the symptoms and root causes of security challenges, and encourages multi-dimensional coordination with clear priorities, in efforts to safeguard its rejuvenation.

III. Mutual reinforcement between a new development pattern and a new security architecture to advance Chinese modernization

The CPC Central Committee has called for pursuing a new development pattern and creating a new security architecture, stressing the importance of

safeguarding China's new development pattern with a new security architecture, which reflects the principle of ensuring both development and security. It is also a strategic measure to accelerate the modernization of China's national security system and capacity, and advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through Chinese modernization.

First, China has developed a profound understanding of the dialectical relationship between development and security, along with the principle of ensuring both development and security. Adhering to systematic thinking and ensuring security in the pursuit of development are the hallmarks of the CPC's innovative theories concerning national security in the new era, and also constitute the main theoretical bedrock underpinning the practice of safeguarding China's new development pattern with a new security architecture. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, Xi has repeatedly expounded the dialectical relationship between development and security, constantly promoting this theoretical innovation. For instance, on February 17, 2017, while presiding over a seminar on national security, Xi for the first time called for coordinating development and security. On December 11, 2020, at the 26th group study session of the Political Bureau of the 19th CPC Central Committee, Xi urged:

We must consider development and security as of equal importance, and work to achieve mutually beneficial interaction between high-quality development and high-level security. We will improve our ability to maintain national security through development, and at the same time try to create a safe environment conducive to social and economic development through innovations in the approach, mechanisms and methods for ensuring national security. Taking greater account of security factors in pursuing development, we will try to achieve a dynamic balance and increase our capacity to perform our duties for national security.¹

In March 2023, Xi delivered a speech at the closing meeting of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), and stressed:

¹ Xi Jinping, "Pursue a Holistic Approach to National Security," *Qiushi*, December 11, 2020, https://en.qstheory.cn/2023-09/22/c_921766.htm.

Security is the foundation of development and stability is the prerequisite for prosperity. We must resolutely pursue a holistic approach to national security, improve the national security system, strengthen our capacity for safeguarding national security, enhance public security governance, and improve the social governance system. With this new security architecture, we will be able to better safeguard China's new pattern of development.¹

Second, China has launched a series of strategic plans. The 19th National Congress of the CPC held in October 2017 made it clear that ensuring both development and security “is a major principle underlying the Party’s governance.”² The fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee further included “ensuring both development and security” in the guiding principles for pursuing economic and social development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. The report to the 20th National Congress of the CPC devoted a special section to “modernizing China’s national security system and capacity and safeguarding national security and social stability.” For the first time, the report called for safeguarding China’s new development pattern with a new security architecture. Toward this end, China should increase efforts on “improving the national security system,” “strengthening our capacity for safeguarding national security,” “enhancing public safety governance,” and “improving the social governance system.”³ On May 30, 2023, while presiding over the first meeting of the NSC under the 20th CPC Central Committee, Xi urged modernizing China’s national security system and capacity and safeguarding China’s new development pattern with a new security architecture. “Efforts should be made to create a favorable external security environment, better ensure security for opening up, and promote the deep integration of

¹ “Full Text of Xi Jinping’s Speech at First Session of 14th NPC,” State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, March 15, 2023, http://english.scio.gov.cn/m/topnews/2023-03/15/content_85168965.htm.

² Xi Jinping, “Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era—Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” October 18, 2017, https://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping’s_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf.

