

Deepening National Security Reforms to Guarantee Consistent Advancement in Chinese Modernization

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Abstract: Persistent efforts are needed to fully implement the guiding principles of the third plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and advance the reform of China's national security work on the new journey that lies ahead. All of us in the Party should never forget our original aspiration. Since the advent of the new era, China has pushed forward and made remarkable achievements in reforming its national security work, undergoing a process of constant evolvement and continuous improvement. The third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee could be deemed the starting point of comprehensively deepening reform in the new era, opening a new epoch for reforming and innovating China's national security work. It identified modernizing China's system and capacity for governance as the overall goal of further deepening reform comprehensively and, most significantly, made a historic decision to establish the National Security Commission, having far-reaching impacts. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed pursuing a holistic approach to national security, which provides us with fundamental guidance for further reform. The new version of the National Security Law of the People's Republic of China fully covers China's national security system and will guide the improvement of its legal system for national security in the new era. The fourth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee called for improving China's national security system in efforts to modernize the country's system and capacity for governance. The 20th CPC National Congress clarified the Party's central task on the new journey and made strategic plans for safeguarding Chinese modernization through modernizing the country's national

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security system and capacity. The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee carried forward the spirit of the above meetings, from the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee to the 20th CPC National Congress, reiterating the importance of further deepening reform comprehensively on the new journey, emphasizing national security as the foundation for advancing Chinese modernization, and setting out the road map and agenda for modernizing China's national security system and capacity in the next five years. Therefore, we must study and implement the guiding principles of the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee.

Keywords: Chinese modernization, deepening reform comprehensively, modernizing China's national security system and capacity, third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee

Comprehensively deepening reform represents a crucial instrument for the Communist Party of China (CPC) to achieve remarkable accomplishments in governance in the contemporary era. Advancing Chinese modernization constitutes the central objective of the Party and represents the most significant political undertaking in China's new development stage. Modernizing China's national security system and capacity is a necessary part of further deepening reform comprehensively and advancing Chinese modernization.

The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee was held in July 2024, marking the 10th anniversary of Chinese President Xi Jinping's proposal of a holistic approach to national security. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization was adopted at this session, placing greater emphasis on safeguarding national security, making new plans for modernizing China's national security system and capacity, and pointing out the direction for deepening national security reform on the new journey. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, reforms in the field of national security have been a crucial part of the historical process of comprehensively deepening reform. It will also be a guarantee for further deepening reform comprehensively and promoting Chinese modernization on the new journey.

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee Opened a New Era of National Security Reform in China

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, in the face of a more complex and severe national security situation, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has attached greater importance to national security work, focusing on the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The CPC Central Committee has promoted the reform of China's national security system and mechanisms, implemented a holistic approach to national security, and strengthened the Party's absolute leadership over national security work. These actions have facilitated the achievement of historic levels of success in China's national security cause. The third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee was the starting point for comprehensively deepening reform in the new era. To understand the latest spirit of the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, it is necessary to review the reform process of national security since the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee.

First, according to the decision of the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, the National Security Commission (NSC) was established. The third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, held in Beijing from November 9 to 12, 2013, is heralded as a milestone. The Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform was passed at this session, which pointed out that the overall goal of comprehensively deepening reform is to improve and develop the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance, and proposed establishing a national security commission to improve the national security system and strategy. When explaining to the plenum issues pertaining to the Decision, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed, "National security and social stability form the basis for further reform and progress." This revealed the extreme importance of national security work. National security has thus become a high-frequency word in the new era. At the same time, General Secretary Xi Jinping further clarified the necessity and urgency of establishing a NSC, pointing out that China faces the double challenge of safeguarding its

sovereignty, security, and development interests externally and maintaining political security and social stability internally. There has been a marked increase in the number of foreseeable and unforeseeable risks, and yet China's security mechanisms have not been able to meet the needs of maintaining national security. Therefore, it is necessary to build a platform to coordinate national security work. Xi emphasized that the establishment of the NSC and the centralized and unified leadership of national security work are the top priorities. The main responsibilities of the NSC are to formulate and implement national security strategies, promote the rule of law, formulate guidelines and policies, and study and resolve major issues in national security work. The decision of the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee to establish the NSC is of epoch-making significance. This major reform helps achieve development and security simultaneously, coordinate domestic and international policies, and safeguard China's national interests. It is beneficial for China to play a leading role in promoting peaceful development globally.

