

China

News and Report

中国新闻与报道

NO. 7

April 1, 2012

Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi Answers Questions from Domestic and Overseas Journalists on China's Foreign Policy and External Relations

The Fifth Session of the 11th National People's Congress held a press conference in the Great Hall of the People on March 6, 2012. Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi answered questions from Chinese and foreign press on China's foreign policy and external relations.

Yang Jiechi: Good morning, friends from the press. It's a great pleasure to meet you here. Premier Wen Jiabao has outlined China's foreign policy and foreign relations in his Report on the Work of the Government. Now I'm ready to take your questions.

CCTV: Much has changed in the international situation over the past ten years, and China's diplomacy has encountered many challenges and tests. How do you see China's diplomatic work over the past ten years? Moreover, we have seen confrontation and conflicts between some countries. Under such circumstances, what do you think are the new challenges confronting China's diplomacy and how do you see China's diplomacy this year?

Yang Jiechi: I think it is very meaningful that we start today's questions and answers by reviewing China's diplomatic work over the past ten years, as a review of the past offers one insight into the future.

In the past ten years, the world has undergone major development, major changes and major adjustments. It has also been a decade when China's diplomacy has forged ahead and produced abundant results. Over the past ten years, under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Hu Jintao as General Secretary, China's diplomacy has firmly served the overall interests of China's development. We have properly handled thorny issues and worked actively to open up new prospects for China's diplomatic work. China's diplomacy has fostered a sound external environment for China's economic and social development.

In my view, China's diplomatic work over the past ten years can be summed up as follows:

First, serve overall interests. To safeguard China's sovereignty and security have always been the overarching objectives of all of China's diplomatic endeavors. Over the past ten years, China's diplomacy actively served domestic economic and social development. We effectively protected the lawful rights and interests of overseas Chinese nationals and companies, and defended China's sovereignty, security and development interests.

Second, pursue cooperation. We enhanced friendly relations and cooperation with other countries in the world and regional and international organizations. We intensified exchanges with them in the political, economic and cultural fields through both bilateral and multilateral channels. We opened up new dimensions for pursuing win-win cooperation.

Third, advance reform. We actively participated in global governance and helped move the international system and international architecture in a direction that serves the interests of developing countries. We worked to raise the representation and influence of China and developing countries as a whole in international affairs.

Fourth, enhance China's image. Through such platforms as overseas visits by Chinese leaders, receiving visits to China by foreign leaders, the Beijing Olympic Games and Shanghai World Expo, we engaged in dynamic public and cultural diplomacy, endeavored to enhance the friendship between Chinese people and people of other countries, and showed to the rest of the world a China that is culturally-advanced, democratic, open and making continuous progress.

Fifth, make contributions to the world. We worked actively to uphold world peace and promote common development. China has played a constructive role in helping resolve regional and international hotspot issues, and China has become an important engine driving world economic growth.

Our world today is undergoing profound and complex changes. The trend of our time towards peace, development and cooperation has gathered momentum. At the same time, the underlying impact of the international financial crisis is still with us. The world economic recovery lacks momentum, and global challenges such as climate change and energy and food security are still prominent. All these developments will exert major force on the international situation and China's diplomatic work in the time to come.

This year, we will continue to advance our all-dimensional diplomacy at multiple tiers and in a wide range of fields. We will continue to take into account both the domestic and international situations, make continuous innovation in our diplomatic practices and theories, and make active contribution to the successful opening of the 18th National Congress of the CPC and full implementation of the 12th Five-Year Plan.

The priorities of China's diplomatic work this year are as follows:

First, serve China's domestic development. We will properly handle the external risks and challenges, and create more favorable conditions for China's economic and social development to serve the primary goal of shifting China's growth model at a faster pace.

Second, uphold peace. We will continue to firmly defend China's sovereignty and security, stand for handling and resolving regional and international issues—those hotspot ones in particular—through dialogue, consultation and negotiation, and play a responsible role as a major country.

Third, promote cooperation. We will enhance our friendly relations and cooperation with other countries and regional and international organizations. We will work with them to deepen common interests, meet global challenges, safeguard world peace and promote common development.

RIA Novosti: Minister Yang, how do you comment on the recently held presidential election in Russia? What considerations does the Chinese side have for the further development of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination? This year, China will be the rotating president of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and play host to the 2012 SCO summit. Can you tell us some of China's considerations about the summit? And what expectations does the Chinese side have for the future development of the SCO?

