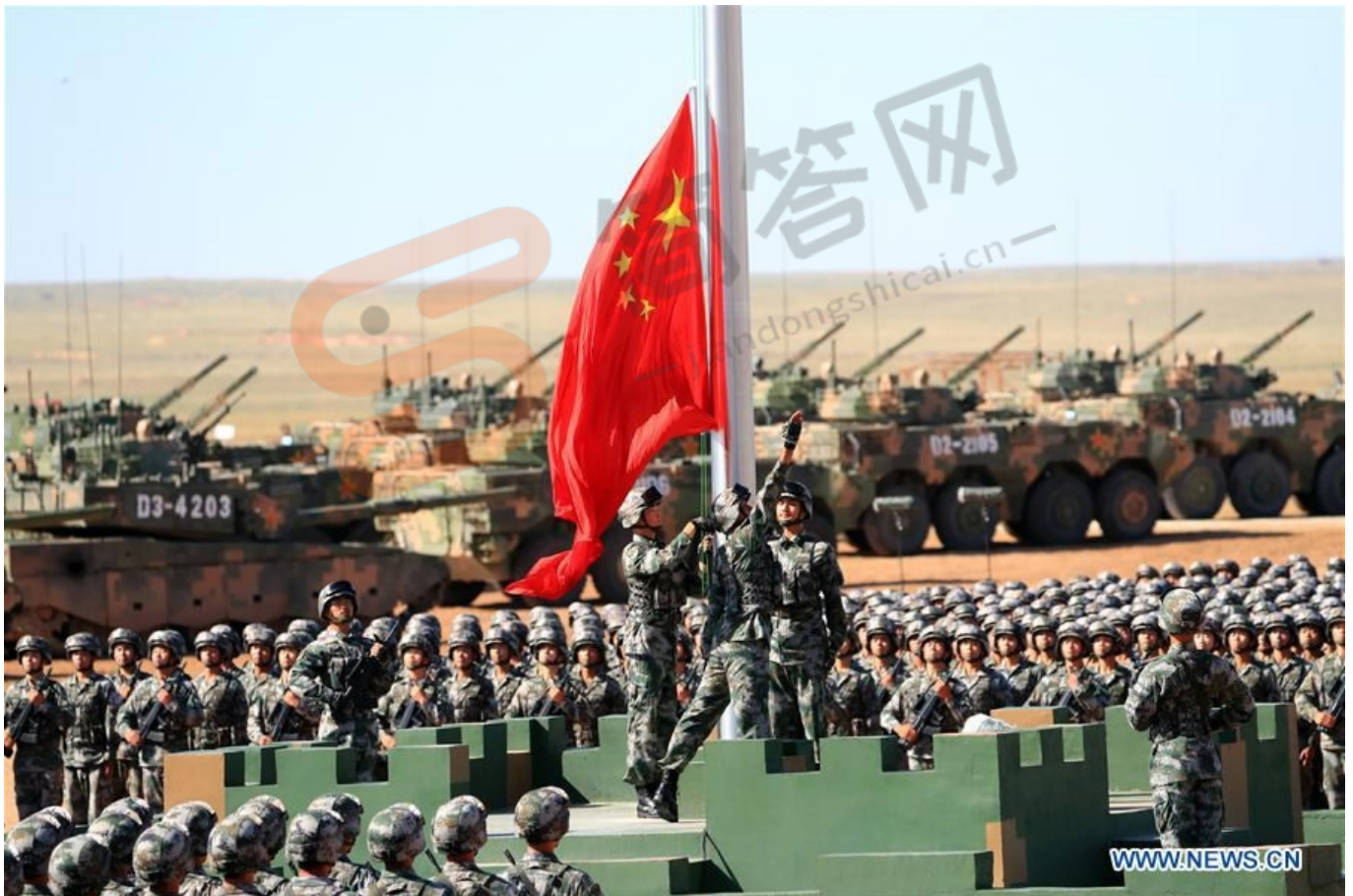


《Xi: Chinese military forces committed to safeguarding peace》

Updated at 10:30 a.m. BJT

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Sunday that safeguarding peace is the responsibility of the country's military forces.

"The world is far from tranquil and peace needs to be safeguarded," Xi said in a speech after inspecting troops during a military parade at Zhurihe training base in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, as part of the commemorations to mark the 90th founding anniversary of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).



A flag-raising ceremony is held during a military parade celebrating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the PLA at Zhurihe training base in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, July 30, 2017. /Xinhua Photo

'Heroic' PLA

Since its birth in the Nanchang Uprising on August 1, 1927, the PLA, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), has made "immortal feats" to advance the well-being of the Chinese people, Xi stated.

Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, hailed the PLA as "heroic" military forces that have been fighting for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, adding that he and all Chinese people feel proud of the heroic PLA.

"Today, we are closer than ever to the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," he stressed. "And more than any time in history, we need to build strong armed forces of the people."

The PLA must be built into world-class military forces, he noted.

Xi put forward the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the dream of a strong army in late 2012.

'PLA must always stand side by side with the people'

Xi called on all members of the PLA to be "unswervingly committed to the fundamental principle of serving the people wholeheartedly" and "always stand side by side with the people."

He also urged the military forces to enhance their combat readiness and forge an elite force that is able to win wars whenever it is needed.



Twenty-four helicopters fly in the formation of the number "90" symbolizing the epic journey of the PLA in 90 years during a military parade at Zhurihe training base in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, July 30, 2017. /Xinhua Photo

"I firmly believe that our heroic PLA has the confidence and capability to defeat any intruder," he said. "Our heroic PLA has the confidence and capability to safeguard the nation's sovereignty, security and development interests."

