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## FROM PANCHSHEEL TO MULTILATERAL MECHANISMS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHINA AND INDIA

BY

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The Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA), Beijing is an organization devoted to people-to-people diplomacy, the first of its kind established after the founding of New China. Over the past 65 years, it has been dedicated to enhancing friendship among the people of all countries in the world, including Indian people. In recent years, CPIFA has been carrying out frequent friendly exchanges with the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi.

**Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence**

This year, the two sides co-sponsored activities in Beijing to mark the 60th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence or Panchsheel as known in India, jointly initiated by Premier Zhou Enlai and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, former leaders of the two countries. Over the past 60 years, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence embodying the common wisdom of China and India have not only constituted the political basis and fundamental guarantee for the steady and healthy development of Sino-Indian relations, but they have also become the norms universally accepted by the international community for handling state-to-state relations.

As important countries in this region, China and India are obliged to continue striving for peaceful development, oriented toward national rejuvenation, safeguarding regional peace and stability and promoting common security of all countries under the guidance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. China and India can boost cooperation in numerous areas.

**A New Security Concept**

There is a need to jointly initiate a new security concept. History has repeatedly proved that neighbours gain from peaceful coexistence and lose from conflicts. China and India, as initiating countries of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, should energetically advocate comprehensive security on the basis of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination as well as a new security concept featuring common security and cooperative security.

Both sides should resolve contradictions through dialogue and consultation; actively promote security and cooperation in this region and work hard to safeguard a peaceful and stable regional situation. China will stick to the path of peaceful development and hopes that all

countries in the world would take the same path. The country looks forward to positive responses to Beijing's goodwill from India and other neighbouring countries.

**Major Country Relationships**

It is important to enhance coordination and mutual trust among major regional countries. Major-country relationships have a bearing on the trend of regional security to a large extent. The key lies in the efforts of all countries, particularly major countries, in this region to give up the Cold War mentality, respect each other's reasonable concerns on major issues involving regional security and stability, reasonably handle differences in positions and conflicts of interests, persist in meeting half way, cultivate healthy interactions and blaze a win-win trail. China and India, both major influential countries in the Asian region, should become models for enhancing coordination and mutual trust.

Both sides need to work hard for the building of dialogue and cooperation mechanisms for regional security. A regional security framework for dialogue, instead of confrontation, constitutes an important guarantee for regional security. Both sides need to make full use of regional multilateral mechanisms to boost links and communication, lower "costs for redundant construction", achieve comparative advantages, improve the efficiency of joint response to security problems and gradually build up a transparent new security cooperation pattern with equal participation.

**Multilateral Cooperation**

Both sides are committed to steadily promoting and deepening pragmatic cooperation. China and India are both BRICS members and emerging economies. Each is respectively the biggest manufacturing country and the biggest service-industry country. Since the beginning of the 21st century, economic and trade cooperation between the two countries have witnessed rapid development and the trade volume has increased by more than 20 times. However, in view of our two countries having a total population of 2.5 billion, the trade volume still falls short of the proper scale and level. With their respective characteristics, the economies of China and India complement each other. They boast unique cooperative advantages in infrastructure construction, manufacturing industry, banking services, high-end and new technologies as well as in pushing

for the construction of Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor.

It is believed that the two economies, on the rapidly rising track, once linked together smoothly, will yield tremendous scale-economy effect and form the most competitive productive base, most attractive consumption market and most powerful engine stimulating growth in the world. They will benefit the people in this region, consolidate a stable material base for regional peace and contribute to the economic prosperity of Asia and the world at large.

**New Leadership in China and India**

At present, the Chinese Dream set forth by President Xi Jinping has won extensive support of the Chinese people and considerable interest in the international arena. With themes on national prosperity and strength, national rejuvenation and the people's happiness, it embodies the goals of China's national development and the Chinese people's aspirations for a happy life in future.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been well known for daring "to challenge orthodoxy, conventional wisdom and social assumptions". His assumption of office will undoubtedly bring an important "Indian opportunity" for India's future development. The new Indian government has demonstrated to the world its determination for reform and development as well as its enthusiasm for external friendship and cooperation.

As a friendly neighbour of India, China, in turn, regards India's development as an opportunity. China and India are both at a similar development stage. The Chinese Dream and the Indian Dream are closely linked. So long as the dreams of the two countries are linked together, the strategies would also move in the same direction, the markets can integrate and the hearts of peoples accord with each other.

The day for two great ancient civilizations to join hands for national rejuvenation will come at an early date and a prosperous and rejuvenated Asian era will project itself in the world soon. CPIFA is ready to join hands with ICWA in making positive contributions in this respect.

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