

# PLA garrison key to HK prosperity, Xi says



President Xi Jinping inspects the garrison at the PLA's Shek Kong barracks in Hong Kong on Friday, the eve of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China. [Photo/Xinhua]

President Xi Jinping has said the People's Liberation Army garrison stationed in Hong Kong should resolutely champion state sovereignty, security and interests regarding the country's development, and ensure Hong Kong's prosperity and stability.

Xi made the remarks after inspecting the garrison at the PLA's Shek Kong barracks in Hong Kong on Friday, the eve of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China.

The PLA has had a garrison in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region since the former British colony was handed over to China in 1997.

More than 3,100 officers and soldiers and over 100 pieces of military equipment took part in the review by Xi, who is also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

After the review, Xi received briefings by the garrison and said it should be navigated with the goal to reinforce the PLA, and its works should be strengthened in every aspect at a new starting point.

In the past 20 years, the garrison has strictly lived up to instructions of the CPC Central Committee and the Central Military Commission, and has fully honored the "one country, two systems" principle as well as the Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region's Basic Law and Garrison Law, Xi said.

"The (PLA) garrison is an important embodiment of national sovereignty, an important force to safeguard 'one country, two systems', and an important cornerstone of Hong Kong's prosperity and stability," he said.

It should beef up its political awareness and its consciousness of political power and the big picture, and strengthen its sense of duty about ensuring "one country, two systems", Xi added.

The garrison should also remain alert and effectively maintain combat readiness, he said.

Earlier in June, Xi had conferred an honorary title on a special operation force under a brigade of the Hong Kong garrison.

Leung Chun-ying, vice-chairman of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and chief executive of the HKSAR, said in a recent interview with China Central Television that the garrison "has won widespread rapport and support by the Hong Kong public".