

**Toward a Community
with a Shared Future for Humanity:
From the Spirit of the Chinese People's War of
Resistance against Japanese Aggression to
the Four Global Initiatives**



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We must remind Japan of facing squarely its history of aggression, so as to win the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community through concrete actions, faithfully following the path of peaceful development. As a responsible major country, we must also unite with other forces of justice in the international community to jointly promote a correct view of World War II history, and firmly defend the fruits of victory. We must shoulder our own historical mission. Through solid historical research, comprehensive education, and effective international communication, we must build and consolidate an unbreakable defense of historical memory and national spirit, ensuring that the truth of history is passed on from generation to generation.

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Although Japan accepted de facto surrender, most of its senior officials have long been reluctant to admit the country's crimes of aggression. Those who are familiar with Japan's national conditions before its defeat know that it was a society where the inferior had to strictly obey the superior, and the military was also strictly hierarchical. How could a group of young officers have launched a war of aggression against other countries with nationwide mobilization without the support of their superiors? A close look at the systems of the Japanese government, military, and business communities at the time, which were intertwined with each other, can help reveal the attempts to whitewash the responsibilities of senior officials and explain why their war crimes have not been thoroughly addressed over the past decades.

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At this critical juncture where humanity once again faces the choice between confrontation and détente, war and peace, aggression and resistance, only by establishing the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity can we correctly understand the relationship between our own country and others, properly handle complex international relations, truly adhere to the principles of peaceful development and mutual benefit, completely abandon Cold War mentality and acts of

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History has proven that only by working together and forging a broad consensus to build a community with a shared future for humanity can we unite to navigate through the complex and turbulent international landscape and tackle the ever-emerging global challenges. Once again, humanity stands at the crossroads of history. Clinging to outdated hegemonic dreams will only push the world toward the abyss of confrontation, while embracing our shared future is the only path to opening a new chapter of unity and cooperation.

Introduction: History Brooks No Distortion, Justice Allows No Challenge

Cheng Yonghua, Former Chinese
Ambassador to Japan

Eighty years ago, the World Anti-Fascist War, which determined the future and destiny of humanity, achieved its final victory. As the main eastern battlefield of this global struggle, the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression lasted the longest, sacrificed the greatest, and made a monumental contribution to the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness, as well as to the realization of world peace. Amid today's changing international landscape, it holds greater practical importance to reflect on the war eight decades ago, drawing lessons from history, cherishing the present peace, and looking into future development through clarifying truths.

**China's War of Resistance as the Eastern
Pillar of the World Anti-Fascist War**

The Chinese People's War of Resist-

ance Against Japanese Aggression was by no means an isolated struggle for national self-defense, but an integral component of the World Anti-Fascist War. Beginning with the September 18th Incident in 1931, the Chinese people forged an iron bastion of resistance against Japanese militarist aggression with their flesh and blood, unveiling the World Anti-Fascist War. Throughout the fourteen years of arduous struggle, the Chinese battlefield pinned down an overwhelming majority of Japan's ground forces. At the tremendous cost of over 35 million military and civilian casualties, the Chinese people blunted the fascist onslaught, providing vital support to world anti-fascist forces. Their efforts thwarted Japan's Northward Expansion strategy, delayed its southward advance, and thus earned strategic opportunities for the Allied counteroffensives in Europe and the Pacific.

As President Xi Jinping pointed out, "This great triumph opened up bright

prospects for the great renewal of the Chinese nation and set our ancient country on a new journey after gaining rebirth.” This war was the first complete victory won by the Chinese people in their resistance against foreign invasion since the Opium War. It was a great national liberation war that washed away a century of national humiliation, stood as a shining example of overcoming strength with righteousness before the eyes of the world, greatly elevated China’s international standing, and laid a solid foundation for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It demonstrates profoundly that the Chinese people’s great war of resistance was not only a magnificent chapter in the Chinese nation’s standing tall among the nations of the world, but also an indelible contribution to the cause of peace for humanity. History must not be forgotten, and justice will ultimately prevail. This is the truth revealed by history. This is the cornerstone of our efforts to defend the post-war international order.

China’s Active Role in Establishing the Post-War International Order

The victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression not only meant expelling the invaders but, more importantly, laid the foundation for establishing a lasting UN-centered postwar international order. As a major member of the global anti-fascist alliance, China actively participated in drafting the Declaration by United Nations, the Cairo

Declaration, and the Potsdam Proclamation. It became a founding member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, playing a proactive and significant role in shaping the new international order. One crucial aspect of this order was through a series of international legal documents and institutional arrangements, thoroughly eliminating Japanese militarism, preventing Japan’s remilitarization, and ensuring it embarked on a path of peaceful development.

The Cairo Declaration explicitly stipulated that territories Japan had stolen from China, including Northeast China, Taiwan, and the Penghu Islands, must be returned to China. The Potsdam Proclamation reaffirmed the implementation of the Cairo Declaration’s provisions. These international legal instruments established binding principles for Japan and became the fundamental cornerstone of the postwar international order. China has consistently been a staunch defender and active participant in this order. However, it must be noted that the evolution of the post-war international landscape has sowed seeds for the subsequent rise of historical revisionism in Japan.

Japan’s Dangerous Shift in Collective Historical Perception

I began engaging in work related to Japan in the 1970s and witnessed reflections on its wartime history among the Japanese society. Back then, despite oc-

casional cacophony from the right-wing, the Japanese society generally harbored remorse for wartime atrocities. The public largely remained vigilant against militarism, and held an apology attitude toward the peoples of neighboring countries including China and Korea. However, since the 1980s and 1990s, the historical revisionism denying or even glorifying it has resurfaced within Japan. Such rhetoric and deeds have repeatedly challenged international justice and provoked the peoples of victimized Asian countries, becoming a serious negative factor undermining regional peace and stability.

What is alarming is that this reactionary trend is no longer confined to a handful of right-wing politicians. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who largely inherited the objective understanding of historical issues held by older-generation leaders such as Kakuei Tanaka, was still compelled to abandon his plan to issue an official statement marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the war due to pressure from far-right forces. Public opinion polls show that the overall perception of World War II history in Japanese society is becoming increasingly blurred and even distorted. According to a survey conducted by Kyodo News and “Genron NPO”, over 40% of Japan’s younger generations are completely unaware of August 15th as the day of Japan’s surrender. Many Japanese youth rarely, if ever, discuss World War II history with family or friends, and their understand-

ing of that period primarily comes from school education and media productions that dilute and whitewash the facts.

The root cause of this situation lies primarily in the incomplete reforms carried out under U.S. occupation, which left room for the resurgence of historical revisionism. In the immediate post-war years, the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers undertook a series of “demilitarization and democratization” reforms, aiming to eradicate the social foundations of militarism. However, as the Cold War loomed, the strategic priorities of the United States shifted. American policy toward Japan rapidly transitioned from initial “reform” to “support,” abruptly halting the purge of Japan’s militarist remnants. Class-A war criminals such as Nobusuke Kishi were not only spared thorough punishment but were later released and returned to Japanese politics, even assuming key positions such as prime minister. This act of “releasing the tiger back to the mountain” significantly hindered Japan’s recognition of its historical liabilities.

Secondly, the fading of wartime memory created fertile ground for historical revisionism to grow. The right-wing “Imperial History View,” which seeks to fundamentally deny the evil nature of Japan’s war of aggression, is increasingly eroding historical education in Japan. In 1982, while reviewing high school history textbooks, the Japanese Ministry

of Education tampered with historical facts. References to invasion were altered to “enter”, the full-scale invasion of China was rephrased as “comprehensive offensive”. The Nanjing Massacre, among other historical facts of aggression, were downplayed or even falsified. This sparked widespread outrage within Japan and drew strong condemnation from Asian nations including China, North Korea, and South Korea. Under external pressure, then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kiichi Miyazawa issued a statement promising to rectify the textbook’s description and added a clause to the review criteria, requiring “international understanding and cooperation” to be considered when addressing historical content related to neighboring countries. However, despite protracted struggles between neighboring countries and Japan over the textbook issue, distorted or even glorified accounts of aggression continued to appear. This resulted in the younger generations lacking sufficient understanding of their country’s wartime crimes and the spread of erroneous historical views, providing fertile ground for the remnants of militarist ideologies.

Furthermore, many Japanese politicians and media outlets one-sidedly emphasize Japan’s status as a “victim” of the war, particularly regarding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They extensively highlight their victimhood as “the only nation to have suffered nuclear attacks”, yet downplay or remain

silent about grave atrocities committed by Japanese militarism across Asia. This rhetoric, deliberately ignoring historical causality and blurring the fundamental distinction between perpetrators and victims, represents a clear case of historical nihilism. The Yasukuni Shrine, a spiritual symbol of Japan’s militarist aggression and expansion, enshrines 14 Class-A war criminals responsible for serious wartime atrocities. Some Japanese politicians regard it as a place to “honor the souls of heroes”, repeatedly visiting and paying respects to it. This constitutes a blatant challenge to historical justice and human conscience, gravely wounding the feelings of the victimized Asian peoples.

It is noteworthy that Japanese historical revisionism is gradually exerting influence at the policy level, seeking to challenge the postwar peace framework. In recent years, moves to revise the Constitution have become increasingly prominent, attempting to amend Article 9 of the “Peace Constitution,” normalize the Self-Defense Forces, substantially increase defense spending, break through the principle of “exclusive defense,” and loosen military restrictions. More recently, xenophobic tendencies have even emerged in Japan’s political arena. Behind these trends lies a persistent drive to break free from the postwar international order’s constraints on Japan’s military power and to become a so-called “normal state.”

On the other hand, amid the current

major transformations in the international landscape, the United States has increasingly leveraged Japan to serve its strategic objectives, including its new Cold War alignment and geopolitical goal of containing China. The U.S. -Japan collusion has become increasingly concrete and militarized, a trend also reflected in the narrative of World War II history. For instance, in March this year, U.S. Secretary of Defense Hegseth, while attending a memorial ceremony for the soldiers died on Iwo Jima, equated the “courageous spirit” of both American and Japanese soldiers during the war, claiming that it would “be remembered throughout history.” More recently, the U.S. State Department went so far as to state that “the United States and Japan ended a devastating war in the Pacific region.” Such absurd remarks, which brazenly distort historical narratives, are a crude affront to historical truth and international justice. This not only in fact endorses the historical revisionism in Japan but also attempts to foster bloc confrontation in the Asia-Pacific, posing a serious threat to regional peace and stability.

Upholding the Correct View of History and Jointly Advancing Peaceful Development

The issue of historical perception is a matter of fundamental principle in China-Japan relations, bearing on the political foundation for rebuilding of bilateral ties and the sentiments of the

two peoples. Over the years, significant achievements have been made in economic and trade cooperation, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people interactions between China and Japan, creating an interconnected relationship. The healthy development of bilateral relations has brought substantial benefits to both countries and their peoples, becoming a crucial cornerstone for regional peace and stability. None of this would have been possible without the profound sense of historical mission and extraordinary political wisdom of the elder generations of leaders from both countries, who had made clear agreements on historical issues since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972.

Today, as the international landscape undergoes profound changes, China-Japan relations once again stand at a crossroads. History serves as a constant warning: the bottom line of peace must be upheld, and historical tragedies must never be repeated. We must not allow the reactionary trend of historical revisionism to provoke the peoples of China and other victimized Asian nations, to trample on historical justice and human conscience, or to collude with geopolitical calculations within and beyond the region, undermining the postwar international order centered on the United Nations and pushing the region back into the abyss of bloc confrontation and military conflict.

We must remind Japan that only by

facing squarely its history of aggression can it truly draw lessons from the past. It must adhere faithfully to the principles enshrined in the four political documents between China and Japan, and win the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community through concrete actions, faithfully following the path of peaceful development. As a responsible major country, we must also unite with other forces of justice in the international community to jointly promote a correct view of World War II history, firmly defend the fruits of victory, resolutely uphold the international order based on international law, and collectively resist any attempts to distort history and subvert justice. More importantly, we must shoulder our own historical mission. Through solid historical research, comprehensive education, and effective international communication, we must build and consolidate an unbreakable defense of historical memory and national spirit, ensuring that the truth of history is passed on from generation to generation.

As President Xi Jinping emphasized on multiple occasions, “Remembering history does not mean being obsessed with the past. Rather, in doing so, we aim to create a better future and pass the torch of peace from generation to generation.” Upholding historical truth and international justice is the only path to achieving lasting peace and common prosperity in our region and the world, and will also significantly contribute to the great cause

of building a community with a shared future for humanity.



