CHINESE ECONOMY:
FOUR ASPECTS OF CHINA

A three-part lecture given
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This is the second part of the lecture by

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ABSTRACT

Media reports on China’s modernization and military development have been viewed as news about Chinese military threat. But in my point of view, China’s growing military strength means more chances for peace. Our ancestors liked to build walls to ward off their enemies and evil spirits. As the most magnificent and largest defense project in ancient China, the Great Wall is effectively the manifestation of strategic defense thought of the Chinese nation and our longstanding peace-oriented nature. The Great Wall is no longer a wall to ward off enemies. It has turned into a bridge that links the east and west, the south and north, and the countries all over the world.

Keywords: China’s peace-oriented concept of war, the Great Wall

* This lecture was delivered on November 23, 2012 at the Ateneo de Manila University Science Education Complex Escaler Hall.
Good afternoon. I am Major Wang Henping, assistant to the defense attaché in our Chinese embassy. Today, I am really honored to be given this opportunity to deliver a speech as a junior Chinese military officer in front of the population of one of the best universities in the Philippines.

In the past few days, overseas media reported on China’s modernization, national defense, and armed forces, which is indicated in President Hu Jintao’s report to the 18th CTC National Congress. Some are concerned with China’s military development. Others even continue disseminating news about Chinese military threat. But in my point of view, China’s growing military strength means more chances for peace.

As a military diplomat, I would like to share with you some of my understanding of China’s peace-oriented military thought. I believe most of you know the Great Wall, but I am not sure how many of you have been there.

A Chinese saying goes, “one who has never been to the Great Wall, is not too sure.” Yes, our people are proud of the Great Wall, which snakes through half of our country. Our ancestors liked to build walls to ward off their enemies and evil spirits. As the most magnificent and largest defense project in ancient China, the Great Wall is effectively the manifestation of strategic defense thought of the Chinese nation and our longstanding peace-oriented nature.

These concepts have not only served as dominant guidelines for China’s thought and strategy, they have also exerted profound influence in all aspects of traditional Chinese culture. Specifically, the peace-oriented concept of war is mainly reflected in the tendency to be prudent about starting a war. It looks upon winning without a fight as the most admirable situation. This idea is particularly influenced by China’s traditional philosophy and practices.
Compared with Ancient Greek and Roman mythologies, which eulogies heroes of war, heroes in Chinese mythologies and legends are mostly sages, men of virtue. Chinese characters also illustrate this peace-oriented concept of war. The character 武 (wǔ), meaning military or military strength, is composed of two parts. One is 止 (zhǐ) the other is 戈 (gē). 止 means stop, 戈 means spear. These characters combined mean stopping the spears.

Due to geographic and economic factors, most of us in China are wedged between different domestic factions in revolt against tyranny and to protect territorial integrity. To fend off invasions from neighboring nomadic groups, China mainly resorted to protective means such as building the Great Wall, promoting actual trade, or paying tributes. It was colonialism that broke the generally peaceful environment in China.

In face of invasion and oppression, China rose to resist, regaining its independence and establishing the New China in 1949, but not after a century of unyielding struggle and sacrifice. In the New Era, China once again showed its peace-oriented development path. However, as our defense minister General Yang Gaolin said, “Peace never comes from the sky, a century of humiliation has acquainted us with the saying, ‘-- days leave you vulnerable to attack, and reinforcement will pursue peace and independence.’” To this end, China must pursue an active defense strategy; build up military strength to safeguard peace.

Military strength is a blessing when applied for good; it is a curse when applied for evil. In the hands of the Japanese militarist, the militarist race was a raging monster. In the hands of the Chinese, it serves as a just force to safeguard world peace and stability. You can see our brave and selfless soldiers in the UN peacekeeping operations and in the disaster-torn countries that need humanitarian assistance.
Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, today the Great Wall is no longer a wall to ward off enemies. It has turned into a bridge that links the east and west, the south and north, and the countries all over the world. Chinese People’s Liberation Army, which is metaphorized as the Iron Great Wall has also become a bridge linking China and the rest of the world.

To conclude my speech, I would like to invite the Filipino friends to go to China, visit the Great Wall, and witness our peace-loving People’s Liberation Army. Thank you. Maraming salamat.

About the author: Major Wang Hanbing is the assistant to the defense attaché of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Philippines.