

'Upholding the Concept of Maritime Community with a Shared Future Opening a New Chapter in Maritime Security Cooperation'



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**Ladies and gentlemen, all my colleagues and friends,
Good morning!**

I feel very pleased to come to the beautiful coastal city Colombo, and to discuss the maritime security and cooperation of the Indian Ocean with everyone present here. First of all, on behalf of the Commander of the PLA Navy, Admiral Shen Jinlong, and the Political Commissar, Admiral Qin Shengxiang, I'd like to express warm congratulations to the 10th "Galle Dialogue", to give my sincere thanks to the Sri Lankan Ministry of National Defense and the Sri Lankan Navy for your warm invitation, and I also express my sincere greetings to all my navy colleagues present here.

For 10 years, more and more countries have taken part in the "Galle Dialogue", and the research and discussion fields have become wider and wider. The "Galle Dialogue" is more and more influential, which has already become a grand international meeting to improve mutual trust, build consensus, and strengthen cooperation among navies around the world. The "Galle Dialogue" plays an active

role in maintaining regional and international maritime security, and promoting joint development. In 2011, with invitation, the PLA Navy sent a delegation to participate the "Galle Dialogue" for the first time. Up to now, the PLA Navy has already participated the "Galle Dialogue" for nine consecutive years. For a long time, the PLA Navy has paid high attention to and actively taken part in the maritime security affairs of the Indian Ocean region. Through the "Galle Dialogue", the PLA Navy carried out wide and in-depth exchanges and discussions with navies of various countries, and reached important consensus and made progress. In the following, I want to make a speech on the topic of "Upholding the Concept of Maritime Community with a Shared Future; Opening a New Chapter in Maritime Security Cooperation".

The Indian Ocean connects the Pacific to the east and the Atlantic to the west, and covers numerous maritime strategic passages. About 70% of petroleum products and 50% of containers transportation have to pass the Indian Ocean, which is renowned as "maritime lifeline". The Indian Ocean is the maritime

transportation hub of the global trade, and the friendship bridge for exchanges and mutual learning between the Eastern and the Western civilizations, which plays an important role in global strategic pattern. More than 2000 years ago, China developed the ancient maritime Silk Road with countries along the coast of the Indian Ocean for trading. The Chinese silk and porcelain were sold to the India, Sri Lanka, and the Arabic countries. The colored glazes and pearls of these countries were also sold to China through the Indian Ocean. Up to this day, the China-initiated “Belt and Road Initiative” has won wide support from countries along the coast of the Indian Ocean. With even more closer cooperation in areas such as, trade, port, shipbuilding, and shipping, the trade value of China and the countries along the coast of the Indian Ocean has reached up to more than 100 billion US dollars. Every year more than 5000 large merchant ships depart from or come to China, and navigate among the South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. So to speak, the security and stability of the Indian Ocean is both related to the countries around the Indian Ocean and also closely related to the fate of countries around the world.

However, we notice that at present the maritime security situation of the Indian Ocean still faces various risks; especially, the non-traditional security threat situation is still grim: severe natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis, etc. take place frequently; maritime emergencies, such as, oil spilling, dangerous chemicals leakage, navigation accidents, and etc. take place from time to time; piracy, transnational crime, illegal immigration, illegal fishing, and etc. are common occurrence; especially, the regional conflicts and international terrorism pose great challenges to regional security.

Maritime security and challenges are closely related to maritime future and destiny, and the fundamental interests of every country. This year on April 23rd, in the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PLA Navy, the Chinese president

Xi Jinping put forward the great initiation of “building maritime community with a shared future”, which provided the Chinese solution for maintaining maritime peace and stability and promoting global ocean governance. In my point of view, the concept of maritime community with a shared future contains rich connotations, such as co-building “peaceful, safe, prosperous, open, and beautiful” oceans. As the mainstay of national maritime power, the navy takes great responsibility for maintaining maritime peace and order. We should respect each other, treat each other equally, improve mutual trust, strengthen maritime dialogue and exchange, deepen navy practical cooperation, commit to mutual benefit and win-win strategy on maritime security, deal with various maritime common threats and challenges together, and jointly maintain maritime peace and stability.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my friends:

In recent years, the PLA Navy operating in the Indian Ocean has been always upholding the concept of maritime community with a shared future, actively conducting maritime security cooperation on various fields with countries around the Indian Ocean, actively implementing international duties and obligations, strenuously providing maritime public security service, and making contributions to the development and stability of the Indian Ocean region.

Actively maintaining the security of international maritime passages. In December, 2008, according to relevant UN resolutions, the PLA Navy dispatched the escort task force to the Gulf of Aden and Somali water area to conduct regular escort missions, carried out cooperation with the navies of many other countries, and jointly maintained the security of international maritime passages. For 10 years, the PLA Navy dispatched altogether 33 batches of escort task forces, with 106 naval ships, more than 28000 officers and men, and provided security protection for more than 6700 Chinese and foreign ships. Among them, more than 50% are foreign ships. The PLA Navy escort task force rescued, saved, and helped more than 70 ships

in distress. The PLA Navy escort task force provided escort for World Food Programme (WFP) grain carriers for multiple times. The PLA Navy escort task force also provided escort for ships undertaking Syrian chemical weapon destruction missions for multiple times.