³ “Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, August 2, 2023, <https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english2023/tjzl/cpcjj/20thPartyCongrressReport/>.

development and security.”¹ This remark demonstrated a high level of vigilance amidst the turbulent and unsettled international environment; it also highlighted the role of a new security architecture in fostering a favorable external security environment. On February 28, 2025, Xi stressed at the 19th group study session of the Political Bureau of the 20th CPC Central Committee:

Party committees and governments at all levels must adhere to systems thinking, further reinforce the concept that both development and security are of paramount importance, and consciously coordinate development and security in their work by pursuing joint planning and unified deployment for mutual reinforcement.²

On April 30, 2025, Xi presided over a symposium on China’s economic and social development in the 15th Five-Year Plan period. After listening to opinions and suggestions from leading officials of several provincial regions, Xi pointed out, “Greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring both development and security, with a comprehensive assessment of domestic and external risks and challenges.”³ He urged efforts to improve China’s national security system and capacity, promote mutually beneficial interaction between high-quality development and high-level security through efficient governance, and safeguard China’s new development pattern with a new security architecture. Xi’s above instructions laid down arrangements for implementing the spirit of the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee as China’s 14th Five-Year Plan nears completion, demonstrating his accurate assessment of changes both in and outside China and leadership in formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan. Overall, ensuring both development and security, safeguarding China’s new development pattern with a new security architecture, and achieving mutually beneficial interaction between high-quality development

¹ “Xi Urges Accelerated Efforts to Modernize National Security System, Capacity,” State Council of the People’s Republic of China, May 30, 2023, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202305/30/content_WS6475e94fc6d03ffcca6ed801.html.

² “Xi Stresses Advancing Peaceful China Initiative to Higher Level,” Xinhua, March 3, 2025, <https://english.news.cn/20250303/1780603fe2f2406886f74599f550080d/c.html>.

³ “Xi Stresses Sound Planning for Economic, Social Development in 2026–2030,” International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, April 30, 2025, https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english2023/ttxw_5749/202505/t20250527_167023.html.

and high-level security have become major principles guiding China's sustainable development on the journey ahead.

Developing New Quality Productive Forces and New Quality National Security Capabilities: New Historical Opportunities

Amidst accelerating global changes, China faces an increasingly complex international environment and the challenging tasks of promoting reform and development while maintaining stability at home. The country needs high-quality development to advance its modernization, which calls for accelerating the cultivation of new quality productive forces. Meanwhile, high-level security is indispensable for safeguarding Chinese modernization, and enhancing new quality national security capabilities is vital to this goal. China needs to ensure both development and security—more specifically, high-quality development and high-level security—on its new journey, which presents a valuable opportunity for boosting new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities in a coordinated manner.

I. Accelerating the formation of new quality productive forces is essential for high-quality development

As Xi said, “Productive forces are what fundamentally drive the development of human society and are the final cause of all social and political changes.”¹ Since the launch of reform and opening up, China has dedicated itself to liberating and developing productive forces. The Chinese economy has grown rapidly for over 40 consecutive years and is now the world's second largest. The Chinese nation has achieved the tremendous transformation from standing up and growing prosperous to becoming strong, completing the First Centenary Goal on time. Based on the historical experience of other nations, changes in the international environment, and its own economic reality, China needs to pursue high-quality development if it is to continue its modernization drive. Promoting new quality productive forces is essential—and a key priority—for high-quality development.

First, international and historical experiences have demonstrated that

¹ Xi Jinping, “Advancing New Quality Productive Forces Is Essential and a Key Priority for Fostering High-Quality Development,” TheoryChina, December 2, 2024, <https://en.theorychina.org.cn/c/2024-12-02/1516943.shtml>.

unleashing new quality productive forces is the prerequisite for high-quality development. Throughout the scientific and technological revolutions and industrial transformations the world has undergone since modern times, countries that rose to global leadership did so by developing productive forces that were well ahead of their times and by boosting economic transformation and upgrading. For instance, steam power was one of the most significant technological breakthroughs of the First Technological Revolution in Britain, which triggered industrial and transportation revolutions and gradually earned Britain the title of “the workshop of the world.” The West thus entered the era of capitalism and colonialism, drastically transforming the world’s political landscape. Pathbreaking inventions such as electricity and internal combustion engines alongside the expansion of the chemical industries during the Second Technological Revolution enabled rapid economic growth in the United States. They significantly elevated its composite national strength and paved the way for its later hegemony. The advancement of nuclear energy, computers, and space technology during the Third Technological Revolution took humanity into the age of information and economic globalization, laying the groundwork for the United States to emerge as the world’s sole superpower. Currently, the Fourth Technological Revolution, represented by AI, is in full swing. Only by unleashing new quality productive forces and achieving high-quality development can China advance its modernization and win the global race.

