



China's grand parade on Thursday, held to mark Japan's defeat in World War II, stirred nationalist sentiments as 12,000 troops marched near Tiananmen Square alongside the latest weapons and aircraft on display.

The event was marked by a speech from Chinese President Xi Jinping, who said he would downsize the nation's 2.3 million-member armed forces by 300,000, The New York Times reported.

Military officials defended the decision, and Senior Col. Zhou Bou, director of the International Security Cooperation at the Ministry of National Defense, said the reductions would mean improvements to China's People's Liberation Army.

"To have it reduced means that the quality of the P.L.A. has actually increased," Zhou told the Times.

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