Part I.
China's War of Resistance
against Japanese Aggression:
A Heroic Epic in Humanity's
Pursuit of Fairness and Justice

Japan's Launch of War of Aggression Has Deep-Rooted Institutional Causes

Xu Yan, an expert in military history

It has been eight decades since Japanese Emperor Hirohito read out on the radio the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, which only mentioned “ending the war” without clearly acknowledging defeat. Although Japan accepted de facto surrender, most of its senior officials have long been reluctant to admit the country’s crimes of aggression. In their speeches, Japanese leaders often only refer to the “mistakes” made in Japan’s wartime policies and rarely apologize publicly. Moreover, the Japanese media has repeatedly played up the fact that young officers in the imperial Japanese army defied senior officials in launching the war. For example, many films and television series depicting the February 26 Incident highlight the bloodshed when junior soldiers attacked senior officers cruelly. Although such works reveal the Japanese army’s dirty laundry, they also shift the blame downward. History books compiled by the Japanese government often claim that junior soldiers at the front line acted without authorization, breaching the “non-expansion” policy of the then Japanese government.

However, those who are familiar with Japan’s national conditions before its defeat know that it was a society where the

inferior had to strictly obey the superior, and the military was also strictly hierarchical. How could a group of young officers have launched a war of aggression against other countries with nationwide mobilization without the support of their superiors? A close look at the systems of the Japanese government, military, and business communities at the time, which were intertwined with each other, can help reveal the attempts to whitewash the responsibilities of senior officials and explain why their war crimes have not been thoroughly addressed over the past decades.

Samurai Were Mere Brutal Enforcers, While High-Ranking Officials and Zaibatsu Were the Masterminds of Aggression

In Japan’s wars of aggression, the brutality of its military horrified the world. Upon closer examination, this cruelty stemmed, to some extent, from a deformed fusion of Western imperialist and fascist notions of “survival of the fittest” with Japan’s domestic samurai traditions. Ancient Japan, long plagued by daimyo (warlord) rivalries, fostered a dedicated warrior class in society, molding them into a character that combined unwavering loyalty to superiors with ruthless slaughter of inferiors—a “both

sheep and wolf” mentality. Around the Meiji Restoration, capitalist-style reforms emerged in Japanese society. The samurai class was nominally abolished, with many of its members becoming professional soldiers. Japan’s old military, particularly the army, retained numerous factions and preserved feudal master-servant traditions between ranks. Young officers in factional struggles often obeyed their “masters”, acting as violent enforcers against dissenters.

After the Meiji Restoration officially began in 1868, the Japanese Emperor transformed from a religious figurehead into Japan’s supreme sovereign ruler. The previously separate warlord forces from various domains were unified into the “Imperial Army”. Some of Japan’s then-small industrial and commercial capitalists seized the opportunity to develop into large capitalist zaibatsu (conglomerates), which became pillars of the military and political forces. The Mitsui zaibatsu, one of the most financially powerful formed in the early Meiji years, contributed substantial funds to establish the “Imperial Army”. When Japan launched the so-called “First Sino-Japanese War” (known as the Jiawu War in China), its annual fiscal revenue was only 80 million yen (at the time, 1 yen was roughly equivalent to one Chinese silver dollar). It was the zaibatsu that took the lead in raising 250 million yen nationwide, ensuring Japan could develop its military industry and win that war. The total war spoils

(reparations and seized assets) extracted from China amounted to 290 million taels of silver, equivalent to 360 million yen. The Japanese government promptly used these war profits to reward major zaibatsu like Mitsui, further inflaming the expansionist ambitions of the official, financial, and military spheres and cementing an aggressive national policy of “enriching the nation through war”.

After the Jiawu War, Japan continued its relentless foreign aggression. The division of labor at the top was: “officials” made decisions, “capital” provided support, and the “military” executed. However, this tripartite “cooperation” often involved disagreements. While their expansionist ideology was aligned, the profit-conscious zaibatsu, fearing losses, were relatively cautious. In contrast, officers obsessed with “Bushido” were filled with fanatical “hot-headedness”. Because the consequences were unpredictable, politicians, zaibatsu, and older officers often advocated “gradual advance” at the outset of war and watched from behind the scenes. The young officers, however, would step forward with a “do-or-die” attitude to provoke incidents. If unsuccessful, they would serve as “scapegoats” to bear responsibility.

The September 18th incident of 1931 (also known as the Mukden Incident) was portrayed by Japan as the “unauthorized action” of a few Kwantung Army staff officers. But in reality, it was a deceptive trick coordinated between

the front and back stages. At the time, Japan faced a worldwide economic crisis, with its GDP falling by a third. The upper echelons sought to revive the economy by invading Northeast China, making “Manchuria and Mongolia are Japan’s lifeline” a domestic catchphrase. However, the government and zaibatsu feared economic sanctions from the US and UK, and even the top-level officers in the Army had reservations. They thus instructed second-tier officers in the Kwantung Army to act as the “front-runners”. The three staff officers who gave the order to open fire in Shenyang were Colonel Kenji Doihara, Colonel Kanji Ishiwara, and Colonel Seishiro Itagaki. Kwantung Army Commander General Shigeru Honjo pretended not to know beforehand. Only after seeing the Northeast Army’s lack of resistance did he order full-scale action. While the Japanese government announced to the world it would “adhere to a policy of non-expansion” as the Kwantung Army occupied key places like Shenyang and Changchun, the military swiftly carried out a complete occupation. Seeing no intervention from the US and the UK, the Japanese leadership approved the establishment of “Manchukuo” and promoted Doihara, Itagaki, and others. How could this possibly be the “unauthorized” action of young officers?

Seeking Wealth Through War: Radical Advocacy for Invading China Received

Covert Zaibatsu Support

Those well-read in Japanese history will notice that many leaders of zaibatsu and high-ranking politicians had names like “Taro”, “Ichiro”, or “Ryuichi”. This stems from Japan’s historical practice of “primogeniture”, which means the elder son inherits everything. Since Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty implemented the “Favor-expansion Act” to weaken powerful families, China generally practiced dividing family property equally among sons, leading to the saying “wealth does not pass three generations”, meaning a great family’s wealth would be dispersed by the grandchildren’s generation. In Japan, the practice of passing family assets down through the eldest son for generations was prevalent. Before WWII, 40,000 large and small enterprises and merchants were mostly “century-old shops”. The bureaucratic system established after the Meiji Restoration had many high-level officials representing the zaibatsu, often also hereditary. This system led to power and wealth being concentrated for generations among a tiny number of families. Japan’s four major pre-war zaibatsu—Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda—controlled half of domestic industrial production. Their attitude greatly influenced the decisions of the Japanese government and military at the time. For example, after the Japanese army occupied Northeast China, the Mitsui zaibatsu immediately followed up with exploitation to plunder

resources. The enormous profits they gained fueled their expansionist ambitions, making them in favor of continuing the aggressive expansion into North and Central China.

Looking closely at the names of pre-war Japanese officers, one often finds “Jiro”, “Kenji”, “Saburo”, and “Shiro”. This was mainly because sons other than the eldest needed to go out and make their own way upon adulthood. In ancient times, these men often became low-ranking samurai, entered monasteries, or turned into ronin (masterless samurai). By modern times, entering military academy and rising through the ranks became a new way out. Even eldest sons who became officers often came from families with little wealth. The income of a pre-war Japanese company-grade officer was less than that of a university graduate. For those officers, getting married and starting a family would be quite difficult. Promotion to major would more than triple their salary, hence the saying “impoverished company-grade officers, wealthy majors”. Upon becoming a general officer, they could enjoy the lavish lifestyle of the upper class. Before the full-scale invasion of China began in 1937, the total Japanese army was limited to around 300,000 men, with only just over 40,000 officer slots. Promotion depended mainly on battle merits and patronage from superiors. Many junior officers yearning for promotion therefore

hoped for war and attached themselves to certain senior officers, working fiercely to become their die-hard followers.

The pre-war Japanese military high command not only had regional factions but also disagreed on the three main directions of aggression: invading China, attacking the Soviet Union, or plundering Southeast Asia. They also quarreled with political circles over military budget allocation. To resolve internal disagreements, those brutal military leaders often resorted to violence. Finding it “inconvenient to appear themselves,” they had their subordinates do the dirty work. Around the time of the September 18th Incident, Japan witnessed repeated assassinations of prime ministers, generals, and other senior officials, with the perpetrators almost always being company-grade officers. For instance, in 1932, a group of young officers broke into Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi’s home and shot him in the head precisely because this elder statesman opposed increasing military spending. Later, the murderers received pardons because some military and political leaders claimed they acted out of patriotism”. On February 26, 1936, during intense rivalry between the Army’s “Toseiha” (Control Faction) and “Kodoha” (Imperial Way Faction), several young Captains led about 1,400 troops in a mutiny in Tokyo, killing several senior officials with the rank of general. Before the February 26 Incident, several “Kod-

oha” generals had secretly expressed support for the mutineers, saying those they intended to attack “deserved to die”. However, the incident enraged the Emperor and was suppressed. Several company-grade officers were executed, but the senior figures who supported them were not held accountable. Later, Japanese authorities and some media called these events “gekokujo” (the lower dominating the upper), but those in the know understood it was merely internal strife among the upper echelons.

Outwardly, the zaibatsu did not participate in military internal strife. Still, in reality, they believed the “Kodoha’s” advocacy for attacking the Soviet Union northward would yield no profits. The “Toseiha” which advocated invading China, received their covert support and came to dominate the military after the February 26 Incident. In the five years after the Japanese army occupied Northeast China, Japan’s domestic GDP doubled. While the zaibatsu reaped huge profits, the income of most ordinary people also increased somewhat. This contributed to a fanatical tide of support for aggressive expansion within Japanese society. Those young officers who stirred up trouble abroad thus became celebrated “national heroes”. This vicious incentive led the official, military, and financial worlds to unanimously demand expanding the war. Japan’s war machine thus rolled from Northeast China into most of China and even into the Pacific Theater,

unable to stop.

Why Did the Tokyo Trials Leave “Historical Regrets”?

The Chinese people’s extraordinarily arduous War of Resistance, coupled with the US’ shift to counteroffensive soon after initial setbacks in the Pacific War, meant Japan’s military attrition far exceeded its plundered gains. Domestic zaibatsu not only saw their dreams of wealth shattered but also faced losing their capital. From the second half of 1944, Japan’s major zaibatsu and the politicians representing them privately discussed seeking peace with the US as soon as possible. The Emperor also sent his “imperial brother, Prince Takamatsu, to lead secret talks with the US in Switzerland. In February 1945, Konoe Fumimaro, Japan’s top nobleman whose family had been handed down for centuries and a pre-war Prime Minister, gathered opinions from political and business circles and secretly advised the Emperor that defeat was inevitable. To preserve the “national polity” (emperor system), they must sacrifice the military, especially making the officers who had been pioneers since the “Manchurian Incident” (the September 18th Incident) bear responsibility.

In the secret negotiation deal reached in Switzerland, the US, seeking to end the war quickly to reduce its own losses and to control Japan post-war to counter the Soviet Union, agreed by early sum-

mer 1945 that Japan could retain the emperor system based on its unconditional surrender. Initially, the Japanese emperor still wanted to bargain further. However, after the Soviet Union entered the war and the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August that year, he decided at an imperial conference to accept American terms. At that time, most leading Japanese military figures believed that Japan still had 7 million troops and its homeland had not been invaded, so they were unwilling to accept surrender. Army Minister Korechika Anami yelled about fighting to the death at the imperial conference. However, the emperor's "sacred decision" was supported by civilian government officials and the zaibatsu. Without political and financial support, the military could no longer fight. Anami and other military leaders subsequently committed suicide at home. Young officers in Tokyo who caused trouble refusing to surrender could only shoot themselves in the head in the square. Even Hideki Tojo, the former Japanese Prime Minister who had already resigned and was living in idle retirement, shot himself in the heart but survived because he missed, and the new Army Minister Sadamu Shimomura chastised him for refusing to "take responsibility for the emperor in court." This history of internal disputes within the upper echelons of Japanese militarism and its outcome clearly illustrates who were the primary controllers of Ja-

pan's war of aggression.

After Japan's unconditional surrender, over 400,000 US troops were stationed on the Japanese mainland. Following the common demand of the world's anti-fascist forces, they established the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo, which ultimately sentenced seven Class-A war criminals to death, with other war criminals receiving life imprisonment or various prison terms. While punishing these war criminals upheld justice, the trials left regrets: Mainly "bald-headed militarists" were punished. The Japanese imperial family was not pursued due to prior US promises (including Prince Yasuhiko Asaka, who commanded the Nanjing Massacre), and the zaibatsu emerged unscathed. Joseph Grew, the then US Under Secretary of State and former Ambassador to Japan, reported to the White House: "Japan's big industrialists were our friends before the war and will be our friends in the future." The US occupation authorities in Japan only dissolved the Mitsui zaibatsu. This zaibatsu just split it into several smaller companies. Other zaibatsu remained famous post-war enterprises, attaching themselves to US capital within supply chains and introducing new technology for upgrades. Victims from China, Korea and other countries who were forced into labor by Japan and its related companies repeatedly sought compensation after the war, but these claims struggled for years to receive a fair response.