Second, the profound changes taking place in the international environment have necessitated accelerated cultivation of new quality productive forces toward high-quality development. Currently, momentous changes are unfolding worldwide, with transformations and turbulences intertwined. In particular, the United States is overhauling its domestic and foreign strategies, intensifying its “America First” obsession, pursuing unilateralism and protectionism, and bullying other countries, which has escalated the “great-power competition,” added fuel to anti-globalization sentiment, and once again pushed the world to the edge of regression and confrontation. China’s external environment is becoming increasingly challenging and complex. To effectively tackle the international competition and various challenges and risks, China needs to enhance its composite national strength through high-quality development. Toward this end, it must further liberate and develop productive

forces. Most importantly, China needs to accelerate the formation of new quality productive forces characterized by high technology, high performance, and high quality. Simultaneously, it must foster relations of production that align with new quality productive forces, positioning itself at the forefront of the times.

Third, China's economic reality also calls for accelerating the development of new quality productive forces. Xi stressed in his report to the 19th National Congress of the CPC that "China's economy has been transitioning from a phase of rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development."¹ This transition reflects the laws of economic development and is in fact a strategic choice by the CPC Central Committee, keeping pace with the times. Recent years have witnessed subdued economic recovery worldwide. Some developed countries, in particular, have found their economic growth losing steam, development paths remaining unclear, and imbalances widening between development and security. All these have deteriorated China's external development environment. Worse, the Chinese population is rapidly aging, and the country is facing increased pressure in terms of environmental protection. As a result, China finds it increasingly difficult to sustain the traditional growth model. Economic transformation and upgrading are urgently needed to achieve high-quality development. Therefore, China must step up its efforts to develop new quality productive forces based on the conditions of different regions. Moreover, China should promote industrial innovation through technological innovation, striving for new advantages in international technological, economic, and trade competition.

II. Improving new quality national security capabilities is crucial to high-level security

The 20th National Congress of the CPC and the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee both made strategic arrangements for modernizing China's national security system and capacity, calling for strengthening its capabilities, especially by leveraging science and technology, to safeguard national security. On the journey ahead, China must ensure both

¹ Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era—Delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China."

development and security. It must cultivate new quality productive forces conforming to the needs of high-quality development, and at the same time improve new quality national security capabilities to ensure high-level security. Advancing new quality productive forces is essential—and a key priority—for fostering high-quality development. Similarly, enhancing new quality national security capabilities is crucial—and a key priority—for achieving high-level security.

The increasing complexity of China's national security environment calls for enhancing new quality national security capabilities. Drastic changes are currently taking place in China's development environment both at home and abroad. Domestically, challenges persist. For instance, China's domestic demand remains insufficient; the fundamentals underpinning its economic recovery need further consolidation; numerous risks and dangers are lurking in key areas; short-term pains will be inevitable in the transition from old to new drivers of growth. Internationally, China faces challenges such as the resurgence of protectionism, the confluence of unilateralism and geopolitical conflicts, and an unsteady world economy. Particularly, the United States is stubbornly clinging to the obsolete zero-sum game mentality and continuing containment of China in an attempt to sustain its hegemony, adding more complications to China's security environment. These realities have presented higher requirements for China's national security capabilities, necessitating a holistic approach to national security. In the face of various risks and challenges, China must uphold a holistic perspective, focusing on building new quality national security capabilities.