Yang Jiechi: We have noted that the presidential election of Russia was smoothly held on March 4. President Hu Jintao has sent a message of congratulations to newly elected President Putin. We wish the people of the Russian Federation even greater achievements in their cause of national prosperity and revitalization.

The Chinese Government is prepared to work closely with the Russian side to deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between the two countries and enhance practical cooperation between the two sides in all fields.

As far as this year is concerned, China-Russia relations can be summed up as "one central task" and "five priorities." The one central task is to fully implement the plan for the development of China-Russia relations in the next ten years. The five priorities are: First, ensure the success of high-level contacts and mutual visits this year. Second, increase mutual political support. Third, intensify practical cooperation between the two countries in such fields as economy and trade, energy, science and technology, infrastructure at the national and the local level. Fourth, step up cultural and people-to-people exchanges. In particular, we

need to work together to ensure the success of the Year of Russian Tourism in China. And fifth, enhance cooperation in regional and international affairs. We are confident that with the joint efforts of the two countries, the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination will achieve even greater results.

This year is the year of good-neighborly relations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It is also the first year for the development of the SCO in its second decade. China will play host to the SCO summit this year. The theme of the summit this year is to deepen good-neighborly relations and plan the future of the SCO. There are three main items on the agenda of the summit. The first is to discuss measures for enhancing friendly relations and cooperation under the SCO framework, and formulate a strategy on the development of the organization in the next ten years. Second, plan the next stage of practical cooperation of the SCO, in particular the establishment of institutional safeguards for the financing of multilateral cooperation. Third, there will be an exchange of views on regional and international situations, with a focus on improving the SCO measures in coping with situations that pose threats to regional peace, stability and security. We believe that the SCO summit this year will help build on past progress and open up new prospects for the future development of the organization.

With respect to the future of the SCO, I believe all the parties concerned will make better use of the advantage of geographical proximity and work together to enhance cooperation for regional security and stability and strengthen regional connectivity and people-to-people exchanges so as to bring more benefits to their people.

Wall Street Journal: Does China regard the recent U.S. strategic shift towards Asia as a threat? And if so, what countermeasures does China plan against that threat? More broadly, given the range of tensions now between China and the U.S. over Iran, Syria and many other issues, what steps should the two countries be taking to establish more trust?

Yang Jiechi: I believe it is necessary that we first look at the big picture of China-U.S. ties.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué. Over the past 40 years, China-U.S. relations have forged ahead in spite of some twists and turns, and the door of exchange and cooperation between the two countries has become more wide open. The engagement between China and the United States has

shown that a peaceful China-U.S. relationship benefits both countries, while a confrontational one harms both. To sustain the sound and steady development of China-U.S. relations is a common responsibility of the two countries. It also meets the fundamental interests of the international community. There are some differences and disagreements between China and the United States. But on the whole this relationship has been moving forward, not backward.

Last year, President Hu Jintao paid a successful state visit to the United States. During the visit, he and President Obama reached an important agreement that the two countries will work together to build a China-U.S. cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. Since then, President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao have had several important meetings with President Obama. Last month, Vice President Xi Jinping paid a successful visit to the United States. That has given a strong boost to the building of the China-U.S. cooperative partnership.

In handling China-U.S. relations, we always believe that the two sides should view and handle this bilateral relationship from a strategic and long-term perspective. They should always work together closely to build the China-U.S. cooperative partnership. We believe the two sides should always adhere to the principles set out in the three Sino-U.S. Joint Communiqués and the China-U.S. Joint Statement, and truly respect each other's core interests and major concerns. In particular, the U.S. side needs to honor its commitment and carefully and properly handle Taiwan and Tibet-related issues that concern China's core interests. I believe the two countries should continue to intensify exchanges and coordination through such platforms as high-level mutual visits and contacts and the China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogues. The two countries should work together to increase mutual strategic trust, remove various disturbances and open up new prospects for the two great countries to embrace healthy interaction and win-win cooperation.

