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Speech given by H. E. Mr. Tang Guoqiang Ambassador of the People's Republic of China At Oslo Military Society



Foto: Stig Morten Karlsen, OMS

Dear acting chairman, ladies and gentlemen:

It's an honor for me to be here at Oslo Military Society, which has a history of 185 years, to give you a briefing on China. I'm going to talk about 6 questions which have been frequently asked.

1. How to observe China ?

In my opinion, an objective, changing and global vision is necessary.

China is a country both old and young.

It is old, because it is a big oriental country with a civilization stretching back several thousand years. With diligence and wisdom, the Chinese nation created a splendid civilization and made significant contributions to the progress of humanity.

It is young, because the People's Republic of China is just 60 years old, and the country began reform and opening-up only 30 years ago. The Chinese people established the New China after unremitting struggles and ultimately found a development path suited to China's national conditions through painstaking efforts. This is the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Following this path, the ancient civilization has been rejuvenated.

The key element of China's reform and opening-up is to free people's mind and the most fundamental and significant component is institutional innovation. Through economic institutional reform, we have built a socialist market economy, where the market plays a primary role in allocating resources under the government's macro-regulation. We have carried out political institutional reform, promoted democracy and improved the legal system. People are the masters of the country. We run the country according to law and endeavor to build a socialist country under the rule of law.

The Chinese people are working hard to modernize their country. It is a mighty experiment ongoing in a large developing country.

China is also a country both big and small.

It is big, because it has an area of 9.6 million square kilometers and a population of 1.3 billion. With hard work over the past half century and more, China has achieved great progress. Its total economic output is now the third in the world, the total trade volume is the third largest in the world, and the foreign currency reserve is no.1 in the world.

It is small, because it remains a developing country and is keenly aware of the big gap that it has with the developed countries. There has been no fundamental change in our basic national condition: a big population, weak economic foundation and uneven development. China's GDP per capita ranks behind 100 countries in the world and is only about 1/26 of Norway. If we use the UN's criteria of 1 dollar a day as the poverty line, there are still 150 million Chinese people living harsh lives below this line. 10 million have no access to electricity. More than 10 million need to find the jobs every year. 84 million disabled need to be taken special care of.

To basically achieve modernization by the middle of this century, we must accomplish three major tasks: first, achieve industrialization, which Europe has long completed, while keeping abreast of the latest trends of the scientific and technological revolution; second, promote economic growth while ensuring social equity and justice; and third, pursue sustainable development at home while accepting our share of international responsibilities. The journey ahead will be long and arduous, but no amount of difficulty will stop the Chinese people. Through persistent efforts, we will reach our goal.

China's relationship with the rest of the world has undergone historic changes.

China's economy has become an important part of the world economy. In 2009, China's share of global GDP was 7.8%, total imports and exports accounted for more than 8 percent of the global share and the actually used foreign capital exceeded 90 billion U.S. dollars. China's development has strongly promoted the growth of world economy and trade. Being the third largest import market in the world and the largest import market in Asia, China's imports from the relevant countries and regions have created 10 million job opportunities abroad. In 2009 China's economic contribution to world economic growth amounted 30%.

China has become an important member of the international community. It has participated in more than 100 intergovernmental organizations and signed more than 300 international conventions. China has actively participated in international and regional affairs, and seriously fulfilled its international responsibilities.

China's development is inseparable from the world and the world's prosperity and stability also need China. As the world is irreversibly multi-polarizing, economic globalization is developing in depth and scientific and technological revolution is accelerating, China's future and destiny are increasingly closely linked with the world. Although China is doing its best, its contributions to the world is still limited as China is a developing country. However, China will surely contribute more as it continues to grow.

2.How did China cope with the financial crisis and achieve 8.7% growth rate in its economic development last year ?

Facing the crisis, we have acted decisively. We have made timely adjustment to the direction of our macroeconomic policy, promptly introduced ten measures to expand domestic demand, and formulated a series of related policies. Together, they make up a systematic and comprehensive package plan aimed at promoting steady and relatively fast economic growth.

First, substantially increase governmental spending to boost domestic demand. The Government has announced a two-year investment program that will generate, through fiscal spending, a total investment of 4 trillion RMB yuan nationwide, equivalent to 16% of China's GDP in 2007. The money mainly goes into government-subsidized housing, the construction of railway and other infrastructural projects, social development programs, environmental protection and post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction.