The diversification of national security risks calls for enhancing new quality national security capabilities. Amidst changes in China's national security environment, the country is facing more foreseeable and unforeseeable risks and challenges. For instance, challenges in the field of traditional security have become even more complex, affecting China's political, military, and homeland security. In the field of non-traditional security, apart from extreme weather events, a growing number of security issues, including economic security, technology security, biosecurity, data security, AI security, and energy security, have emerged, with their impact increasingly felt. Against the backdrop of intensifying China–United States strategic rivalry, legal struggles

are being fought in foreign-related fields against foreign sanctions or long-arm jurisdiction. In addition, with the Chinese economy “going global” with big strides, issues such as protecting Chinese personnel and interests abroad have become more prominent. Faced with diversified national security risks, China urgently needs to enhance new quality national security capabilities.

Enhancing new quality national security capabilities is crucial to achieving high-level security. National security encompasses several key elements: the status of security, the awareness of security, and the capabilities to safeguard national security—the last element directly affects the former two. Given the increasingly complex national security environment and diversified national security risks, China must enhance new quality national security capabilities to constantly improve the status of its national security and raise its people’s sense of security, forestalling and defusing various security risks that arise in the pursuit of high-quality development, thus safeguarding high-quality development through high-level security.

III. Efforts should be intensified to ensure that new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities effectively integrate with and boost each other

Accurately understanding the relationship between and effectively coordinating new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities is not only a theoretical issue, but one of great practical significance. During the second session of the 14th NPC on March 5, 2024, Xi stressed focusing on high-quality development as the top priority, urging efforts to develop new quality productive forces according to local conditions.¹ Xi’s views provide us with fundamental guidance for appropriately understanding and balancing new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities. Both new quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities should focus on serving and safeguarding high-quality development as the top priority; in this sense, they are highly unified. Moreover, new quality national security capabilities are a concrete manifestation of new quality productive forces in the realm of national security—they reinforce each

¹ “Xi Stresses Developing New Quality Productive Forces According to Local Conditions,” State Council of the People’s Republic of China, March 5, 2024, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202403/05/content_WS65e722bdc6d0868f4e8e4b87.html.

other and evolve in tandem.

New quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities are highly unified. Based on insights into the world's current technological revolution and industrial transformation, Xi has creatively introduced the concept of new quality productive forces, with a focus on pursuing a new development pattern to achieve high-quality development. With an entirely new perspective, this concept has deepened the CPC's understanding of the laws governing the development of productive forces, thereby inheriting and carrying forward the Marxist theory of productive forces. To accelerate the development of new quality productive forces, China should vigorously boost innovation in science and technology, spur industrial innovation, pursue a new model of development, take solid steps to advance institutional innovations, and introduce new mechanisms for talent management.¹ To build new quality national security capabilities, China should leverage science and technology, innovate the methods and pathways to safeguard national security, reform and improve its national security institutions and mechanisms, and strengthen the cultivation of national security professionals. New quality productive forces and new quality national security capabilities are highly unified and symbiotic. New quality national security capabilities are the concrete manifestation of new quality productive forces in the field of national security, and the effective improvement of new quality national security capabilities in turn provides strong guarantees for the development of new quality productive forces.

The growth of new quality productive forces will effectively enhance China's new quality national security capabilities. New quality productive forces, formed through technological and industrial innovation, can translate into lasting drivers of high-quality development while, at the same time, boosting China's new quality national security capabilities. For example, China has fully leveraged its new system for mobilizing resources nationwide, adopted a problem-oriented approach, and accelerated the building of self-reliance and strength in science and technology. China has managed to relieve the stranglehold some countries attempt to tighten on its development

¹ Xi Jinping, "Advancing New Quality Productive Forces Is Essential and a Key Priority for Fostering High-Quality Development."

of core technologies, break the technological blockades imposed by Western countries, and gain advantages in emerging industries, thereby putting itself in a favorable position to win international competition. This trend is most evident in such fields as new energy vehicles and AI. While generating economic benefits, these technological advancements can also transform into new quality national security capabilities, enhancing China's ability to respond to risks and challenges, contributing to high-level security, and providing robust security support for China's high-quality development and modernization.

