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Spotlight: Overseas experts, scholars applaud China's plan to cut troops

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The international community has praised China's decision to cut its army by 300,000 troops, as announced by President Xi Jinping at Thursday's military parade in Beijing.

Many overseas scholars and experts believe that such a decision sends a message about China's commitment to promoting world peace, and working side-by-side with other countries to seek common development and prosperity.

"The implicit message of President Xi Jinping's speech is that a strong China intends to be a peaceful power and can afford to do so without jeopardizing the security of the Chinese people," said Ted Galen Carpenter, a senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute in the United States.

"His speech occurred against the backdrop of a military parade that displayed a modern, extremely capable defense force," Carpenter said.

"Most notably, he stressed that China, despite its growing strength, will never seek hegemony. And... he announced that China would cut the number of its troops by 300,000 -- a 13-percent reduction. Both the United States and China's regional neighbors should welcome the tone and substance of the speech," Carpenter said.

Phay Siphon, a spokesman for the Cambodian Council of Ministers, said Xi's pledge to reduce China's army by 300,000 troops reflected China's commitment to peaceful development.

"The cut in troops clearly shows China's wish to uphold peace and sends a key message to the world that China's military strength will pose no threat to the rest of the world," Lawmaker Sok Eysan, a spokesman for the ruling Cambodian People's Party, told Xinhua.

Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Singapore Nanyang Technological University, said that Xi's announcement to cut troops proves the Asian giant's sincerity over peace.

Professor Francis Chigunta, a senior lecturer in the Department of Development Studies at the University of Zambia (UNZA), said China's decision to cut the number of its troops was a welcome decision and urged other world powers to emulate the move.

"It is a sign that China is trying to reduce tension in the world, especially with its neighbors. China is trying to send a message that even though it has risen as a superpower in the world, it is still committed to peace. This move is good especially for the Asian region," he said.

The professor said the move also shows that China has modernized its military and was not interested in having many troops.

"It further shows that China has modernized its military; it has better equipment and it is trying to say that it is not the number that matters, but the quality of the military equipment. It is about quality and not quantity of the military prowess," he said.

Marisela Connelly, expert in Chinese affairs at the College of Mexico's Center for Asian and African Studies, expressed her belief that Xi was sending a message to the world.

"China is saying that it has all this weaponry but that it will cut its armed forces by 300,000 troops to show its commitment to the peaceful resolution of international conflicts," she said.