

The Formation, Value and Realization of Xi Jinping's Thought on Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

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Abstract: A community with a shared future for mankind refers to equal, all-win, safe and inclusive human collective organizations between countries. Xi Jinping's thought on building a community with a shared future for mankind is deeply rooted in the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and is the "Chinese diagnosis" made, and "Chinese plans" proposed, for world problems. It provides the realistic possibility to advocate for and construct a community with a shared future for mankind for development, peace and security of the world and global governance. We should adhere to the principles of step-by-step implementation, equality and mutual assistance, respect for differences, eco-friendly development and inclusiveness, to achieve a community with a shared future for mankind.

Keywords: Xi Jinping; a community with a shared future for mankind; global governance; China's voice; China's approach

The report of the Eighteenth CPC National Congress stated, "We should raise awareness about human beings sharing a community of common destiny. A country should accommodate the legitimate concerns of others when pursuing its own interests and it should promote common development of all countries when advancing its own development. Countries should establish a new type of global development partnership that is more equitable and balanced, stick together in times of difficulty, both share rights and shoulder obligations, and boost the common interests of mankind." Since the Eighteenth National Congress

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of the CPC, Xi Jinping has inherited and developed the thought of “a community with a shared future for mankind”, and profoundly elaborated the idea many times on international occasions and in diplomatic activities. We should grasp the nature of human interests and values, and find greatest common interests in the relationships between countries, promoting lasting peace in the world and constantly enriching ideological connotations.

1. The connotation and characteristics of the thought of a community with a shared future for mankind

Community refers to a collective formed by people under common conditions. In international politics and international relations, it usually refers to a collective organization composed of several countries in a specific respect, and generally classified as having the following categories, namely political community, economic community, cultural community and ecological community. After studying and understanding Xi Jinping’s discourse about a community with a shared future for mankind, we find that the basic connotation refers to an equal, all-win, safe and inclusive collective of political, economic, cultural and ecological properties between countries. This kind of community with a shared future for mankind has marked features.

First: Equality. Xi Jinping pointed out, “Countries may differ in size, strength or level of development, but they are all equal members of the international community with equal rights to participate in regional and international affairs. On matters that involve us all, we should discuss and look for a solution together. Being a major country means

shouldering greater responsibilities for regional and world peace and development, as opposed to seeking greater monopoly over regional and world affairs.”^① Both major and minor countries are equal members of the global village with sovereign equality, and no country should interfere, at will, in the internal affairs of another country. This equality, in Kant’s point of view, is from “mankind shares the right in possessing the surface of the earth” (Kant, 2010, p.119). Therefore, no nation has the right to claim itself exclusive of the earth’s natural resources, or has the right to guide other nations how to live and think.

Second: All win. According to Xi Jinping, all win refers to “symbiosis” and “cooperativeness” between countries, as “in this world, interrelations and interdependence between countries is unprecedentedly increased. Mankind is becoming a community with a shared future with close connections, as they live in the same global village and in the same space-time of the intersection of history and reality.”^② Therefore, “Only through win-win cooperation can we make big and sustainable achievements that are beneficial to all. The old mindset of zero-sum game should give way to a new approach of win-win and all-win cooperation. The interests of others must be accommodated while pursuing one’s own interests, and common development must be promoted while seeking one’s own development.”^③ There is no single island in today’s world, and all countries and peoples are connected by commercial behavior, trade in goods and the cyber world. We have never been so closely linked and we are interdependent. The volatility of China’s stock market may affect Ireland, while the changes on Wall Street in the United States may affect the nerves of all the people in the world.

①③ The keynote speech of Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Bo’ao Forum for Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2015/03-28/7166267.shtml>.

② Xi Jinping’s speech at Moscow University of International Relations. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2013-03/24/c_124495576.htm.

This may bring about opportunities for common prosperity as well as global crises. Therefore, the most rational approach is all-win cooperation rather than a solitary activity, unilateralism or a zero-sum game. Only in this way can human beings embark on the path of prosperity and all-win.

