

China's Diplomacy Innovation since the 18th CPC National Congress

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Abstract: Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China's diplomacy based on maintaining the continuity of the reform and opening up and stability of the fundamental policy, has achieved significant innovation in practice, concept and system design, highlighting increasingly the obvious China's characteristics, China's style and China's spirit.

Since in November 2012 the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held, the Chinese diplomacy, based on maintaining the principles of independent and focusing on the national development as the center, has achieved innovation in practice, concept and system design, highlighting the obvious China's characteristics, China's style and China's spirit

Practice innovation: new height, new trend, new policy

Diplomatic practice is the most significant embodiment of diplomatic innovation. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the Chinese diplomatic practice innovation reflected in the following aspects: multilateral diplomacy has reached a new height, summit diplomacy has become more active and the principle of state interests as the foreign policy bottom-line gets clearer, the policies to safeguard territorial sovereignty and regional stability get more steady.

First, the multilateral diplomacy has reached the new height. China's reform and opening up initiated the process of China's integration with the international community. Now China is a member of all the major international organizations in the world. By participating in the activities of international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and others,

China has put forward proposals, contributed wisdom, undertaken commitment, shouldered responsibility, and played a major country role. For example, China bears less than 1% of the United Nations expenses in 1995, increases to 5.15% during years between 2012-2015, and increases again to 7.92% in 2016; undertaking peacekeeping costs from 1982 up to 2016, China's proportion of the United Nations peacekeeping costs reaches 10.2%. These achievements are enough to attract the world's attention, and make the Chinese people proud.

China is also an advocate and active participant in global, regional and trans-regional multilateral mechanisms. Having taken part in a series of international systems such as the BRICS Summit, the Group 20 Summit, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), China-Africa Cooperation Forum, China-ASEAN Summit and the East Asia Summit, etc. the Chinese heads of state and government actively carry out multilateral diplomacy. In recent years, China also continues to provide and build the international platforms, having hosted in May 2014 the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), in November of the same year the 22nd APEC leaders informal meeting, in 2015 the Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary the War of Resisting against the Japanese Aggression and the World anti-Fascist War

Victory, and in 2016 the G20 Summit in Hangzhou. Fully using the diplomatic "hosting occasion", China comprehensively plans and coordinates bilateral and multilateral diplomatic activities, actively builds up composite effects, and participates in promoting the improvement of global governance

Second, diplomacy by heads of state and government has become more active. One of the reasons for the striking multilateral diplomacy is that the scale and level of these multilateral diplomatic activities are getting higher and higher. The Chinese top leaders not only participate in multilateral diplomacy, but also frequently go out of the country for state visits, take friendly tours, and enhance bilateral relations. From 2013 to June 2016, since assuming the presidency, President Xi Jinping has visited more than 40 countries. During the same period, more and more foreign top leaders come to China to participate in international conferences, or pay state visits. A total of 51 foreign top leaders visited China in 2013, 65 in 2014, more than 70 in 2015. In 2016, more than 20 top leaders participated in the G20 Summit in Hangzhou. The head diplomacy has become the most prominent feature and the most active form of China's diplomacy since the 18th CPC National Congress.

Third, the national interests becoming the bottom line of foreign policy has been further strengthened. The Report to the 18th CPC National Congress points out that China firmly upholds national sovereignty, security and development interests, and will never yield to any outside pressure.¹ President Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed that no country should expect us to make a deal with the core interests, and to swallow the bitter fruits of harming China's sovereignty, security and development interests.² This principle is prominently reflected in the maintenance of national security of territory and sovereignty.

