



# TWO SESSIONS

## Xi promotes civil-military reform plan

Integration key to building world-class defense, paying close attention to advances in technology

By ZHAO LEI  
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping urged the armed forces on March 12 to uphold and accelerate the civil-military integration strategy amid the country's efforts to build a world-class military.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, told national legislators from the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force that the civil-military integration strategy is crucial to building a world-class military.

He requested that the military improve its independent research and innovation abilities in defense science and technology and make

more effort to transfer research achievements into equipment and weaponry.

Officers are called on to pay close attention to the advances in defense technology and development of new weapons around the world, give more support to key fields and strive for a leading position in the world-wide competition in defense science and technology.

The president ordered members of the military to be open-minded and share their research and development resources with others. Closed-door research and monopolies must be torn down to optimize the use of resources and stimulate interest and innovation in defense technology from the public, he said.

Referring to the ongoing reform of the national defense and the armed



President Xi Jinping, also chairman of the Central Military Commission, greets deputies at a meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force at a session of the 13th National People's Congress.

LI GANG / XINHUA

forces, Xi said it has effectively removed institutional obstacles in the way of the military's further growth. He asked officers to deepen the reform and focus on combat training.

Xi said the establishment of a department dedicated to managing and supporting veterans will help improve public services for retired military personnel and make military careers more attractive to youngsters.

It was the second time in March that Xi has emphasized the significance of civil-military integration.

At the first conference of the Central Commission for Integrated Military and Civilian Development of the 19th CPC Central Committee this month, the president, also head of the commission, ordered the government and the military to make breakthroughs in the ongoing reform of defense sectors to boost civil-military integration.

He demanded at the conference that big strides be made this year in overhauling defense industries, the arms procurement system and price-setting and taxation mechanisms for

weapons businesses.

Civil-military integration has become a national strategy and a priority on the government's agenda since Xi was elected top leader in 2012.

It usually refers to the military and defense industries transferring technologies to civilian sectors and also including private companies on the military's suppliers list.

State-owned defense contractors still dominate the research, development and production of weapons and equipment for the military.

## MNCs eye Belt and Road benefits

By ZHENG XIN  
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

Despite doubts among some detractors, two CEOs of Western multinational corporations (MNCs) said they see substantial growth opportunities in China's Belt and Road Initiative and are actively angling for a piece of the trade initiative in an attempt to win more orders.

MNCs, including leading global mining group Rio Tinto and manufacturing and technology conglomerate Honeywell, have said they are willing to team up with Chinese companies to further expand in Belt and Road markets, contributing their technologies and global footprint in infrastructure-related sectors, including power, oil and gas, chemicals, minerals and building materials.

"Chinese authorities are pragmatic about infrastructure and have

placed the Belt and Road Initiative at the center of the policy agenda," said Rio Tinto CEO Jean-Sebastien Jacques.

"Infrastructure is fundamental to global growth — it underpins communities and builds nations. China has shown the world what can be achieved," he said.

According to Jacques, China's infrastructure boom provides lessons for the rest of the world. Infrastructure including roads, railways, transport links and power generation are key to supporting global growth and can unleash economic growth by creating jobs, increasing investment and enhancing productivity.

"The world is already looking at how China, the wider Asian region and the rest of the world can cooperate and make better use of bilateral and multilateral approaches to deliver all-important regional infrastructure," he said.

"At Rio Tinto, our business sees the potential from a greater focus on infrastructure through the Belt and Road Initiative."

China's development is closely connected with that of all other countries and its commitment to peaceful development will not change, Premier Li Keqiang said when delivering the Government Work Report at the first session of the 13th National People's Congress on March 5.

The Belt and Road Initiative, for instance, offers opportunities for cooperation and development for all countries amid a sluggish global economy.

Shane Tedjarati, president of Honeywell Global High Growth Regions, said Honeywell is well-positioned to support the Belt and Road Initiative through its China growth strategy and portfolio.

To support the initiative, the company provides a range of engineer-

ing and aerospace systems as well as consumer and commercial products, and has been partnering with leading Chinese companies for years to explore infrastructure development and other opportunities in emerging markets, he said.

Global mining giant BHP believes projects involving with the Belt and Road Initiative are expected to drive up to 150 million metric tons of steel demand and positively affect the global business layout.

Spread over a decade, this amounts to an additional 15 million tons per year, or 3 to 4 percent incremental demand growth for steel in regions participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, said Arnoud Balhuizen, chief commercial officer of BHP.

"The demand for infrastructure investment in countries and regions participating in the initiative is huge, and such investment will drive significant demand for construction materials and equipment, leading

to an increase in direct and indirect demand for steel," he said.

Analysts believe Chinese companies have made huge technological progress in the past few years. Yet many Western multinationals still lead in various ways, like Honeywell's pipeline automation technology, and the teaming-up will be a win-win for both sides.

The initiative could well be a windfall for MNCs and will benefit Chinese companies as well, said Zhang Jianping, director of international economic cooperation at the National Development and Reform Commission.

Figures from the Mercator Institute for China Studies reveal that economies involved with the initiative account for about 30 percent of the global economy, while figures from China Development Bank show that some \$900 billion worth of projects is now either under way or in detailed planning stages.