China and the United States have more converging interests in the Asia-Pacific region than anywhere else in the world. What is the trend in this part of the world? In my view, the trend of peace, development and cooperation is going strong. It meets people's will and it is unstoppable. We believe all countries in the world, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. All roads from China lead to the Asia-Pacific and the whole world. China is ready to work with other countries to build a more equal and harmonious world. We

hope that all countries concerned will work together for the peace, stability, development and prosperity of this region. We hope to see and welcome a constructive role by the United States in this region. At the same time, we hope the U.S. side will respect China's interests and concerns. We are ready to work with the United States and other countries in this region to develop an Asia-Pacific region that enjoys greater stability and development.

China and the United States have stayed in close communication on the issues of Syria and Iran. Peace, stability and development in the Middle East serves the fundamental interests of both people in that region and the international community. This is the overarching purpose and end goal in our dealing with relevant issues in the Middle East.

You mentioned Syria and Iran. Let me now say a few words about Iran. On the Iranian nuclear issue, we are opposed to the development and possession of nuclear weapons by any country in the Middle East, including Iran. At the same time, we believe that all countries, while fulfilling their obligations, have the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe that this issue should be properly handled and resolved through dialogue, not confrontation, through cooperation not sanctions. We are opposed to imposing unilateral sanctions. And we believe that the majority of countries in the world take such a position. At the same time, we place high importance on the mechanism of consultation and negotiation between the P5-plus-1 [the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany] and Iran. China and the United States are among the P5-plus-1 countries. Under the framework of this mechanism, China has stayed in close communication and coordination with the United States, Russia, the EU, and other members concerned. We hope to see the early holding of the next round of dialogue under this mechanism so as to push forward the process of seeking a proper settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue.

China National Radio: We have noted that since the end of last year, there have been close mutual leadership visits and interactions between China and its neighbors. Yet some people take the view that the disputes between China and some of its neighboring countries over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests have heated up. And some countries are increasingly worried about China's national strength and its diplomatic posturing. How do you evaluate China's relations with its neighbors and how will China handle and resolve the disputes it has with some of its neighbors?

Yang Jiechi I believe one should view China's relationship with its neighboring countries in the broader context of the general trend of development. I believe now the general trend is a positive one. China pursues a policy of building good-neighborly relationships and partnerships with countries in its neighborhood. We are committed to deepening mutually beneficial cooperation with other Asian countries. Relations between China and other Asian countries are in good shape, and there are a lot of positive factors.

First, there have been close high-level exchanges. Last year, there were high-level mutual visits between China and the majority of other Asian countries. Take ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] as an example. There were over 50 high-level mutual visits between the Chinese side and the ASEAN countries. High-level exchanges have played an irreplaceable role in guiding the efforts of China and other Asian countries in increasing mutual understanding and friendship.

Second, the interests of China and other Asian countries have become more closely entwined. Just now you said that some countries are worried about China's rising national strength. But I am afraid their worry is 'what if China's development becomes too slow?' I have visited some Asian countries recently. I feel that the Asian countries want to see the sustained, positive momentum of the Chinese economy. And they hope that China will enjoy continuous development as that will bring abundant benefits to people of the two sides in terms of business cooperation and mutually beneficial cooperation in other fields. When there are so many benefits, why not do it?

This world is far from a balanced one. Some have megaphones, some only small microphones and some have none at all. Yet I always believe that the real figures speak louder than microphones. China has become the biggest trading partner of the majority of its neighbors. Last year, trade between China and other Asian countries topped \$1 trillion. China's investment in the Asian region approached \$20 billion. Cooperation between China and other Asian countries in science, technology, finance, energy and infrastructure has been unprecedented in terms of both breadth and depth.

Third, mutual coordination has increased. China and other Asian countries have helped each other and worked together closely in handling major regional and international issues, pushing forward regional cooperation and tackling the international financial crisis and major

natural disasters.

Forth, there have been dynamic cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Last year, China and many other Asian countries held such cultural and people-to-people exchange activities as Year of Friendship and youth festivals. These activities have borne witness to the deep friendship between the Chinese people and people of other Asian countries.

It is true that there are some differences and disagreements between China and some of its neighboring countries over some issues. China believes that these disputes should be peacefully handled and resolved through dialogue and consultation. At the same time, we hope that the relevant parties will respect China's legitimate rights and interests, avoid making remarks or moves that may complicate the situation, and work with China for stability, development and progress in the Asian region. Progress has already been made in handling these differences between China and the relevant Asian countries. We have reached a series of important agreements seeking peaceful settlements of related disputes and pushing forward mutually beneficial cooperation.

