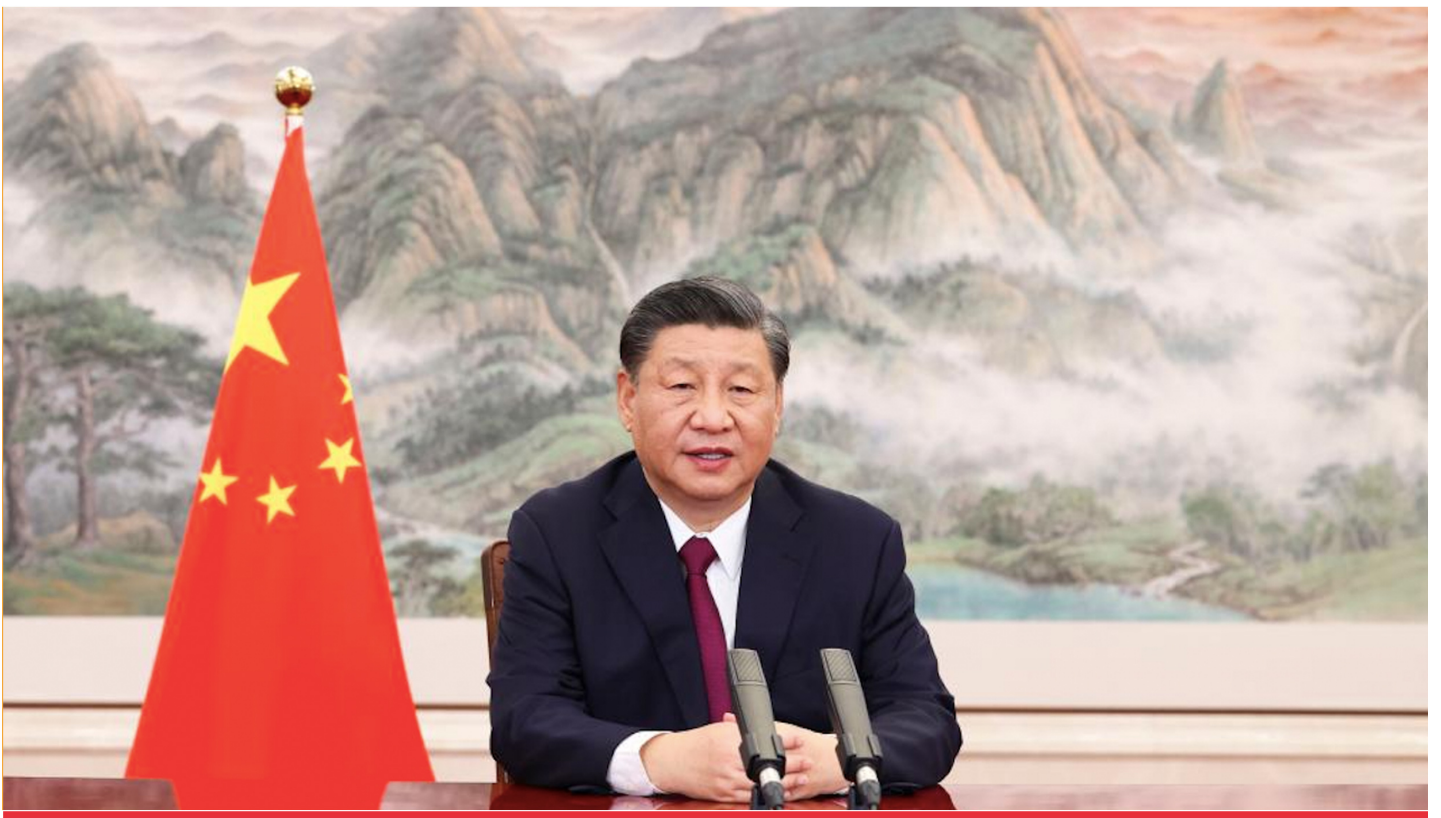




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China's Global Security Initiative: Shaping a prosperous global future?



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China's Global Security Initiative: Shaping a prosperous global future?



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The World Economy is at a crossroads on so many fronts, that it requires a different approach than what we are used to, especially in dealing with security risks.

We need a new way of thinking about security that puts more emphasis on cooperation than on alliances and on communication than on fighting. What could have happened differently regarding the crisis in Europe (Russia-Ukraine)?

The Global Security Initiative (GSI) is a plan put forward by China to move toward a new security paradigm that puts collaboration ahead of alliances and communication ahead of conflict.

The Global Security Initiative (GSI) was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference on April 21, 2022.