The key reason for these historical regrets lies in the US' post-WWII strategic needs, which led to a policy of utilizing and co-opting the Japanese zaibatsu. The Japanese emperor system was also preserved, and some politicians who represented industrial and commercial interests during the war continued in government post-war. For example, Nobusuke Kishi, Minister of Commerce and Industry during WWII and Class-A war criminal (maternal grandfather of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe), even became Prime Minister of Japan in the 1950s. How could these individuals, themselves bearing war crimes, who remained in power and continued to manipulate Japan's political and economic circles, thoroughly clear the nation's crimes of aggression? Therefore, in reviewing history, while strongly condemning the atrocities committed by the aggressors on the battlefield, we must also deeply investigate the underlying causes within Japanese society, take this as a warning against the revival of Japanese militarism and firmly defend the hard-won peace.

China's War of Resistance: The Eastern Main Front of the World Anti-Fascist War

Lin Limin, President of the Chinese Institute for History of the World War II and Professor at the University of International Relations

On September 18, 1931, Japan launched the “September 18th Incident,” initiating a 14-year-long war of aggression against China and marking the beginning of the world anti-fascist war. The Chinese people, “regardless of region or age,” fought bloodily and bravely against the Japanese fascist aggressors. They were the first in the world to raise the banner of armed resistance against fascist aggression, establishing the anti-fascist “Eastern Main Front” centered on the Chinese battlefield. China endured tremendous sacrifices and made extraordinarily arduous and great contributions to the victory of World War II.

The Chinese People Were the First to Raise the Banner of Armed Resistance Against Fascist Aggression

In 1929, the capitalist world was hit by the Great Depression, which had global repercussions. Reactionary fascist forces successfully seized power in Germany, Japan and Italy, embarking on a path of internal dictatorship and external expansion, using war to escape crisis.

Unlike World War I, where major

belligerents were concentrated in the heartland of Europe, the chief culprits of WWII — the fascist powers of Germany, Japan and Italy — were positioned at opposite ends of Eurasia. They could not, and did not, start a world war all at once as in WWI. Instead, they chose to start with weaker colonial and semi-colonial “intermediate countries,” attacking from the weak to the strong sequentially. This process began with Japan’s invasion of China’s three northeastern provinces through the “September 18th Incident” in 1931. It was followed by Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, Germany and Italy’s intervention in Spain in 1936, Hitler’s Germany’s annexation of Austria and invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938, its invasion of Poland in 1939, and then campaigns in Scandinavia and Western Europe (1940), the Soviet Union (June 1941), and the United States (December 1941). Through these scattered yet strategically connected actions across Asia, Europe and Africa, the German, Japanese and Italian fascists ignited wars worldwide. Among these, Japan’s invasion of China’s northeast in 1931 was the starting point of this series of actions, and the Chinese people’s resistance against Japanese aggression was the first battle of the world’s resistance against fascist aggression in WWII.

Faced with the step-by-step advancement of the German, Japanese and Italian fascists, powerful Western nations like the US, the UK and France repeatedly attempted to appease the fascists by sacrificing “intermediate countries.” This led to the accelerating pace and expanding scope of fascist aggression, causing the flames of WWII to spread from Asia to Africa, Europe and eventually the entire world.

Under these complex international circumstances, the Chinese people, starting in 1931, launched an extraordinarily arduous struggle. They were the first in the world to raise the banner of armed resistance against fascist aggression. This had overarching global significance in opening up and sustaining the anti-fascist “Eastern Main Front” of WWII. It also inspired and warned the world, especially the major Western powers like the US, the UK and France, that the only way to stop the tide and ambition of fascist aggression was to counter aggressive war with a just war. There was absolutely no other alternative.

China Fought the Longest and Defeated the Most Enemy Troops

In 1931, facing the brazen aggression of the Japanese militarists, although China was comprehensively backward in economy, technology and military equipment, the Chinese military and civilians feared no strong enemy and courageously launched large-scale counterattacks

against Japan. On September 19, 1931, Chinese military and civilians fiercely battled Japanese troops in Changchun, inflicting 145 casualties on the Japanese army in a single day. In November of the same year, to block the Japanese attack on Qiqihar and Harbin, Chinese military and civilians killed or wounded over 1,000 Japanese soldiers. In January 1932, Chinese military and civilians put up a stubborn resistance in Shanghai, forcing the Japanese army to reinforce three times and “change commanders four times,” deploying over four divisions and numerous aircraft and warships. After over a month of fighting, the Japanese suffered “tens of thousands of casualties” and were ultimately compelled to accept a ceasefire, pausing their attempt to occupy Shanghai.

From the first shot fired by Chinese military and civilians in 1931, which was also the first shot of the world’s anti-fascist war, until Japan’s defeat and surrender in 1945, hundreds of millions of Chinese military and civilians persistently resisted Japanese aggression without waver- ing. In the three northeastern provinces of China, military and civilians in the occupied areas organized the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, numbering hundreds of thousands. They persisted in fighting for 14 years under extremely harsh conditions, eliminating over 200,000 Japanese troops, pinning down large numbers of Japanese forces, and providing strong support for the nationwide War

of Resistance. Inside the Shanhaiguan Pass, to support and encourage the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, Chinese military and civilians fought bloody battles against the Japanese along the Great Wall, launching the Defense of the Great Wall in 1933 and the Suiyuan Campaign in 1936. After Japan began its full-scale invasion of China in July 1937, Chinese military and civilians successively launched the Beiping-Tianjin Resistance, the Battle of Shanghai, the Defense of Nanjing, as well as the Battle of Tai'erzhuang, the Battle of Pingxingguan, among others, sustaining the "Eastern Main Front" of the anti-fascist war in WWII.

By the time the European war broke out in 1939, the Chinese military and civilians had already been resisting Japanese fascist aggression alone for eight years. Subsequently, Chinese military and civilians cooperated with Allied powers like the Soviet Union, the US and the UK, launching large-scale campaigns such as the Hundred Regiments Offensive, the Battle of Changsha and the Battle of Kunlun Pass, and twice entering Myanmar to fight directly in aid of Allied forces. Behind Japanese lines, the Communist Party of China led the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army (the main forces of China's anti-Japanese war) and the people extensively waging guerrilla warfare. Men and women, old and young, all joined the fight, using characteristic tactics such as mine war-

fare, tunnel warfare, sparrow warfare and sabotage warfare to strike the Japanese aggressors, forcing them into frantic flight and constant fear.

From 1931 to 1945, Chinese military and civilians fought nearly 200,000 large and small battles, including over 200 major campaigns. Military and civilian casualties exceeded 35 million, and they wiped out over 1.5 million Japanese troops in total, accounting for more than half of Japan's total casualties. At the end of the war, the number of Japanese soldiers surrendering in the China theater reached 1.28 million, constituting more than half of all surrendering Japanese forces. China's casualties and losses exceeded those of any other participating country, representing tremendous sacrifice for the victory of the world anti-fascist war.

China's 14-Year War of Resistance: An Indelible Contribution to Global Victory

The Chinese military and civilians independently shouldered the mission of sustaining the "Eastern Main Front" of World War II, inflicting massive losses on Japanese fascist forces. Through prolonged and effective resistance, China staunchly supported the strategic objectives of the Allied powers. It is undeniable that China's role was pivotal in shaping the outcome of the war.

First, China pinned down and devastated the main force of the Japanese army, making direct contributions to the

defeat of Japanese fascism and the ultimate victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. Despite the Japanese military featuring dual structure (Army and Navy), the Army accounted for over two-thirds of both personnel and funding, dominating Japan's fascist aggression decisions with a "Army-first, Navy-second" approach. Throughout China's 14-year resistance, the relentless efforts of Chinese military and civilians forced Japan to deploy the bulk of its Army, and even parts of its Navy, to the Chinese theater. On average, two-thirds of Japan's Army was engaged in China throughout WWII, peaking at 94 percent during critical periods. Even when Japan attacked the Pearl Harbor and launched the Pacific War in December 1941, 35 of its 51 Army divisions remained tied down in China.

Second, China's containment and attrition of Japan's Army placed Japanese forces in a strategic quagmire across northern, southern and western fronts, profoundly impacting the global war effort.

Forcing Japan to abandon its "Northern Advance": Japan originally planned to attack the Soviet Union, but this required concentrating its Army main force. The plan of Kwantung Army Special Maneuvers in 1941, for example, demanded at least 25 divisions for operations against the USSR. However, China's protracted war had already trapped Japan in an unwinnable quagmire, compelling it to scrap the "Northern Advance."

Delaying and hampering Japan's "Southern Advance": Unlike the Army, the Japanese Navy advocated for a "Southern Advance" against the US and the UK to seize Southeast Asia. But the Army's heavy losses in China forced Japan to postpone this move. When the Navy finally risked the "Southern Advance" in December 1941, the Army could only spare 11 divisions for support, which severely limiting Japan's operational timing, speed and outcomes.

Aborting plans for further "Southern Advance" against Australia and "Western Advance" into India: After occupying Southeast Asia, the Japanese Navy sought to consolidate Pacific dominance by invading Australia, but this required up to 50 divisions. Similarly, in 1944, the launch of Battle of Imphal in Myanmar, aimed at supporting Germany by attacking India, was hobbled by China's resistance. Japan could only muster 100,000 troops for this campaign, ending in disastrous defeat.

Third, China's prolonged resistance and massive elimination of Japanese invaders inspired the global Anti-Fascist Alliance, particularly "intermediate nations" facing aggression. Like most "intermediate nations," China was an agricultural country fighting an industrial power. Yet, the Communist Party of China, along with the Eighth Route Army, New Fourth Army and Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, leveraged people's war and guerrilla tactics to play

a cornerstone role in the resistance. This became a model for “intermediate nations” combating fascism. The systematic development of people’s war theory and guerrilla strategies not only provided a blueprint for weaker nations resisting stronger aggressors but also greatly enriched global military thought.

In summary, from 1931 to 1945, Chinese military and civilians were the first to raise the banner of armed resistance against fascist aggression, courageously fulfilling the historic mission of the “Eastern Main Front.” This victory, earned through immense national sacrifice rather than bestowed by any other nation, reshaped 20th-century world history, cemented China’s post-war status as a major power and won the respect of peace-loving people worldwide.

Why Could the Anti-Fascist Grand Alliance Succeed?

Xu Lan, Professor in the School of History of Capital Normal University

World War II was truly a global conflict, with major battlefronts spanning the world: the Chinese theater, Northern and Western Europe, the Atlantic, the Balkans, the Mediterranean, East and North Africa, the Soviet-German front, the Pacific theater, etc. Among these, the Chinese theater was the earliest, longest and most arduous in resisting Japanese fascist aggression. As Chairman Mao Zedong noted on April 24, 1945, “The Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression developed along a tortuous path. This war began as early as 1931.” From the September 18th Incident in 1931, which marked the start of regional war of resistance against Japanese aggression, to the July 7th Incident in 1937, which sparked nationwide resistance, and culminating in Japan’s formal surrender on September 2nd, 1945, marking the victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, the struggle spanned a full 14 years.

During these 14 years, the Chinese people, through a protracted war, resisted the bulk of the Japanese Army, made immense national sacrifices, and supported

resistance efforts across various theaters. From the July 7th Incident in 1937 to the end of that year, Japan deployed 16 divisions to the Chinese theater (excluding Northeast China), which were approximately 600,000 troops, or two-thirds of its total strength of 950,000 at the time. By 1938, Japan’s forces in China had grown to 24 divisions, which exceeded 1 million troops, leaving only one division in Japan’s homeland. When the Pacific War broke out, the majority of the Japanese Army, up to 27 divisions, remained tied down in China, and when including forces in Northeast China, this totaled 40 divisions, accounting for around 78% of Japan’s 51 divisions at the time. By Japan’s defeat in 1945, 1.283 million Japanese troops surrendered in the Chinese theater (including Taiwan and the area north of 16°N in Vietnam), accounting for roughly 46.7% of the 2.746 million Japanese troops overseas (excluding the Kwantung Army).

According to incomplete statistics, during the war, China suffered 35 million casualties, including 21 million deaths, with over 300,000 killed in the Nanjing Massacre alone. Using price levels in 1937 as a reference, the Japanese aggression imposed direct economic losses of \$100 billion and indirect losses of \$500 billion on China. Through ardu-

ous resistance and immense sacrifices, the Chinese people thwarted Japan's aggression plan to "conquer China in three months," trapping Japan in the so-called "Chinese quagmire." This prevented Japan from forming a true military alliance with Germany and Italy for a long time, delayed the expansion of the war, halted Japan's northward advance, weakened its southward push, effectively supported the Soviet Union's war against Germany, and significantly bolstered the formation and growth of the international anti-fascist Allied Forces. This also greatly aided the United States and Britain in implementing their "Europe First" strategy, ultimately contributing to the defeat of German and Japanese fascism.