Third: Security. A community with a shared future for mankind is in the pursuit of world security. Xi Jinping stated, “In today’s world, security means much more than before and its implications go well beyond a single region or time frame. All sorts of factors could have a bearing on a country’s security. As people of all countries share a common destiny and become increasingly interdependent, no country could have its own security ensured without the security of other countries or of the wider world. The Cold War mentality should truly be discarded and new security concepts be nurtured as we explore a path for Asia that ensures security for all, by all and of all.”^①

Xi Jinping also talked about this in his speech *Working Together to Create a New Mutually Beneficial Partnership and Community with a shared Future for Mankind* at the General Debate of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly. Shaping a community with a shared future for mankind is the consensus and legacy of history left to the people of all ethnic groups and countries by the anti-fascist war. If there were no common memory or deep repentance for this extremely brutal war, it would have been impossible for human beings to establish the United Nations, and it would be less likely we would work together to develop the principles of peaceful coexistence as put forth in the Charter of the United Nations (Xi, 2015). We are driven to reflect on the following questions due to the pains and memories of this war: Where should we go? How can we live in

peace and coexistence? This is the answer to Kant’s famous question, “What should mankind expect” (Kant, 2004, p. 612). In fact, Xi Jinping replied to this question on behalf of the Chinese government and the Chinese people, namely we should move toward a union and peaceful coexistence. Only in this way can we guarantee the development and security of all countries. Therefore, the promotion of world security should be the common goal of every country.

Fourth: Inclusiveness. This is recognition of the differences between civilizations, countries and nations as well as pluralism and multi-polarization of the world today. The West does not enjoy a dominating status in the world today. Instead, it has become a multi-polar and diverse world. With the rise of the third world and the developing countries, the pattern of the world has transferred from centralization dominated by the West to multi-polarization. Meanwhile, with the national rejuvenation of the developing countries, cultural consciousness and self-confidence have become the “new norms” in these countries. In today’s world, it is an era of exchange and integration through equal dialogue between a variety of civilizations and many countries rather than an era of a dominant civilization. Only through mutual respect, mutual learning, and harmonious coexistence can the world maintain its diversity and thrive. Xi Jinping (2015) pointed out, “Each social model represents the unique vision and contribution of its people, and no model is superior to others. Different civilizations should engage in dialogue and exchanges instead of trying to exclude or replace each other.” Therefore, the world order people are expecting is not based on Western centralism, but on mutual tolerance, dialogue and consultation between multiple countries, nations and civilizations.

① The keynote speech of Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Bo’ao Forum for Asia. Retrieved from <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2015/03-28/7166267.shtml>.

2. The formation and value of the thought of a community with a shared future for mankind

The thought of a community with a shared future for mankind, put forward by Xi Jinping, has its own ideological origin, realistic background and value of the times.

First, the ideological origin of a community with a shared future for mankind. Karl Marx pointed out that people make their own history under the conditions encountered, established and inherited from the past. Similarly, Xi Jinping's thought of a human community with a shared future is not proposed arbitrarily. Instead, it is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture. Some scholars have pointed out that the thoughts of excellent traditional Chinese culture have provided important wisdom for a community with a shared future for mankind, like the universal feelings of "the unity of the heaven and humanity", human feelings of "all under heaven are of one family," and coordinated wisdom of "the way of neutralization" (Mou, 2015). The ecological views like "support the heaven and the earth to be nurtured into everything in the world," and "a man of kindness regards himself and the universe as a whole," state the ecological feelings and responsibilities of each person, and people should show reverence for nature and maintain a harmonious relationship with nature. This is conducive to reflection on the western thinking of "conquering nature" as well as "ecological imperialism" with national interests and polluting outputs, and advocating people of the world to jointly cope with global ecological problems. In addition, the Confucian world view is beyond the boundaries of races and countries, and is a concept of holism with the world and all mankind as a whole. The traditional Confucian proposals like "cultivate individual moral character, run the family in unison,