Advancing Chinese Modernization along the Path of National Security with Chinese Characteristics: A New Historical Journey

The present and the near future constitute a critical period for China's endeavor to build a great country and move toward national rejuvenation on all fronts through modernization. It is also a period of turbulence and change, with instability and uncertainty increasing in China's external environment. To safeguard Chinese modernization, China must focus its national security work on the central task of the CPC, following a path of national security with Chinese characteristics and modernizing its national security system and capacity.

I. Promoting Chinese modernization as the “foremost politics”

Xi said in his report to the 20th National Congress of the CPC:

From this day forward, the central task of the Communist Party of China will be to lead the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in a concerted effort to realize the Second Centenary Goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization.¹

Advancing Chinese modernization is the CPC's central task on the journey ahead. The Central Economic Work Conference held in December 2023

¹ “Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

stressed, “Promoting Chinese modernization must be upheld as the foremost politics.”¹ This important judgment is made by the CPC Central Committee, with Xi at its core, based on a comprehensive analysis of the international and domestic environments, along with a deep understanding of the underlying laws of Chinese modernization. Chinese modernization is socialist modernization pursued under the leadership of the CPC. It contains elements that are common to the modernization processes of all countries, but it is more characterized by features that are unique to the Chinese context. China must follow its own path to modernization, pursuing steady and sustained progress through a coordinated and targeted approach.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of a huge population. As Xi pointed out:

Chinese modernization is unprecedented in human history in terms of both scale and difficulty. A huge population provides ample human resources and a vast market, but it also poses many problems and challenges. Ensuring that all our people are fed is a tough challenge to begin with, and there are other issues to be resolved, such as employment, income distribution, education, health care, housing, eldercare, and childcare. None of these issues can be easily solved and each of them involves an enormous number of people.²

China is working to achieve modernization for more than 1.4 billion people, a number larger than the combined population of all developed countries in the world today. This is a task of unparalleled difficulty. The road ahead remains long and bumpy. China has every reason to feel proud and confident about itself; however, it is equally necessary for the nation to maintain self-caution and self-improvement. China has a large economy, but its GDP per capita remains relatively low, and it is facing new challenges stemming from a

¹ “Xi Delivers Important Speech at Central Economic Work Conference,” State Council of the People’s Republic of China, December 14, 2023, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202312/14/content_WS657aacdec6d0868f4e8e22a5.html.

² Xi Jinping, “Building China’s Strength and Advancing Its Rejuvenation through Modernization Drive,” *Qiushi*, May 16, 2025, https://en.qstheory.cn/2025-05/16/c_1093426.htm.

shrinking and structurally aging population. While emphasizing the importance of technological empowerment, China needs to maximize the benefits and minimize the possible downsides of technological advancements, such as AI.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of prosperity for all. Achieving common prosperity is a defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics and involves a long historical process. The immutable goal of China's modernization drive is to meet its people's aspirations for a better life. China will endeavor to maintain and promote social fairness and justice, bring prosperity to all, and prevent polarization. Xi stressed, "We have developed a complete set of guidelines, principles, institutions, policies, and measures to deliver prosperity for all. As we work to pursue high-quality development and strive to make the economic 'pie' bigger and better, we need to share it more fairly."¹ Pursuing common prosperity highlights the strengths of China's socialist system, which advocates shared prosperity through collaboration and equitable distribution, in contrast to the American style of modernization characterized by wealth inequality and polarization. However, China also faces the practical challenge of a widening income gap. Therefore, it needs to deepen reform on its distribution system and narrow the income gap between different social strata, regions, and groups, persistently and steadily achieving prosperity for all.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of material and cultural–ethical advancement. Material abundance and cultural–ethical enrichment are fundamental goals of socialist modernization. Material want is not socialism, nor is cultural impoverishment. In addition to creating abundant material wealth, Chinese modernization also strives for cultural–ethical enrichment. While continuing to consolidate the material foundation for modernization and improve the material conditions for people's well-being, China aims to develop advanced socialist culture, foster strong ideals and convictions, and carry forward its cultural heritage. China will thus promote all-around material abundance as well as people's well-rounded development. The modernization China pursues is healthy and all-encompassing. It attaches equal importance to material development and cultural–ethical progress, ensuring that the

