

Implement the Guiding Principles of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee and Ensure High-Quality Development through High-Level Security

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Abstract: As a major principle underlying the Communist Party of China's (CPC) governance in the new era and a core piece of its holistic approach to national security, ensuring both development and security emphasizes comprehensive governance from a long-term perspective and influences the world with its global vision. It keeps pace with the times by prioritizing innovative areas and is of great theoretical and practical significance. On the new journey ahead, we must firmly ensure both development and security. More importantly, we must ensure both high-quality development and high-level security, safeguarding the former through the latter. This is an urgent requirement we face in today's world, which has entered a period of turbulence and transformation characterized by increasing complexity. Confronted with the formidable tasks of promoting reform and development while maintaining stability at home and the grave challenges brought about by international turbulence and changes, we must earnestly implement the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress and the third plenary session of the 20th Party Central Committee. We should ensure secure and sustainable development, accelerate efforts to modernize China's national security system and capacity, foster high-level security, and improve the mechanisms for preserving national security in foreign-related affairs. In short, we should strive to achieve a positive interplay between high-quality development and high-level security, so as to effectively

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safeguard Chinese modernization.

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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 played a guiding role through constant innovation, and China has achieved solid progress in ensuring security while advancing development theoretically and practically. All this has contributed to China's "two miracles"—rapid economic growth and enduring social stability. Now, as we approach the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP) period, the 15th FYP is being formulated, and the 10th National Security Education Day is coming soon on April 15, 2025. At this critical juncture, we must progress with the times and earnestly implement the guiding principles of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the third plenary session of the 20th Party Central Committee. Importantly, we must apply a holistic approach to national security by ensuring both high-quality development and high-level security. We must guarantee high-quality development through high-level security to steadily advance Chinese modernization.

The Contemporary Significance of Ensuring Both Development and Security

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, Xi has attached great importance to development and security imperatives and repeatedly stressed the need to ensure both. While presiding over the first meeting of the National Security Commission (NSC) of the CPC Central Committee on April 15, 2014, Xi creatively proposed a holistic approach to national security, calling for "paying close attention to both development and security." In his report to the 19th CPC National Congress, Xi urged, "We should ensure both development and security and be ever ready to protect against potential dangers in time of peace. This is a major principle underlying the Party's governance." The fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee held in October 2020 explicitly

established “ensuring both development and security” as a guiding principle for China’s social and economic development in the 14th FYP period. Xi’s report to the 20th CPC National Congress reiterated, “We 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. Let us harness our indomitable fighting spirit to open up new horizons for our cause.” “Ensuring both development and security” was written into the revised Party Constitution. The Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization (hereinafter termed “Resolution”) adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th Party Central Committee stressed ensuring that “high-quality development and greater security reinforce each other.” The above statements have revealed the inherent consistency between development and security and pointed the way for accurately understanding the dialectical unity of these two imperatives. Development is the top priority; national security is also of paramount importance. Ensuring both development and security is a major strategic idea proposed by the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core based on China’s new development stage. It is an integral part of a holistic approach to national security, characterized by a profound logic, theoretically, historically, and practically. This principle is of great theoretical and practical significance to China’s security and stability, global development and peace, and constant advancements in innovation.

I. Emphasizing comprehensive governance to ensure China’s security and stability in the new era

Xi noted, “Security is the prerequisite for development and development is the guarantee of security. Therefore, security and development must progress in tandem.” Security and development are like the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a cart.¹ The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has now entered a crucial stage. We face the formidable tasks of promoting reform and development while maintaining stability at home. The environment confronting us is increasingly complex, internally and externally, and the risks

¹ Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee, eds., *Study Outline on China’s Holistic Approach to National Security* (Xuexi Publishing House and People’s Publishing House, 2022), 47.

and challenges are unprecedented. Under such circumstances, the CPC Central Committee's call for ensuring both development and security highlights the great importance it places on comprehensive governance, which is essential for forestalling and defusing major risks and ensuring China's security and stability.

A holistic and systematic approach. Development is of fundamental importance to all countries. It holds the key to various security problems. Sustainable development is the greatest bulwark of security, and underdevelopment constitutes the largest source of insecurity. Conversely, security provides conditions and guarantees for development. Without security and stability, development is out of the question. Therefore, we must give equal importance to development and security, working for an organic integration of both. We should make plans and arrangements for national security in coordination with those for economic and social development, enhancing security through development and ensuring development through security. A holistic approach to national security advocates a new security architecture coordinating high-quality development and high-level security, and aims to safeguard China's new development pattern with this new security architecture. Thus, China will be better able to survive, compete, develop, and sustain its progress and make solid progress in building a modern socialist country in all respects.¹