Safeguard territorial sovereignty and oppose Japan's nationalization of the Diaoyu Islands. In defiance of China's opposition, the Japanese Government had implemented the so-called "nationalization" of China's Diaoyu Islands in September 2012, so the

Sino-Japanese relations has been in a deadlock. In order to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity, China's maritime monitoring ships began to enter the territorial waters of the Diaoyu Islands region and maritime surveillance aircraft began to enter the Diaoyu Islands air to carry out patrol missions, China has announced the base points and baselines of the territorial waters of the Diaoyu Islands, established the East China Sea air defense identification zone, and expressed firm stance for China to safeguard territorial sovereignty. Meanwhile, China is committed to improving the Sino-Japanese relations, in the spirit of "facing up to the history and looking forward to the future", at the end of 2014 reached some consensus with the Japanese side to overcome political obstacles in bilateral relations: the two sides are in agreement to comply with the principles and spirit of the four political documents, to prevent deterioration of the situation in the East China Sea through dialogue and consultations, and gradually restart political, diplomatic and security dialogues through various bilateral channels.

Safeguard the territorial sovereignty of the South China Sea, the stance is more determined. The islands, reefs, etc of the South China Sea are Chinese intrinsic territory, which in recent years have been illegally occupied by a few countries. The delimitation of the sea areas resulting from the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has made it a bilateral problem between China and a few relevant countries, and has been gradually expanded under the external influence. The Chinese Government firmly safeguards its territorial sovereignty in the South China Sea. In July 2013, the office in charge Xisha Islands, Nansha Islands and Zhongsha Islands was upgraded to "Sansha city" at prefecture level of Hainan Province, China in order to strengthen the implementation of effective management of the South China Sea, and build some land reclamation projects on some islands mainly related to the category of civil engineering in the range of sovereignty.

In 2013, the Philippine side submitted the South China Sea dispute to the International

Maritime Arbitral Tribunal, causing concerns in the international community. China upholds the sovereignty over Nansha and the Xisha Islands and its adjacent waters, and neither accepts, nor participates in, nor recognizes and nor implements the arbitral award. China advocates two-track thinking on the South China Sea dispute, i.e. based on fully respecting historical facts and international law, the parties directly involved should resolve the specific disputes through peaceful negotiations; the peace and stability in the South China Sea should be jointly maintained by China and ASEAN.

Fourth, to maintain peace and stability in Northeast Asia, the policy is clearer. As a close neighbor of the Korean Peninsula, China has always insisted on the denuclearization of the Peninsula, maintained peace and stability on the Peninsula, and advocated to solve the problems through dialogue and negotiation. China condemns the DPR Korea for its third nuclear test in February 2013 and supports the UN Security Council Resolution 2094. After the DPR Korea's fourth nuclear test in January 2016, China supports the UN Security Council Resolution 2270 fully integrating into the sanctions coverage the DPR Korea's main export commodities and their transportation and financial channels. In order to implement the relevant resolutions, China, according to the Foreign Trade Law, bans the import of mineral materials from the DPR Korea, and the export of aviation fuel to the DPR Korea.

Of course, China always believes that sanction is not the final solution, has called on all parties concerned to return to the dialogue, opposed any action to deteriorate the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and is against the United States and South Korea deploying on the Korean Peninsula a THAAD anti-missile system. As for DPR Korea's fifth nuclear test in September 2016, China expressed a "resolute opposition", but is also opposed to the unilateral sanctions unhelpful to solve the problems.

Concept innovation: new concept, new thought, new proposition

New diplomatic practice needs new theoretical guidance, and new theories need to

be applied and tested in the new practice. The diplomatic practice since the 18th CPC National Congress is realized under the guidance of a series of new concepts. These new concepts mainly include the following aspects.

First, the concept of the "Chinese dream". After the 18th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping positions the basic task of China's economic construction the realization of the Chinese dream, i.e. achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In a series of important diplomatic occasions latter on, Xi Jinping has systematically expounded the connotation of the Chinese dream and its world significance. He points out that the Chinese dream is closely linked with people's beautiful dreams around the world. The realization of the Chinese dream cannot be separated from the peaceful international environment and the stable international order. That the Chinese people realize their dream will create more opportunities for all countries, and will better promote world peace and development.³