Leaders of the anti-fascist Allied Forces recognized the contributions of the War of Resistance. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt noted that the "magnificent defense of China" which would increase in strength was a critical factor in preventing Hitler's plan to "winning control" and regarded the "tenacity of the Chinese people" against Japanese aggression as "an inspiration to the fighting men and all the peoples of the other United Nations." British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who initially underestimated the War of Resistance, later acknowledged, "I must point out that if China collapses, at least 15, perhaps 20, Japanese divisions would be freed up. A large-scale invasion of India would then become a real possibility." Soviet lead-

er Joseph Stalin also affirmed that "the struggle of the Chinese people and their army greatly facilitated the cause of defeating Japanese aggression." Moreover, China played a significant role in the founding of the United Nations.

Thus, the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression was an integral part of World War II, marking the opening of the war and establishing the first anti-fascist battlefield in the world. It also became the main Eastern battlefield against Japanese fascism. Based on this understanding, Chinese academia has undergone three major shifts in its perspective on World War II:

First, the traditional notion of an "8-year War of Resistance" has been revised to recognize the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression as a great war with 14 years of struggle.

Second, corresponding to the 14-year war, the start of World War II has been redefined from the traditionally acknowledged date of September 1st, 1939, to September 18th, 1931, with the September 18 Incident and China's regional war of resistance marking the beginning of the World Anti-Fascist War.

Third, World War II provoked by fascist countries is now seen as a process evolving from regional conflicts to a worldwide war. The basic narrative is as follows: In Asia, the September 18th Incident stirred up by Japan in 1931 triggered China's regional war of resistance, mark-

ing the start of both the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression as well as the World Anti-Fascist War. In 1935, Ethiopia's war of resistance against Italian aggression marked the expansion of warfare to Africa. In 1937, Japan started the July 7th Incident and launched a full-scale invasion of China, marking the outbreak of World War II in Asia, with the Chinese nation forming a united front against Japanese aggression and opening the main Eastern battlefield against Japanese fascism through protracted warfare. In September 1939, Germany's blitzkrieg invasion of Poland forced Britain and France to declare war, marking the full outbreak of World War II. In June 1940, France fell, while Britain continued to resist. In June 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union, making it the main battlefield against Nazi Germany. In December 1941, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor sparked the Pacific War, and the U.S. declared war on Japan the next day, which marks the expansion of World War II to a global scale.

The anti-fascist grand alliance, with the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China at its core, was the leading force in securing victory in World War II. During the war, it issued a series of charters, declarations, and announcements, such as the Atlantic Charter, Declaration by United Nations, Cairo Declaration, Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security, Declaration on Liberated Europe, United Nations Charter, and

Potsdam Declaration. These documents outlined a post-war world of peace and security with respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity achieved through cooperation, especially cooperation of major countries. Meanwhile, they established principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for territorial sovereignty, collective security, peaceful resolution of international disputes, peace, democracy, development, cooperation, win-win outcomes, decolonization, advancing democracy in international relations, and promoting the development of a multipolar world. They created multidimensional mechanisms and ongoing aspirations to prevent and constrain world wars and promote global socioeconomic development, foster post-war peace and development and advance human civilization. A key lesson from the success of the anti-fascist grand alliance is its ability to set aside differences in social systems and ideologies to unite against humanity's common enemy of fascism, fighting shoulder to shoulder to ultimately defeat the evil of fascism.



Part II.

The Post-World War

II International Order:

Institutional Safeguards for

Humanity's Advance toward

a Shared Future

Multilateral Cooperation is One of the Most Important Outcomes of the Post-war Settlement

Shen Yi, professor at the Department of International Politics, Fudan University

The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. Among the outcomes of that victory, the multilateral international system and order centered around the United Nations (UN) remain the cornerstone and central framework of contemporary international relations. Looking back over the past eight decades, this UN-centered international system, despite the twists and turns of the Cold War, has on the whole effectively prevented the outbreak of another world war. It has also, with relative success, averted the recurrence of direct large-scale armed conflicts among major powers like those seen in World War II. Therefore, it has made a significant contribution to the overall long-term peace and stability of the post-war international community.

From the perspective of historical evolution, the core structure of the post-war world order originated in U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's (FDR) vision of liberal internationalism. The basis for the Allied Powers' victory over the fascist Axis aggressors lay in pragmatic and effective "great-power cooperation." In designing the basic framework of the Unit-

ed Nations, one of the most important achievements was the conception that four major powers - China, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom - would jointly shoulder responsibility, a design that served as the precursor to the mechanism of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. This effort, which transcended the traditional patterns of power politics and advanced multilateral cooperation in a pragmatic manner, laid a solid foundation for the post-war world order.

Regrettably, FDR's proposals and strategies did not find genuine continuation and development within the United States. Following his death, the United States quickly reverted to power politics, greatly abandoning multilateralism and returning to the path of bloc confrontation and camp rivalry, which ultimately led to the outbreak of the Cold War. The emergence of the bipolar confrontation not only divided the world but also directly undermined the role of the United Nations.

Although direct military showdowns between NATO and the Warsaw Pact did not occur, the frequent eruption of proxy wars, the blatant rejection of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, as well as the manipulation and distortion of international cooperation and devel-

opment agenda, became commonplace during the Cold War. These practices not only ran counter to the original intent behind the design of the post-war world order but also subjected many countries and regions around the globe to prolonged turbulence.

In the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, humanity embraced new hopes for peace and development. However, the United States as the sole superpower, together with some Western countries, failed to seize this opportunity to advance the true multilateral cooperation. Instead, they excessively consumed the “dividends” of Cold War victory and sought to impose a unipolar hegemonic order on the world. In the post-Cold War era, the United States took itself as the “world leader,” placing its own will above international law and multilateral mechanisms. In the name of “upholding rules,” it practiced “pseudo-multilateralism,” frequently building “small circles” to sideline the United Nations. Such hegemonic behavior, cloaked in the rhetoric of multilateralism, was in essence an attempt to replace multilateralism with unilateralism and to substitute self-imposed rules for the post-war international order.

In the security domain, NATO not only failed to dissolve after the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact, but instead continued to expand eastward, extending Cold War mentality beyond Europe. The United States seized this opportunity to

build a global network of military alliances, intervening in the internal affairs of other countries under the banner of “democracy.” On multiple occasions, it resorted to the use of force while bypassing the United Nations, thereby undermining the legitimacy and credibility of the post-war order. The result was a widening deficit in global security governance, with relevant countries steadily increasing their defense budgets and falling into a substantive security dilemma. In the economic domain, the United States and the West once led a wave of “hyper-globalization” characterized by neoliberal features, pursuing the unrestricted flow of capital and markets while neglecting the interests of the Global South and domestic social equity of all nations. As financial crises erupted with increasing frequency worldwide and income inequality widened, countries around the world began to reflect on the imbalance of economic globalization, giving rise to voices of “deglobalization.”

Facts have demonstrated that globalization lacking inclusiveness and fairness cannot be sustained. An international order dominated by a small number of states and driven by the unilateral pursuit of their own maximal interests is inherently unstable and unable to ensure that the majority of countries share in the dividends of development. In the face of challenges, certain states have quickly shifted to foreign strategies marked by pronounced isolationism - withdrawing

from organizations and treaties, shifting blame and responsibility, and frequently wielding unilateral coercive measures. Such practices disrupt normal global economic and trade activities, threaten the security and stability of global supply chains, and expose the world to turbulence and uncertainty.

The overwhelming majority of countries are unwilling to return to the dark era of “the law of the jungle.” Be it the Russia-Ukraine conflict or the Gaza crisis, both serve as constant reminders of the need to draw lessons, abandon outdated notions such as Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation, and resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiation to achieve common security.

Eight decades on, it is imperative for all countries to resolutely uphold the international system and fundamental principles established as the fruits of victory in World War II. First and foremost, this means safeguarding the international system built around the United Nations and the international order underpinned by international law. The UN system embodies the concentrated outcomes of victory in World War II and supports the basic framework of post-war international fairness and justice. As a crucial pillar of international peace and security, any attempt to undermine the authority of the United Nations or to establish alternative structures must be met with vigilance and resistance.

Second, this means adhering to true multilateralism - emphasizing that international affairs should be addressed through consultation, rather than dictated by a single country or a small group of countries. Regardless of size or strength, every state is an equal member of the international community and has the right to participate in the formulation and improvement of common rules. Peoples across the world who cherish peace must remember the history written with blood and sacrifice, resolutely safeguard the outcomes of victory in World War II, uphold true multilateralism, and practice the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits in global governance.

Finally, it is essential to firmly oppose any signs of the new Cold War and bloc confrontation. In today's world, zero-sum games lead nowhere, and military bloc confrontations only endanger global security. The Chinese government has made it clear that it will never allow the world to regress to the law of the jungle, where the strong prey on the weak. Together with the international community, China will oppose division and confrontation, safeguard hard-won peace, and strive for a brighter future for humanity. At the same time, recent experience has demonstrated that cobbling together closed and exclusive alliances, advocating economic decoupling, and imposing technological blockades

are merely replicas of outdated Cold War mentality. They are not only unpopular, but also destined to fail.

Having endured war and confrontation, humanity understands even more deeply the precious value of peace and cooperation. The post-war international order has provided crucial institutional guarantees for humanity's march toward a shared future, and its positive achievements must be treasured and preserved. Looking ahead, the international community must draw lessons from history, firmly reject any return to spheres of influence or Cold War confrontation, and unite under the banner of true multilateralism. Only in this way can the aspiration proclaimed at the very opening of the United Nations Charter - "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to humanity" - become a reality, ensuring a brighter, safer, and more prosperous future for all human beings.

Japanese Militarism Has Not Been Eradicated and Must Never Be Tolerated

Liu Xiaoming, Former Chinese Ambassador
to the United Kingdom

For a long time, Western historical writings and textbooks have given scant attention to the Asian Theater of War, particularly the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The tremendous sacrifices made by the Chinese people for the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War have often been overlooked and forgotten in the West. In recent years, however, the British intellectual and historical community, guided by an objective and impartial spirit, has begun to re-examine and study in depth that period of shared history, reflecting the respect that history deserves.

In that war, China bore the brunt of confronting and containing the main forces of Japan over a prolonged period. The Chinese military and civilians paid a heavy price, with 35 million casualties, which is equivalent to 70 percent of Britain's total population at the time. Strategically, China's War of Resistance coordinated with and supported the operations in both the European and Asian theaters, thwarting and disrupting the fascist powers of Japan, Germany, and Italy in their attempts to cooperate. Like the British people, the Chinese people made an in-

delible historical contribution to humanity's ultimate victory over fascism.

The War of Resistance also received sympathy and support from the British government and people. On the Main Eastern Battlefield, Chinese and British soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder in bloody battles. More than 90,000 British troops were killed or wounded in the war against Japan, including 36,000 who lost their lives. In Imperial Japanese-run prisoner-of-war (POW) camps alone, there were a total of 12,000 Britons who perished. The British public established various organizations to support China's resistance, actively publicizing China's struggle and raising funds and supplies through donations, charity sales, and benefit performances. The Chinese people will forever remember this solidarity.

At the same time, Chinese soldiers and civilians actively supported and assisted British forces in the Main East Battlefield. In 1942, the Chinese Expeditionary Force fought across more than 1,500 kilometers in Myanmar, rescuing British troops encircled by Japanese forces, while incurring enormous sacrifices of their own. That same year, fishermen from Dongji Island in Zhoushan, Zhejiang, risked their lives to rescue hundreds of British POWs from the sunken Japanese

troop transport Lisbon Maru, providing them with scarce food and clothing. On the European front, 24 Chinese naval cadets took part in the Normandy landings, where they displayed courage and valor, earning praise from Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself.

The British writer Aldous Huxley once remarked, “That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach.”

As we commemorate the martyrs of the anti-Japanese battlefield, we must not forget the immense disasters inflicted upon humanity by fascist aggression and the unprecedented catastrophe it brought to human civilization. To remember history means not allowing certain attempts to deny the brutal crimes of Japanese aggression, to distort the history of World War II, or to seek to rehabilitate Japanese militarism. To remember history means urging Japan to face squarely its history of aggression, to avoid repeating past mistakes, and to remain committed to the path of peaceful development.

During my tenure as Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, I published an op-ed in the mainstream British newspaper The Daily Telegraph, likening Japanese militarism to Lord Voldemort in the novel Harry Potter. Breaking its usual length restriction on remarkable editorials, The Daily Telegraph carried the article in full and even ran a guiding commentary on the front

page. In the piece, I wrote: in Harry Potter, Voldemort splits his soul into seven “Horcruxes.” The only way to eliminate him is to destroy them all. If militarism is like the haunting Voldemort of Japan, the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo is a kind of horcrux, representing the darkest parts of that nation’s soul.