A people-centered and pragmatic approach. By ensuring both development and security, China can protect the life and property of its people more effectively and allow them to fully enjoy the dividends of national development and security. China strives to achieve high-quality development by accelerating the cultivation of new quality productive forces. China's market has grown from large to strong, buoyed by a historic rise in its economic strength. China has devoted great energy to narrowing the gaps between its urban and rural areas, among different regions, and between different income levels. It has eradicated absolute poverty and finished building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, bringing tangible improvements to its people's lives through economic growth, scientific and technological advancements, and

¹ Chen Yixin, "Thoroughly Implement a Holistic Approach to National Security," *Qiushi*, No. 8, 2024, 51.

social development. Meanwhile, efforts have been stepped up to advance the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level. China has done its utmost to protect national security and the safety of its people and their property by improving the public security governance mechanisms, the social governance system, and the integrated system for maintaining law and order. As a result, the Chinese people live and work in contentment, Chinese society is stable and orderly, and the country enjoys lasting peace and stability. A series of measures promoting high-quality development and high-level security have brought about the two miracles of rapid economic growth and enduring social stability, given the Chinese people a stronger sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security, and strengthened cohesiveness throughout society, fully demonstrating the strengths and governance capacity of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

A must for advancing Chinese modernization. Chinese modernization is a brand new path. It differs from Western modernization by rejecting the old—capital-centered, polarizing, materialistic, and expansionary—path. However, while advancing its modernization, China faces various challenges at home and abroad. An effective response to these challenges requires balancing development and security imperatives. China must pursue high-quality development, propel transformative changes in the quality, efficiency, and impetus of economic growth, and boost total factor productivity, so as to strengthen its innovation capacity and economic competitiveness. Concurrently, China must enhance high-level security by improving its national security system, promoting the rule of law in the field of national security, and intensifying relevant publicity and education campaigns. Thus, China's national security efforts can become more systematic, standardized, and scientific.

II. Gaining influence worldwide by contributing to global development and stability amidst the once-in-a-century changes

At present, momentous changes of a like not seen in a century are accelerating across the world. The international balance of power is undergoing profound adjustments, unilateralism, protectionism, hegemonism, and power politics are posing greater threats to world peace and development, and the backlash against globalization is growing. The world has entered a period of turbulence and transformation. China's balanced approach to development and security is of great practical significance for the world urgently needing positive

changes.

Boosting global sustainable development through China's stability and growth. Despite various external shocks, such as the intensification of geopolitical rivalries and the weak economic recovery worldwide, the Chinese economy, guided by the principle of ensuring both development and security, has maintained steady, resilient, and dynamic performance, contributing about 30% of global growth. From “the world’s factory” to “the world’s market,” China has become a major stabilizer and driving force for the world economy. As protectionism proliferates in certain countries, frequently disrupting global industrial and supply chains through pan-securitization and decoupling measures, China has stayed committed to opening up while ensuring national security. It has actively promoted international trade and investment cooperation alongside people-to-people exchanges. Thus, China has created more opportunities for world development.

Providing high-quality solutions and public goods for reforming the global governance system. Xi’s major expositions on a holistic approach to national security demonstrate his broad vision and deep love for humanity,¹ as manifested in China’s practice of ensuring both development and security globally. For instance, China’s concept of a human community with a shared future calls for building “an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity.” This vision has won broad international consensus and has been written into many United Nations (UN) documents and multilateral resolutions or declarations. Guided by the vision of a human community with a shared future, China has proposed the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative (GSI), and the Global Civilization Initiative, aligning its development, security, and progress with those of the whole world. China’s three initiatives complement and reinforce each other, focusing on the outstanding issues facing the world community amidst the current turbulence resulting from the once-in-a-century changes. They are dedicated to jointly resolving the obstacles hindering global development, addressing international security challenges, and promoting

¹ Yang Mingjie, “Understanding General Secretary Xi Jinping’s Major Expositions on a Holistic Approach to National Security Theoretically and Philosophically,” *Dangjian*, No. 4, 2024, 26.

mutual learning among civilizations. They have offered Chinese proposals and wisdom for the world's common security and prosperity. Moreover, China is a provider of global public goods. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has enhanced policy, infrastructure, trade, financial, and people-to-people connectivity among the participating countries, boosting their cooperation, development, and shared security. Balancing development and security has been included in the "five balances" that ensure high-quality BRI cooperation in the next decade.¹

Serving as a reference for other latecomer countries that aspire to seize the initiative for development and security. In the history of world modernization, we have seen so many countries missing their development opportunities due to an excessive emphasis on security or, contrarily, putting their national security in danger by narrowly focusing on development. The principle of ensuring both development and security is rooted in China's exploration of a path to modernization since 1949 and reflective of the changes in its internal and external environments and the needs of its development in the new era. This principle has yielded great results, and it promises broad prospects. China's practice of ensuring both development and security and its remarkable achievements offer other latecomer countries valuable experience and references for tackling risks and challenges in complex domestic and international environments.