Comrade Xi Jinping has interpreted the "Chinese dream" as national prosperity and rejuvenation, the well-being of the people, and during meeting with foreign guests and overseas visits, he proposed the Chinese dream is closely bound up with beautiful dreams of peoples all over the world including the American dream. The "Chinese dream" is the inheritance and development of China's important thought of the peaceful development in the new era.⁴ China's dream has also become China's new diplomatic concept in the new era, and realization of the Chinese dream is also a new task of China's diplomacy.⁵

Second, the Belt and Road initiative. During his visit to Central Asian and Southeast Asian countries in 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road Initiative). This is inheritance and upgrade of the ancient Silk Road in conformity with the requirements of the times. In 2014, the Chinese Government promulgated the Vision and Action on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the

21st Century Maritime Silk Road. From the initiative developing into concrete actions, the Belt and Road Initiative, for connecting the Asia-Pacific Economic Circle and the European Economic Circle, provides a inclusive development platform for relevant countries to jointly discuss, build and share.

What the Belt and Road Initiative pursues is policies communication, facilities interoperability, trade interconnection, capital circulation, people heart-to-heart connection for countries along the routes. Over the past three years, more than 100 countries and international organizations get involved, China with more than 30 countries along the routes have signed cooperation agreements to build the Belt and Road, and carried out international cooperation of production capacity with over 20 countries, the United Nations and other international organizations have a positive attitude to it, financial cooperation represented by Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Silk Road Fund, etc. gets deepened continuously and a number of influential milestone projects are gradually completed. The progress and results of the Belt and Road building, from scratch to the present development, exceed expectations,⁶ and the effects are demonstrated.

Third, the sound value of righteousness and interests. Adhering to the bottom line of the national interests in the diplomatic work does not mean profit-before-everything. In 2013, President Xi Jinping during his visit to Africa stated that China's diplomacy should establish a sound value of righteousness and interests. He then makes a brilliant exposition of the concept of righteousness and benefits on many international occasions. He points out that righteousness reflects a concept, the concept of Communists and a socialist country. Interests is to adhere to the principle of mutual benefits and win-win outcomes. To achieve both righteousness and interests, there should be good-faith, friendship, justice and ethics. Politically adhering to the principle of equality and justice, and upholding equality and treating each other as equals, economically adhering to mutual benefit and win-win outcomes and common development, all of which further

enrich the core values of China's diplomacy.

Adhering to the sound value of righteousness and interests in practice is to treat the close neighbors fairly, take overall situation into account, is committed to maintaining regional stability and development, treat developing countries with sincerity, friendship and equality, give affordable assistance to poor countries, cannot put profit first and cannot get preoccupied with the national gains and losses; internationally upholding fairness and pursuing justice, practicing the concept of equality, achieving both justice and interests, be sincere, be friendly, be fair, and be ethical.⁷

Fourth, the concept of establishing new-type major countries relations. With the rising China and the narrowed strength gap with the United States, some people, in line with repeated occurrence of confrontation and even war between the emerging powers and the defending powers historically, worry about possible confrontation and even military conflict between China and the United States. In view of this situation, President Xi Jinping puts forward during meeting with President Obama in June 2013 the principle of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, cooperation and win-win outcome, the concept of establishment of Sino-U.S. new-type major country relations, this idea becomes the goal and guiding ideology for China to develop and stabilize Sino-U.S. relations.

In November 2014, at the Central Diplomatic Work Conference, Xi Jinping emphasized promoting the establishment of new-type international relations with win-win cooperation as the core, adhering to the win-win strategy of opening up, and reflecting the concept of win-win cooperation in all foreign cooperation aspects such as the political, economic, security, culture and other aspects, and promoting the establishment of new-type international relations with win-win cooperation as the core. This is the innovation and development of the concept of international order, and has opened up a new vision of international relations.