¹ Ibid.

two reinforce each other and advance together. China rejects “materialistic modernization,” as represented by mammonism, which is biased, obsolete, and distorted. Therefore, China needs to ensure both development and security, safeguarding cultural and ideological security.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of harmony between humanity and nature. Humanity and nature make up a community of life. If we extract from nature without limit or inflict damage on it, we are bound to face its retaliation. Respecting, adapting to, and protecting nature to promote harmony between nature and humanity is a salient feature of Chinese modernization. China is committed to sustainable development, prioritizing resource conservation and environmental protection while allowing nature to restore itself. China will protect nature and the environment as we humans cherish our eyes, and continue to pursue a model of sound development featuring improved production, higher living standards, and healthy ecosystems to ensure the sustainable development of the Chinese nation. China will never sacrifice the environment in exchange for modernization. Contrarily, it respects science, treats nature with awe, and pursues harmonious, green, and sustainable modernization. Chinese modernization seeks harmony between humanity and nature, alongside ecological improvement and intergenerational equity. China strongly opposes the destructive exploitation of nature, because that will “eat our seed corn.”

Chinese modernization is the modernization of peaceful development. In pursuing modernization, China will not tread the old path of war, colonization, and plunder taken by some countries. That brutal and blood-stained path of enrichment at the expense of others caused great suffering for the people of developing countries. China will stand firmly on the right side of history and the side of human progress. Dedicated to peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, China will strive to safeguard world peace and development as it pursues its own development. China will make greater contributions to world peace and development through its own development. Chinese modernization advocates self-discipline, self-reliance, inclusiveness, and progress, dedicated to promoting positive interaction and win–win cooperation between China and the rest of the world, as opposed to the colonial expansion by Western powers in modern times and the hegemonic, high-handed, and bullying acts by certain

countries we witness today. Chinese modernization will break the logic that predestines a rising country to hegemony, and open new horizons for world multipolarity and the peaceful rise of major countries in the era of globalization.

Advancing Chinese modernization is a great and arduous endeavor; many challenges await despite its rosy future. At present, momentous changes unseen in a century are accelerating worldwide. A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is well underway, and a significant shift is taking place in the international balance of power, presenting new strategic opportunities for China's development. At the same time, however, a backlash against globalization is rising, accompanied by the resurgence of unilateralism and protectionism. The world economic recovery remains sluggish, regional conflicts and disturbances are frequent, and global issues have become more acute. Trump's second term as US President has been accompanied by an escalation of his "America First" policy, as illustrated by his narrow pursuit of profit and attempt to reverse progress, pushing the world into a new period of turbulence and change. China faces many deep-seated problems regarding reform, development, and stability that cannot be avoided or bypassed, while external attempts to suppress and contain it may escalate at any time. China has entered a period of development in which strategic opportunities, risks, and challenges are concurrent, with uncertainties and unforeseen factors on the increase. Various "black swan" and "gray rhino" events may occur at any time. China must therefore be more mindful of potential dangers, be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios, and be ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms. China must meet obstacles and difficulties head on, ensure both development and security, and dig deep to surmount the difficulties and challenges on the road ahead. Harnessing its indomitable fighting spirit, China will open up new horizons for its cause. Advancing Chinese modernization is highly difficult given the complex and intertwined challenges China faces both at home and abroad. National security work is urgently needed to safeguard Chinese modernization. It is imperative that the country unwaveringly implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC and the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, stick to a path of national security with Chinese characteristics, and safeguard its modernization drive by modernizing

its national security system and capacity.