III. Featuring forward-looking thinking and blazing the path to sustained progress in innovation

Technology is a powerful tool for development, but it may also be a source of risks. Throughout history, emerging technologies have always been a double-edged sword: while benefitting society and improving people's lives, many technologies could be abused to the detriment of public interests.² Presently, a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation is gathering pace. Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), aerospace, new energy, and new materials, are reshaping

¹ "Vision and Actions for High-Quality Belt and Road Cooperation: Brighter Prospects for the Next Decade," Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, November 2023, https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202311/content_6916832.htm.

² *Study Outline on China's Holistic Approach to National Security*, 91.

human society profoundly, providing huge development opportunities while posing new challenges in non-traditional (such as cyber, space, resource, and biological) security domains. Generally speaking, the development of emerging technologies remains at an uncertain stage, plagued by greater instability and uncertainty than traditional, mature ones. Development imbalances are more acute among different regions, countries, and sectors. The difficulty of making technological breakthroughs, accompanied by inadequate policies and regulations, has increased the odds of “black swan” and “grey rhino” events and their potential hazards. Ensuring both development and security provides important guidance for the effective and orderly governance of emerging technologies to fully unleash the dividends of science and technology while avoiding risks.

One prime example is AI. Xi has repeatedly stressed ensuring both development and security in the governance of AI. At a group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held in 2018, Xi spoke of the need to strengthen leadership, make good plans, clearly define tasks, and consolidate the foundation to boost the healthy development of new-generation AI in China:

AI is a strategic technology heralding the ongoing technological revolution and industrial transformation. It has a “head goose” effect with strong traction and spillovers.... Accelerating the development of new-generation AI is a strategic issue key for China to stay ahead in the global technological race, and it is a critical, strategic resource for China to boost leapfrogging development in science and technology, industrial upgrading, and overall productivity increase.... While developing AI, we should strengthen risk assessment and precautions to secure the people’s interests and national security and ensure that AI is safe, reliable, and controllable.¹

The rapid growth of AI has presented benefits alongside risks and challenges. We should comprehensively evaluate AI’s profound impact on

¹ “Xi Stresses Boosting Healthy Development of New-Generation AI,” *People’s Daily*, November 1, 2018.

human society through a broad development and security lens.¹ Admittedly, technologically disadvantaged countries may lack development drivers and consequently suffer invasion or bullying. However, we must not neglect the insecurity caused by AI's disorderly development, including, but not limited to, ethical misconduct, human rights violations, monopolies, and social stratification.

In recent years, significant breakthroughs have been witnessed in AI technologies worldwide, impacting various fields such as politics, technology, economy, and society and reshaping human lifestyles, production patterns, and even values. China has introduced a series of policies to support and regulate the development of AI. These policies closely echo the trends of technological advancement and industrial development, spanning multiple dimensions such as technological innovation, industrial applications, talent cultivation, and standard specifications. In July 2023, China issued its Interim Measures for the Management of Generative AI Services, making it among the earliest to regulate generative AI. The Interim Measures clearly stipulate, "The state is to adhere to the principle of placing equal emphasis on development and security, merging the promotion of innovation with governance in accordance with law." While staying focused on security, the Chinese government has ramped up its policy support for the AI industry through investment funding, tax incentives, and computing power subsidies. Guided by the principle of ensuring both development and security, China's AI industry is thriving, with innovation capabilities constantly improving, application areas rapidly expanding, and empowerment effects increasingly significant. China has formed a complete industrial system comprising different layers from foundations to frameworks, models, and applications.

An Urgent Requirement to Respond to External Turbulence and Changes

As the report to the 20th CPC National Congress pointed out, momentous changes unseen in a century are accelerating across the world. A backlash

¹ Yang Mingjie, "Theoretical Contributions of a Holistic Approach to National Security: From the Perspective of AI Governance," *World Economics and Politics*, No. 3 (2024): 9.

against globalization is rising; unilateralism and protectionism are mounting. The global economic recovery is sluggish, regional conflicts and disturbances are frequent, and global issues are becoming more acute. The world has entered a new *period* of turbulence and change. Meanwhile, the Resolution of the 20th CPC Central Committee adopted at its third plenary session stressed that the present and the near future constitute a critical *period* for our endeavor to build a great country and move toward national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization and that national security provides a pivotal foundation for ensuring steady and sustained progress in Chinese modernization. In the face of the abovementioned two *periods*, which are overlapping, we must follow the principle of ensuring both development and security, especially high-quality development and high-level security. We need concrete action to guarantee high-quality development through high-level security.

I. Major-country rivalries become more intense and complex

Profound changes are taking place in the international balance of power, with the shift toward multi-polarity gaining momentum. Those countries that used to dominate the international system are accelerating their strategic adjustments, driven by the fear of losing power. Consequently, the outdated Cold War and zero-sum game mentality is resurging, leading to further divergence among countries and rebalancing of international relations. Major-country rivalries are becoming increasingly confrontational.