Fifth, the concept of the community of shared destiny for mankind. Following the proposed goal of promoting the establishment

of new-type international relations with win-win cooperation as the core, President Xi Jinping, at the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia 2015, proposed that humans have only one earth, all countries are located in this one world. The world is prosperous while Asia can be prosperous; and Asia is prosperous while the world can be prosperous. In the face of profoundly changing regional and international situation, we should grasp the mega-trend of the world, keep up with the trend of the times, jointly create more favorable regional order for Asia and the world, promote the construction of a mankind community of shared destiny through stepping toward the Asian community of shared future.⁸

At the 70th UN General Assembly general debate, President Xi Jinping again gives a comprehensive exposition of the new-type international relations concept with win-win cooperation as the core, and proposes the "pentad" general path and general layout to build the mankind community of shared destiny: establishing partnerships in which countries treat each other on equal-footing, engage in mutual consultation and show mutual understanding; creating a security pattern featuring fairness and justice, and joint contribution and shared benefits; pursuing open, innovative, and inclusive development that benefits all; promoting inter-civilizations exchanges to promote harmony, inclusiveness and respect for diversity; building an ecological system that puts mother nature and green development first.⁹

Sixth, the Asian new security concept. In May 2014, President Xi Jinping proposed at the fourth CICA summit to promote a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept in Asia. Common security is to respect and assure the security of every country; Comprehensive security is to co-ordinate the maintenance of security in traditional fields and non-traditional fields; Cooperation security is to promote national and regional security through dialogue and cooperation; Sustainable security is to focus on both development and security in order to achieve lasting peace.¹⁰ This idea provides guidance not only to maintain national security and to strengthen

international security cooperation, and pioneers a jointly building, sharing, win-win path for Asian security through building a new framework for regional security and cooperation, provides a new thinking for the maintenance of security and stability in Asia and the world at large, and is China's important contribution to regional and global security.

Seventh, the peripheral diplomatic concept of "amity, sincerity, mutual benefits and inclusiveness" and the working principles of "sincerity, delivering outcomes, affinity, and good faith" in Africa. The peripheral areas are the environment for China to settle down, and the foundation for its development and prosperity. In October 2013, the CPC Central Committee convened the Forum on Peripheral Diplomatic Work, at which Xi Jinping stressed China's relations with neighboring countries, i.e. to maintain neighborliness and partnership with neighbors, adhere to harmonizing, securing and enriching neighbors, highlighting the concept of "amity, sincerity, mutual benefits and inclusiveness"; adhere to neighborliness and mutual assistance; lay stress on equality and affinity; attach importance to affection and meet frequently; do more popular things and heart-warming things to ensure neighboring countries more friendly, more intimate, more identified, and more supportive, and enhance the affinity, appeal and influence.¹¹

In 2013 President Xi Jinping during his first visit to Africa proposed the four-phrase motto -- "sincerity, delivering outcomes, affinity, and good faith" -- toward African friends, i.e. we must be sincere in treating African friends, deliver outcomes in cooperation with Africa; be affirmative in strengthening Sino-African friendship, and have good-faith in solving problems in Sino-African cooperation.¹² This concept has become China's new concept of work toward Africa. These above-ideas have become the guiding ideas for China to develop relations with the neighboring countries and developing countries in the new era.

Institution Innovation: new thinking, new institution, new style

With China's further integration into the

world, the stakeholders on the diplomatic issues are also increasing. Coordinating the interests of all parties, grasping the overall domestic and international situations, and achieving institutional innovation are the need of the current diplomatic work, but also a new innovation point of China's diplomacy since the 18th CPC National Congress.

The leadership position of the Communist Party of China is the characteristic and advantage of China's diplomatic institution. Emphasizing the top-level design, and ensuring the implementation of the central strategic intention is the guarantee of institutional innovation. In order to unify thinking, the Central Government held three special diplomatic conferences including the Forum on Peripheral Diplomatic Work in October 2013, the Central Conference on Diplomatic Work in the November 2014, and the Conference on PLA Diplomatic Work and the 16th Meeting on Military Attaché Work in January 2015. These meetings are held at high level and in big scale, and unify the thinking of the central government on relevant issues.

