

BRICS Countries Shall Actively Promote Transformation of International Security Order

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1. Current international security landscape and transformation of international security order

The international security landscape is undergoing the most profound and complex transformation since the end of Cold War. Traditional security problems are still acute. On the one hand, with the Obama Administration's rebalancing strategy in the Asia Pacific to reshape the Asia-Pacific security situation and the crisis in Ukraine incurring the most serious geopolitical confrontation after the Cold War, relations among major countries may go through an "unharmonious period" with rising frictions, confrontation and conflicts.

The speech made by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to a joint session of US congress has demonstrated that Japan, not adjusting

its attitude towards history, still holds firmly onto its militarist view and fails to assess World War II correctly, which exacerbates the international community's concern over the resurgence of Japanese militarism. Turbulence in West Asia and North Africa keeps accumulating. Security in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya is under constant threat, and the Arab allies led by Saudi Arabia are conducting air strikes against Houthi rebels in Yemen. On the other hand, the US has promoted Iran and other 6 countries to reach an initial agreement on Iranian nuclear program and promoted normalization of US-Cuba relations, bringing a ray of light upon international security landscape. Meanwhile, non-traditional security problems have become all the more severe with the surging of the IS, active operation of AL-Qaeda, frequent attacks by Boko Haram, extended and intensified harassment by Al-Shabaab and rampant spreading of the disease of Ebola in Africa. Cyber security has become an important factor affecting national security. Countries around the world have accelerated formulation of cyber security strategy so as to grasp the right to establish international cyber governance rules. The world is still far from tranquility. An important reason is that because of evolution of history and changes of conditions, the international security order based on post-WW II power balance fails to adjust to a world of deepening globalization, thus is struggling to deal with various traditional and non-traditional security threats. The theme of this BRICS Academic

Forum is “Cooperation for Growth, Security and Prosperity” with security being the precondition since without it there would be no room for development or prosperity. It is increasingly necessary to reform and upgrade the international security order so as to build a more peaceful and secure world that better facilitates development and prosperity.

2. The current transformation of the international security order is the first peaceful one of its kind

Transformation of post-Cold War international security order is proceeding in an arduous manner. Starting with the establishment of the Westphalian order---the first security order of international significance---the world has then been through successively the Vienna order, the Versailles order and the Yalta order. In this process, the international security order has been in a cycle of “order establishment---order dysfunction---wars---order re-establishment”. Along with all these transformations unexceptionally driven by wars, there had often been worldwide turbulence, divergence, restructuring and battles. The end of the Cold War marked the fourth transformation of international security order. Different from previous ones which were realized through wars, for the first time, the transformation proceeds in a relatively peaceful manner, thus neither fast nor drastic. During this process, which is ongoing and will last for a long time, the old security order, though growingly irrelevant, will not be replaced by a new order in

the short term. It will take a long time for the new one to be fully functional. At the same time, the world will be unstable with all parties actively shaping the international security order according to their own interests.

3. Trends in current transformation of the international security order

What kind of security order does the world need? Where shall the transformation go? These are difficult questions facing all countries. If they can be addressed properly, the world may embark on a virtuous cycle of “security---growth---prosperity---security”.

Otherwise, there will be a vicious cycle of “instability ---poverty---extramalization--- instability”. With deepening globalization, the world is faced with a completely new security environment featuring three important trends. First, participants of international affairs are increasingly diversified, ranging from countries to international organizations and even to individuals. Second, non-traditional security threats are growing and traditional ones are relatively declining. With traditional security threats interwoven with non-traditional ones, threats including terrorism, extremism, cross-border crime, epidemics and environmental pollution are severe. Third, the international system has become increasingly integrated. Security of one country is closely linked with that of other countries and no country can stay secure on its own.