Desperate to maintain its global dominance, the United States is ramping up containment of potential competitors. The National Security Strategy of the United States released at the end of 2017 painted China and Russia as “strategic competitors.” The 2018 National Defense Strategy asserted that “inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security,” marking a strategic shift toward major-country competition. After taking office, the Biden administration further elevated the response to major-country competition as a priority in the “decisive decade,” tightening its “dual containment” policy against China and Russia. The United States has been supporting the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to squeeze Russia’s strategic space, aggravating the “security dilemma” between Russia and NATO. After the Ukraine crisis broke out in 2022, Russia–United States relations plummeted to their lowest since

the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, the Biden administration has labeled China as the nation's "top competitor"—the only rival with both the intent and, increasingly, the power to challenge the US-dominated international order, vowing to outcompete China through a whole-of-government approach, which has added to the instability in China–US relations.

Amidst the shifting balance of power, major-country rivalries are becoming increasingly complex. Unlike the world in the Cold War, which was divided into two completely different camps, the current international landscape is more complicated: emerging economies are rising collectively, the Global South is surging, and middle powers are seeking a larger voice in world politics. All these have led to intensified rivalries among the world's major countries. In the face of the United States–Russia confrontation and the Ukraine crisis, the European Union (EU) is attempting to enhance its strategic autonomy and reduce dependency on the United States. As Donald Trump's second term approaches, anxiety is mounting in Europe. Wooed by the United States, India has become an important member of the Quad, officially the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue involving the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. Despite India's active participation in the US-led "Indo–Pacific Strategy," which is aimed at containing China, differences persist between the two countries on a wide range of issues. For instance, after the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis, India declined to join the West and other countries in condemning and sanctioning Russia. In addition, BRICS cooperation continues apace. The BRICS family has achieved a historic expansion, and its international influence is growing rapidly.

II. The risk that regional conflicts may spill over or escalate is on the increase

Currently, two major conflicts are underway—one between Russia and Ukraine and the other between Palestine and Israel. Old tensions continue to intensify due to external interference. The possibility remains elevated that these two conflicts may spill over or escalate, which will not only threaten global peace and stability but also raise concern about a "third conflict."

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues, and the situation remains tense and complex. So far, this conflict has lasted for more than 1,000 days, inflicting heavy costs on both sides. According to estimates by

UN officials, more than 39,000 civilians have been killed or injured, over 3,400 schools and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed, and 10 million people have fled their homes. Adding fuel to the fire, the Biden administration announced additional assistance for Ukraine in November 2024, racing to bolster Ukraine before leaving office in January 2025. Biden has given the green light for Ukraine to use long-range missiles supplied by the United States to strike Russia. Moreover, his administration is preparing a \$725 million weapons package for Ukraine. As countermeasures, Russia has updated its Fundamentals of State Policy on Nuclear Deterrence and used its new hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile as a means of deterrence. Trump has repeatedly said that he could settle the conflict between Russia and Ukraine within one day after returning to the White House. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky recently put forward a new ceasefire proposal. However, given the historical and practical complexity of the conflict and the gap between Zelensky's latest proposal and Russia's stance, it remains unclear whether the two sides can reach a ceasefire in the short term.

“An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” makes the Palestinian–Israeli revenge cycle hard to contain. On October 7, 2023, a new round of Palestinian–Israeli conflict suddenly erupted in the Middle East, a region seemingly “on the path to reconciliation.” Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel, killing more than 1,000 people. In response, Israel announced a “total blockade” on the Gaza Strip and relentlessly bombed there, citing “rescuing all hostages” and “eradicating Hamas” as two of its military goals. All these have led to a massive humanitarian crisis. Regional players such as Iran, Hezbollah, and the Houthis have all involved themselves in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, albeit to varying degrees. The dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliations between Israel and Iran since April 2024 risks causing an uncontrolled escalation and spillover. Affected by regional conflicts, the situation in Syria has undergone a dramatic shift recently, as Bashar al-Assad's government collapsed, and foreign powers are jockeying for control in the country. Peace in the Middle East remains a distant prospect.

III. The proliferation of anti-globalization and pan-securitization hinders economic and trade cooperation

With the intensification of international competition, populism,

nationalism, and protectionism are significantly increasing in some countries, blowing strong headwinds on economic globalization.

In the face of the collective rise of emerging economies, Western capitalist countries are pursuing pan-securitization in the name of “de-risking” and returning to trade protectionism. As early as 2018, during his first presidency, Trump initiated a trade war against China, citing China’s “unfair trade practices” as an excuse and touting “decoupling” and severing industrial and supply chains. Since taking office, Biden has inherited Trump’s policy, replacing “decoupling” with “de-risking” and “small yard with high fences.” Meanwhile, the Biden administration has been promoting “friendshoring”—relocating production and supply chains from China to “friendly nations.” In December 2024, the outgoing Biden administration announced restrictions prohibiting the sales of certain types of chips and machinery to China and adding more than 100 Chinese companies to a restricted trade list.¹ Looking ahead to Trump’s second term, he will probably heighten his “America First” approach. Recently, Trump has threatened tariffs against multiple countries.