Second, implement a large-scale industrial restructuring and rejuvenation program. We are restructuring ten key industries, including automobiles and iron and steel. We take

economic and technological measures to boost energy conservation and reduce emissions, and promote merger and reorganization of enterprises to raise the level of industry concentration and the efficiency of resource allocation. We also encourage and support the extensive application of new technologies, techniques, equipment and materials.

Third, make efforts for progress and innovation in science and technology. We are stepping up the implementation of the National Program for Medium- and Long-Term Scientific and Technological Development, with special emphasis on 16 major projects including core electronic devices, development and use of nuclear energy and advanced numerically controlled machine tools in order to make breakthroughs in a host of key technologies.

Fourth, significantly raise the level of social security. We continue to increase basic pension for enterprise retirees and upgrade the standard of unemployment insurance and workers' compensation. We raised the level of living allowances in both urban and rural areas and welfare allowances for those rural residents without family support. We are advancing the reform of the medical and health system and working to put in place a nationwide basic medical and health system covering both urban and rural areas within three years. We are following a more active employment policy with special emphasis on helping college graduates and migrant workers find jobs.

Last year was the most difficult year for China's economic and social development since the beginning of the new century. However, because of the correct policy initiatives, the main trend of China's economy was good. In 2010, we will continue to expand domestic demand and rely on innovation, energy saving, emission reduction and in particular economic structural adjustment so as to realize a steady and relatively fast development in economy. Of course, we will continue to join hands with other countries and take firm measures to overcome global economic difficulties.

3.If China further develops, will it pose any threat to the world?

Some friends said that indeed China has been a peace-loving country and has pursued foreign policy of peace in the past six decades because it needed to develop. But if China further develops, will it change its foreign policy from peace to expansion? All Chinese people will answer this question with a sound "No".

A more developed China is an opportunity rather than a threat to the world. "Harmony without sameness" has been a much cherished value of the Chinese people since ancient times. The argument that a strong nation is bound to seek hegemony finds no supporting case in China's history and goes against the will of the Chinese people. China today is committed to a path of peaceful development. We will continue to pursue a defence policy that is defensive in nature and a nuclear strategy solely for self-defence. We will continue to adhere to the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstance. China's military development has a clear purpose, that is, to maintain national security and unity and ensure smooth economic and social development.

A more developed China will continue to treat others equally and will not impose its will upon others. China has always maintained that all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community and must respect one another and treat one another with equality. This will continue to be China's foreign policy and practice in the new century. China, like any country in the world, will stick to the principles on issues affecting its core interests and major concerns, and defend its hard-won equal rights and legitimate interests.

A more developed China will undertake more international responsibilities and will never pursue self interests at the expense of the interests of others. As I mentioned just now that in this interdependent world, China's future is closely linked to that of the world. Our own interests and those of others are best served when we work together to expand common interests, share responsibilities and seek win-win outcomes. That is why while

focusing on its own development, China is undertaking more and more international responsibilities commensurate with its strength and status.

Living in a changing world, China will continue to pursue a foreign policy of peace and independence. At the same time, it proposes to all countries in the world that we must see things in the light of their development and seek solutions with a cooperative spirit. We should foster a cooperation outlook based on mutual respect and equal consultation and safeguard the right of developing countries to equal participation in international affairs. We should foster an outlook on interests which emphasizes mutual benefit and common development, and advance economic globalization in the direction of balanced progress and shared benefits. We should foster a security outlook featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination, respect each other's security interests and pursue security for all. We should foster an outlook on civilization that encourages mutual learning and seeks common ground while reserving differences, and facilitate exchanges among civilizations and development models for common progress. And we should foster an outlook on the environment that champions mutual support and coordinated progress, and make joint efforts to preserve the Earth, our common home.

In short, we are seeking a peaceful international environment to develop ourselves and at the same time contribute to the cause of world peace through our own development. This is a long term strategic choice that China has made and will never change.

4.What kind of security situations are China and the world and China facing?

