

Opening Speech

Zhang Yuyan

Director of Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Nov.10, 2008, Beijing China

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

First of all, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to the smooth convening of the “International Conference on NTS-Asia Annual Convention 2008” jointly sponsored by the Academic Division of International Studies, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; the Institute of Asia-pacific Studies—also under the CASS; the Centre for NTS Studies, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

At present, the whole world is faced with more and more challenges posed forth by issues in the field of non-traditional security. Unlike traditional security issues, non-traditional security issues are marked with some new features. Firstly, non-traditional security issues are characterized by their diversity, covering various areas such as cross-border crimes, human traffic, drug smuggling, public health, energy security, natural calamity, etc., either existing independently or interwoven. Secondly, non-traditional security issues are transnational, either emerging first in one country, and then spreading to other countries, or emerging simultaneously in many a country. For example, environmental issues in a certain country can be widely influential in a region where it is located. Thirdly, non-traditional security issues, such as epidemic diseases and natural calamities, are also marked with the feature of abruptness. We ought to be prepared to tackle all the new issues with new approaches, and the above-mentioned features of non-traditional issues show that we need

all-round cooperation, bilateral, multilateral, regional or even global collaboration, to deal with non-traditional security issues. Right because of this, it is of vital and practical significance for this conference to offer a platform for scholars from various countries to discuss and exchange views over issues each of these countries is faced with in fields such as food safety, energy security, calamity diplomacy, and transnational crimes, etc.

As is well known, China is also currently faced with a series of non-traditional security issues, such as the issue of food safety, for which the problem caused by the melamine-tainted milk made by the Sanlu Group Co. is a typical case, the issue of natural calamities, for which the strong earthquake at Wenchuan that claimed thousands of lives in May this year is a typical case, and the increasingly pressing issues of energy supply and transportation safety along with the growth of economy, etc. In the process of dealing with the earthquake at Wenchuan, the Chinese government's prompt and effective rescue measures as well as its transparent information mechanism, won high opinion for China from various countries across the world, and we can say that this is a typical example of success in the area of calamity diplomacy. In addressing the Sanlu milk powder scandal, Premier Wen Jiabao points out that food and drug safety is the most immediate and practical issue concerning the interest of the people, is an issue of vital importance related with the life of the people, for which we need to make efforts unremittingly and can never be negligent, and it will never do to pursue economic growth and seek profit at the cost of the people's health.

Nowadays, China is exploring a road of modernization suitable for her peaceful development in accordance with her scheme for reform and opening-up as well as the change of the world situation. While drawing on various experience of development from the rest of the world for reference, both the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government also make efforts to learn and implement the "Scientific Outlook on Development." The essence of the "Scientific Outlook on Development" is to put the people first and regard enhancing the health of the people as a major goal in improving the people's life. This involves the necessity of comprehensively strengthening the system of public health care, handling food safety incidents and

production accidents forcefully, and laying stress upon developing public undertakings with the view of improving the people's life as a central mission. The fundamental demands put forth by the "Scientific Outlook on Development" include comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development, for which we need to build up a resource-thrifty and environment-friendly society. To serve this purpose, we need to solve glaring issues such as the waste of resources and pollution of environment, positively cope with the issue of climate change, strengthen the long-range mechanism for economizing on resources and protecting environment. As a responsible power, China must take virtually effective actions on the issue of reducing the emission of carbon dioxide. I learn from the program of the conference that Chinese scholars are scheduled to deliver special speeches on these issues, and I hope that foreign scholars and representatives from various countries can speak out freely and discuss in depth, for these issues of non-traditional security are also international issues related with both our region and the whole globe.

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is the supreme seat of learning in China in the research work concerning philosophy and social sciences. Meanwhile, it is also an important think tank or brain trust of the Chinese government, with its research scope covering almost all the domains of social sciences and humanities. Among the eight institutes specializing in international studies in the CASS, the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies is the only one making all-round studies of the Asia-Pacific area. This Institute consists of five research departments, namely the Department of Security and Diplomacy, the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Regional Cooperation, the Department of Society and Politics, and the Department of Religion and Culture, and it has also one library and two editorial departments. Non-traditional security has always been one of the vital subjects in the research work of this Institute. Except for transnational non-traditional security issues, this Institute mainly makes studies of non-traditional security issues and their impact upon the region from various perspectives such as religion, race, economy, society, etc.

I am assured that both Chinese and foreign scholars present at this conference will be able to fully analyze and discuss the non-traditional security issues faced with by

each of the countries concerned and the countermeasures to deal with these issues, share our experience and lessons, and as a result, offer our intellectual resources to the enhancement of the capacity of meeting challenges in the field of non-traditional security, and make contributions to and propel the cooperative course in the field of non-traditional security in this region.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the second international symposium on non-traditional security in Asia held in Beijing. I hope that with the continuation of the symposium on non-traditional security in Asia, the related issues of our continent can be discussed more profoundly and systematically, thus establishing an enduring communication channel for the research work regarding non-traditional security issues carried out in various countries in this region, and promoting the research work and interactions in and out of this region concerning various non-traditional security issues.

Finally, on behalf of the Institute of Asia-pacific Studies, I would like to express our thanks to the Centre for NTS Studies, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, for its lasting efforts in organizing and promoting scholars of different countries in this region to be engaged in making studies of non-traditional security issues, and I would like also to express our thanks to the Academic Division of International Studies, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, for its academic and material support to this conference. As one of the hosts, I would like also to express our thanks to scholars from various countries and representatives from different Chinese institutions concerned for your participation in this conference.

All of you are welcome to Beijing, to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. I wish this conference a complete success!

Thank you all!