

NATO vs China

The Annual summit of North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO) took place on 14th June 2021 in Brussels (capital of Belgium). In that summit NATO leaders have alleged that the policies of China and Russia are creating security risk. On this allegation of NATO the Chinese Mission to the European Union responded in the following manner.

NATO Chief Jens Stoltenberg said:

'The message is that, of course, there are opportunities in our relationship with China. For instance, on arms control and climate change we need to talk to China, investing heavily in new military capabilities, including nuclear capabilities and also more advanced weapon systems.'

'We see coercive behavior, for instance in the South China sea and we also know that China does not share our values.'

'China is coming closer to us. We see them in cyberspace, we see China in Africa and in the Arctic but we also see China investing heavily in our own critical infrastructure and try to control it, (referring to ports and telecom networks). We need to respond together as an alliance.'

Chinese Mission to the European Union (EU) spokesperson replied:

China has always pursued a defensive national defence policy and has kept its military modernization legitimate, open and transparent.

'In 2021, China's defence budget is 1.35 trillion Yuan (\$209 billion) accounting for 1.3% of the nation's GDP which is less than NATO's 'pass line', the Mission spokesperson said, 'In contrast, the 30 member NATO alliance has a total military spending as high as \$1.17 trillion, making up over half of the global sum and 5 or 6 times that of China.'

'It is crystal clear to the world whose military bases stretch all over the world and whose aircraft carriers are wandering around to flex their military muscle.'

As for nuclear weapons, the number of nuclear warheads among NATO members is nearly 20 times more that of China, according to statistics from think tanks in Sweden and the US. The Mission noted, questioning if NATO could make the same commitment as China which abided by the 'no first use' principle of nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances and committed to unconditionally not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or zones.

'China has been committed to peaceful development but will never forget the tragedy of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia or the sacrifices of our compatriots 'homes and lives', the Mission stressed. 'We will unswervingly defend our sovereignty and development interests and keep a close eye on NATO's strategic adjustments and policies toward China.'

"China will not pose any 'systematic challenges' to others but will not sit idle in the face of any systematic challenges," the Mission said.

It urged NATO TO MAINTAIN A RATIONAL ATTITUDE ON VIEWING China's development and stop the hyping of various forms of the 'China threat theory' and using China's legitimate rights as excuses for manipulating group politics, creating conflicts or stimulating geo- competition.

Source: *CNBC (June 14th 2021) and 'Global Times' (June 15th 2021)*