With the advent of the new century, the world is undergoing tremendous changes and adjustments. Peace and development remain the principal themes of the times, and the pursuit of peace, development and cooperation has become an irresistible trend of the times. The rise and decline of international strategic forces is quickening, major powers are stepping up their efforts to cooperate with each other and draw on each other's strengths. They continue to compete with and hold each other in check, and groups of new emerging developing powers are arising. Therefore, a profound readjustment is brewing in the international system.

However, world peace and development are faced with multiple difficulties and challenges. Struggles for strategic resources, strategic locations and strategic dominance have intensified. Meanwhile, hegemonism and power politics still exist, regional turmoil keeps spilling over, hot-spot issues are increasing, and local conflicts and wars keep emerging. The impact of the financial crisis is still with us. In the aspect of world economic development, issues such as energy and food are becoming more serious. Issues such as terrorism, environmental disasters, climate change, serious epidemics, transnational crime and pirates are becoming increasingly prominent.

The Asia-Pacific security situation is stable on the whole. The regional economy is brimming with vigor, mechanisms for regional and sub-regional economic and security cooperation maintain their development momentum, and it has become the policy orientation of all countries to settle differences and hotspot issues peacefully through dialogue. However, there still exist many factors of uncertainty in Asia-Pacific security. The drastic fluctuations in the world economy impact heavily on regional economic development, and political turbulence persists in some countries undergoing economic and social transition. Ethnic and religious discords, and conflicting claims over territorial and maritime rights and interests remain serious, regional hotspots are complex. Terrorist, separatist and extremist forces are running rampant, and non-traditional security issues such as serious natural disasters crop up frequently.

On the whole, China's capability for upholding national security has been further enhanced. The attempts of the separatist forces for "Taiwan independence" to seek "de jure Taiwan independence" have been thwarted, and the situation across the Taiwan Straits has taken a significantly positive turn. The two sides have resumed and made progress in consultations on the common political basis of the "1992 Consensus", and

consequently cross-Straits relations have improved. Meanwhile, China has made steady progress in its relations with the developed countries, strengthened in all respects the good-neighborly friendship with its neighboring countries, and kept deepening its traditional friendship with the developing countries. China is playing an active and constructive role in multilateral affairs.

China is still confronted with long-term, complicated, and diverse security threats and challenges. Being in a stage of economic and social transition, China is encountering many new circumstances and new issues in maintaining social stability. Separatist forces working for "Taiwan independence", "East Turkistan independence" and "Tibet independence" pose threats to China's unity and security. Damages caused by non-traditional security threats like terrorism, natural disasters, economic insecurity, and information insecurity are on the rise. Impact of external uncertainties and destabilizing factors on China's national security and development is growing.

5.What kind of defence policy will China pursue?

China pursues a national defense policy which is purely defensive in nature. China's national defense policy in the new century basically includes: upholding national security and unity, and ensuring the interests of national development; achieving the all-round, coordinated and sustainable development of China's national defense and armed forces; enhancing the performance of the armed forces with informationization as the major measuring criterion; implementing the military strategy of active defense; pursuing a self-defensive nuclear strategy; and fostering a security environment conducive to China's peaceful development.

According to the requirements of national security and the level of economic and social development, China pursues a three-step strategy to modernize its national defense and armed forces step by step in a well-planned way. That is:

To lay a solid foundation for the informationization of armed forces by 2010; to accomplish mechanization and make major progress in informationization by 2020; and to reach the goal of modernization of national defense and armed forces by the mid-21st century.

Last question, how are the Sino-Norway relations?

Last year was the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Norway. Over the past years, both sides have been attaching importance to developing bilateral ties, and regarding each other as important partners. The bilateral ties are developing in a positive and stable way. In 2009, our two countries enjoyed good relations. There were frequent exchanges of high-level visits. The trade volume last year reached 5.73 billion U.S. dollars, an increase of 21% compared with 2008. The negotiation of a free trade agreement is under way. The cooperation in education, culture and science and technology continued to deepen.

In the new year, we will further expand exchanges and cooperation in various fields and enhance the friendly relations between our two countries. As far as I know, nearly half of the norwegian cabinet ministers will visit China or to participate in the World Expo in Shanghai this year. This will make a positive contribution to bilateral relations. I believe that as long as China and Norway abide by the principle of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, our bilateral relations will surely continue to develop in a steady way. Thank you for your attention.