The second bright spot of institutional innovation is to promote building of the coordinative mechanism of diplomacy-related departments, and improve the relevant laws. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee has set up the Leading Group for Comprehensive Deepening Reform, the leading Group for Cyber Security and Information Technology, established specially in 2013 China National Security Commission as the central coordinating body on decision-making and discussions of national security, strengthening the centralized leadership of the national security work, and overall co-ordination of national security involving major issues and important work.

While strengthening the institution building, China has further improved laws in areas of foreigner-related security, and ensured that various relevant work is conducted in line with law, including in 2014 the Anti-Espionage Law, in 2015 the new National security Law and Anti-Terrorism Law, and in 2016 the Overseas NGOs Domestic Activities Management Law, etc. adopted by

the National People's Congress.

The aspect of policy implementation innovation is the key. President Xi Jinping points out that the situation that the top-level policies are responded by lower-level measures for getting around them is never allowed, that an order is not enforced and prohibition is not maintained is never allowed, and the discount, selection, or adaptation in implementing decisions of the Central Committee is never allowed.¹³ Yang Jiechi stressed in his published article the assurance of the successful performance of the central functions in the diplomatic work concerning the central leadership, decision-making, central disposal and others, and assurance of the realization of strategic intentions by the central leadership.¹⁴

According to the decision by the National People's Congress, the State Oceanic Administration and Maritime Surveillance under its Jurisdiction, the Coast Guard of the Ministry of Public Security, the Fishery Law Enforcement Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Maritime Anti-Smuggling Police of the General Administration of Customs and other departments had reconfiguration and reorganized the new State Oceanic Administration in 2013, in order to reconfigure the maritime law enforcement forces, and improve the institutional efficiency. In order to strengthen economic and diplomatic work, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the International Economic and Financial Consultative Committee in 2013. In order to provide legal advice, research reports and policy recommendations on major diplomatic issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also established the International Law Consultative Committee in 2015. These mechanisms innovation is to ensure full implementation of the central policy.

In the four years since the 18th CPC National Congress held, China's diplomacy, based on maintaining the continuity of the reform and opening up and stability of the fundamental policy principles, organically combines the inheritance with innovation, and adherence with development, demonstrates outstanding Chinese characteristics, Chinese

style and Chinese spirit.
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Footnotes:

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- 2.“Xi Jinping at the third collective study by the Political Bureau of the CCCPC stressed doing a better job in overall coordination of the domestic and international situations, cementing the foundation for marching on the peaceful development road”, People’s Daily, January 30, 2013.
3. “Xi Jinping’s speech at the General Debate of the 70th UN General Assembly”, People’s Daily, September 29, 2015.
- 4.Yang Jiechi, “Theoretical and Practical Innovations of China’s Diplomacy under the New Conditions”, Qiushi, No.16, 2013.
5. Wan Yi, “Exploring the Road to Major Countries Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics”, People’s Forum, August 9, 2013.
6. “Xi Jinping’s speech at the General Debate of the 70th UN General Assembly”, People’s Daily, September 29, 2015.
- 7.Wang Yi, “Adhering to Correct Justice and Interests Outlook, Actively Plying a Responsible Major Country Role”, People’s Daily, September 10, 2013.
- 8.Xi Jinping, “Stepping toward the Community of Shared Destiny, Pioneering a New Future for Asia”, People’s Daily, March 29, 2015.
9. Xi Jinping, “Collaborating to Build New Partnerships for Cooperation and Win-Win Outcome, Whole-heartedly Develop Mankind Community of Shared Destiny”, People’s Daily, September 29, 2015.
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11. Xi Jinping, “Showing more Interest in Maritime Recognition and Maritime Strategy, Promoting Strong Maritime Country Building to Progress Continuously”, People’s Daily, August 1, 2013.
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- 13.http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-01/22/e_114460744.htm.
14. Yang Jiechi, “Theoretical and Practical Innovations of China’s Diplomacy under the New Conditions”, Qiushi, No.16, 2013.