



Chairman of the European Union Military Committee

CEUMC Speech at the Reception for the 90th PLA's Anniversary

Brussels, 19 July 2017

Major General Qi Huajun,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to be invited to speak at this very special occasion, the celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the People's Liberation Army. Please accept my sincere thanks.

For a civilization like the Chinese, one of the most ancient ones with a recorded history of 4.000 years, 90 years is just a snapshot. But time is not as it used to be. Everything is fast-forwarded now. During their 90 years of history, People's Liberation Army have achieved very much for the Chinese people. They empowered a revolution and helped making China the global superpower it is today.

But People's Liberation Army contribution is not limited only to the Chinese people. It is a powerful and versatile tool in the hands of the Chinese political leadership, an instrument that has often been used to make world a better place. China is a very active global actor in security building. As the number one troop contributor to United Nations missions among the five permanent Security Council members with almost 3.000 personnel, China tangibly demonstrates its support to the international rules-based system. At the same time, it demonstrates China's commitment to contributing to global stability. The initiative announced by President Xi Jinping in September 2015 to create a standby force of 8.000 peacekeepers only underlines this noble and responsible position.

In the European Union, we also share this position which guides our security and external policy. This shared position brought us together in some of the world's most troublesome areas, in Africa. Chinese and European Union

troops work in parallel in Mali and in the Horn of Africa, assisting local authorities in building up their own capacities. China enjoys the highest appreciation in these countries because of your troops' performance and contribution. I strongly believe that there is so much to achieve if we identify ways to work together.

Together, the military of the EU and People's Liberation Army, we can build one more bridge that will bring our nations together. The respect of one soldier towards another provides fertile ground for these efforts to flourish.

With these final words, I would like to congratulate the People's Liberation Army on its 90th anniversary and wish to its leadership and its staff all the best in their missions.

Please join me in raising a glass to the wellbeing and health of our hosts, of the People's Liberation Army staff and of the Chinese people. Cheers!

Edited by Captain (GRC/N) Vasileios Loukovitis