Xi added he is confident that the PLA will make greater contributions to realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and maintain world peace.

He reviewed the country's armed forces in the field at Zhurihe training base before delivering the speech. It was the first time that Xi observed such a massive parade staged in the field.

Covering more than 1,000 square kilometers, Zhurihe is the largest military training base in Asia. It is also the site that has witnessed several major PLA exercises and international war games.

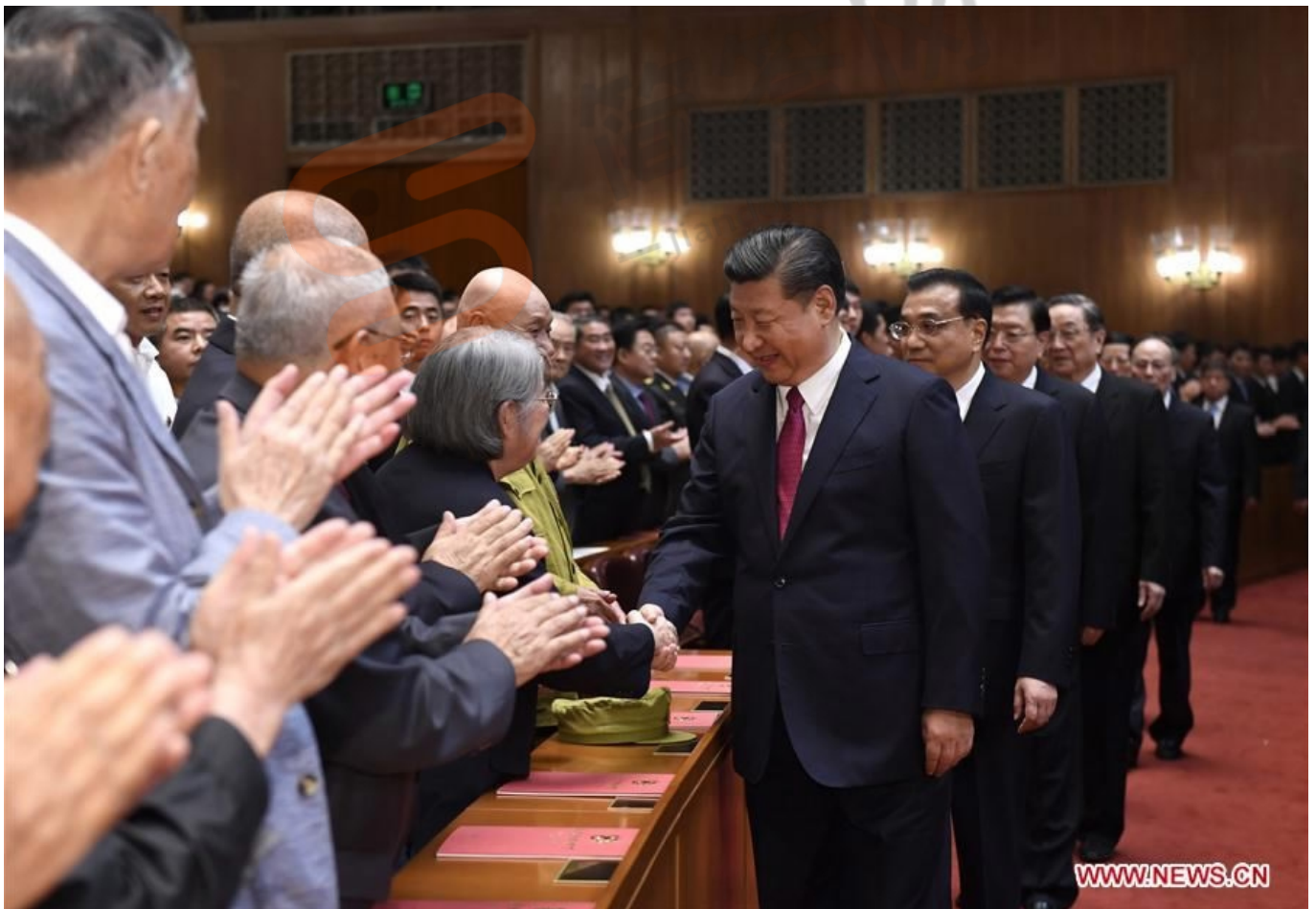
Accelerated military reform

China's military reform accelerated in recent years, aiming at smaller in number, but better structured and modernized armed forces.

On September 3, 2015, Xi announced China would cut the number of its troops by 300,000 in a speech at a gathering to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the victory of Chinese people's resistance against Japanese aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

After the fourth cut of troops since the reform and opening-up in the 1980s, the number of Chinese troops would be reduced from 2.3 million to two million.

Apart from cutting troop numbers, China has also been restructuring its armed forces.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior leaders shake hands with representatives of veterans, retired comrades and military officers honored with the Order of Bayi, the country's highest military award, before watching a grand gala in Beijing, capital of China, July 28, 2017.

A slew of measures began at the end of 2015 with the inauguration of the general command for the PLA Army, the PLA Rocket Force and the PLA Strategic Support Force.

In January 2016, the former military headquarters – staff, politics, logistics and armaments – were reorganized into 15 new agencies under the CMC.

Then in the next month, five PLA theater commands were established, replacing the previous seven military area commands.

This April, China announced a military reshuffle with 84 corps-level units newly adjusted or established, hailed by Xi as a significant move to build the "world's leading military forces under new circumstances."