Recent years have witnessed the resurgence of resource nationalism, driven by supply shortages and price hikes of critical minerals in the world market. Critical minerals, known as the vitamins of strategic industries, provide raw materials for the ongoing technological revolution and industrial transformation. Aggravated by their scarcity and uneven distribution, critical minerals have increasingly become a new realm of strategic competition among the world’s major countries. Against such a backdrop, some resource-rich countries call for renegotiating existing contracts, adjusting mineral royalty rates, restricting or prohibiting the export of raw ores, and forging critical minerals alliances between producers, directly affecting the sustained and stable supply of critical minerals. For example, Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile hope to create a “lithium OPEC.” The United States has established the Minerals Security Partnership in collaboration with the EU and several other allies to strengthen control over critical minerals globally.

¹ Ana Swanson, “Biden Targets China’s Chip Industry with Wider Trade Bans,” *New York Times*, December 2, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/02/business/economy/biden-china-chips-exports.html>.

IV. Global challenges grow in salience

The rapid pace of technological advancements entails risks that urgently require governance. At present, a new round of scientific and technological revolution is gathering pace, as evidenced by breakthroughs in areas including AI, genetic technologies, nanotechnology, and space technologies, which have driven profound transformations in related industries. At the same time, as Xi pointed out, the scientific and technological revolution has brought “a series of unpredictable risks and challenges.”¹ Take AI as an example. In September 2024, the National Technical Committee 260 on Cybersecurity of Standardization Administration of China issued an AI Safety Governance Framework, warning that apart from AI’s inherent safety risks, such as risks from models and algorithms, risks from data, and risks from AI systems, we must also guard against safety risks in AI applications, such as cyberspace risks, real-world risks, cognitive risks, and ethical risks. In an interview with *The Economist* in 2023, just weeks before his 100th birthday, Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State, said, “I think the technology will become more and more dangerous when combined with the other factors, within five years.”²

Global warming is accelerating, resulting in more frequent and more damaging extreme weather events, posing a serious threat to life and property worldwide. According to the World Meteorological Organization, in 2023, a total of 79 disasters associated with hydro-meteorological hazard events were reported in Asia; of these, over 80% were related to flood and storm events, with more than 2,000 fatalities and nine million people directly affected.³ The Global Risks Report 2024 from the World Economic Forum selected extreme weather as the top risk over the next decade.⁴

The international terrorism threat is increasing. As the United States shifts its strategic focus to major-country competition, international terrorist groups

¹ “Xi Jinping Sends Congratulations to the Opening Ceremony of 2024 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit via Video Link,” November 21, 2024, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2024/1121/c1024-40365996.html>.

² “A Conversation with Henry Kissinger,” *Economist*, May 17, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/kissinger-transcript>.

³ “Climate Change and Extreme Weather Impacts Hit Asia Hard,” World Meteorological Organization, April 23, 2024, <https://wmo.int/zh-hans/news/media-centre/qihoubianhuahejitudantianqideyingxiangzhongchuangyazhou>.

⁴ “The Global Risks Report 2024,” World Economic Forum, January 10, 2024, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/in-full/>.

have taken this opportunity to expand their influence, posing a serious challenge to the security of Chinese personnel and projects overseas. In March 2024, three attacks targeting China-invested projects took place in Pakistan within just one week; five Chinese nationals were killed in one of these attacks. On October 6, another terrorist attack happened on a convoy of a Chinese project, killing two Chinese nationals and injuring several others. On December 2, 2024, Xi delivered an important speech at the fourth symposium on the development of the BRI. He urged efforts to manage all types of risks and challenges appropriately, address the impacts of geopolitical conflicts, and safeguard the security of China's overseas interests while advancing high-quality BRI cooperation. "It is a must to combine high-quality development with greater security."¹ Xi's speech set the direction for safeguarding China's overseas interests in the current period of turbulence and change.

Steady and Sustained Progress in Chinese Modernization

Currently, the Chinese economy has been transitioning from a stage of high-speed growth to a stage of high-quality development. It is a pivotal stage for transforming China's growth model, improving its economic structure, and fostering new drivers of growth. It is also a stage where China faces pressure from internal and external risks and challenges, which are closely intertwined. In light of this, we must fully apply a holistic approach to national security and ensure high-level security while pursuing high-quality development. We must work faster to modernize China's national security system and capacity, improve the institutions and mechanisms for national security, and integrate security with development, so as to safeguard the country's long-term stability and security.