Let me say a few words about the South China Sea issue here. China always believes that the disputes in the South China Sea should be properly resolved through negotiations between the parties to the disputes on the basis of facts and in accordance with the basic norms governing international relations. Pending final settlement of the disputes, the parties concerned may put aside their disputes and engage in joint development. China and the relevant countries have reached important agreements on peacefully resolving disputes and pushing forward practical cooperation in the South China Sea. At the same time, much remains to be done in this regard. China and ASEAN countries have reached agreement on the guidelines on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. In a word, I believe that China and relevant countries have the ability and wisdom to properly handle South China Sea issues and maintain peace and stability in the area.

Xinhua News Agency: Minister Yang, just now you reviewed China's diplomacy over the past ten years. My question is a forward-looking one. What major changes do you think will take place in our world in the next ten years and what role will China play?

Yang Jiechi: The next ten years will be a very important decade for China's peaceful development. We will

mark the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. We will meet our objective of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. At the same time, I want to point out that to judge the overall economic strength of a country, one should look at not just one particular indicator, but a whole system of indicators, not just one aggregate number, but several structural numbers. China will remain a developing country, and there is still a long way to go before China can achieve modernization. We have full confidence that we will meet our goal. We also have an objective judgment of the situation and our road ahead. China will neither belittle itself nor seek to lecture others.

I believe the next 10 years will be a decade when fast changes will take place in the international architecture and major trends will develop rapidly in the world. It will also be a decade when all the parties engage in close interactions and pursue stability and improved governance in the midst of changes. The following major trends deserve particular attention:

First, the momentum of pursuing development will gather steam. All parties will pay closer attention to shifting their growth models at a faster pace and they will endeavor to develop and enhance their new advantages as they participate in international economic cooperation and competition in an age of economic globalization.

Second, the trend towards a multi-polar world will become clearer. The overall strength of developing countries will be on the rise and there will be greater balance in the distribution of international power.

Third, the competition and cooperation surrounding reform of the international system will get stronger. The parties will seek to exert bigger influence on the adjustment and shift of the international rules and international order. And reform of the current international system will move ahead steadily.

Fourth, regional and international hotspot issues and global challenges will become more prominent. Some hotspot issues will continue to heat up. Such global challenges as climate change, energy, resource and food security and terrorism will persist. And countries will become more interdependent with their interests more closely entwined. I believe under such circumstances the idea of sticking together in tough times to tide over the difficulties will gain stronger popular support.

In the next ten years, the favorable and unfavorable factors in the external environment of China are inter-

woven. Risks and difficulties, favorable conditions and positive trends are the two sides of a coin. There are both opportunities and challenges. And on the whole, we believe that for China, opportunities outweigh challenges and the country is still at an important stage of strategic opportunities for development.

China will remain committed to the independent foreign policy of peace, the path of peaceful development and a win-win strategy of opening up. We will continue to work with other countries to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity. We believe that all countries should embrace win-win cooperation. This means that while pursuing one's own interests, one also needs to take into account the interests of other countries; while enjoying one's rights, one should also fulfill one's responsibilities. Countries need to accommodate each other and work together to uphold justice and expand common interests. We believe that all countries should work together to make the international order more just and equitable and to usher in a better future for the world.

PTI: I would like to ask you about the impact of the rapid development of emerging economies and many developing countries on the global arena. I think this question is relevant because the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] summit is coming up this month and I would like to know what exactly is coming up on the agenda and focus of the BRICS summit and how China views it. You just concluded a visit to India, had extensive discussions with the Indian leadership, and signed interesting agreements on maritime cooperation. I'd like you to give us a broader picture of where the India-China relationship stands today with regard to various differences that the two countries have on a number of issues.

Yang Jiechi: The rapid development of a large number of emerging market economies and developing countries in today's world is very conducive to making the international order more just and equitable. Last year, the third BRICS Leaders Meeting was successfully held in Sanya, Hainan Province, China and I believe the upcoming fourth BRICS summit will be crowned with success.

China hopes that the upcoming BRICS summit will achieve important results in three areas. First, boost growth. We hope that the summit will help enhance people's confidence in world economic growth and add new impetus to world economic recovery. Second, promote stability. We hope that the summit will bring out the active and constructive role of BRICS countries in international affairs and

promote the relaxation and stability of the regional situation. Third, enhance cooperation. We hope that the summit will help push forward the practical cooperation among the BRICS countries in economy, finance and other fields, and bring real benefits to people of the BRICS countries and people of the world.