Competitive cooperation prevails. Under such circumstances, the traditional security concept fails to address problems in the evolving international situation, entailing the creation of a new security concept. According to the traditional security concept which prioritizes nations as the major parties of international order, the goal of national security is the utmost important and military strength is for obtaining the supreme power and to guarantee national security. The stronger the military power becomes, the better the national security is defended. Similar to the traditional concept, the new concept is not a single set of philosophy, but rather a collection of different ideas that have emerged or prevailed after the Cold War or during its last phase, among which the most influential being the concepts of comprehensive, common and cooperative security. All the three concepts hold that national security is not only a relative idea, but also inter-dependent; international security relations, which is a “positive-sum game” instead of a “zero-sum game”, is the only way to avoid security dilemma, facilitate multi-win progress, and maintain security and stability of the entire international system. This round of transformation in international security order can generate more effective international security governance only if it conforms to new features of international security circumstances, reflects changes in international balance of power, and integrates the rationality of both traditional and non-traditional security concepts.

4. For BRICS countries, where is the direction of transformation of the international security order?

BRICS countries are pillars upholding peace and security in their respective regions and important forces promoting world peace and security. Shouldering threefold responsibility of maintaining their own security, providing regional security public goods for and pushing forward international security order, BRICS countries shall utter a “BRICS voice” in the transformation of international security order, propose a “BRICS plan” and play the “BRICS role”.

Firstly, BRICS countries shall discuss and introduce a “new BRICS security concept”, which may include the following four aspects. The first aspect is comprehensive security. Since we face intertwined security problems, the national security we aim for shall be a comprehensive package covering external and internal security, territorial security and safety of life, as well as traditional and non-traditional security, so as to eventually facilitate security in political, territorial, military, economic, cultural, societal, technological, information, ecological, resources and nuclear areas.

The second aspect is common security. All countries are equal,

enjoying the right to participate in international security affairs on an equal footing and access to inclusive security while shouldering the responsibility to defend world security. No country shall pursue absolute security since it costs the security of other countries, and more importantly entails conflicts and wars among major countries. To build a peaceful world, we cannot accept that the security of a single country or a group of countries at the expense of the insecurity of other countries.

The third aspect is cooperative security. Without cooperation there would be no real peace or security and the world would be plunged into one war after another. Therefore we need to focus on common security interests of different countries and enhance strategic mutual trust through candid and in-depth communication. We can start from areas with low sensitivity, gradually expand cooperation areas and devise ways of cooperation, so as to promote peace and security through cooperation.

The fourth aspect is sustained security. As repeatedly proven by history and reality, underdevelopment in most cases is the fundamental reason behind emergence and lingering of security problems. Security cannot be sustained without development, and it is fair to say that development is the ultimate key to security problems. To realize sustained

security, we must treat the root cause by focusing on development so as to promote sustained security through sustained development.

Secondly, BRICS countries shall steer the international order in a more just and rational direction based on “new BRICS security concept”, uphold “BRICS interests”, voice “BRICS pursuit” and demonstrate “BRICS ideal”. By doing so, we are not challenging the existing international security order or creating a new order. Instead, while actively participating in the current international security mechanism and playing a constructive role, we, guided by the common security of the entire humanity and the interests of developing countries in particular, are trying to change the irrationality in the existing international order and promote a new international order which is equal, just, reasonable and efficient, so as to lay a foundation for lasting world peace as well as common development and prosperity.

Thirdly, BRICS countries shall test and enrich “new BRICS security concept” through practice. Only through application, tests and improvement can we tell whether the new security concept is able to solve problems and facilitate regional peace, stability and prosperity. In this respect, we may draw experience from the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization (SCO). Since the end of the Cold War, dual-turbulence in the international and Eurasian geopolitical landscapes has triggered frequent challenges in Central Asia. Apart from traditional security problems, the “three forces”---terrorism, secessionism and extremism---have waged a series of violent terror attacks and become a protruding security threat. Meanwhile, member states of the SCO actively proclaimed and practiced the new security concept within the SCO framework, pursuing a geopolitical strategy of common security through win-win cooperation. And now, the SCO has become an important force stabilizing Eurasia. By carrying out security dialogue and cooperation and exchanging ideas on security, BRICS countries and the SCO can jointly explore effective solutions to regional security problems and coordinate stances on transforming international security order so as to push forward the transformation with more impetus.