Although Japanese militarism is a reality and Voldemort a fictional character, I believe the two share three similarities:

First, both embody darkness and evil, guilty of heinous crimes. In Harry Potter, Voldemort is the biggest villain, also known as the “Dark Lord,” whose very name struck terror into people’s hearts, and whose reign was marked by destruction. Historically, Japanese militarism brought profound catastrophe to Asian countries, leaving behind crimes too numerous to record.

Second, both linger like restless specters, returning from the dead. Japanese militarism suffered a fatal blow in World War II but was never thoroughly eradicated. Today, the Yasukuni Shrine serves as a spiritual rallying place for militarism, enshrining Class-A war criminals and promoting a distorted view of history. Japanese politics is accelerating toward the right, giving rise to militarism’s revival. Voldemort, too, once had his physical body destroyed, but by relying on the Horcruxes in which fragments of his soul were hidden, he rose again from the ashes and returned in force.

Third, neither can be tolerated or condoned, and both must be eradicated completely. Voldemort was ultimately annihilated by the forces of justice, allowing the wizarding world to regain peace. By contrast, Japanese militarism is once again becoming a source of instability in Asia today and a root cause of insecurity. China must work together with the international community to extinguish evil before it revives and to prevent disaster before it takes shape. This is a just struggle where righteousness wins broad support, while injustice finds itself isolated.

Bearing history in mind is not to perpetuate hatred. Four score years ago, China and Britain stood together as victors in World War II and founding members of the United Nations. Today, the two countries are comprehensive strategic partners. We share the responsibility to jointly uphold the hard-won fruits of victory, safeguard the post-war international order, and together write a new chapter of peace for humanity.

Challenging One China Principle Is Challenging the Victory in World War II

Wang Shushen, Deputy Director of Taiwan Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

During the first half of the twentieth century, humanity underwent two world wars, which plunged human civilization into deep darkness. After World War II, the international community and major nations engaged in profound reflection, jointly resolving to learn from previous lessons, establish new international rules and order, and safeguard lasting peace and collective interests. As a vital member of the global anti-fascist alliance, China made immense sacrifices and indelible contributions to the victory in World War II. Together with the international community, China actively negotiated the establishment of the United Nations and collectively drafted the United Nations Charter, thereby laying the foundation for a new international system and order.

China is a victorious nation of World War II, having reclaimed its territories of Taiwan and the Penghu Islands and resumed the full exercise of sovereignty over Taiwan and its affiliated islands. Taiwan's return to China is an integral part of the victory in World War II and the post-war international order. This sets the comprehensive, irrefutable legal,

historical, factual, and identity foundations which cannot be disrupted by "Taiwan independence" separatist forces or international anti-China factions. In this regard, upholding the one-China principle is safeguarding the post-war international order.

First, international law recognizes Taiwan's reintegration into China's domain, affirming that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory.

During the mid-to-late stage of World War II, the nations of the global anti-fascist alliance negotiated on post-war international arrangements, including measures to halt and punish Japan's aggression in the Asia and Pacific region. In November 1943, China, the United States, and the United Kingdom held a summit in Cairo, Egypt and signed the Cairo Declaration which was publicly announced on December 1 of that year. Among its purposes for the war against Japan, it explicitly stated that territories seized by Japan from China, such as Northeastern China, Taiwan, and the Penghu Islands, must be returned to China. The Cairo Declaration is an international legal document of significant political and military significance, laying the foundation for establishing the post-war international order, particularly in Asia and the Pacific region. On July 26, 1945,

China, the United States, and the United Kingdom issued the Potsdam Proclamation. Article VIII stipulated: "The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out, and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and the minor islands determined by us." The conditions explicitly stated in the Potsdam Proclamation carry binding force under international law. On August 14, 1945, the Japanese government announced its acceptance of the Potsdam Proclamation. On September 2 of that year, the formal Japanese surrender ceremony was held aboard the U.S. Navy battleship USS Missouri. In the signed Japanese Instrument of Surrender, the Japanese government representative explicitly stated that Japan "assumes the obligation to faithfully carry out all the provisions of the Potsdam Proclamation."

From the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation to Japan's Instrument of Surrender, a legally binding chain was formed, confirming that defeated Japan must return Taiwan, the Penghu Islands, and other territories to China. On October 25, 1945, the "Ceremony for the Acceptance of Surrender in Taiwan Province, China Theater" was held in Taipei City. The Chinese government formally declared that, effective immediately, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands would be reintegrated into China's territory, and the Chinese government

would resume exercising sovereignty over Taiwan. China reclaimed Taiwan both legally and factually, fully implementing its jurisdiction and governance. This was widely accepted and recognized by the international community, becoming part of the international order based on international law.

Second, the United Nations recognizes and supports the position that Taiwan is a province of China, and the one-China principle has become a fundamental of the international system with the United Nations as its center.

The establishment and development of the United Nations constitute a vital pillar of the post-war international order. The purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are accepted and obeyed all Member States. The principle of sovereignty is the cornerstone of the Charter, and the sovereign equality of all nations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries are fundamental norms of contemporary international relations. After Taiwan was returned to China in 1945, it possessed neither the right nor the capacity to independently conduct international relations. In 1949, the Government of the People's Republic of China replaced the Government of the Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of China. This is an internal succession of government within China. China's sovereignty remains undivided, and Taiwan's

political and legal status as a part of China's territory remains unchanged. The Government of the People's Republic of China exercises state sovereignty internationally on behalf of China, including Taiwan. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758 by an overwhelming majority, deciding to restore all legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and immediately expel the representatives of the Taiwan authorities from the United Nations and all its affiliated bodies. This further rejected the notions of "two Chinas" and "one China, one Taiwan," consolidating the international community's one-China framework.

Upholding and safeguarding the authority of the United Nations requires upholding and safeguarding the one-China principle. In United Nations legal documents, General Assembly resolutions, and the specialized agency system, Taiwan is explicitly defined as a province of China. Participation by the Taiwan region in United Nations activities requires the consent of the Chinese government. The official legal opinion of the United Nations Secretariat's Office of Legal Affairs clearly states that "Taiwan, as a province of China, has no independent status." In today's world, the legal foundation of the one-China principle cannot be challenged. Any distortion of General Assembly Resolution 2758 not only challenges China's sovereignty unity, and ter-

ritorial integrity, but also challenges the authority of the United Nations and the post-war international order. Those who engage in such actions will inevitably become unilateral changers of the status quo and deliberate disrupters of peace.

Once again, among the establishment and development of diplomatic relations between China and countries around the world, the acceptance and adherence to the one-China principle have become a universal consensus and fundamental norm.

As an activity of interaction between nations, diplomacy must adhere to the principle of sovereign equality. Otherwise, it risks becoming a tool of power politics, undermining the fairness and rationality of international relations. The joint communiqués issued by the Chinese government and countries upon establishing diplomatic relations necessarily articulate the fundamental positions and principles of the establishment of diplomatic ties, carrying solemn political regulatory force and legal binding power for both parties. The core statements of these communiqués include the one-China principle: "There is only one China in the world," "Taiwan is a part of China," and "The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government representing the entire China." These constitute a logically coherent political and legal affirmation. They exclude the existence of "two

Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan,” and also exclude the notion that Taiwan possesses an independent status or sovereign rights.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the one-China principle has gained increasingly broad and robust support in the international community. A total of 183 countries have established diplomatic relations with China, universally promising to refrain from establishing any official ties with Taiwan or engaging in any official exchanges with it. They have firmly supported China’s great cause of national reunification and backed all efforts made by the Chinese government to achieve national reunification. International recognition of the one-China principle has become a prerequisite for diplomatic relations and a norm of international relations. Any country that challenges or violates it will damage its relations with China. Since taking office, Lai Ching-te has declared himself a “Taiwan independence worker,” refusing to acknowledge the one-China principle and the “1992 Consensus.” He challenges the historical and legal fact that “Taiwan is a part of China,” and has been aggressively promoting the notion that “Taiwan is an independent country” and that “the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are not subordinate to each other.” Such provocative “Taiwan independence” actions expose him as a completely “peace destroyer,” “war profiteer,” and “troublemaker,” having already aroused high vigilance

and opposition from the international community.

Last, resolving the Taiwan issue is China’s internal affair. Foreign interference or intervention will not be tolerated.

Generally speaking, internal affairs refer to all matters within a state’s sovereign jurisdiction. The fundamental principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, including respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, constitute the cornerstone of modern international law and international relations. Without the principles of international law concerning the sovereignty and protection of a nation’s internal affairs, international relations would regress to a jungle state where might makes right. Chinese law explicitly stipulates that resolving the Taiwan question and achieving complete national reunification are China’s internal affairs, free from interference by any external forces. The Taiwan question is a legacy of China’s civil war. Its true status is that there is only one China in the world, and both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one China. No matter what pretexts the Taiwan authorities fabricate to pursue “Taiwan independence diplomacy,” they cannot alter the fact that Taiwan is a part of China, nor can they change the historical and legal foundations of the one-China principle.

Ultimately, resolving the Taiwan question is China’s internal affair to be decid-

ed by the Chinese people. The mainland advocates resolving differences through cross-Straits consultations and negotiations under the premise of the one-China Principle, and firmly opposes “Taiwan independence” separatist activities and external interference. The overwhelming majority of countries in the international community support the Chinese government and people in their just struggle against the “two Chinas,” “one China, one Taiwan,” and “Taiwan independence” positions. Any country, force, or individual today that deliberately propagates the “undefined status of Taiwan” or endorses the Democratic Progressive Party authorities’ “new two-state theory” is intentionally distorting the nature of the Taiwan question, defying the international community’s one-China framework, and challenging international law and order. Since the new era began, the mainland has built a stronger foundation and enhanced its capabilities to resolve the Taiwan question. China will ultimately and inevitably achieve reunification. Any external force that interferes in the Taiwan question or obstructs China’s reunification is opposing the historical trend and the prevailing momentum, and will surely meet with failure.

Why It's Necessary to Promote Positive Revolution of the International Order

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Since the end of World War II, the United States has leveraged its unparalleled industrial, financial, and military advantages to dominate the evolution and development of the post-war international order. It has set international rules, provided “public goods” of finance and security, and has strategically embedded its institutional hegemony by exploiting institutional gaps when needed. This is why today we need to commemorate the history of World War II and use the “original aspiration” of its victory to promote positive revolution of the international order.

Institutional Hegemony Laid the curse for “Excessive Intervention”

After World War II, the United States (U.S.) accounted for 35%-40% of the world's industrial output, held more than half of the world's gold reserves, and its overseas deployments and two-ocean fleets ensured an unprecedented capacity for military projection. This “hard power” was quickly translated into “institutional power,” which means embedding its advantages into the structure of the in-

ternational order by shaping institutional rules and procedural arrangements.

The veto power mechanism for permanent members of the UN Security Council, on the whole, reflects a balance of power among major powers and historical progress. However, it also objectively provides the United States with a dual institutional advantage: on one hand, the veto power ensures the U.S. can block any international action that is not in its interest; on the other hand, as the host country of the UN headquarters and its largest financial contributor, the U.S. has significant influence over personnel and agenda setting. These designs allow the U.S. to both dominate the agenda within the rules and, when necessary, mitigate the obstruction from other countries through procedural tactics. Simultaneously, based upon the Bretton Woods system, the U.S. established an international economic order centered on itself, embedding its economic philosophies and policy preferences into the global financial governance framework.

However, the key turning point that shifted the U.S. institutional hegemony from a multilateral cooperative framework to an antagonistic system was George Kennan's famous “Long Telegram” from Moscow in 1946. This telegram argued that Soviet expansionism

was not driven by traditional geopolitical considerations but by the inherent needs of its ideology and political system. Therefore, cooperation with the Soviet Union was impossible, and the U.S. had to adopt a long-term, patient, and firm policy of containment. The U.S. policy circles quickly wove this analysis into specific strategies: the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the Marshall Plan, and the establishment of NATO in 1949 together constituted the U.S.-led institutional hegemony framework.

This model of institutional hegemony created a governance mode of “embedded leadership” where the U.S. is the rule-maker, enforcer and arbitrator simultaneously. It also laid the structural seeds for future “excessive intervention” by the U.S.

The U.S. Had Multiple Calculations in Constructing the Post-War East Asian Order

In East Asia, the U.S. worked to maintain and institutionalize its regional hegemony, driven by a forward-looking calculus for regional dominance and global power balancing. The core of its strategic logic was to compress the spillover windows of the socialist camp by using Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and Taiwan as three interlocking sea-land nodes, complemented by naval supremacy in the Western Pacific and the geographical constraints of the First Island Chain.