Second, the first meeting of the NSC clarified the guiding principle of national security work in the new era and proposed to build a national security system. The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held a meeting on January 24, 2014, to discuss the establishment of the NSC under the Central Committee of the CPC. Since its establishment, the NSC has been chaired by General Secretary Xi Jinping. The NSC is the CPC Central Committee's decision-making, deliberative, and coordinating body on national security work. It is responsible to the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and coordinates major issues and important work related to national security. The establishment of the NSC is an innovation in the national security system with Chinese characteristics, reflecting the Party's absolute, centralized, and unified leadership over national security work. The first meeting of the NSC was held on April 15, 2014, and Xi Jinping delivered an important speech. He stressed the need to grasp the new characteristics and trends of changes in the national security situation, pursue a holistic approach to national security, and embark on a path of national security with Chinese characteristics, providing fundamental guidance for national security work in the new era. Xi Jinping pointed out that the establishment of the NSC is a pressing requirement for

modernizing China's national governance system, enhancing its governance capacity, and achieving long-term stability of the country. It is also an important guarantee for building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The purpose is to better adapt to the new situation facing national security and establish a centralized, efficient, and authoritative national security system. China should attach importance to both traditional and non-traditional security and build a national security system that integrates political security, homeland security, military security, economic security, cultural security, social security, scientific and technological security, information security, ecological security, resource security, and nuclear security. Xi Jinping stressed that the NSC should be centralized, systematic, coordinated, efficient, and effective. It is necessary to implement the unified deployment of national security work. Xi has not only creatively put forward a holistic approach to national security but also set clear requirements for innovating the national security leadership system.

Third, the National Security Law (NSL) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) defines the national security system in the new era from a legal perspective. The reinforcement of the rule of law in the domain of national security is not only an illustration of the comprehensive application of the rule of law in this field but also a crucial element of national security operations in the new era. The NSL was passed at the 15th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress on July 1, 2015. As pioneering legislation governing national security, it has explicitly delineated provisions for China's national security system. According to Article III of the NSL, all national security work shall adhere to a holistic approach to national security, take the people's security as our ultimate goal, political security as our fundamental task, economic security as our foundation, military, cultural, and social security as means of guarantee, and international security as the support, maintain national security in all fields, build a national security system, and embark on a path of national security with Chinese characteristics. Article V stipulates that the central leading body for national security shall be responsible for coordinating the policymaking and deliberations on national security work, researching, developing, and guiding the implementation of national security strategies and relevant major guidelines and policies, conducting overall

coordination of significant national security affairs and important tasks, and promoting the rule of law for national security. The NSL also stipulates that China shall formulate and improve its national security strategy, assess the international and domestic security situation, and clarify the guiding principles, medium- and long-term goals, policies, tasks, and measures in key areas of national security. The central national security leading body implements a unified, coordinated, and efficient national security system and mechanism. The state shall establish a coordination mechanism for key areas of national security and coordinate the work of relevant central functional departments. The state shall establish a consultation mechanism for national security decision-making, organize experts to conduct analysis and judgment on the national security situation, and improve decision-making on national security. The state shall establish a national security risk assessment mechanism and regularly conduct national security risk surveys and assessments in various fields. Relevant departments shall regularly submit national security risk assessment reports to the central national security leading body.

Fourth, the first meeting of the NSC under the 19th CPC Central Committee, held on April 17, 2018, strengthened the Party's absolute leadership over national security work. At this meeting, Xi Jinping delivered an important speech, emphasizing the need to strengthen the Party's centralized and unified leadership over national security work, grasp the current national security situation, fully implement a holistic approach to national security, and strive to break new ground in national security work in the new era, so as to provide a solid security guarantee for achieving the Two Centenary Goals and realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Xi emphasized the necessity of concentrating efforts on pivotal areas, striving to avert all forms of risks and challenges, and enhancing national security capacity. As regards the institutional framework for national security, Xi underscored the necessity of upholding the Party's absolute leadership and enhancing its leadership and coordination capacity. The NSC should play a more prominent role in coordinating national security affairs, implementing national security policies and guidelines, enhancing the efficiency of national security mechanisms, improving the strategic ability to grasp the overall situation, and enhancing the ability to manage risks and challenges. It is

essential that we strengthen the national security authorities politically, educate and guide national security departments and cadres at all levels to strengthen the “four consciousnesses” and bolster the “four confidences,” safeguard the authority and centralized and unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, and build a loyal and reliable national security team. The meeting required that supervision and inspection of the performance of national security responsibilities should be strengthened. The national security system across the country began to be established, and the national security system led by the Party was consolidated.