Not long ago, I visited India. The purpose of my visit was to make preparations for the attendance of the fourth BRICS summit by the Chinese leader and to push forward China-India relations. I feel that both China and India want to see continuous, sound and steady growth of their bilateral relationship and they want to enhance exchange, increase mutual trust and expand cooperation. I had a thorough exchange of views and a meeting of minds with my Indian counterpart, the foreign minister, on a series of aspects, including maintaining the momentum of high-level exchanges between the two countries, advancing China-India practical cooperation in all fields and intensifying personnel interflow and cultural exchanges between the two sides. We believe that we need to do all specific work well in implementing the important agreement reached at the leadership level, including conducting consultations between the two sides on maritime security and working together to ensure peace and tranquility in the China-India border areas.

Nihon Keizai Shimbun: This year marks the 40th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties between China and Japan. How do you comment on the current China-Japan relationship? What considerations does China have for the further development of China-Japan relations? Given the fact that there are some sensitive issues between the two countries, how do you think China and Japan can increase strategic mutual trust and improve the national sentiments between people of the two countries? Moreover, this year China is the coordinator of the cooperation among China, Japan and the ROK [Republic of Korea]. How does China comment on the trilateral cooperation?

Yang Jiechi: Over the past 40 years since China and Japan normalized their diplomatic relations, China-Japan relations have come a long way in a wide range of fields. The Chinese Government places high importance on its relationship with Japan. We believe that the two sides need to continue to enhance mutual political trust in line with the principles enshrined in the four political documents between China and Japan, expand practical cooperation in all fields, improve national sentiments between people of the two countries and push forward the development of China-Japan strategic relations for mutual benefits.

With respect to the sensitive issues between China and Japan, such as the history issue and the issue of the Diaoyu Islands, we hope the Japanese side will fully recognize the complexity and sensitivity of these issues. These issues concern the political foundation and overall interests of China-Japan relations. The Japanese side should truly take history as a mirror and look forward to the future, and properly handle these sensitive issues in keeping with the overall interests of its relationship with China.

I also believe it is necessary for us to talk about how to increase the mutual strategic trust and improve the national sentiments between people of the two sides. To enhance mutual strategic trust between China and Japan, I believe it is crucial that both sides view each other's development from the right, objective and strategic perspective, and truly see each other as an opportunity and partner for development. During President Hu Jintao's visit to Japan in 2008, the two sides issued the fourth political document between China and Japan and reached the important political agreement that the two countries are each other's cooperation partner, they don't pose a threat to each other and that they will support each other's peaceful development. I believe if such political agreement can be truly implemented in our exchanges, the mutual trust between the two countries will deepen. I believe to improve the national sentiments between people of the two countries involves efforts in a wide range of fields. It requires that both sides take a long term perspective and intensify exchanges at various levels, in particular the exchanges between young people of the two countries, so that more people of the two countries are engaged in the cause of friendship.

This year, China is the coordinator of the China-Japan-ROK cooperation mechanism. Premier Wen Jiabao will hold, with leaders from Japan and the ROK, the fifth trilateral leaders' meeting in China. We want to work with Japan and the ROK to deepen practical cooperation, promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges and exchange views on regional and international issues. We believe the parties should enhance the building of the China-Japan-ROK Free Trade Area and work together to push forward their future-oriented, all-dimensional partnership for cooperation.

China News Service: Minister Yang, how do you see the current situation on the Korean Peninsula? We have seen that the relevant parties have had some contact and interaction since last year surrounding the restart of the Six-Party Talks. How do you look at the prospects of the resumption of the Six-Party Talks? The second Nuclear

Security Summit will soon be held in Seoul. What expectations does the Chinese side have?

Yang Jiechi: It serves the common interests of all parties concerned and meets the aspiration of the international community to uphold peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and normalization of relations between relevant countries, and build a peace and security mechanism for Northeast Asia. The Six-Party Talks have become an effective mechanism and important platform for discussing and resolving the above-mentioned issues.