The 1951 Treaty of San Francisco de-

liberately excluded the direct participation and signing of the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union. This approach had multiple calculations: on one hand, it avoided “obstruction” from China and the Soviet Union on sovereignty, reparations, and security arrangements, procedurally accelerating Japan’s return to the international society. On the other hand, it kept unresolved issues with China and the Soviet Union as geopolitical levers for the U.S. to use, maintaining a loose coupling between Japan’s strategic repositioning and regional hotspots (Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula), thereby enhancing the U.S. discretion over Japan’s external security borders.

During the initial period of its occupation in Japan, the U.S. emphasized demilitarization and democratization. However, as U.S.-Soviet tensions escalated, the U.S. prioritized rapid economic recovery and social stability over ideological reform. This shift provided an opportunity for conservative forces to regroup. The divided Liberal Party, Progressive Party, and centrist conservatives merged in 1955 to form the Liberal Democratic Party, leading to the “Yoshida Doctrine,” which prioritized economic development and relied on America’s security guarantees. For the U.S., the “Yoshida Doctrine” complemented its regional hegemonic goals: the U.S. gained a stable anchor with low armed risk and the ability to provide industrial production, logistical support and financial functions, while

the Japanese conservative ruling coalition exchanged security dependence on U.S. for a “developmental state” path.

The Korean War was a pivotal event in which the U.S. transformed a regional civil war into a narrative of “the free world versus communist expansion.” The signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea institutionalized the military cooperation forged during the war into a long-term alliance commitment. Unlike the U.S.-Japan security relationship, the U.S.-South Korea alliance was, from the beginning, more militarily oriented and highly institutionalized. This difference stemmed from the reality of a divided Korean Peninsula and a state of continuous military confrontation, which made South Korea far more dependent on U.S. security guarantees than Japan. The institutional characteristics of the U.S.-South Korea alliance reflects a typical “autonomy for protection” model: the U.S. provides the nuclear umbrella and conventional military deterrence, while South Korea accepts significant U.S. influence in its diplomacy and military affairs.

Taiwan’s strategic position was redefined by the U.S. in the context of the Cold War. It was transformed from an extended battlefield of the civil war into a “geopolitical hinge” in the middle of the First Island Chain. The U.S. used the outbreak of the Korean War as an opportunity to dispatch the Seventh Fleet to the

Taiwan Strait, freezing the civil war situation into a state of “unresolved political status.” The 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China, along with subsequent conditional commitments during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, reflected a dual-layered deterrence structure of the U.S. It prevented Taiwan from escalating conflict through public calls, while conveying a signal to the Chinese mainland of a “limited defense boundary — discouraging offense,” a balance that preserved the U.S.’s strategic maneuverability in handling cross-strait issues.

Signs of “Imperial Overstretch” Begin to Emerge

After the Cold War, the U.S. entered a “unipolar window” of great power balancing, shifting its self-perception from “balancer” to “order manager.” The U.S. simultaneously pursued three nested strategic orientations: first, maintaining its central position in the transatlantic security architecture through NATO expansion; second, launching or leading several military interventions under the pretext of so-called “humanitarian and security” reasons; and third, as China’s comprehensive strength and capacity for institutional shaping rose, shifting from a “contact-and-engagement” framework to a multi-stage adjustment of “rebalancing-competition-locking as the biggest strategic competitor.” At the same time,

the early signs of “imperial overstretch” as described by Paul Kennedy, began to emerge — the total cost curve of global commitments and military projection was rising, while the marginal buffer of the U.S.’s relative economic and industrial structural advantages was diminishing.

The two enlargements of NATO in 1999 and 2004 pushed the alliance into Russia’s traditional buffer zones. The Western narrative focused on “democratic integration,” while the Russian perspective interpreted it as a compression of its security space, creating a “narrative security dilemma.” Furthermore, NATO’s 1999 action in Kosovo, which bypassed the full authorization of the UN Security Council, set a dangerous precedent of “alliance legitimacy partially substituting for procedural legitimacy.” The “9/11” attacks led to NATO’s first-ever invocation of its collective defense clause to support counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan. The initial clear goals of striking Al-Qaeda and overthrowing the Taliban quickly shifted to “nation reconstruction, military and police training, and institution fostering.” In 2003, the U.S. launched the war in Iraq under the pretext that the country might possess mass destruction weapons.

The U.S. military interventions in the Balkans and the Middle East failed to resolve the two core issues of sustained governance costs and legitimacy. Instead, they caused the international community

to question the “boundaries of U.S. power.” Consequently, the gap between the “justness of intent” and “procedural legitimacy” of unipolar order management began to widen.

Parallel to these intervention paths was a systematic shift in the U.S.’s strategic mindset toward China. In the mid-to-late 2000s, two pressures prompted a reassessment of U.S. policy toward China: first, domestic discontent caused by manufacturing and job outsourcing; and second, the impact of China’s military modernization on U.S. hegemony in the First Island Chain and the Western Pacific. The Obama administration proposed a “pivot to Asia,” seeking to shape the institutional dimension through military deployment, diplomatic engagement, and multilateral trade agreements. The Trump administration formally designated China as a strategic competitor, utilizing tools such as tariffs, export controls, and supply chain “de-risking.” The Biden administration has continued this competitive approach, while also emphasizing coordination with allies, ultimately leading to the view of China as the biggest “long-term competitor.”

Promoting International Order toward Multipolarity

Entering the 2010s and facing the trend of multipolarity, the U.S. began to adjust its hegemony strategy, shifting from unilateralism to emphasizing “burden-sharing with allies.” This approach

involves maintaining the core framework of the existing institutional hegemony through collaboration among a group of countries with similar institutions and complementary capabilities.

In 2025, Trump, under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), issued an executive order establishing a reciprocal tariffs system on the grounds that trade deficits constitute a national emergency. This elevated trade disputes from an economic to a national security level, providing the U.S. with greater policy space for unilateral coercive measures. The weaponization of tariffs not only changed the rule foundations of international trade but also politicized economic relations, transforming economic interdependence from a bond of cooperation into a tool of competition. The U.S. also stirred up issues like “economic security” and “economic coercion” to disrupt regional supply and industrial chains, pushing other countries to participate in “coordinated decoupling” from China.

In the Asia-Pacific, the U.S. is attempting to redefine the fundamental principles of the regional order through its Indo-Pacific strategy, emphasizing the “international order base on rules.” However, these “rules” are often set by the U.S. and its allies, and they have a clear exclusionary and targeted nature. In contrast, China, through multilateral mechanisms like the “Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),” the Asian Infrastructure

Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), has proposed different models of regional cooperation and governance concepts. This institutional competition reflects two different visions for the international order: the hierarchical alliance system upheld by the U.S. versus the equal cooperative network advocated by China.

This year also marks the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. Looking back at the evolution of the international order over these 80 years, it is clear that the post-war multilateral cooperation framework is facing threats from antagonistic narratives. In particular, as the world’s sole superpower, the U.S. often holds an “exceptionalist” mindset in international affairs, believing it has the right to reinterpret or selectively apply international rules based on its own interests.

From the Kosovo War, which bypassed the United Nations Security Council’s authorization, to the “preemptive” logic of the Iraq War, to the current unilateral approach of technological blockades against China — all are examples of the abuse of power and excessive intervention by a major power. More importantly, these are not coincidences but rather have an intrinsic logic and inevitability. When a country possesses overwhelming comprehensive power, it will naturally tend to solve problems through unilateral action rather than seek compromise through multilateral negotiation. This

tendency is further amplified when facing challenges or threats, leading the hegemonic power to increasingly rely on coercive means rather than cooperative mechanisms.

If the U.S. cannot effectively constrain its own power abuse and excessive intervention, the global order will inevitably evolve toward a new pattern of “functional splicing and multi-node balancing.” In this new pattern, while the U.S. will still be an important pole, its era of unipolar hegemony will come to an end.



Part III.

**The Way Forward: Jointly
Building a Community with a
Shared Future for Humanity**

The World Needs New Concepts and New Solutions

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The victory in the World Anti-Fascist War (World War II) was a triumph of human justice. Safeguarding the achievements of that victory and upholding the post-war international order is essentially about defending humanity's shared justice and conscience. Looking back over the past 80 years, the great accomplishments and historical experience of human civilization after the war deserve earnest review and reflection. The fundamental purposes and principles should be solemnly reaffirmed and remembered. These achievements remain the solid foundation for human survival on this planet, and these experiences continue to serve as valuable guidance for steering the progress of human civilization over the next 80 years.

The Cause of Peace of Humanity Faces Severe Challenges

A countercurrent is surging against the international order established after World War II. Certain countries pursue hegemonism and unilateralism, wantonly undermining the post-war international order with the United Nations at its core, and trampling on the basic norms

of international relations established by the UN Charter. Geopolitical rivalry and confrontation among major powers are intensifying, while local conflicts and regional hotspots are multiplying, pushing the number of global conflicts to a new high since the end of World War II. The Ukraine crisis has lasted for more than three years, and peace remains elusive. The Palestine-Israel and Middle East conflicts have further escalated. Attempts to change national sovereignty and borders by force have continued since the end of the Cold War.

The trend of de-globalization is intensifying. The implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is seriously lagging. Climate change is becoming increasingly severe, and the digital divide is further widening development gaps. Historical nihilism and historical revisionism are resurfacing, distorting historical truths, undermining standards of right and wrong, eroding justice and conscience, and shaking the foundations of the post-war international order. The deficits in global peace, development, security, and governance are exacerbating. Unilateralism and bullying practices pose grave dangers, and world peace faces real threats.

As a principal architect of the post-war

international order and system, the United States, under the America First Policy of the Trump administration, implemented a strategy of “withdrawal diplomacy,” drastically reducing the supply of international public goods and revealing a trend of retreat from global engagement. This approach undermined and destabilized the existing international order. The question of what a “G-1 world”—without U.S. participation—would look like has sparked significant global debate.

Although the current international order is not perfect, there is no need to overthrow it; rather, it should be carefully safeguarded, reformed, and improved. Over the past 80 years, China has been a creator, builder, beneficiary, and staunch defender of the post-war international order. In the face of today’s global threats and challenges, China firmly maintains that peace and development remain the prevailing trends of our time. China adheres to multilateralism and is willing to work with other countries to actively participate in reforming and improving the international system.

China firmly maintains that there is only one system in the world, i.e., the UN-centered international system; only one order, i.e., the international order based on international law; and only one set of rules, i.e., the basic norms of international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. The new mechanisms and initiatives China has proposed are useful

supplements and improvements to existing mechanisms, making them more just and equitable, to achieve win-win cooperation and common development. No matter how the international landscape changes, China’s resolve to practice true multilateralism will not change, and its actions to promote multilateral cooperation will not change. China is willing to work with other countries to contribute Chinese wisdom, present Chinese solutions, and effectively promote the reform of the international system in a positive direction.

China Leads the Reform and Improvement of the Global Governance System

The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government transcend the barriers and limitations of different histories, cultures, systems, and ideologies. They seek to harness the greatest synergy from the diversity of human civilization and the convergence of diverse national interests. With the goal of meeting people’s aspirations for a better life, they have put forward the important vision of building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity to promote the reform of the global governance system and address the many political, security, development, civilizational, and ecological challenges facing the world.

The vision of building a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity presents a new approach to international re-

lations that differs from traditional models. Mutual respect for sovereignty is the fundamental principle for handling relations between states and constitutes the foundation of equality among nations. Win-win cooperation, based on mutual benefit, is the goal that China's diplomacy strives to achieve, and this vision permeates China's foreign policy. Over the past 80 years, China has advocated for building a new type of international relations characterized by mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation. Through diplomacy with various countries — especially major powers such as the United States, the European Union, and Russia — China has gained valuable experience in managing relations and has developed a new model of major-country interaction. From China's practice, the international community can see a new option for the world.

China's outlook on global governance advocates openness and inclusiveness, not closure or exclusivity; upholding international law, not unilateral dominance; consultation and cooperation, not conflict and confrontation; and keeping pace with the times, not standing still. China adheres to true multilateralism, believes that international rules should be jointly formulated and maintained by all countries, and insists that global affairs should be managed through consultation, not dictated by the most powerful. Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions are winning more international consen-

sus and are being incorporated into today's international order in institutionalized forms.

China is also providing more high-quality international public goods within its capacity, participating in global governance reform with concrete actions. It has proposed the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, the Global Governance Initiative, and the Belt and Road Initiative, outlining the broadest possible circle for shared development, universal security, and common prosperity of civilizations. These initiatives are being steadily advanced in practice, winning broad international recognition and participation.

The More China Develops, the More Hope There Is for World Peace

Over the past 80 years, no major power has a better record on peace and security than China. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, it has never initiated a war or conflict, nor has it occupied an inch of another country's territory. Today, China is at a critical stage of advancing national rejuvenation and building strength through Chinese modernization. Naturally, it hopes to maintain long-term world peace, not only for itself but also to create a stable, favorable, predictable, and sustainable international environment for global economic development.