Fifth, the fourth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee proposed improving the national security system with a view to modernizing China’s system and capacity for governance. The third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee first proposed modernizing China’s system and capacity for governance. On October 31, 2019, the fourth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee adopted a decision on some major issues concerning how to uphold and improve the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and advance the modernization of China’s system and capacity for governance. The decision set forth a proposal to uphold and improve the social governance system based on collaboration, participation, and common interests, as well as maintain social stability and defend national security. It also put forward clear requirements for improving China’s national security system. Specifically, China should adhere to a holistic approach to national security, coordinate development and security, and uphold the unity between the people’s security, political security, and the supremacy of national interests. It is imperative that China prioritize its people’s security, with a particular focus on political security, economic security, and the enhancement of its military, scientific, technological, cultural, and social capabilities. To achieve this, it is necessary to improve the national security system and to develop robust national security capacity. It is recommended that China improve its leadership system and legal framework for national security. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to enhance national security awareness among the general public and to establish and enhance the national security risk assessment, prevention, and control mechanisms. It is also imperative that China enhance its capabilities to avert and repel national security threats, maintain a high level of vigilance,

and take decisive action to thwart the incursion and disruption of hostile forces through activities such as infiltration, sabotage, subversion, and separatist movements.

Since 2013, the solid advancement of national security reform and innovation has achieved remarkable results in the new era. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century pointed out:

The Party has redoubled its efforts to strengthen the national security system and capacity building in this regard. It established a national security commission under the Central Committee, and it has improved the centralized, high-performing, and authoritative leadership system and the legal, strategy, and policy systems for national security. It has also put in place coordination and emergency management mechanisms for national security....Since the 18th National Congress, we have enhanced national security on all fronts and overcome many political, economic, ideological, and natural risks, challenges, and trials. This has helped ensure that the Party and the country thrive and enjoy lasting stability.

The 20th CPC National Congress Emphasized Safeguarding Chinese Modernization through a Modernized National Security System

The 20th CPC National Congress defined the Party's central task on the new journey, namely, "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 It not only explained the rich connotations of Chinese modernization but also made strategic plans for modernizing China's national security system and capacity. While addressing the opening of a study session

¹ Xi Jinping, "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects—Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China," October 16, 2022.

on studying and implementing the spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress on February 7, 2023, General Secretary Xi Jinping highlighted the importance of coordinating development and security in promoting Chinese modernization. He emphasized the need to implement a holistic approach to national security, improve the national security system, enhance the ability to maintain national security, and ensure the lasting security of the country, system, ideology, and key areas. The Central Economic Work Conference held in December 2023 emphasized that advancing Chinese modernization is of the utmost political importance. It is imperative to gain a clear understanding of the interrelationship between modernizing China's national security system and capacity and advancing Chinese modernization. Modernizing China's national security system and capacity is not only an integral component of Chinese modernization but also a robust guarantee for the sustained and long-term advancement of Chinese modernization.

First, the report to the 20th CPC National Congress unprecedentedly devoted a chapter to national security work, fully expounding the theoretical achievements and practical requirements of a holistic approach to national security. Chapter XI specifically discussed modernizing China's national security system and capacity and safeguarding national security and social stability. The report explicitly asserted that “national security is the bedrock of national rejuvenation, and social stability is a prerequisite for building a strong and prosperous China,” underscoring the pivotal role of national security in the overarching objectives of the Party and the country in the new era. The report also stressed that we should unswervingly implement a holistic approach to national security and ensure national security and social stability.

We must take the people's security as our ultimate goal, political security as our fundamental task, economic security as our foundation, military, technological, cultural, and social security as important pillars, and international security as a support. We will take coordinated steps to ensure external and internal security, homeland and public security, traditional and non-traditional security, and our own security and common security. We will both uphold national security and create the conditions for ensuring it. We will strengthen

popular support for national security and social stability, improve the mechanisms for our participation in global security governance, and advance the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level. With this new security architecture, we will be able to better safeguard China's new pattern of development.¹

This statement reflects the new requirement of coordinating development and security. China should use new security architecture to safeguard its new development pattern.