manage the nation in order, and peace will prevail throughout the universe," "all the people of the world are brothers," "a man of noble character will render kindheartedness and justice to the people after he keeps positive relationships with family members, and he will care for the giving by heaven after he renders kindheartedness and justice to the people," advocate fraternity for himself and family members to other people, the society and the world, and regard all people in the world as the same family. Confucianism advocates "harmony in diversity," and believes that "all living creatures grow together without harming one another," "ways run parallel without interfering with one another," "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," "according to different circumstances, take appropriate measures," and "conflict must be reconciled and resolved." These thoughts advocate ethnic equality, national equality, cultural diversity, mutual tolerance, and mutual respect, and hold that people should consider the will of all parties when getting along, and should be good at compromising and balancing. Under the influence of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, a community with a shared future for mankind proposed by Xi Jinping, is logical and natural. It can be concluded, "The thought of a community with a shared future for mankind is nurtured by the over 5,000 year-old Chinese culture" (Guo, 2015). It remains connected with the traditional Chinese culture with "harmony" at its core.

Second, the realistic background of the formation of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. Peace and development are the themes of today's world, but the world is not peaceful. The worldwide problems like the shadow of war, the threats of terrorist attacks, the dangers of global warming, still exist. A community with a shared future for mankind is a "Chinese diagnosis" made with a "Chinese approach" and proposed for worldwide problems. In March 2013, Xi Jinping

delivered his basic judgment on the trend of human civilization to the whole world in the speech at Moscow University of International Relations. "Countries in this world are unprecedentedly interdependent, and human beings have become a community with a shared future for mankind living in one global village, and the same time-space with the intersection of history and reality" (Xi, 2014). On May 7, 2015, right before the 70th anniversary of the victory of Russia's Great Patriotic War, Xi Jinping pointed out in *Bearing in mind the history, creating the future* published in the *Russian Newspaper*, "The Law of the Jungle, the strong preying on the weak, or warlike or hegemonic policies, or winner-take-all or zero-sum mindsets will not benefit coexistence, peace and development for all mankind. Peace not war, cooperation not confrontation, and win-win not zero-sum are what drive peace, progress and development of human society." Chinese thinking outlines the future direction of human civilization.

The realization of a community with a shared future for mankind is highly consistent with the realization of the Chinese Dream of great national rejuvenation. On November 29, 2014, Xi Jinping pointed out at the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs, "The Chinese Dream is about peace, development, cooperation and win-win outcomes. What we pursue is the well-being of both the Chinese people and the people of all other countries." In his 2016 New Year's greetings, Xi Jinping pointed out that "We have only one earth, which is the common home to people of all countries...The international community should work together to build a community with a shared future for mankind, which is shared by all people in every country. The world is so big, and the problems are so many. The international community expects to hear China's voice and see China's plans. China cannot be absent. Seeing the people trapped deep in suffering and wars, we should have compassion and

sympathy, and take responsibilities and action. China will always open its arms to the world and will make all efforts possible to extend our helping hand to the people facing difficulties. Let our 'circle of friends' grow bigger and bigger."

At the same time, the realization of a human community with a shared future is unified intrinsically with new international relations with all-win cooperation as the core. On March 23, 2013, Xi Jinping pointed out in his speech *Keeping up with the Trend of the Times and Promoting World Peace and Development* at Moscow University of International Relations, "To keep up with the times, we cannot have ourselves physically living in the 21st century, but with a mindset belonging to the past, stalled in the old days of colonialism, and constrained by zero-sum Cold War mentality." China will never sacrifice the interests of other countries for its own, and will never benefit itself at others' cost.

Third, the time value of a community with a shared future for mankind. A community with a shared future for mankind is of worldwide significance, and is deeply rooted in reality, hitting the pulse of the times and conforming to the expectations of the people of the world. Xi Jinping pointed out, "The world is going through a historical process of accelerated evolution. The light of peace, development and progress will be powerful enough to dispel the clouds of war, poverty and backwardness. The movement toward a multi-polar world and the rise of emerging markets and developing countries has become an irresistible trend of history. Economic globalization and the advent of an information age have unleashed and boosted vast new social productive forces. They have created unprecedented development opportunities while giving rise to new threats and challenges which we must face squarely" (Xi, 2015). The era today is an era of world multi-polarization, economic globalization and social informatization.

