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## CICA Summit – New Security Concept to Match Global Trend

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The fourth CICA summit took place on May 21-22, 2014 in Shanghai with China assuming the chairmanship for 2014-16.

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) is an inter-governmental forum created for promoting peace, security and stability in Asia. It was created in response to the changing times in an attempt to strengthen regional awareness and enhance the effectiveness of tackling the problems.

Asia has increasingly become a driving force of global progress. In recent years, it has accounted for over 50% of global growth with China leading the race. Supported by robust economic growth and political awakening, the region boasts a growing ability and confidence to resolve its own problems. The idea of convening the CICA was first proposed by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev in October 1992 at the 47th Session of the UN General Assembly. Founded in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 1999, the CICA pledged to create an «an environment of confidence» among its members states, which is merely, as its own mandate explains, a «stepping stone» for the ultimate goal - military alignment.

The first meeting of the CICA Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held in 14 September 1999 to adopt *the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between CICA Member States*. At present the Organization unites 26 member-states which hold summits once every four years. The US and Japan are not full-fledged members with observer status. Canada is neither a member, nor an observer. Conspicuously Japan, the Asia's second-largest economy, the Philippines, a US military ally, and Indonesia, locked in territorial dispute with China, are missing as members. This year the summit included Iranian president Hassan Rouhani, an open challenge to the US, and United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon.

In the last two decades of CICA's lifespan, Asia has resolved many disputes through equal-footed consultation, mutual understanding and seeking common ground while setting differences aside for the time being (for example, China has settled the boundary with 12 of its 14 land neighbors), thereby setting a good example of regional security.

China and Russia are working together to turn CICA into the basis for a new regional security framework keeping the United States outside. This security vision also seeks to downplay the importance of regional military alliances, a major source of US influence in Asia. Instead, CICA would serve as the major body for the collective handling of security issues.

As of 15 January 2013, CICA member states have agreed to implement the following four Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) of the military-political dimension:

1. Mutual visits by the military authorities and representatives of defense colleges;
2. Mutual invitations among armed forces for participation in national holidays, cultural and sport events;
3. Information exchange on CV's of top military personnel;

4. Exchange of information on the status of their accession to or ratification of multilateral instruments on arms control and disarmament as well as conventions on the outer space.

The document is to large extent based on the Joint Russian-Chinese Initiative on Strengthening Security in the Asia Pacific Region adopted on October 6, 2010 in Ankara, Turkey.

Speaking at the conference on May 20 President Xi Jinping called for the creation of a new Asian structure for security cooperation based on a regional group that includes Russia and Iran and excludes the United States. «*We need to innovate our security cooperation (and) establish new regional security cooperation architecture*», he said speaking to an audience that included President Vladimir Putin of Russia and leaders of Central Asian countries. The Chinese leader said he wanted CICA to be «*a security dialogue and cooperation platform*» for all of Asia being a basis for a regional security framework. Clearly pointing a finger at the United States he called military alliance alliances to «*the outdated thinking of the Cold War*». According to him, «*We cannot just have security for one or a few countries while leaving the rest insecure*». He also noted that «*a military alliance which is targeted at a third party is not conducive to common regional security.*» In his speech Mr. Xi Jinping offered an alternative vision for the region based on an all-inclusive regional security framework rather than individual alliances with external actors like the United States. China stands for Asian problems to «*be solved by Asians themselves*», meaning there was no role for the United States. After the conference the Chinese leader called for Asian countries to «*completely abandon*» old security concepts, presumably including the alliance system currently maintained by the U.S. China stands for the creation of a new mechanism within CICA to allow member states to hold defense consultations.

On a visit to China, Russian President Putin said in an interview that he wanted «*a new security and sustainable development architecture in Asia-Pacific.*». According to him, Russia and China have actively advocated establishing a new security architecture in the region to be based on the principles of equality, respect for international law, indivisibility of security, non-use of force or threat of force. He noted that CICA is a well-established cooperation mechanism which has been successfully working in such spheres as security, new challenges and threats.

It's rather symbolic that Russia and China were holding a joint naval exercise in the East China Sea at the time of the event. The routine training event has no specific targets but is nonetheless politically symbolic as China is engaged in a heated territorial dispute with Japan, backed by the US.

The initiative to enhance the CICA role as an instrument to tackle security issues dovetails with the Russia basis foreign policy document – the *Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation* which was approved by President of the Russian Federation V. Putin on February 12, 2013. It says that Russia is an integral part of this fastest-developing geopolitical zone and is interested in «*creating a transparent and equitable security architecture in the APR and cooperation on a collective basis*». (Article 75). The Concept stresses that «*Improving political and security environment in Asia is of fundamental importance for Russia as the potential for conflict in the region remains significant, military arsenals are built up, and the risk of WMD proliferation is increasing*» (Article 76). The document emphasizes that «*Russia considers it vital to create and promote a partner network of regional associations in the APR*». (Article 77).

The Russian Federation views the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia *«as the main platform for strategic dialogue between leaders on key APR security and cooperation issues»* (Article 78).

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BRICS, the CSTO, the SCO, the Latin America's Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) created in 2011 to keep outside the US and Canada – all of them are the examples of international organizations emerging in the world which exclude the US and its close allies to avoid the influence they find negative. The CICA summit is an element of the global trend taking tangible shape.