I. Ensuring secure and sustainable development

Ensuring both development and security is a major principle underlying the CPC's governance in the new era. To build a modern socialist country in all respects, we must, first and foremost, pursue high-quality development,

¹ "Xi Stresses Comprehensively Advancing High-Quality Belt and Road Cooperation," December 3, 2024, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202412/03/content_WS674f059dc6d0868f4e8eda51.html.

which inherently requires secure development. 2025 will be the final year for completing the 14th FYP and accomplishing the goals and tasks set in the National Security Strategy (2021–2025). In line with the requirements of the 14th FYP and the National Security Strategy (2021–2025), secure development reflects the distinct features of ensuring both development and security in the new era.

Secure development has further enriched China's new development philosophy, representing the CPC Central Committee's new requirements for national development in an unstable and uncertain international environment. Xi stressed at a group study session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee on May 29, 2015, that we must firmly keep in mind the concept of ensuring security in development. The 19th CPC Central Committee's proposals for formulating the 14th FYP (2021–2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035 adopted at its fifth plenary session (hereinafter termed "Proposals") not only established "ensuring both development and security" as a guiding principle for economic and social development in the 14th FYP period but also stressed the importance of incorporating security imperatives into all areas throughout the process of national development, guarding against and defusing various risks that may affect China's modernization process, and resolutely safeguarding national security. At the fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, Xi further underscored "ensuring a security-based development, which is a red line." "This is also an important precondition and guarantee for the new development dynamic, and is essential for the smooth flow of the domestic economy," he added. Specifically, we must follow a holistic approach to national security, uphold the primacy of our national interests, take the people's security as our ultimate goal and political security as our fundamental task, and strengthen China's national security system and capacity; we must find a balance between opening up and security, ensure security while advancing opening up, and improve our ability to dynamically preserve national security in an open environment; we must put people's lives and safety first and increase our public security capacity across the board to see that our people live and work in contentment, our society is stable and orderly, and our country enjoys enduring peace and stability. On January 11, 2021, Xi made an

important speech at a seminar for provincial- and ministerial-level officials on studying and implementing the guiding principles of the fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee. He stressed:

As the principal contradiction in Chinese society has changed and the global balance of power is steadily shifting, China will have to contend with more internal and external risks in development than before. We must be more aware of potential dangers, keep in mind worst-case scenarios, and be prepared for more complex and graver situations.

The Proposals also placed security in a highly prominent position, calling for incorporating security imperatives into all areas throughout national development. “If our underlying security foundations are not solid, the entire edifice of our development will come under threat.” Therefore, we must uphold the unity between the people’s security, political security, and the primacy of our national interests, be brave and adept in carrying out our struggle, and build our strength across the board, especially our deterrence capacity. The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee met on November 18, 2021, to review documents including the National Security Strategy (2021–2025). It was stressed at this meeting that to safeguard national security under new circumstances, we must apply a holistic approach to national security and accelerate our efforts to form a new security architecture; furthermore, we must deliver secure development and promote a dynamic balance between high-quality development and high-level security. On October 22, 2022, the 20th National Congress of the CPC adopted the revised Party Constitution. In Paragraph XIII of the General Program, the expression “ensuring higher-quality and more efficient, equitable, and sustainable development of the economy” was replaced by “ensuring higher-quality and more efficient, equitable, sustainable, and secure development of the economy,” which fully demonstrated the CPC’s accurate understanding of the characteristics of China’s current development stage and charted the right course for appropriately addressing risks and challenges and achieving high-quality development.

Secure development is an integral aspect of high-quality development, highlighting how high-level security safeguards high-quality development.

We must coordinate high-quality development and high-level security, always bearing in mind that security is the prerequisite for development and development guarantees security. As Xi said, development remains our Party's top priority in governing and rejuvenating China and is of fundamental importance. Development holds the master key to solving security problems. Without development, security will be out of the question. Only through development can we solidify our material and technological foundations and be fully resourced and able to preserve national security and social stability. The development we pursue on our new journey must be high-quality. Only by focusing on the primary task of promoting high-quality development can we continue to increase China's economic strength, scientific and technological capabilities, and composite national strength, elevate China's security and development to a higher level, and make sure the destiny of China's development and progress remains firmly in our own hands. Xi also stressed that national security is the bedrock of national rejuvenation, and social stability is a prerequisite for building a strong and prosperous China. Without security and stability, there will be no development; even the fruits of development already reaped will risk being lost at any time. Therefore, we must give greater priority to high-level security, work harder to shore up weaknesses in sectors vital to China's development and security, and enhance our capacity to prevent and mitigate major risks. Only in this way can we effectively ensure steady economic growth and enduring national security.