The era today is an era of multi-polarization. World multi-polarization is bound to require more countries to take on the role of global governance. Advocacy and construction of a community with a shared future for mankind provides a realistic possibility for the common world of mankind and the realization of the diversified patterns of world development. More and more people are participating in international affairs, and particularly the developing countries are playing an increasingly important role in the international arena. The construction of a community with a shared future for mankind serves for the realization of plural and diversified main global governance bodies. Only by cooperation can countries achieve economic development, mutual political trust and harmonious coexistence.

The era today is an era of economic globalization. Economic globalization has made the interests of the people from different countries mutually integrated. Advocacy for, and construction of a community with a shared future for mankind provides a realistic possibility for common development for the people in the world. The development of the world economy has already passed the era with a country outshining others; instead, it is an organically connected era with high interdependence. The construction of a community with a shared future for mankind is conducive to the realization of the cooperation and sharing in the world economy and sustainable development, so that the people in the world will share a better future through common development of the countries.

The era today is an era of social informatization. Social informatization makes the whole world share both danger and safety. Advocacy and construction of a community with a shared future for mankind provides the realistic possibility for a peaceful and safe world. In the information age with the Internet as the symbol, the connection of human density has

reached an unprecedented state. At the same time, network interconnections and information exchanges have made more effective security necessary and expected. Therefore, the people in the world can enjoy intimacy in security to construct a community with a shared future for mankind.

People around the world examine the world from a global perspective and at the height of future prospects for mankind, beyond the limitations of time and space, by the thought of a community with a shared future for mankind, so it is conducive to building a healthy international economic and political pattern and maintaining the long-term interests of the people of the world. Facts have repeatedly shown that a community with a shared future for mankind has aroused the sympathy of people of all nationalities. When Xi Jinping explicated the idea of a “Sino-African community with a common future” at the Tanzania Nyerere International Conference Center, he received applause thirty times in his thirty-minute speech. When he advocated a “Sino-Latin American community with a shared future” in his speech at the Congress, he became the foreign leader winning “the most applauses.” When he clearly put forward “moving forward a community with a shared future and embracing a new future for Asia,” his proposal was evaluated as the discourse center of Asian confidence and the symbol of Asian unity by the foreign media.

3. The realization of a community with a shared future for mankind

During the forum of the United Nations of 2015, Xi Jinping stressed, “We should build partnerships in which countries treat each other as equals, engage in mutual consultation and show mutual understanding. We should create a secure environment featuring fairness, justice, joint participation and shared

benefits. We should promote open, innovative and inclusive development that benefits all. We should increase inter-civilization exchanges to promote harmony, inclusiveness and respect for differences. We should build an ecosystem that puts the nature and green development first.”

In fact, it points out the overall layout of and the main path to a community with a shared future for mankind. The following principles should be followed to advance the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind in the real world.

First, the principle of step-by-step implementation. A community with a shared future for mankind cannot be accomplished in one move. It will require joint and long-term efforts of people throughout the world. According to Xi Jinping’s statement, the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind should be implemented step by step. It starts from the construction of a community with a shared future between countries and develops into a regional community with a shared future, and ends with a community with a shared future for mankind. At the annual conference of the Bo’ao Forum for Asia 2015, Xi Jinping stated, “We have only one planet, and all countries share one world. To do well, Asia and the world could not do without each other. Facing the fast changing international and regional landscapes, we must see the whole picture, follow the trend of our times and jointly build a regional order that is more favorable to Asia and the world. We should, through efforts towards such a community for Asia, promote a community of common interest for all mankind.”^① Here, Xi Jinping raised his proposal of “through efforts towards such a community for Asia, promote a community of common interest for mankind”. As a matter of fact, China is practicing the idea of a community with a shared future for mankind step-

by-step through the initiatives like “the Belt and Road”, the “Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank” and the “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.”

Second, the principle of equality and mutual assistance. Equality and mutual assistance refers to the realization of fair and innovative development between countries through constructing equal inter-state relations. All countries should adhere to multilateralism, rather than unilateralism; they should adopt a new vision of seeking positive outcomes for all, and reject the outdated mindset that one side’s gain means the other side’s loss, or that the winner takes all; pursue new ideas of win-win, multi-win and all-win. Xi Jinping (2015) pointed out, “We should abandon the Cold War mentality in all its manifestations, and foster a new vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Development is meaningful only when it is inclusive and sustainable. To achieve such development requires openness, mutual assistance and cooperation.” Therefore, all countries in the world should abandon old concepts of development and establish the new development concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, to achieve coordinated development. On October 12, 2015, Xi Jinping pointed out at the 27th session of a group study of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on global governance pattern and global governance system, the big world issues increasingly required consultation of all countries, and it had become a consensus of a majority of countries to establish international mechanisms, comply with international rules and pursue international justice.

