

# PLA prepared to safeguard sovereignty

The Chinese army will step up the pace of improving its joint combat capabilities and “stand ready to fight and win at any time”, State Councilor and Minister of National Defense Chang Wanquan said on Monday.

Speaking about the cross-Straits situation, Chang said the People’s Liberation Army is “confident, capable and fully prepared to resolutely safeguard State sovereignty and territorial integrity”.

Chang made the remarks during a speech at a grand reception marking the 90 anniversary of the founding of the PLA, which falls on Tuesday.

President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of Central Military Commission, attended the reception along with other Party and State leaders.

The PLA has come a long way since its birth during the armed uprising in the city of Nanchang on August 1, 1927, when it had only 20,000 soldiers.

Xi oversaw and addressed a grand military parade on Sunday marking the 90th anniversary at the Zhurihe Training Base in North China’s Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

On Tuesday morning, Xi will attend a grand ceremony in Beijing commemorating the 90th anniversary and deliver a speech.

Led by Xi, the PLA has been advancing reform and technological upgrade and boosting training and combat readiness, Chang said.

Through this it has achieved thorough restructuring and has greatly enhanced its combat effectiveness, he added.

The military will press ahead with reforms and staunchly focus on winning in combat and training for readiness, Chang said.

Speaking of the cross-Straits situation, Chang said adherence to the 1992 Consensus and opposition to Taiwan independence constitute the political foundation of peace and development of cross-Straits relations.

Any form of secessionist attempt by anyone at any time would surely be opposed by the whole Chinese people and nation, he added.

Noting the Chinese military’s role as a contributor to world peace, he said the PLA facilitates global development and supports international order.

As of June, the Chinese military had participated in 24 UN peacekeeping missions, sending 31,000 personnel, 13 of whom lost their lives on duty.

Chang said the PLA is ready to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation with foreign militaries and jointly make greater contributions to world peace

and the common development.

Since 2008, the PLA Navy has dispatched 26 escort task force groups, including more than 70 ships for escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia.