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## **CHINA TO DEEPEN COOPERATION WITH SCO STATES FOR REGIONAL STABILITY, SECURITY**

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Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 23 said that China is willing to deepen pragmatic cooperation with other Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries in defense and security to contribute to long-term regional stability and prosperity, Chinas Xinhua news agency reported.

Xi made the remarks at a meeting with defense ministers from Russia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstans chief of the general staff of armed forces.

Xi hailed contributions made by SCO member countries in safeguarding regional security and stability, ranging from improving meeting mechanism among defense ministries and military leaders to conducting joint military exercises.

Xi stressed that security is the cornerstone for development. "We must take safeguarding regional security and stability as the SCO's work priority as always."

The SCO summit will be held in the coastal city of Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province in June.

On the same day, at a group meeting with foreign ministers from Russia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as with SCO secretary-general and the director of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Executive Committee, President Xi Jinping said that he believes the upcoming SCO summit in Qingdao in June will be a success.

The officials are in Beijing to attend the meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers on April 24.

Xi told the foreign ministers that China stands ready to work with other member countries to continue to support each other politically and provide the SCO wisdom and plans, safeguard regional security and stability, promote coordination levels and implementation capabilities, enhance cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative, gradually establish institutional arrangements of regional economic cooperation, and expand people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation.

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