Second, the 20th CPC National Congress made strategic plans for modernizing China's national security system and capacity. China should improve its national security system. System is a general term for institutional mechanisms. Specifically, we must uphold the centralized and unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee over national security work and improve the efficient and authoritative national security leadership system, which mainly refers to the NSC. China should strengthen the coordination mechanism for national security work and improve the legal, strategy, and policy systems for national security, as well as the risk monitoring, early warning, and national emergency management systems. It would be beneficial to enhance the security guarantee system in pivotal areas and the coordination and command system for key projects. It would also be advantageous to reinforce the security guarantee systems in the economy, major infrastructure, finance, network, data, biology, resources, nuclear, space, and ocean. This not only includes cross-departmental work coordination mechanisms but also covers five specialized systems, namely, the rule of law, strategy, policy, risk warning, and emergency management, as well as several security guarantee systems. China also needs to improve its anti-sanction, anti-interference, and anti-long-arm jurisdiction mechanisms to counter external forces' abuse of sanctions and containment against it, emphasizing precise countermeasures and effective rights protection. It is also necessary to improve the layout of national security forces and build a national security protection system that is fully connected, three-dimensional, and efficient. This will also reflect the requirements of coordinating traditional

¹ Ibid.

and non-traditional security and coordinating security governance in all areas as part of efforts to maintain and shape national security.

China should enhance the ability to safeguard national security. As the report to the 20th CPC National Congress stated:

We will resolutely safeguard the security of China's state power, systems, and ideology and build up security capacity in key areas. We will ensure the security of food, energy, and resources as well as key industrial and supply chains. We will strengthen our capabilities to ensure overseas security and protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas. We will safeguard China's maritime rights and interests and resolutely defend our country's sovereignty, security, and development interests.¹

The report also urged us to strengthen national security capacity building, focusing on maintaining political security, economic security, overseas security, and homeland security. We must improve our ability to prevent and mitigate major risks, guard against systemic security risks, and crack down on infiltration, sabotage, subversion, and separatist activities by hostile forces. We must prevent and deal with major risks, strengthen national security education, improve the ability of leading officials at all levels to coordinate development and security, and enhance the national security awareness of the entire population.

China should enhance public safety governance. In his report to the 20th CPC National Congress, Xi urged:

We will follow the principles of putting safety first and placing emphasis on prevention, and we will establish an overall safety and emergency response framework. The public safety system will be improved, and we will drive a shift in public safety governance toward a model of prevention. Workplace safety risk controls will be strengthened, and safety supervision in key sectors and areas will be

¹ Ibid.

bolstered. We will enhance our capabilities for disaster prevention, mitigation, and relief and for responding to and providing support during major public emergencies. Regional emergency response capabilities will be strengthened. We will tighten supervision over food and drug safety and improve the systems of supervision, early warning, and prevention and control for biosafety and biosecurity. Protection of personal information will be strengthened.¹

China should improve the social governance system. The report to the 20th CPC National Congress stressed:

We will improve the social governance system based on collaboration, participation, and shared benefits, so as to make social governance more effective. We will apply and further develop the “Fengqiao model” for promoting community-level governance in the new era, and we will improve the mechanisms for appropriately addressing disputes between members of the public under the new circumstances. We will improve our work in handling public complaints and maintain open and regular channels for learning about people’s concerns, handling their claims, and protecting their rights and interests. Primary-level social governance platforms featuring grid-based management, meticulous services, and IT support will be improved to strengthen urban and rural community governance. We should see that problems are resolved as they emerge at the community level. We will work faster to modernize and enhance social governance in cities. We will take a holistic approach to ensuring law and order, we will consistently combat and root out organized crime, and we will lawfully crack down on various illegal and criminal activities that cause grave public concern. We will boost public participation in crime prevention and control and create an atmosphere that honors individuals who rise to the occasion during emergencies. This will foster a community of social governance in which everyone fulfills their responsibilities and

¹ Ibid.

shares in the benefits.¹

Social governance is inextricably linked to the maintenance of social harmony and stability, as well as to the everyday lives of individuals. This necessitates a synthesis of the rule of law and self-governance, a unified approach to addressing symptoms and root causes, the empowerment of science and technology, reform and innovation, and a more optimal balance between order and vitality.