As the world's largest developing

country, China is a natural member of the Global South. The cooperation mechanisms that China has participated in establishing — such as the East Asian economic and governance system, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank—are becoming important international cooperation platforms for economic development and global governance among Global South countries, delivering remarkable results. BRICS is emerging as a backbone of cooperation and an engine of growth in the Global South. In November of last year, President Xi Jinping announced eight actions to support global development, injecting new momentum for accelerating the development of the Global South. No matter how the global situation evolves, China is ready to work with other countries in the Global South to promote a greater role for them in global governance.

With rapid advances in science and technology, the international order has already extended beyond traditional spaces and borders. Cyberspace, the atmosphere, outer space, the deep sea, and virtual spaces of data and computing power are becoming new frontiers of international order and new arenas of strategic competition among major powers. Strategic control over these new spaces directly translates into geopolitical influence, economic leverage, and military security advantages. Major pow-

ers are accelerating progress in advanced technologies by strengthening education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as developing advanced manufacturing, engaging in fierce competition in high-tech frontier fields involving sensitive issues. China has been the first to introduce a series of corresponding domestic regulations and policies while repeatedly calling for cooperation among major powers. They must shoulder their responsibilities in jointly formulating governance frameworks and building effective international legal constraint systems. The experiences accumulated by major powers over the past 80 years in establishing regimes for the control of nuclear and biological weapons remain relevant and valuable.

At the same time, the global technology divide is widening, and a new polarization between the Global North and South is emerging. Faced with high Western technological barriers and obstacles to green transitions, many Global South countries suffer from insufficient digital infrastructure, limited financing, and inadequate mechanisms for technology transfer, facing the risk of becoming new colonies of high-tech and the digital divide. The international community is striving, through various efforts and cooperation frameworks, to bridge the North-South gap and address development imbalances. The Global South hopes to see major powers shoulder responsibility and lead global green and

digital development.

China, having grown stronger, pledges to the world that, no matter how powerful it becomes, it will never seek hegemony or act as a superpower. China is ready to work with all countries, drawing lessons from history and gaining wisdom and strength from the great victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. It will firmly advocate the correct historical view of World War II, resolutely safeguard the post-war international order, firmly defend international fairness and justice, resolutely oppose all forms of hegemonism and power politics, and work together to build a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity, striving for a brighter future for all humanity.

Addressing Current International Challenges Through the Four Global Initiatives

Li Kaisheng, Vice-President of the Shanghai
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Taking a correct historical perspective, we aim to create a better future. World War II was the most influential event in modern international politics. It not only reshaped the world of its time but also laid the foundation of the international order that ensued. Therefore, how the war is remembered is directly tied to how the post-war order is understood, upheld, and developed. As a victor of World War II, a key participant in the post-war order, and a constructive force for shaping the future international system, China has consistently worked to develop that order by learning from history. The Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative, and Global Governance Initiative – anchored in the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity – are clear demonstrations of China’s commitment to the correct historical view of World War II and its ability to grasp the broader direction of future progress. Advancing these initiatives is essential for safeguarding and further developing the post-war international order.

Upholding the correct historical view of World War II is necessary for grasping

the trend of history.

The Communist Party of China has long excelled at grasping the underlying trends of our times. Historically, China has been emphasizing the importance of drawing lessons from history to better understand the present and anticipate the future. While the international landscape may shift constantly, the Party believes it follows deeper laws. To discern those laws requires a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the past. At the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs in June 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that “The right approach to history takes into consideration not only the current international landscape; more importantly, it calls for commanding laws governing the advance of history by both reviewing the past and following the future development trend.” This statement has comprehensively illustrated why and what to do to uphold this correct historic perspective.

One of the key purposes of adopting this outlook is to protect and improve the post-war international order, which rests on the outcome of World War II. Misinterpreting the war leads to confusion over what that order is and how it should be preserved. Today, the United States — once a prominent architect of

the order — is undermining it in pursuit of narrow self-interest, abandoning major-power coordination, retreating from economic globalization, and even eroding the UN-centered system. This places the post-war structure and rules at risk of serious damage or collapse. In this context, it is even more crucial to maintain a correct perspective of World War II to provide solid historical and legal grounds as well as clear suggestions for the order's defense and renewal. Though imperfect, the post-war order remains a good choice and the foundation for future improvements. For one thing, the core elements — the UN-centered system, the principle of equality between large and small nations, and coordination among major powers — must be preserved and reinforced. For another, defending the correct historical view of World War II does not mean resisting change. The current system must find better ways to secure peace, foster development, and uphold justice. But the solution is not Washington's "America First" policies or trade wars; it lies in countries working together, guided by history's trajectory and the common interests of humanity, to propose solutions that serve all.

Maintain and Develop the Post-war International Order on the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity

The concept of a community with a shared future for humanity offers Chi-

na's systematic vision for the future of the international order, grounded in safeguarding the post-war framework. Its goals and principles are consistent with the spirit of the post-war international order. From "the five-point proposal" (partnerships featuring equality, consultation and understanding; a security environment featuring fairness, justice, joint efforts, and shared interests; an open, innovative, inclusive and mutually beneficial development; cultural exchanges featuring harmony, inclusiveness, and respect for differences; and, an ecosystem that prioritizes nature and green development) to "the five goals" (an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys enduring peace, universal security, and common prosperity), its specific ideas echo the aspirations set forth in the UN Charter: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to humanity, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

At the same time, the concept responds to the post-war order's shortcomings in sustaining peace, securing development, and delivering justice. It improves the existing order by doing so: firstly, fostering a sense of community to counter national egoism and populism

given that it is difficult to fundamentally change the national state's system; secondly, facilitating a new type of globalization that dedicates to addressing global inequalities while leveraging new technologies to seek new cooperation patterns; thirdly, promoting new types of international relations that avoid the "Thucydides trap" and advocating genuine multilateralism with the joint participation of all countries and hence forging a path of common security and development; lastly, striking a balance between development and ecological protection, and then achieving the sustainable development of the world and the all-round development of humans with the harmony between humans and nature as the goal.

Nowadays, U.S. hegemonism is resurgent and geopolitical competition is intensifying. Against this backdrop, some may dismiss the vision of building a community of shared future for humanity as idealistic, like a song of a highbrow type will find very few people to join in the chorus. Yet global politics is shaped not only by power but also by ideas, and major powers bear particular responsibility for guidance. As the United States lowers the moral standards of international political cooperation, other countries must strengthen their efforts to defend and improve the order, looking for peace and mutual benefit instead of straying away. For this reason, the importance of a community with a shared future for humani-

ty cannot be overstated, and more voices should join in advancing this vision.

Implementing the Four Global Initiatives to build a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity

For China, building a community with a shared future for humanity is not just an idea but a program of action. To this end, China has proposed the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative, which together chart the direction of human progress and serve as pillars of the vision. In this year that marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the founding of the UN, it is especially important to leverage these initiatives to tackle current global challenges and to lay enduring foundations for constructing a community with a shared future for humanity.

Implementing the Global Development Initiative requires protecting an open and fair trading system and advancing inclusive economic globalization. At present, the focus remains on the massive number of developing countries, particularly the least developed with incomes around \$1,000 per capita. The fact is that globalization may not guarantee development, but without it, development is impossible. Only by keeping markets open, promoting fairness, and providing support in infrastructure and experiences – rather than imposing puni-

tive tariffs as the Trump administration has done – can these nations gain access to markets, capital, and technology, and turn hope into physical progress.

The Global Security Initiative calls for a concept of common security and rebuilding an equal, orderly multipolar system through major-power coordination. Whether it is the conflict in Ukraine, renewed war in the Middle East, or border tensions in South Asia and Southeast Asia, all highlight the need for stakeholders to abandon the zero-sum mindset and respect the sensible security concerns in a mutual manner. Realities have told us that stability can only be achieved in a multipolar framework, not under the dominance of a single hegemony. To fundamentally resolve the aforementioned conflicts, it is essential to urge all countries in the world to reattach importance to and advance the multi-polarization process. In particular, major powers should abandon the mindset of bloc confrontation and ideological rivalry, and provide more practical solutions for a world beset by conflicts through pragmatic coordination.

The Global Civilization Initiative emphasizes seeking common ground while shelving differences, fostering people-to-people dialogue with inclusivity and mutual respect among countries and civilizations. Diversity is a source of strength, not conflict. To promote inclusiveness and mutual learning among civilizations, it is imperative to abandon the

practice of imposing so-called Western “universal values” in disregard of other countries’ national conditions under the assumption of being a “city upon a hill”; to reject extremist mindsets that regard any difference as “heresy,” exclude dialogue, or even resort to force for eradication; and to move away from policies that downplay the role of people-to-people exchanges and politicize or securitize cooperation in education, science and technology, and culture as tools to suppress other countries. By treating all civilizations as equals and applying the principle of “Do not do to others what you don’t want others to do to you,” civilizational diversity can be a driver of exchange and development rather than conflict.

The Global Governance Initiative stresses genuine multilateralism and reform of the global governance system to make it fairer and more equitable, building on the post-War order. At a time when distorted narratives of World War II and the expansion of hegemonism – embodied in tariff bullying – are undermining international governance, President Xi Jinping’s Global Governance Initiative offers a timely and powerful response. It is also the foundation for realizing the Global Security, Development, and Civilization Initiatives, and the essential path for all nations to join hands in building a community with a shared future for humanity.

Re-examining World War II from the Perspective of Human Civilization

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With the evolution of the times and its convergence with the world, China's understanding and definition of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and World War II have progressively deepened. There is a growing emphasis on examining and defining the nature of that war from the perspective of human civilization. In 2015, President Xi Jinping emphasized in his Address at the Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War: "In defiance of aggression, the unyielding Chinese people fought gallantly and finally won total victory against the Japanese militarist aggressors, thus preserving China's 5,000-year-old civilization and upholding the cause of peace of humanity. This remarkable feat made by the Chinese nation was rare in the history of war."

These definitions of the nature of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression have been

elevated to the level of human civilization, revealing more profoundly that both the War of Resistance and World War II were monumental struggles between civilization and barbarism, progress and reaction. The actions of the fascist forces of Germany, Italy, and Japan were nothing less than a challenge to human civilization. This fundamentally underscores that fascist aggression was intolerable, while the resistance of the Chinese people and the global community was just and progressive.

In modern times, the recognition of aggression as illegal has become one of the fundamental values of the international community. However, there has been considerable debate over the definition of "aggression." In 1953 and 1956, the United Nations General Assembly twice established Special Committees on the Question of Defining Aggression to study the issue. By 1974, the General Assembly finally adopted the Definition of Aggression through Resolution 3314 (XXIX), which affirmed: "Aggression is the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the UN Charter, as set out in this Definition." The resolution enumerated seven specific acts constituting aggression and

stated that “the first use of armed force by a State in contravention of the Charter shall constitute prima facie evidence of an act of aggression.”

This consensus, forged through prolonged human suffering and reflection, transcends divergent interests and perspectives. It stands as a hallmark of progress in humanity’s shared values and represents, ultimately, an advancement of human civilization. Once such a common understanding takes shape, it evolves into a benchmark – not only as a moral restraint but also as a principle of international law.

Viewing issues from the perspective of human civilization allows us to transcend differences in national interests, perceptions, and values, enabling the establishment of common standards to determine what is just and unjust in international relations, what actions are permissible and what are not. When these standards are consolidated in the form of international law, they become moral and legal norms that all nations must abide by. Violations of these norms will not only incur moral condemnation from the international community but also face sanctions and punishments under international law. This reflects both requirements for the development of civilization and constraints imposed by its norms.

The great victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist

War was hard-won, and it contains extremely profound experiences and lessons. Over the past 80 years, many countries have reflected on these experiences and lessons from various perspectives, while the international community has continued to rethink this war and explore ways to prevent such tragedies from recurring.

What are the key lessons from the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, and what important insights should the international community draw from them? There are at least the following points.

First, it is essential to both safeguard one’s own sovereignty and territorial integrity and respect those of other countries. Having endured the pain of national sovereignty and territorial integrity being violated, China firmly opposes any infringement by external forces on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and never commits such acts against other nations.

In the 1950s, China proposed the renowned Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, advocating mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. After more than seven decades of practices, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have not only become the cornerstone of China’s foreign policy

but have also been gradually widely accepted by the international community. President Xi Jinping has emphasized, on many occasions, the need to carry forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and build a world of win-win cooperation.

Second, no country should resort to war as a means to resolve frictions with others. Any violation of this principle must be met with resistance and punishment. Humanity's evolving understanding of war itself reflects the progress of civilization. Historically, war was once considered a necessary means to pursue national interests, and even a manifestation of strength and prosperity. However, the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 marked the beginning of restrictions on the right of states to wage war. Following World War I, the establishment of the League of Nations further curtailed its member states' authority to engage in warfare.

