

Making Sense of China's Security Outlook: Concept and Practice

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Let me thank the Chair. How privileged I am to be invited to speak at this international research conference of KDU, a top Defense University in the region and the beyond. And I would also like to thank Dr. Bhagya Senaratne a Visiting Fellow at the China Institute of International Studies who had done a great job to make it possible for me to attend. And I am looking forward to seeing all the friends in the near future.

I think I have a disadvantage to speak a little but I thought that it would be good for me to present my understanding on China's security outlook or concept which has been going through evolution or changes in response to the changes in transformation in the region and the beyond. There are three parts in my presentation. Part one will be about the China's evolving security concept. And second part will be on challenges or issues facing by the concept of security and its practice in the light of changes or transformations. And the last part, I will say a few words on some ideas on how China and Sri Lanka in particular and the region in general can strengthen security dialog.

I think since all of you are security and defense experts, you must have followed the new terminology on China's security concept. I think at this moment what we are talking about again interestingly a holistic security outlook concept which covers almost eleven kinds of security. So, it is a very extensive concept on security. And this kind of concept derives from an understanding which I think combines both external and internal situations and also reflects China's own outlook or thinking about its relationship with the outside world.

The time when China started to talk about security concept would date back to around the mid-1990s. I think if I remember correctly it was in

1996 that China started to talk about the new security concept for the region. For China, the security concept should be based on mutual confidence, mutual trust, dialogue and cooperation. This security concept I think was a reflection and response to the changing situation. In the post-Cold War era, China continued to focus its own development while striving very hard for a favorable environment for its development. But the situation outside China was changing. China's relationships with major powers were changing as well. And so were China's relations with its neighbors. I think the idea to have a new security concept featuring mutual trust and security through dialogue and cooperation was relevant.

I think by 2002 China came up an official statement on a security concept on Asia, which was presented at the Asian Regional Forum, and the new security concept had become more elaborated. And again, four key words on security featuring mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit and the equality and the cooperation. So, this is again I think it reflects kind of continued efforts by China to promote a concept for common security through cooperation and dialogue so that China will be able to continue to focus on its development. This I think is an important development. I call it China's security concept, version one.

As China develops or rises, its relationship with outside the world becomes more interdependent and complicated. China's perceptions on the security both at home and abroad are changing. I think it increasingly sees its own security or security at home domestic security intertwined, which includes political security, social security, economic security. China has realized that what is happening outside the world would affect what is happening in China. And it would have to pursue

its security in a more comprehensive or a holistic way.

In the meantime, I think China continued to pursue the peaceful development by working closely with major countries for a framework of relationship. And it worked closely with its neighbors to promote common development. Meantime there are differences and disputes between China and its neighbors that need to be managed in a constructive way. I think China also strongly feels that a regional security architecture is also important as it could help China to work with other countries multilaterally. I think China is thus becoming increasingly an active player in regional architecture like ARF and talks on concluding a Code of Conducts on the South China Sea (COS).

Author Biography



Dr. Rong Ying is Vice President and Senior Research Fellow at the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). He had previously served as Deputy Director for South Asian, Middle Eastern and African

Studies, Director for International Exchange, Director for International Strategic Studies, and Director for American Studies at CIIS from 1999 to 2008. He was Vice President of CIIS from 2008 to 2011. From 1993 to 1997, he served at the Chinese Embassy in the United Republic of Tanzania as Third Secretary and as Minister-Councilor at the Chinese Embassy in Japan from 2011 to 2016. Dr. Rong got his MA in English from Beijing Normal University and his PhD from Peking University. He was a visiting scholar at the Bush School for Government and Public Service, Texas A & M University, U.S. from April to October 2000.