The Resolution adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee emphasized properly handling five "major relationships," including the one between development and security. In addition, the Resolution made a series of major plans to promote secure development. For example, in terms of industrial and supply chain security, the Resolution called for improving the systems for enhancing the resilience and security of industrial and supply chains:

We will move faster to build industrial and supply chains that are self-supporting and risk-controllable, improve the institutions and mechanisms for bolstering key industrial chains such as integrated circuits, industrial machine tools, medical equipment, instruments,

basic software, industrial software, and advanced materials, and strive to secure more technological breakthroughs that can be applied across entire industrial and supply chains. A mechanism will be put in place to assess and respond to industrial and supply chain risks.

Regarding scientific and technological security, the Resolution stated, “We will establish risk monitoring, early warning, and response systems to safeguard science and technology security, and ensure self-sufficiency in scientific and technological infrastructure.”

With respect to financial security, the Resolution stressed:

We will improve the functions of the capital market to give balanced weight to investment and financing. We will prevent risks and tighten regulation to promote the sound and stable development of the capital market....A financial law will be formulated. We will improve the financial regulatory system to ensure that all financial activities are placed under regulation in accordance with the law, strengthen regulatory responsibility and accountability systems, and improve regulatory coordination between the central and local levels. We will build secure and efficient financial infrastructure...establish binding constraints for defusing risks at an early stage, and build a robust system to effectively fend off and control systemic risks and ensure financial stability.

As regards ecological security, the Resolution called for improving the coordination mechanism for ensuring national ecological security, as well as the working systems for adapting to climate change.

II. Accelerating the modernization of China’s national security capacity to ensure high-level security

We must fully implement the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress and the first meeting of the NSC under the 20th CPC Central Committee. The 20th CPC National Congress made overall deployment for “modernizing China’s national security system and capacity and safeguarding national security and social stability,” explicitly urging “strengthening

our capacity for safeguarding national security.” We must understand this requirement and take firm action to implement it. We must ensure political security by resolutely safeguarding the security of China’s state power, systems, and ideology; we must preserve economic security by building up security capacity in key areas and ensuring the security of food, energy, and resources as well as key industrial and supply chains; we must strengthen our capacity to ensure overseas security and protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas; we must safeguard China’s maritime rights and interests and resolutely defend its homeland security; we must enhance our capacity to prevent and mitigate major risks, remain on high alert against systemic security risks, and crack down hard on infiltration, sabotage, subversion, and separatist activities by hostile forces. In addition, we should conduct extensive public communications about the importance of national security and improve the ability of leading officials at all levels to ensure security in the pursuit of development. This will raise the people’s awareness and readiness regarding national security and strengthen the public line of defense. On May 30, 2023, while presiding over the first meeting of the NSC under the 20th CPC Central Committee, Xi urged efforts to modernize China’s national security system and capacity. The national security front must be prepared for actual combat and deal with practical problems. Emphasis must be placed on coordination and efficiency, law-based thinking, science and technology empowerment, and popular support. It is imperative to maintain political security, improve security governance of network data and AI, accelerate the development of a national security risk monitoring and early warning system, promote the rule of law in national security efforts, and strengthen education on national security.

To ensure high-quality development through high-level security, we must nurture new quality combat capabilities in sync with new quality productive forces. The Political Bureau of the 20th CPC Central Committee held a group study session regarding high-quality development on January 31, 2024. While presiding over the study session, Xi emphasized that pursuing high-quality development is an unyielding principle in the new era, and developing new quality productive forces is an endogenous requirement and a pivot of high-quality development. He urged efforts to promote innovation and faster

development of new quality productive forces. New quality productive forces are driven primarily by innovation; they feature high technology, high efficiency, and high quality; they are “advanced productivity” required by the new development philosophy. Marked by innovation, new quality productive forces are, in essence, advanced productivity, with high quality as the key. Xi noted that scientific and technological innovation is the core element for developing new quality productive forces. Therefore, we must encourage scientific and technological innovation, especially original and disruptive innovations, and work harder to build high-level self-reliance and strength in science and technology and achieve breakthroughs in core technologies in key fields. Thus, original and disruptive scientific and technological innovations can emerge one after another, and we will foster more momentum for developing new quality productive forces. On March 7, 2024, while attending a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People’s Liberation Army and the People’s Armed Police Force at the second session of the 14th National People’s Congress, Xi delivered an important speech. He said the CPC Central Committee’s drive to develop new quality productive forces since the 20th Party National Congress has provided rare opportunities for enhancing strategic capabilities in emerging areas. He called for enabling effective integration and mutual reinforcement between new quality productive forces and new quality combat capabilities; prioritizing key projects and fully implementing related strategies and plans, including coordinating maritime military preparedness, maritime rights and interests protection, and marine economy development to boost China’s capacity to manage the ocean; optimizing China’s aerospace layout and enhancing its aerospace system; building a cyberspace defense system to improve China’s ability to safeguard cybersecurity. Research on intelligent technologies will be strengthened, and such technologies will be further promoted, according to Xi. The development of emerging areas is driven fundamentally by scientific and technological innovation and applications. We should be more confident in our creative capacities and bolster new quality productive forces and new quality combat capabilities through independent and original innovation. It is necessary to deepen the structural reform of defense-related science and technology industries by accelerating the supply of new quality combat capabilities. Xi also urged improving the agile response and rapid transformation mechanisms for

advanced technologies and building innovation chains, industrial chains, and value chains tailored to the development of emerging areas. We need to update our thinking and explore the building and utilization of new types of combat forces to fully unleash and develop new quality combat capabilities.

