



PANCHSHEEL

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[Panchsheel principles still relevant: China](#)

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ANANTH KRISHNAN, June 29, 2014



Chinese President Xi Jinping (third from right) and Premier Li Keqiang (behind Mr. Xi) arrive with Myanmar President Thein Sein (right) and Vice-President Hamid Ansari at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Saturday, June 29, 2014. Photo: AP

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Quoting from one of Rabindra Nath Tagore's verses on friendship, '... If you think friendship can be won through war, spring will fade away before your eyes', President Xi Jinping on Friday reiterated the virtues of good relations between neighbours, peace and cooperation and amity in the region as envisaged six decades ago in the Panchsheel treaty among India, China and Myanmar. At the 60th commemoration of the Panchsheel here, he asserted that China would follow the five principles of Panchsheel even as it is ready to work with the West to uphold world peace and development.

Without taking names, he frowned upon the practice of one state flexing its muscles while "injustice and inequalities still exist in international affairs." In his address delivered at the Great Hall of the People, located at the western edge of Tiananmen Square, he stressed the need to revisit the five guiding principles of [Panchsheel](#), which, he said, had been endorsed by a host of international organizations and instruments. The Chinese President said no country should monopolize international affairs and with a word of caution against countries that use the "law of the jungle" by which the "strong bully the weak," he called for strengthening South-South Cooperation and bettering North-South dialogue.

Mr. Xi spoke of adhering to territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression and non-interference in internal matters, and peaceful co-existence — the basics of Panchsheel, and said these continue to remain relevant and grow.

"All good things must evolve," he said, and asserting a country's rights over its foreign policy, he said no other state could be allowed to dictate its foreign relations.

India reciprocated its commitment to Panchsheel with Vice-President Hamid Ansari calling attention to the need for greater interaction between the people of India and China in all fields for stronger bilateral relations.

"India believes that globalization should transform the world into, as Mahatma Gandhi had envisaged, 'a federation of friendly, interdependent nations,' without domination or exploitation. Panchsheel is the basis of such a world order. We need to work together to develop a framework for equitable globalization, for genuine multilateralism, and for seeking common and fair solutions for challenges that transcend national borders and threaten humanity," he said.

The Vice-President said there was a need for a new paradigm for global action and Panchsheel could act as a catalyst to better coordinate efforts, enhance mutual understanding, share developmental experiences and tackle trans-national threats more effectively.

"We gather here today to reaffirm the timeless relevance of Panchsheel in establishing a peaceful, stable, prosperous and secure world. As the co-originators of Panchsheel, it is our duty

to revitalize our friendly relations and to promote cooperation as the only way forward towards the realization of our common goals of progress and prosperity for our peoples,” Mr. Ansari said.

Stood the test of time

President of Myanmar Thein Sein said the five principles had stood the test of time, matured and become part of the inter-state relations. “Myanmar is confident that the five principles will play a greater role in interstate relations,” President Sein said.

He acknowledged the “significant role” played by China and India in helping the economy of Myanmar and said having consistently followed the Panchsheel directives, and a non-aligned foreign policy, his country would cherish friendly ties with all nations, especially its neighbors.

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[Iraq chaos shows need to revive Panchsheel, says former Chinese leader](#), by ANANTH KRISHNAN, June 28, 2014

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As India and China mark the sixtieth anniversary of their “Panchsheel” or “five principles of peaceful coexistence” agreement on Saturday, a senior Chinese leader has pointed to the United States-led invasion of Iraq and the recent chaos in the war-torn country as underlining the need for renewing the six decades-old idea.

Speaking a day ahead of the anniversary, which will be marked here by Vice-President Hamid Ansari and Chinese President Xi Jinping, Dai Bingguo, the top Chinese diplomat over the past decade, said in an apparent reference to the U.S. that “hegemonism was staging a comeback” and referred to the war in Iraq as “a lesson” for emerging countries.

Mr. Dai, who retired as State Councilor last year and was the Special Representative on the border talks with India for a decade starting in 2003, also sought to assure China’s neighbours who are concerned about an increasingly assertive posture from Beijing in the region that his government would not “stray from its commitment” to following the “Panchsheel” mode of diplomacy.

The “five principles,” which refer to mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, cooperation for mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence, were

first invoked in a 1954 treaty on trade between India and Tibet and championed by Nehru and former Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai.

Mr. Dai, however, argued that Panchsheel was “not a piece of relic in a museum, but a full principle to guide international relations in the 21st century.” “Hegemonism is staging a comeback in the form of new interventionism by Western countries,” Mr. Dai said in an address here to mark the anniversary. The new government under Mr. Xi, he said, was focusing on domestic development which “needs a sound international environment and neighborhood.”

“We will never seek to be as superpower; we will never bully other countries, invade or exploit other countries. We mean what we say.”

China invited Mr. Ansari and Myanmar’s President Thein Sein to Beijing to mark the anniversary with much fanfare, a move seen by some analysts here as attempting to signal to the region, amid disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines and Japan, that China’s rise would be peaceful. That message is expected to be stressed by Mr. Xi on Saturday.

The former Chinese Ambassador to India, Zhou Gang, said the “Panchsheel” also had a role to play in India-China relations today, regardless of its mixed legacy. Following the 1962 war, he said, the “Panchsheel” had “helped us overcome the consequence of the brief conflict with India and normalize relations”. So also after the nuclear test of 1998 which had strained ties between the two countries. “Today,” he said, “we’ve become a model for relations between two major neighboring countries”.

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When “Panchsheel” failed Myanmar

By ANANTH KRISHNAN, June 28, 2014



The Hindu. Than Than Nu, daughter of the first Prime Minister of Myanmar U Nu.

Photo: Ananth Krishnan.