Finally, the first meeting of the NSC under the 20th CPC Central Committee implemented the spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress and emphasized the need to accelerate the modernization of China's national security system and capacity. On May 30, 2023, the first meeting of the NSC under the 20th CPC Central Committee was held. This meeting not only affirmed the progress and achievements in the construction of China's national security system but also outlined the key tasks of national security work for the future. At the meeting, Xi Jinping delivered an important speech, emphasizing that we must implement the spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress, understand the complex and severe situation facing national security, grasp major national security issues, accelerate the modernization of the national security system and capacity, safeguard the new development pattern with a new security architecture, and strive to open up new horizons for national security work. Reflecting on the work of the past five years, the meeting noted that the NSC had shown a fighting spirit, adhered to a holistic approach to national security, improved the leadership, legal, strategy, and policy systems for national security, and realized the effective operation of the national security coordination mechanism. China's sovereignty, security, and development interests have been robustly defended, and its national security has been reinforced. In light of the current circumstances, the meeting underscored the fact that the challenges pertaining to national security are becoming increasingly complex and difficult. It is imperative that we cultivate strategic confidence, reinforce our conviction in the prospect of triumph, and fully acknowledge the advantages and favorable circumstances at our

¹ Ibid.

disposal. Furthermore, it is essential that we undertake meticulous preparations, anticipate the most unfavorable outcomes, strive for optimal results, and remain prepared to withstand significant challenges. We must accelerate the modernization of China's national security system and capacity and pay more attention to efficient cooperation, the rule of law, science and technology, and grassroots foundations. Looking to the future, the meeting pointed out that it is necessary to use the new security architecture to safeguard the new development pattern, shape an external security environment that is favorable to China, and promote the deep integration of development and security. It is imperative that the means and methods of maintaining and shaping national security undergo a transformation guided by theory, with a view to improving the layout and promoting scientific and technological empowerment. It is necessary to improve the comprehensive response to national security risks and conduct real-time monitoring and timely warning. As regards the implementation of key tasks, the meeting underscored the necessity of aligning national security operations with the decisions and plans made at the 20th CPC National Congress. This entails an approach that ensures political security, enhances the governance of the Internet, data, and artificial intelligence (AI), accelerates the development of a national security risk monitoring and early warning system, promotes the establishment of a robust national security legal framework, and strengthens national security education.

The Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee Placed National Security in a More Prominent Position

The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee was held from July 15 to 18, 2024, marking a pivotal moment in China's political history. It discussed the two major themes of comprehensively deepening reform, as proposed by the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, and advancing Chinese modernization, as proposed by the 20th CPC National Congress, and adopted the Resolution of CPC Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization (hereinafter termed "Resolution"). It emphasized that reform should be pursued in a comprehensive and far-reaching manner, with a particular focus

on promoting Chinese modernization as a central objective. The Resolution represents a significant milestone in the history of the CPC, serving as a foundational document that shapes the Party's future trajectory. The Resolution devoted a chapter to national security, and General Secretary Xi Jinping's Explanation of the Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization (hereinafter termed "Explanation") also made numerous references to national security. This highlights the significance of national security in China's modernization process on the new journey.

First, the Resolution emphasized that a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to reform is essential for the protection of national security in both the immediate and long-term future. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the Explanation that further deepening reform comprehensively is an urgent need to address major risks and challenges and promote the steady and long-term development of the Party and the country. In the course of pursuing Chinese modernization, it is inevitable that a number of contradictions, risks, and challenges will emerge. In particular, the world is undergoing a significant transformation that has not been witnessed for a century, characterized by a rise in conflicts and turmoil, the intensification of global issues, challenges to peace and development, and the impact on the postwar international order. Suppression and containment from the outside world is becoming more prevalent. China's development has entered a period of coexistence between strategic opportunities and risks and challenges, accompanied by increasing uncertainties and unpredictable factors. Various "black swan" and "gray rhino" events may occur at any time. To respond effectively to the aforementioned risks and challenges and to gain a strategic advantage in the context of intensifying global competition, it is necessary to further deepen reform in a comprehensive manner and to implement a robust system for preventing and defusing risks and effectively responding to challenges. In the new era, the primary task of national security is to address significant risks and challenges. The long-term stability of the Party and the country is also a crucial aspect of national security, protecting the nation from potential threats. The Explanation fully clarified the relationship between further deepening reform and national security and emphasized that the purpose of further deepening reform is to

prevent and defuse risks, effectively respond to challenges, and safeguard national security. The objective of further deepening reform comprehensively is to ensure China's security, long-term stability, and development.