The GSI is guided by "six commitments or pillars," which are: (i) pursuing common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security; (ii) respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; (iii) adhering to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter; (iv) taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously; (v) peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation; and (vi) maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.

The GSI concept paper

Fast forward to February 21, 2023, when China released the GSI concept paper, which elaborates on the six pillars mentioned above and equally identifies priorities, platforms, and mechanisms of cooperation.

According to the concept paper, "the GSI aims to eliminate the root causes of international conflicts, improve global security governance, encourage joint international efforts to bring more stability and certainty to a volatile and changing era, and promote durable peace and development in the world."

Gleaning from these core principles, it's safe to say that the GSI could and probably will become a catalyst for the world to chart a new path to building sustainable peace, stability, and development.

The six (6) key commitments of the GSI

The six (6) commitments of the GSI come from how China talks about its own security and the security of other countries.

First off, the GSI's new objective does indeed have a global focus. China has typically focused its cautious forays into security on specific regions and stressed the need to find local solutions to local problems, even though China

is already an economic power with global reach and widely perceived as a future, or even present, superpower capable of competing with US influence.

The GSI codifies the fundamental principles of contemporary Chinese foreign policy, which are enumerated in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which are mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in internal affairs; equality and cooperation for mutual benefit; and peaceful co-existence.

The GSI believes that everyone has a duty to take seriously the real security concerns of other countries.

1. *Stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.*

The key word under this pillar is how the world could strive to build **sustainable security**.

Since 2014, China has been working on a new plan for shared, all-encompassing, cooperative, and long-term security. This vision has received widespread recognition and support from the international community.

To make security last, it will be important to keep it up in both traditional and non-traditional areas, improve security governance in a coordinated way, and respect and protect the security of every country.

2. *Stay committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.*

It goes without saying that if you don't find it exciting for another country to meddle in your territorial affairs, then what gives you the right to do so when it comes to other countries?

According to the GSI, "all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community." Their internal affairs brook no external interference; their sovereignty and dignity must be respected, and their right to independently choose social systems and development paths must be upheld."

3. *Stay committed to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.*

It's safe to say that the UN Charter is the institutional foundation for world peace and security.

All nations should reject any attempt to undermine its successful implementation because it is totally unjustified.

True multilateralism must be practiced by all nations, and they must strongly support the international order with the UN at its center.

4. *Stay committed to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously. Humanity is an indivisible security community.*

As profoundly stated, "the security of one country should not come at the expense of that of others".

This is very fundamental if we seek to secure lasting peace in our world. All nations' valid and reasonable security concerns should be taken seriously and addressed appropriately, not routinely disregarded or undermined.

5. *Stay committed to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation.*

There needs to be a new way of solving problems, and as has become clear, this new way does not involve sanctions and military confrontations.

Dialogue and consultations are a key tenet of this commitment to the peaceful settlement of crises and encourage conflicting parties to build trust, and settle disputes.

6. *Stay committed to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional domains.*

If there were a way to monitor the existential threats to international security, such as terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity, pandemics, etc., it would only be reasonable to advise nations to adhere to the global governance principles of comprehensive consultation, collaborative participation, and shared benefits and cooperate to resolve international issues and regional conflicts.

GSI in Practice – Saudi Arabia & Iran Deal

"Name me a world leader who'd change places with Xi Jinping." This was a direct quote from a speech made by American President, Joe Biden during the State of the Union Address in February 2023.

It's fair to assume that the president will be happy to switch places with President Xi Jinping now, judging from the historic deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran brokered by China.

Putting aside the geopolitical nuances, this is a typical GSI in practice by China and sets the stage for a new and more effective alternative to resolving conflicts around the world.

The deal reached between Saudi Arabia and Iran encompasses all six commitments. which are the core principles of the GSI.

The two countries are set to resume diplomatic ties and reopen embassies and missions within two months after seven years of no diplomatic ties.

No arms were raised, no sanctions imposed, but only dialogues and extensive consultations. A peaceful Middle East is a peaceful world for all.

Our world is anything but peaceful: major country competition is heating up, geopolitical conflicts are getting worse, changes not seen in a century are happening quickly, the global security governance system is woefully behind, and new traditional and unconventional security threats are constantly emerging.

China's Global Security Initiative, could become the catalyst for building and shaping a prosperous and peaceful global future.

The GSI suggests that all countries' legitimate security concerns should be taken seriously, that the goals and principles of the UN Charter should be followed, that all countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected, and that disagreements and disputes between countries should be solved peacefully. The vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security provides conceptual guidance.

About author



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Paul Frimpong is a development economist, top voice on Sino-Africa relations, and an award-winning entrepreneur.

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