II. Steadily advancing Chinese modernization along the path of national security with Chinese characteristics

First, to advance its modernization, China must firmly stay on the path of national security with Chinese characteristics. Choosing the right path is crucial to the cause of the Party and the people. As the saying goes, “The direction determines the path, and the path determines the future.” A wrong path will lead nowhere and may even disrupt China’s march to national rejuvenation. In judging whether a particular path works, one needs to see whether it fits a country’s actual conditions, whether it responds to the call of the times, whether it delivers economic development, social progress, and political stability, whether it improves people’s lives, whether it wins public support, and whether it contributes to the progressive cause of humanity. The uniqueness of China’s cultural tradition, history, and circumstances determines that China needs to follow a development path that suits its own reality—the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Chinese people, under the leadership of the CPC, have blazed this path through innumerable hardships and great sacrifices. It is the right path that conforms to the times and China’s reality. As history has shown and will continue to bear witness to, only socialism can save China; only socialism with Chinese characteristics can deliver development to China; and only by upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics can China realize its dream of national rejuvenation.

While presiding over the first meeting of the NSC of the CPC Central Committee on April 15, 2014, Xi delivered an important speech, in which he for the first time proposed a holistic approach to national security and, also for the first time, called for pursuing a path of national security with Chinese characteristics. The path of national security with Chinese characteristics is, in essence, an embodiment of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the realm of national security, demonstrating China’s confidence in its path in terms of national security work in the new era. In the final analysis, upholding the path of national security with Chinese characteristics aims to ensure that China’s advance toward national rejuvenation will not be hindered or obstructed. Therefore, it is necessary to fully grasp the key features characterizing the path of national security with Chinese characteristics.

(i) Maintaining the CPC's absolute leadership, improving the centralized, high-performing, and authoritative leadership system for national security, and integrating the people's security, political security, and the primacy of China's national interests. The path of national security with Chinese characteristics takes the people's security as its ultimate goal, protecting the safety of the Chinese people; identifies political security as its fundamental task, consolidating the CPC's position as the governing party; and emphasizes the primacy of China's national interests, aligning with the practice of sovereign countries worldwide. In sum, the path of national security with Chinese characteristics is dedicated to ensuring the people's security, political security, and the primacy of China's national interests as an organic whole, safeguarding China's security through a coordinated approach.

(ii) Defending China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, especially by ensuring stability and order in its border and neighboring regions. Sovereignty and territorial integrity are fundamental to China's core interests, influencing its political and homeland security. The path of national security with Chinese characteristics resolutely defends, effectively safeguards, and proactively shapes China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

(iii) Ensuring both development and security—more specifically, obtaining a dynamic equilibrium between high-quality development and high-level security. The fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee urged “ensuring both development and security” as one of the guiding principles for pursuing economic and social development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. The path of national security with Chinese characteristics emphasizes ensuring security in the pursuit of development, proactively shaping a relatively secure and generally favorable environment for China's sustainable and high-quality development both at home and abroad.

(iv) Adopting a holistic and coordinated approach to traditional and non-traditional security. The path of national security with Chinese characteristics safeguards and shapes China's security under the guidance of a holistic approach to national security. It advances national security in various fields, addresses both traditional and non-traditional security threats, and emphasizes inter-agency and inter-sector coordination and collaboration.

(v) Firmly pursuing peaceful development. The path of national security

with Chinese characteristics emphasizes finding a balance between China's security and the common security of the world. Globally, it advocates common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, implements the GSI, opposes “zero-sum security” or “absolute security,” and promotes a community of shared security for humanity.