Xi's above ideas are highly strategic and forward-looking. They point out the direction for promoting high-quality development, which is primarily driven by new quality productive forces, and high-level security, which is mainly built on new quality combat capabilities, on our new journey. Development relates with productive forces, while security involves combat capabilities. Promoting new quality productive forces is an endogenous requirement and a pivot of high-quality development. Correspondingly, enhancing new quality combat capabilities, including strategic capabilities in emerging areas and non-traditional security response capabilities, is the endogenous requirement and pivot of high-level security. New quality combat capabilities principally come from scientific and technological empowerment, institutional innovation, strategic planning, and proactive shaping.

III. Modernizing China's national security system and improving the mechanisms for ensuring national security in foreign-related affairs

The Resolution adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee put forward new requirements for improving China's national security system based on the relevant arrangements of the 20th Party National Congress.

The mechanisms for coordinating national security work will be strengthened. We will improve the legal, strategy, policy, and risk monitoring and early warning systems for national security, the systems for safeguarding security in key sectors, and the coordination and command systems for major projects. We will create a coordinated and highly effective system for protecting national security and better leverage science and technology to safeguard national security.

In addition, the Resolution kept pace with the times and laid down systematic arrangements regarding improving the mechanisms for ensuring

national security in foreign-related affairs.

We will establish sound coordination mechanisms for promoting security in neighboring regions. We will strengthen the institutions and mechanisms for early warning, prevention and control, and protection against risks to China's interests and investments overseas and deepen 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. Mechanisms for countering foreign sanctions, interference, and long-arm jurisdiction will be strengthened. We will enhance the mechanisms for safeguarding China's maritime rights and interests, as well as those for China's participation in global security governance.

Improving the mechanisms for ensuring national security in foreign-related affairs is an important measure the CPC Central Committee, with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, has decided to adopt. Pursuing national rejuvenation amidst global changes unseen in a century, the CPC Central Committee strives to ensure both development and security, improve the institutions and mechanisms for national security, and enhance our capacity to protect national security. At present, the domestic and international factors that affect national security are mutually intertwined, interpenetrating, interacting, and reinforcing. Foreign-related national security risks are increasingly influencing national security and social stability. Under such circumstances, we must improve our capacity and mechanisms for protecting national security in foreign-related affairs.

First, we must take coordinated steps to ensure external and internal security amidst the risks and challenges arising from the once-in-a-century global changes. The world today has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation. Accordingly, China's external environment and security landscape are undergoing significant changes. Foreign suppression and containment may escalate at any time. In such a situation, we must carry forward our fighting spirit, establish sound coordination mechanisms for promoting security in neighboring regions, strengthen mechanisms for countering foreign sanctions, interference, and long-arm jurisdiction, enhance

the mechanisms for safeguarding China's maritime rights and interests, withstand and push back against extreme external pressure, strictly prevent and crack down on infiltration, sabotage, subversion, and separatist activities by hostile forces, resolutely consolidate the leadership of the CPC and its position as the ruling party of China, uphold socialism with Chinese characteristics, and safeguard China's core interests.

Second, we must balance opening up and security to promote high-standard opening up and foster a new development pattern. China has become a main trading partner for over 140 countries and territories and a primary source of investment for more countries. It holds huge assets overseas, and the number of Chinese traveling, working, and studying abroad is large. Xi has stressed that "the more open we are, the more attention we should pay to security."¹ We must strengthen the institutions and mechanisms for early warning, prevention and control, and protection against risks to China's interests and investments overseas and deepen international law enforcement cooperation in the realm of security to handle major security incidents involving Chinese citizens and institutions in a timely and coordinated manner, improve the systems for safeguarding security along the Belt and Road, protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese citizens and legal entities overseas, and ensure the security of food, energy, and resources as well as key industrial and supply chains.

Third, we must ensure our own security and common security and promote global security governance. To achieve national rejuvenation, we need a stable and united domestic environment and a peaceful international environment. We should champion common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable global security, put into practice the GSI, actively participate in global security governance, advocate a balanced, effective, and sustainable security architecture, seek the maximum common ground toward universal security, and promote a human community with a shared future.

(edited by Chen Qingyi)

¹ "Xi's Speech at a Gathering Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone," October 14, 2020, <https://m.gmw.cn/baijia/2020-10/15/34269019.html>.