

Editor's Note: On the sidelines of the Taihu World Cultural Forum in Beijing, which was held from Oct 17 to 19,

China Daily's Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Zhou Shuchun hosted a cultural dialogue between prominent international political

figures at the Palace Museum. They discussed global challenges and shared their views and insights about possible solutions.

Finding solutions to global challenges

Dialogue highlights need to build a community with a shared future for mankind, supports multilateralism

By CAO DESHENG

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Amid growing global challenges, China's solution of building a community with a shared future for mankind conforms to common aspirations for a better world, according to international political figures.

Ali Ahmedov, deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan; former Italian prime minister Romano Prodi; former Polish president Bronisław Komorowski; and former Egyptian prime minister Essam Abdelaziz Ahmed Sharaf called for concerted efforts from the international community to improve the global governance system to cope with rising uncertainties and instability.

The notion of building a community with a shared future for mankind is important as people worldwide face common challenges and have common desires for better lives, Ahmedov said.

The notion is a direction for countries to make joint efforts to achieve a common goal, he added.

Rooted in Chinese civilization, the notion was proposed by President Xi Jinping in March 2013 during a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

Together with the idea of building a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation, the notion constitutes the main pillar of China's foreign policy.

Xi proposed a vision that takes into account the interests of all countries and enables people to jointly work for world peace, stability and common prosperity, Ahmedov said.

In February last year, the vision was written into resolutions of the UN Security Council by a unanimous vote.

It was enshrined by the Communist Party of China in its Constitution, in October last year at the Party's 19th National Congress, and was written into China's Constitution at the annual session of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, in March.

Observers said this shows China's commitment to the world to promote building a community with a shared future for mankind and an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

In Sharaf's view, a community with a shared future for mankind should have peace, security and development at its core. He said that against the backdrop of globalization, common understanding is



China Daily's Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Zhou Shuchun (left) presents portraits and photo albums to guests attending the Taihu World Cultural Forum in Beijing. From second left: the former prime minister of Egypt, Essam Abdelaziz Ahmed Sharaf; the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, Ali Ahmedov; the former Italian prime minister, Romano Prodi; and the former Polish president, Bronisław Komorowski. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

needed to build such a community.

Komorowski agreed with Sharaf, saying people around the world share the same aspirations for better security, more freedom and greater wealth, and even in a profoundly changed world, people should work together for a better future.

Prodi voiced his worries about a world challenged by unilateralism and protectionism, saying rising tensions are emerging in the international system, particularly in trade and economic disputes, which may negatively influence political and cultural cooperation.

The world faces a range of problems and challenges, such as regional conflicts, terrorism, climate change and wealth gaps, Prodi said. However, the international system is under threat, and addressing the challenges needs united efforts, he said.

Ahmedov echoed Prodi, saying some countries fail to honor the existing international order, and even override others' interests and international rules, having a bad effect on global development.

Xi has said on a number of occasions that the world is undergoing profound changes not seen for a century. The international order based on rules established with the founding of the UN after World War II is being challenged by rising unilateralism, isolationism and populism.

Against such a backdrop, countries are looking for solutions to such questions as how to uphold the

postwar international order with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter at the core.

They are also trying to find solutions to the question of how to promote democracy, the rule of law and a proper balance in international relations as well as how countries can work together for a better future amid growing economic globalization, multi-polarization, cultural diversity and digitalization.

Ahmedov said the global governance system should be improved and developed to ensure the sanctity and authority of international rules.

Sharaf said that to achieve a significant change in the international order, massive support is needed. Therefore, the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind can play a vital role in establishing some commonalities, namely common trust and common security leading to a common development, he added.

Dialogue participants all called for upholding the rules-based international order to bolster multilateral trade and promote a free and open economy.

Ahmedov said Azerbaijan firmly supports multilateral trading, and trade protectionism must be rejected.

Prodi said multilateralism is crucially important, and the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at the core must be upheld, as protectionism will lead to an economic downturn and reduced

job opportunities. Saying that only the multilateral trading system can protect growth of the world economy, Prodi added that all countries should be part of the process of global economic integration. Otherwise, it will be a disaster for the world.

For Komorowski, the pressing task is to reduce the harm caused by trade protectionism to the world economy. As a European Union member, Poland opposes protectionism, he said.

The veteran politicians stressed the importance of cultural and people-to-people exchanges in promoting mutual learning about various civilizations.

Prodi called for interactions between various countries, saying cultural exchanges should not be confined to the elite, but should increase the involvement of ordinary people.

People-to-people contacts, such as student exchanges, help cultural interaction and ultimately lead to common understanding among people in different countries with different languages and cultures, he said.

Prodi said he is worried about the international situation being challenged by isolationism. In a world where the international order is being changed, he feels this makes the future unpredictable.

He called for united efforts from the international community to cope with the risks and threats.

Ahmedov said the ancient Silk

Road promoted interaction among various civilizations. Now, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, coupled with modern transportation, logistics and the internet, will help to promote progress among civilizations, not only in the growth of trade and business, but in cultural prosperity.

Sharaf called for building "the dream of global harmony" in a world of higher interdependence through sincere dialogue between civilizations and people-to-people bonds.

Komorowski considers dialogue between civilizations a condition for building international security, cooperation and development. He said the Belt and Road Initiative is a bridge not only for economic and transportation cooperation, but also offers exchanges and partnership in culture, science and civilizations.

Sharaf lauded the BRI, saying it is a main tool for strengthening the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Prodi said that through the BRI China can show to the world its responsible and constructive leadership. He said in view of rising economic and cultural barriers, Belt and Road construction is a unique opportunity for Beijing and the world.

The political figures hailed the dramatic changes that have taken place since China implemented reform and opening-up in 1978 and said the country's rapid development presents opportunities for the world.

Sharaf said he was impressed with China's breathtaking changes in the past 40 years, particularly in reducing poverty.

China's success can be attributed to the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, Sharaf said, adding he hoped that China, as the world's second-largest economy, could play a bigger role in international affairs.

Komorowski said these "incredible changes" mean not only an increase of wealth for the Chinese people, but also the rise of the nation's status on the international stage. China needs to consider how to exert its influence to benefit the world, he added.

Sharaf highlighted the traditional friendship and cooperation between China and Africa. He said the even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future that Xi proposed at the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in September and the eight major initiatives for cooperation in coming years will bring vast changes to Africa.

Mo Jingxi and Zhou Jin contributed to the story.