Second, China should safeguard its modernization by modernizing its national security system and capacity. The path of national security with Chinese characteristics strives to modernize China's national security system and capacity, as manifested by its national security institutions and their operational capabilities. Modernizing China's national security system and capacity is crucial to—and provides key underpinnings for—Chinese modernization. Since the establishment of the NSC, China has laid down the main framework for its national security system, created a theoretical system for national security, and improved the relevant strategy system. China has established mechanisms for coordinating national security work, strengthening national security on all fronts. Looking ahead, China must implement the spirit of the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee and modernize its national security system and capacity at a quicker pace.

The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization, adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, included “advancing the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level” into its overall objectives, and devoted a special section to “modernizing China's national security system and capacity.” The resolution urged, “We must fully apply a holistic approach to national security, improve the institutions and mechanisms for safeguarding national security, and ensure that high-quality development and greater security reinforce each other, so as to safeguard the country's long-term stability and security.”¹

(i) Improving the public security governance mechanisms and the social governance system to build a higher-level Peaceful China. At the 19th group study session of the Political Bureau of the 20th CPC Central Committee, Xi

¹ “Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

stressed:

Building a higher-level Peaceful China bears on the full development of our undertakings, the well-being of the people, and the long-term stability of the country. We must unwaveringly implement a holistic approach to national security, and make sustained efforts to enhance national security, social order, governance effectiveness and public satisfaction, thereby advancing the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level.¹

A holistic approach to national security provides important guidance for advancing the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level. China must unwaveringly implement a holistic approach to national security, working tirelessly to improve the well-being of its people, promote prosperity for all, protect the people's legitimate rights and interests, and maintain social fairness and justice. It should also strengthen its social governance system alongside the institutions and mechanisms for social work, fostering a community of social governance in which everyone fulfills their responsibilities and shares in the benefits. China must give top priority to its political security, resolutely safeguarding the security of its state power, systems, and ideology. In addition, China should improve its public safety system, shifting public safety governance toward a model of prevention; bolster disaster prevention, mitigation, and relief efforts; and enhance workplace safety, food and drug safety, cybersecurity, and AI security, forestalling risks in key areas. China should apply and further develop the "*Fengqiao* model" for community-level governance in the new era, promoting law-based handling of public complaints and proposals, promptly and effectively resolving social problems and disputes, improving the integrated system for maintaining law and order, and boosting public participation in crime prevention and control.

(ii) Improving the mechanisms for ensuring national security in foreign-related affairs and proactively shaping a generally favorable external security environment for advancing Chinese modernization. Chinese

¹ "Xi Stresses Advancing Peaceful China Initiative to Higher Level," Xinhua.

modernization is the modernization of peaceful development. China is firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, dedicated to promoting a community with a shared future for humanity. It champions the common values of all humanity, pursues the GDI, GSI, GCI, and GGI, and advocates for an equal and orderly multipolar world alongside universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. It engages in leading the reform and development of the global governance system while resolutely safeguarding its own sovereignty, security, and development interests. China should establish sound coordination mechanisms for promoting security in neighboring regions. Specifically, China must implement the guiding principles of the Central Conference on Work Related to Neighboring Countries, maintain regional stability with its neighbors, and deepen security and law enforcement cooperation against various risks and challenges. Meanwhile, China should strengthen its institutions and mechanisms for early warning, prevention, control, and protection against risks to its interests and investments overseas and boost international law enforcement cooperation in the realm of security to protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas. Mechanisms for countering foreign sanctions, interference, and long-arm jurisdiction should also be improved. Last but not least, China should enhance the mechanisms for safeguarding its maritime rights and interests, as well as those for its participation in global security governance.

Entering the new era, China has unwaveringly pursued a holistic approach to national security, given equal importance to development and security, and managed to sustain the two miracles of rapid economic growth and enduring social stability. On the journey ahead, China should fully implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC and the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, striving for mutually beneficial interaction between high-quality development and high-level security, to ensure steady and sustained progress in Chinese modernization.

(edited by Chen Qingyi)