In 1945, the UN Charter and other documents ultimately established the principle that aggressive war is prohibited and the use or threat of force is forbidden, marking a significant advance for human civilization. However, since the end of World War II, various wars and armed conflicts have continued to occur, demonstrating that truly implementing the principle of non-aggression and achieving lasting peace remain profoundly challenging. Every nation and organization in today's world should

contribute to making this vision a reality.

Third, all countries must strictly abide by the UN Charter and the norms of international law, and work together to safeguard the international political, economic, and social order that aligns with the demands of human civilization. The post-war international order, established with the United Nations and its Charter at its core, emerged from the painful lessons of the two World Wars. While imperfect, order is preferable to chaos. Since the end of the war, thanks to the growing strength of peace and justice, this order has been gradually improved and developed, incorporating many new elements that have overall benefited the world.

In light of the lessons of history, all countries must strictly adhere to an international order based on international law and the fundamental norms of international relations founded on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. International law and the UN Charter serve as both essential means and crucial safeguards for maintaining international order, as well as achievements and hallmarks of the progress of human civilization. Once a state has accepted international legal norms, it must strictly observe them with a sense of responsibility and obligation. Any act in violation of international law must be met with resolute opposition and condemnation by the international community.

Fourth, every nation must respect the

diversity of civilizations, and excel in peaceful coexistence and mutual learning with other cultures, thereby collectively weaving a more splendid future of human civilization. The question of how to manage relations among different civilizations has always been a major challenge for human society. Drawing on lessons from history, all countries should uphold the principle of cultural pluralism, approach differences and frictions between civilizations with a constructive attitude, and embrace global civilization diversity with broad-mindedness. We must replace estrangement with dialogue, transcend conflict through mutual learning, and overcome notions of superiority with coexistence, so as to jointly address global challenges. The international community should work together to foster a new international civilization order. This involves establishing and improving rules on matters of civilization, developing more norms and instruments to guide international civilizational relations, and creating institutions and mechanisms that facilitate mutual learning among civilizations.

From the perspective of human civilization, in commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, it is of utmost importance to unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, promote the building of a peaceful, developed, civilized and pro-

gressive world, and push forward the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Throughout history, human society has repeatedly found itself at a crossroads, confronted with the fundamental question: "Where is the world headed?" In the past century alone, this pivotal question has emerged on at least four occasions. The first such juncture arrived at the turn of the 20th century. The failure to reach a consensus on a common path forward culminated in the outbreak of the First World War. Decades later, during the 1930s and 1940s, the world's renewed failure to learn from the past and establish a shared vision plunged it once more into global conflict—the Second World War. After WWII, the international community faced two fundamentally different visions for the future, which led to the division of the world into two opposing camps. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, humanity faced its fourth modern crossroads. Facing the same enduring question, it witnessed a series of events: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, drastic changes in Eastern Europe in 1989, and eventually the end of the Cold War.

Today, the world once again stands at a historical crossroads, facing the same question. This commemoration of the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance and the World Anti-Fascist War comes at a decisive moment for humanity - a time of choice between con-

flict and reconciliation, war and peace, aggression and collective security. It is therefore imperative that we, drawing upon the hard-won lessons of history paid for in millions of lives, steer the course of human civilization toward a more just and peaceful future.

The key to correctly answering the question of “Where is the world headed”, preventing war, and safeguarding peace lies in fully recognizing that today’s world is already a community with shared interests, shared responsibilities, and a shared future. Only by establishing the vision of a human community with a shared future can countries truly understand their relations with others, manage complex international dynamics in the right manner, adhere genuinely to the principles of peaceful development and mutual benefit, abandon Cold War mentality and aggression, and ultimately prevent the repeat of tragedies like the two world wars.

The vision of a community with a shared future for humanity transcends distinctions of race, culture, nation, and ideology, offering a new perspective for contemplating humanity’s future and providing a rational, actionable plan for promoting world peace and development.

It is our hope that through commemorating and reflecting on the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, we can further advance the build-

ing and developing a community with a shared future for humanity, and contribute to the progress and elevation of human civilization.

Conclusion: Defending the Outcomes of War Victory and Working Together to Create A Community with Shared Future for Humanity

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In September 1945, when news of Japan's surrender spread across the world, human history moved past its lowest point and strived toward a future filled with hope. Eighty years ago, the forces of justice across the globe, including China and the Soviet Union, stood shoulder to shoulder, fought with great bravery, and defeated the fascist, achieving a great triumph of justice over evil, light over darkness, and progress over regression.

Eighty years on, Europe once again is shadowed by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the global economy faces the countercurrents of “decoupling and supply

chain disruption”, and climate change threatens the very survival of some island nations. Facing all these challenges, the world is again at the crossroads. Will we choose cooperation or confrontation? Openness or isolation? Will we promote democracy in international relations, or allow power politics to run rampant? Will we uphold international law and basic norms of international relations, or return to the law of the jungle where the strong prey on the weak?

The UN Collective Security Mechanism at Risk

At the end of World War II, the most significant decision made by the international community was the establishment of the United Nations. The UN-centered international system embodies the hard-won victory of the war, laid the founda-

tion for the post-war international order, and created the primary platform for safeguarding world peace and advancing global governance. The United Nations Charter begins with the statement, “We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.” It solemnly declares that the fundamental purpose of the postwar international order is to prevent wars. The Security Council-centered collective security mechanism has served as a critical guarantee for international peace and security.

However, 80 years later, certain countries, by aggressively pursuing a “my country first” agenda and attempting to replace the postwar international order with self-defined rules, have subjected the United Nations to unprecedented challenges. In reality, the various conflicts and injustices witnessed in today’s world do not occur because the purposes and principles of the UN Charter are outdated, but because they have not been effectively implemented. The rise of unilateralism, protectionism, and anti-globalization, along with hegemonic bullying and power politics, poses grave threats. Humanity needs unity rather than division, dialogue rather than confrontation, and mutual benefit rather than zero-sum outcomes. It is particularly concerning that the so-called “rules-based international order” promoted by

the United States is, in reality, an attempt to impose its will and standards on others. It seeks to replace universally recognized international law with rules made within its own small circles of allies. The real intent is to build a parallel system outside the existing UN-centered order to serve its hegemonic interests. This has resulted in dual threats of “fragmentation” and “bloc confrontation” in global governance, posing the gravest challenge to the stability of the international order today.

In the face of new circumstances and challenges, the more complex and volatile the international situation becomes, the more important it is to reaffirm the central role of the United Nations; the more pressing the challenges are, the more essential it is to safeguard its due authority. There is only one international system, and that is the international system with the United Nations at its core. There is only one international order, and that is the international order underpinned by international law. There is only one set of rules, and that is the basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

The World Needs Eastern Wisdom That Transcends Old Paradigms

History advances like a relay race, with one generation passing the baton to the next, and humanity’s progress unfolding through responses to the questions

posed by each era. In 2013, President Xi Jinping, at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, for the first time proposed the important vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity. It came at a critical time of profound transformation in the international system, sluggish global economic growth, and intensifying geopolitical conflicts. This vision inherits and carries forward the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and is deeply rooted in China's traditional culture, embodying the broad-minded ideal of "universal harmony" and reflecting China's unique insight into the future for humanity. It fundamentally responds to the shared aspirations of all peoples for development.

The core essence of the vision of a community with a shared future for humanity can be summarized across three dimensions. In terms of value orientation, China advocates a global governance approach featuring consultation and cooperation for shared benefits. From the Belt and Road Initiative, which emphasizes equal participation and agreement among all parties, to the establishment of new multilateral financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China consistently practices true multilateralism, upholding the principle that world affairs should be handled through extensive consultation. In terms of practical exploration, China actively fosters bilateral and multilateral communities with a shared future, offer-

ing Chinese solutions to address deficits in peace, development, security, and governance. In terms of exchange and mutual learning among civilizations, China hosts events including the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations, the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting and the China-Central Asia Summit, creating new platforms for harmonious coexistence and shared advancement among civilizations. These efforts fully demonstrate that the diversity of civilizations is a fundamental feature of the world and a source of human progress, and build a broad consensus for the realization of a community with a shared future for humanity.

The vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity, while firmly safeguarding the UN-centered international system and the international order based on international law, offers China's solution to the profound changes in the world, in our times, and in history. In the realm of security, China actively advocates the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, promotes dialogue to resolve disputes and consultation to settle differences, and fosters a more balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture. In the dimension of development, over the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative has driven nearly one trillion US dollars in investment, created more than 3,000 cooperation projects, generated 420,000 jobs in participating countries, and lifted

nearly 40 million people out of poverty, vigorously advancing the industrialization processes of numerous developing nations and other countries alike. In the realm of cultural exchanges, the Global Civilization Initiative advocates mutual learning among civilizations, encouraging exchanges rather than estrangement, mutual learning rather than clashes, and inclusiveness rather than superiority. It has robustly refuted narratives such as the so-called “civilizational superiority” and “clash of civilizations”.

Over the past decade and more, this vision has yielded comprehensive and groundbreaking achievements, advancing from bilateral to multilateral engagement and from regional to global dimensions. The Belt and Road Initiative has become a widely welcomed international public good and a platform for international cooperation. The Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Governance Initiative have all delivered enormous dividends of prosperity and stability to the world, generating tangible benefits for people’s livelihoods and pooling strength for the joint endeavor of building a better world.

Creating the Community with a Shared Future for Humanity Injects New Vitality into the International Order

The vision of a community with a shared future for humanity aligns with the common interests of all humanity,

reflects the global aspiration for peace, justice and progress. It brings strong momentum into the transformation of the international order, demonstrating its vitality through a series of concrete actions.

In the field of security, China has promoted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization from “security cooperation” to “comprehensive cooperation,” established the China-ASEAN defense hotline, and introduced the “Concept Paper on the Global Security Initiative.” Regarding issues such as the Ukraine crisis, the Palestine-Israel conflict, and the Afghanistan issue, China has issued position papers and consistently advocated for peace and dialogue, playing a constructive role in seeking political solutions to regional hot-spot issues. The SCO has opposed hostile actions against other countries or regions and has called on all nations to avoid confrontation. China and Central Asian countries have continuously expanded cooperation under multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, the SCO, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the China–Central Asia mechanism. In May 2023, the first China–Central Asia Summit was successfully held in China, and the China–Central Asia heads-of-state meeting mechanism was officially established, charting a new blueprint for China–Central Asia relations.

In the field of economics, with the

entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Asia-Pacific region has become the world's largest free trade area. By June 2025, the China-Europe Railway Express had operated more than 110,000 trains, reaching 229 cities in 26 European countries. The "iron camel caravans" deliver China's electronic products, apparel, and daily necessities to Europe, while bringing back Europe's chemical goods, automobiles and parts, milk powder, cosmetics, and other commodities to China. With BRICS expanding to 11 members and moving into a stage of high-quality development, the New Development Bank is embarking on its second "golden decade," continuing to grow as an emerging force in the international financial system and a flagship of cooperation in the Global South. These cooperation mechanisms have built an open and inclusive "circle of friends," guiding globalization from a "capital-driven" model to a "development-oriented" one.

In the field of ecology, by 2020, China had reduced its carbon emission intensity by 48.4% compared with 2005, exceeding its pledge to cut emissions by 40%–45% by 2020. The latest data show that in the first half of 2025, China's CO₂ emissions fell by a record-high 2.7% year-on-year, while installed renewable energy capacity accounted for 36% of the global total. China and France have jointly promoted the adoption of the implementation rules of the Paris Agreement

and established the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition. China also hosted the UN Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, which adopted the "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework."

The vision of a community with a shared future for humanity continues to deepen and expand in its conceptual connotations, offering a new paradigm for relations among civilizations, new ideas for global governance, new perspectives for international engagement, and new solutions to common challenges. It is bringing enormous dividends of prosperity and stability to the world and delivering tangible benefits to people's livelihoods.

The Future of International Order Lies in the Power of "Togetherness"

The reason why the post-World War II international order has secured overall peace for eight decades is that the United Nations-centered international system established after the war has played an irreplaceable role. The vision of a community with a shared future for humanity, in essence, inherits and elevates this pursuit. It does not seek to replace one system with another, nor to substitute one civilization for another, but to uphold the principle of harmonious coexistence among civilizations, treasuring each own distinct heritage, appreciating other cultures, promoting shared prosperity, and achieving global unity. This is an imper-

ative to address the global governance deficit and also a pressing challenge of our time that the international community must resolve.

History has proven that only by working together and forging a broad consensus to build a community with a shared future for humanity can we unite to navigate through the complex and turbulent international landscape and tackle the ever-emerging global challenges. Once again, humanity stands at the crossroads of history. Clinging to outdated hegemonic dreams will only push the world toward the abyss of confrontation, while embracing our shared future is the only path to opening a new chapter of unity and cooperation.

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