Second, the Resolution embodied the important principle of coordinating development and security. The concept of coordinating development and security is derived from a holistic approach to national security. It is a major principle and distinctive symbol of the CPC's governance in the new era. Furthermore, it represents a continuation and enhancement of the preceding principles of properly handling the relationship between reform, development, and stability and maintaining China's sovereignty, security, and development interests. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the Explanation that the goal of socialist modernization is scheduled to be basically achieved by 2035 and major reform measures will be deployed in the next five years. The emphasis on coordinating development and security indicates that national security is a cornerstone for the steady and long-term development of China's modernization. It would be beneficial to elevate national security to a more prominent position and construct a coordinated and efficient national security system. We must promote the technological empowerment of national security and improve the system for responding to and providing support during major public emergencies. It is imperative that we establish an AI security monitoring system, explore a unified national population management system, take a holistic approach to ensuring law and order, and lawfully crack down on various illegal and criminal activities that cause grave public concern. Furthermore, we should establish and enhance the coordination mechanism for peripheral security and reinforce the anti-sanction, anti-interference, and anti-long-arm jurisdiction mechanisms. Additionally, it is crucial to enhance the trade risks prevention and control mechanisms. We must also improve the foreign-related legal system and the rule of law implementation system and deepen international law enforcement and judicial cooperation. The Resolution not only listed the modernization of China's national security system and capacity in a separate chapter but also proposed for the first time that "national security provides a pivotal foundation for ensuring steady and sustained progress in Chinese modernization," thus clarifying the new strategic significance of national security on the new journey. The 20th CPC National Congress

emphasized that “national security is the bedrock of national rejuvenation, and social stability is a prerequisite for building a strong and prosperous China.” This illustrates the pivotal role of national security in Chinese modernization.

Third, the Resolution incorporated national security into the overall goals of further deepening reform comprehensively, which is of great significance. The overall goals of further deepening reform cover seven aspects, including economy, politics, culture, society, ecology, security, and party building. This means that national security and party building were added to the Five-sphere Integrated Plan, which refers to China’s overall plan for building socialism with Chinese characteristics to promote coordinated progress in the economic, political, cultural, social, and eco-environmental fields. This “5+2” governance strategy further demonstrates the improvement of China’s security on the new journey. Focusing on building a safer China at a higher level includes improving the national security system, strengthening the integrated national strategic system, enhancing the ability to maintain national security, innovating the social governance system, mechanisms, and means, and effectively building a new security architecture. Strengthening the integrated national strategic system indicates that the forthcoming phase of national security work will be characterized by a comprehensive approach to security, encompassing both national defense and military modernization. Building a new security architecture originates from the National Security Strategy (2021–2025). The 20th CPC National Congress further proposed using the new security architecture to safeguard China’s new development pattern, which is the top priority of our national security work on the new journey.

Higher Requirements for Modernizing China’s National Security System and Capacity

In line with the strategic decisions of the report to the 20th CPC National Congress, the Resolution used “Modernizing China’s National Security System and Capacity” as the title of the special chapter on national security and clarified the tasks of reform and development in the field of national security in the next five years. It required that “the reform tasks laid out in this resolution shall be completed by the time the PRC celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2029.”

Chapter XIII of the Resolution introduced new terminology, rigorous standards, compressed timeframes, and significant workloads.

First, the national security work on the new journey must be guided by a holistic approach to national security. The Resolution emphasized that a holistic approach to national security must be fully implemented, the system and mechanism for maintaining national security must be improved, high-quality development and high-level security must be achieved in a benign interaction, and the long-term stability of the country must be guaranteed. The year 2024 marks the 10th anniversary of General Secretary Xi Jinping's proposal of a holistic approach to national security. Over the past decade, this approach has guided the development of China's national security policies and practices, facilitating innovative and enterprising activities that have yielded notable outcomes. These outcomes illustrate the potential of theoretical frameworks and the impact of practical applications. The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee reaffirmed the significance of a holistic approach to national security, underscoring its continued relevance in shaping the future of national security. Achieving a benign interaction between high-quality development and high-level security comes from General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech, which is the embodiment and new development of the major principle of coordinating development and security. High-quality development is the primary task of building a modern socialist country in all respects. Its inherent requirement and important focus are new quality productive forces. High-level security is the high standard and new requirement for national security work put forward by high-quality development. We need to coordinate high-quality development based mainly on new quality productive forces and high-level security based mainly on new quality combat capabilities.