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U Nu, the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Myanmar, was along with Jawaharlal Nehru and former Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai a founding advocate of “Panchsheel” — the “five principles of peaceful coexistence” to guide relations between nations that was conceived of 60 years ago this Saturday.

To mark the event, Vice-President Hamid Ansari and Chinese President Xi Jinping will be joined by Myanmar’s President, Thein Sein. The three leaders will preside over a grand commemoration at the Great Hall of the People here on Saturday.

U Nu was deposed by the military in a 1962 coup, spending years in jail before going to India in exile. The former Prime Minister will be represented on Saturday by his daughter, Than Than Nu, a vocal proponent of political reforms and the Secretary General of the Democratic Party of Myanmar.

The story of the U Nu family has underlined the limits — some would say failures — of the “five principles”. Than Than Nu was 22 when she was forced to go with her family to Thailand and eventually India, which would become her home for two decades.

In New Delhi, she worked for All India Radio, becoming hugely popular back home for her broadcasts in Burmese, providing information censored by the junta. “Mr. Rajiv Gandhi gave us permission to broadcast on Burma for 20 minutes every day,” she said. A decade later, India forced her to stop the broadcasts. The military regime had objected. Than Than Nu’s 20-year career with AIR ended. One of the five tenets of “Panchsheel” is non-interference in the “internal affairs” of countries. Did this notion, embraced by India and China, hurt Myanmar at the time? “It is very difficult to say,” Than Than Nu said, replying after a long pause. “It is difficult to say.”

Was she upset when India stopped her broadcasts at the behest of the military government? “India is the biggest democracy in the world. That should not happen,” she said. Than Than Nu does not think the changes will see Myanmar move away from China. “China helps Myanmar in many ways. Especially when the whole world boycotted Myanmar,” she said.

But didn't China help prop up the military government? “When you look at a coin, it has two sides,” she said. “You cannot look at only one side”.

Today, the changes in Myanmar and opening up have left her optimistic. “It is a very good sign, but we have to be patient.” Than Than Nu does, however, still see merit in the founding ideals espoused by her father. “What we should remember is that at the time, the five principles were successful in many ways,” she said. “Yes, today the situation is not smooth going. But one thing is very sure: at the time, the three leaders were very sincere about what they were doing, and that is what we should remember.”

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In China's new diplomacy, a revival of 'Panchsheel'

By ANANTH KRISHNAN, June 25, 2014



AP Chinese President Xi Jinping

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Mr. Ansari and Mr. Xi will, along with Myanmar's President Thein Sein, preside over a commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the "Panchsheel"

On Saturday, China's President Xi Jinping will welcome Vice President Hamid Ansari to the Great Hall of the People, the sprawling Parliament building that extends across the western edge of Tiananmen Square.

Mr. Ansari and Mr. Xi will, along with Myanmar's President Thein Sein, preside over a commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the "Panchsheel" or "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" – the five tenets of diplomacy championed by Jawaharlal Nehru and then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, first invoked in a 1954 treaty on Tibet and later coming into prominence at the famous Asian-African conference at Bandung.

What is ostensibly the remembrance of a long-gone historical moment has acquired renewed significance in Beijing, underlined by the unexpected importance accorded to a rather obscure anniversary by Mr. Xi's government.

The "Panchsheel", which refers to mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, cooperation for mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence, has become a mainstay of China's diplomacy – even if no longer remembered by many in India – routinely referred to in Beijing's diplomatic dealings with every nation.

Today, the "five principles" have been seized upon by China as it looks to recast its diplomacy in a region where its rise has begun to evoke anxiety and concern among many of its neighbours.

Last month, Mr. Xi outlined for the first time China's vision of a new "Asian Security Concept" at a regional security summit in Shanghai.

At the heart of his idea was nothing other than a slightly reframed "Panchsheel".

"The five principles that China initiated together with India and Myanmar," he said, "have become a basic norm governing state-to-state relations." China would "develop friendly relations and cooperation with other countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence". "China's peaceful development begins here in Asia, finds its support in Asia, and delivers tangible benefits to Asia," Mr. Xi said.

His speech was seen as an attempt to counter concerns in the wake of renewed territorial tensions between China and the Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea. His

“security concept” highlighted a focus on economic integration, just as China has unveiled a new “maritime silk road” plan, pledging to increase investment in Southeast Asian countries and taking forward an Asian infrastructure bank project.

The hidden subtext of his use of the “Panchsheel” was an implicit criticism of the role of China's great rival, the United States, which Beijing has blamed for “provoking” countries into disputes through its “rebalance” to Asia.

“In the final analysis,” Mr. Xi said, “it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia,” as he quoted a proverb warning that “One who tries to blow out other's oil lamp will get his beard on fire”.

Zhao Gancheng, a scholar on South Asia and Strategic Affairs at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), said that while on the surface Panchsheel “looks very much like a label and empty words”, it had taken on new relevance “in the reality of today’s Asian security situation” and the concept outlined by Mr. Xi.

“We believe Asian affairs should be handled by Asians,” Mr. Zhao said. “Look at Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of Asia. These countries which observed lots of conflict can more or less attribute it to interference from the outside. Outside forces have played a very negative role”. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, he said, would provide “a testing ground” for this “Asian model”.

Critics, however, would argue that the Panchsheel – much like Bandung – has lost its relevance in a much changed world. Ideas such as “non-interference”, championed by China especially regarding its sensitivities on Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang, are routinely applied subjectively, while the flaring up of territorial disputes undermines its very premise.

And, on Saturday, when the “five principles” will be remembered fondly by Mr. Xi and Mr. Ansari sixty years on, left unsaid will be remembrance of its biggest failure: a war between its two founding proponents, barely eight years after its inception.

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