Third, the principle of respect for differences. The big countries should undertake more in this regard. In the same global village, countries vary

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in size, development speed and responsibility. The developed countries should drive the developing countries. This is the only way to common development. “China will continue to contribute to global development and pursue an opening-up strategy of mutual benefit. And China welcomes all countries to ride on its development.” This is the commitment and representation of Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with world attention. He believed that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), set up under the advocacy of China, will become a new multilateral development bank for the 21st century that is professional, efficient and clean in operation. It will also be a new platform to help foster a community with a shared future for mankind, to make new contributions to prosperity in Asia and beyond and lend new strength to improvement of global economic governance.

In addition, Xi Jinping’s major initiative of the Belt and Road on behalf of China won widespread praise and enthusiastic response of the international community. In the principles of “wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits”, the Belt and Road Initiative will be connected with the development strategies of countries along the Belt and Road, and will bring new hope for the economic development of the Eurasian Continent and the whole world.

Fourth, the principle of green development. The world must adhere to the principle of green development to move towards a community with a shared future for mankind. Xi Jinping (2015) pointed out in the general debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations, “We should build an ecosystem that puts nature and green development first. Mankind may utilize nature and even try to transform it. But we are ultimately part of nature. We should care for nature and not place ourselves above it. We should reconcile industrial development with

nature and pursue harmony between man and nature to achieve sustainable development throughout the world and the all-round development of humanity. We should firmly pursue green, low-carbon, circular, and sustainable development.” On November 30, 2015, Xi Jinping expressed China’s idea and determination of green development in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Paris climate summit, that we should protect the ecological environment just like protecting our eyes, and treat the ecological environment just like treating our lives, to promote a green development pattern and life style. China will continue to contribute to the promotion of green development. Ecological endeavors will feature prominently in China’s 13th Five-Year Plan and include green development as one of the five major ideas for development. In the General Assembly in Paris, China pledged to peak CO₂ emissions by around 2030 and strive to achieve it as soon as possible, and by 2030, reduce CO₂ per unit of GDP by 60%-65% that of 2005, raise the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to about 20% and increase forest stock by around 4.5 billion cubic meters over 2005. This shows that China is not only proposing the theory of green development but also practicing its obligation in emissions reduction, and calling on all the other countries to promote green development to jointly protect the environment.

Fifth, the principle of inclusiveness. We must adhere to the principle of inclusiveness in exchange and mutual learning between different cultures. Xi Jinping (2015) pointed out, “Civilizations must accept their differences. Only through mutual respect, mutual learning, and harmonious coexistence can the world maintain its diversity and thrive.” American scholar Samuel P. Huntington put forward the theory of the clash of civilizations, and he believed that the differences in civilizations are the root of that clash. In fact, it is the diversity of human civilizations that makes the world varied and

graceful. Diversity brings about communication, communication breeds integration, and integration produces progress. Xi Jinping (2015) pointed out, “Civilizations are only unique, and no one is superior to the other. There needs to be more exchange and dialogue among civilizations and development models, so that each could draw on the strengths of the other and all could thrive and prosper by way of mutual learning and common development. Let us promote inter-civilization exchanges to build bridges of friendship for our people, drive human development and safeguard peace of the world.” These series of culture exchanges and learning put forward by Xi Jinping are of positive guiding significance for the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind.

China is not only putting forward the values and

theories of a community with a shared future for mankind, but also practicing this idea. Practices like the Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor have reflected China’s sense of responsibility and morality to the world. Although the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind has not yet been accomplished, the proposal of this concept has already provided the basis for a justice and moral concept in the international field. The common development and prosperity for mankind relies on the formation of a community with a shared future for mankind. Humans will realize common development and prosperity, guided by the common values based on a community with a shared future for mankind.

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