Second, the Resolution outlined four principal objectives, reflecting both inheritance and innovation. Chapter XIII of the Resolution was titled "Modernizing China's National Security System and Capacity." It represents both a continuation of Part XI (National Security) of the report to the 20th CPC National Congress and a new development. For example, improving the national security system includes: strengthening the mechanisms for coordinating national security work; improving the legal, strategy, policy, and risk monitoring and early warning systems for national security; improving

the systems for safeguarding security in key sectors and the coordination and command systems for major projects; creating a coordinated and highly efficient system for protecting national security; and better leveraging science and technology to safeguard national security. The report to the 20th CPC National Congress proposed “creating a coordinated, multi-dimensional, and highly effective system for protecting national security across all domains.” The first meeting of the NSC under the 20th CPC Central Committee proposed “better leveraging science and technology.” In addition, “improving the public security governance mechanisms” was a continuation of “enhancing public safety governance” in the report to the 20th CPC National Congress. Specific measures include improving the response and support system for major public emergencies; refining the emergency response command mechanisms under the overall safety and emergency response framework; bolstering response infrastructure and capabilities in local communities; and strengthening capabilities for disaster prevention, mitigation, and relief. Additionally, the mechanisms for identifying and addressing workplace safety risks and for conducting retroactive investigations to determine liability will be improved; the food and drug safety responsibility system, as well as the systems of monitoring, early warning, and risk prevention and control for biosafety and biosecurity will be refined; the cybersecurity system will be strengthened and oversight systems will be created to ensure the safety of AI. The latest proposals include “strengthening the cybersecurity system and instituting oversight systems to ensure the safety of AI,” which reflect the importance and complexity of the current cybersecurity situation and the necessity and urgency of strengthening monitoring of AI security. Furthermore, “improving the social governance system” represents a continuation of the same topic addressed in the report to the 20th CPC National Congress. In addition to reiterating the call for improving the social governance system, it introduced a new element by suggesting “exploring avenues for establishing a unified national population management system.” Chinese modernization is a process that affects a vast population. This novel proposal underscores the importance of innovating China’s population management system in light of the evolving circumstances.

Third, to build a new security architecture, it is necessary to improve the mechanisms for ensuring national security in foreign-related affairs. “Improving

the mechanisms for ensuring national security in foreign-related affairs” is both a replacement and continuation of “strengthening our capacity for safeguarding national security” in the report to the 20th CPC National Congress, which specifically includes: establishing sound coordination mechanisms for promoting security in neighboring regions; strengthening the institutions and mechanisms for early warning, prevention and control, and protection against risks to China’s interests and investments overseas; deepening international law enforcement cooperation in the realm of security; protecting the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas; strengthening mechanisms for countering foreign sanctions, interference, and long-arm jurisdiction; enhancing the mechanisms for safeguarding China’s maritime rights and interests, as well as those for China’s participation in global security governance. Among the aforementioned measures, the following can be identified as a development of the relevant statements in the report to the 20th CPC National Congress: strengthening the institutions and mechanisms for early warning, prevention and control, and protection against risks to China’s interests and investments overseas and deepening international law enforcement cooperation in the realm of security, so as to protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas. This indicates that currently the risks to China’s overseas interests are more prominent and that international law enforcement cooperation is more important. Furthermore, establishing sound coordination mechanisms for promoting security in neighboring regions is a newly proposed concept with far-reaching significance. Since the symposium on work related to neighborhood diplomacy was held in October 2013, China has achieved notable success in its neighborhood diplomacy. However, in the context of accelerating global changes, the strategic competition between China and the United States has intensified, and China’s neighboring environment is becoming more sensitive and complex. Therefore, in the future, we need to focus on promoting Chinese modernization and be more proactive in shaping a relatively stable and favorable neighboring security environment to more effectively safeguard China’s sovereignty, security, and development interests.

In conclusion, further deepening reform comprehensively in the new era has yielded notable results, with national security reform and innovation being

a notable example. Looking ahead, we must accelerate the modernization of China's national security system and capacity and ensure high-quality development with high-level security. We need to practice a holistic approach to national security, implement the strategic decisions of the 20th CPC National Congress and the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, take practical actions, and make new contributions to the steady and long-term progress of Chinese modernization.

(edited by Zhang Yimeng)