Actively conducting humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations. In March, 2014, the Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 lost contact. The PLA Navy immediately dispatched numerous naval ships to take part in the international rescue mission. The PLA Navy naval ships continuously searched the wide sea areas in the Gulf of Thailand and the Indian Ocean for nearly one year. In December 2014, the whole city of Male, the capital of the Maldives, was cut off water. The PLA Navy escort task force immediately provided more than 1600 tons of fresh water to Male, which greatly relieved the water shortage of the city.

Actively providing humanitarian medical service. The PLA Navy hospital ship Arc Peace successively carried out "Mission Harmony" missions for 7 times, visited 12 countries in the Indian Ocean region, and provided medical service for more than 230000 people. On August 6, 2017, The PLA Navy hospital ship Arc Peace visited Sri Lanka for the first time, provided free medical service for local people, and conducted professional exchanges with the Sri Lankan medical personnel.

Actively carrying out overseas evacuation mission. In March, 2015, the security situation of Yemen deteriorated sharply. With authorization, the 19th escort task force of the PLA Navy immediately went to the Aden Port of Yemen to carry out overseas evacuation mission. During the operation, the escort task force also helped 276 foreign nationals from 15 countries, including Sri Lanka, to evacuate from Yemen. It was also the first time for the PLA Navy to conduct overseas evacuation mission in dangerous areas and evacuate foreign nationals, which fully demonstrated that China was a responsible country.

Actively participating regional maritime security cooperation mechanism. The PLA Navy has participated regional maritime security cooperation mechanisms, such as "the Galle Dialogue", "the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium", and etc. The PLA Navy has maintained effective communications with all parties concerned. The PLA Navy has carried out technical exchanges and operational cooperation with other navies on fighting against terrorism, transnational crime, pirate groups, and disaster reliefs. In 2014, the PLA Navy officially became an observer of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. In November 2017, the PLA Navy for the first time dispatched naval ships to participate multilateral search and rescue exercise under the framework of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

Actively carrying out naval ships mutual visits and personnel exchanges. The PLA Navy actively carries out naval ships mutual visits and personnel exchanges with the countries of the Indian Ocean region, which establishes trust and fosters friendship among frontline officers and men. In recent 10 years, the PLA Navy has received numerous foreign visiting naval ships from countries of the Indian Ocean region, such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The PLA Navy also has dispatched naval ships to visit 26 countries of the Indian Ocean region, and has trained more than 2000 naval cadets for countries of the region.

The PLA Navy has proved itself with actions that we sincerely hope to see a great family of the Indian Ocean which is filled with peace and stability, solidarity and cooperation, development and prosperity. The PLA Navy will continue to actively participate and promote the Indian Ocean maritime cooperation, and make positive contributions to promoting peace, stability and prosperity of the Indian Ocean.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my friends:

At present, we face unprecedented maritime threats and challenges; meanwhile,

we also have unprecedented opportunities to jointly deal with challenges and maintain maritime security. I sincerely hope that all parties can recognize and uphold the concept of maritime community with a shared future, take practical measures, and jointly promote trans-regional maritime security cooperation. For this purpose, I'd like to put forward three proposals to my colleagues present here:

One. Strengthening mutual communications and exchanges. Strengthening high-level mutual visits, consolidating and deepening friendship and trust among naval leaders to avoid strategic miscalculation; actively carrying out communications and exchanges on national defense and security policy issues to mutually acknowledge and understand each other's security concern and policy trend; strengthening professional exchanges of various level officers, experts and scholars to lay a solid foundation of mutual trust.

Two. Deepening maritime practical cooperation. Constantly enriching the contents and fields of multilateral joint exercises and drills to increase the integration and diversity of the exercises; continuously strengthening cooperation on anti-piracy and maritime strategic passage security, and actively constructing maritime information sharing platform to improve maritime information sharing capability; actively carrying out maritime search and rescue, anti-terrorism operations, humanitarian aid, evacuation operations, and cooperation on meteorological disaster forecast to constantly improve joint capability to deal with maritime security threats.

Three. Strengthening maritime operation coordination. With relevant UN resolutions, and in combination of regional maritime security situations, strengthening communications and coordination, further regulating maritime force activities. It is suggested that on fields, such as humanitarian rescue and disaster relief, maritime anti-

terrorism operations, maritime law enforcement areas, and etc., we should intensively study and solve the issues on military force access in joint operations, intelligence exchange, command coordination, and etc. in order to further improve joint operation capability.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my friends:

Maintaining peace and prosperity of the Indian Ocean is the aim of building maritime community with a shared future. China is willing to carry out closer mutually beneficial cooperation with countries of the Indian Ocean region in order to realize joint development and shared prosperity. The PLA Navy is willing to work together with navies around the world, put the concept of maritime community with a shared future into practice, and jointly create a beautiful future of the Indian Ocean!

Finally, I wish this meeting a great success! Thank you!