Over the past weeks and months, various parties have engaged in positive interactions and contacts. As the chair of the Six-Party Talks, China has stayed in close touch with other relevant parties. We have always encouraged dialogue in pursuit of peaceful settlement of relevant issues and our work has achieved some important results. At the same time, we welcome dialogue and contact between the relevant parties. For example, not long ago, there was dialogue between the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] and the United States and positive progress has been made. We welcome that. We hope all the parties concerned will pool their wisdom, remove disturbances and work together to play a constructive role in advancing the Six-Party process and achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and lasting peace and stability in northeast Asia.

The second Nuclear Security Summit will be held in Seoul late this month. Chinese leaders will attend the summit. During the summit, there will be discussions on enhancing the security of nuclear materials and nuclear facilities and guarding against nuclear terrorism. I also believe that with the joint efforts of all the participants, the summit will also set out new, concrete measures related to nuclear security. That can help to further build up international consensus on nuclear security and inject new dynamism into related international efforts.

Phoenix TV: My question is about the situation in Syria. China has always stood for a peaceful political settlement of the Syrian issue, but the situation in Syria now is not an optimistic one. How does China see the future development of this issue and will China's position and views on this issue in any way affect its relationship with the Arab countries?

Yang Jiechi: It is true that major changes are taking place in the Middle East region. We firmly believe that people in the Middle East know best the situation there. Issues in the Middle East region should be resolved by the people

of the Middle East, and the future and destiny of the region should be determined by the people there.

Over the years, China has been a firm supporter of the just cause of the Arab countries and their people. The two sides have forged a deep friendship, and there are no historical grievances between the two sides. What the two sides have is expanding common interests and the consensus of working together to uphold peace and promote development.

Even the ten fingers can not be of the same length. It is true that China and some Arab countries may sometimes differ in specific ways of action, but the two sides have the same overall objective of promoting stability, development and prosperity in the Middle East region. Cooperation between China and Arab countries is comprehensive and strategic, and the friendship and cooperation between the two sides can stand the test of changing international circumstances.

On the issue of Syria, as you know, not long ago a leading official of the Chinese Foreign Ministry made a statement on this issue. He set out China's six-point proposal on handling and resolving the issue of Syria. Chinese leaders have made clear China's views on this issue on several occasions. Chinese Foreign Ministry officials are also in contact with the relevant parties. I myself have talked on the phone and face-to-face with relevant parties. The fact is that the international community has paid very high attention to the position, proposition and initiative of the Chinese side on this issue, in particular the recent statement made by the leading official of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. And our position and view on this issue have received increasing understanding and support.

La Agencia EFE, S.A.: Does the euro have a future? Does the euro-zone crisis offer a good opportunity for investment? Or should China instead spend its money on internal development? And finally, minister, how do you evaluate the

relations between China and European countries?

Yang Jiechi: Not long ago, the China-EU Summit was held and important progress was made. In my view, the China-EU relationship has bright prospects. We believe that although the euro zone has encountered some difficulties, the EU and European countries have the ability and wisdom to overcome the current difficulties, resolve their debt issue and make new progress along the course of development. We always have confidence in the EU and the euro zone, and we have supported the EU's efforts in stabilizing the financial situation through our own ways. We will continue to make investment in Europe and the euro to achieve mutual benefit.

People's Daily: In recent years, the relationship between China and African countries has received wide international attention. How do you evaluate the current China-Africa relationship and cooperation? Some people say that China's influence in Africa is increasing. What role has China been playing in African affairs?

Yang Jiechi: We feel privileged and we are seized by a strong sense of responsibility that the African people have chosen China as their partner for sincere cooperation. China is a developing country, and China wants to work with African countries to build a bright future.

Some say that China's influence in Africa is on the rise. I think we should say that the consensus of the international community that African countries face enormous opportunities for development is on the rise.

I believe the international community should actively support Africa's peace and development causes, actively support African countries in seeking self-enhancement through unity and independently resolving African issues, actively support African countries in strengthening their own capability for development, and actively support African countries in safeguarding their own rights and interests and playing a bigger role in international affairs.

Comments and suggestions from our readers are appreciated. **E-mail:** shuangqin2004@china.com.cn

Distributed by CHINA NEWS AND REPORT Circulation Department

Address: 225 Chaoyangmennei Street, Dongcheng District, Beijing 100010, People's Republic of China

Tel: 0086-10-65592310

Available through the China Internet Information Center at

http://www.china.org.cn and www.cri.cn