

OPINION: WILL NATO STAY OUT OF ASIA? P.27 | FORUM: LEGALIZING LIVING WILLS P.48

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DIGITAL DYNAMISM

New infrastructure represents an advanced stage of development

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North America Bureau (New York City)

Chief: Yu Shujun
Executive Assistant: Zhao Wei
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: yushujun@cicgamerica.com
Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)
Chief: Lin Yeqing
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoyom@gmail.com
Peru Office (Lima)
Chief: Meng Kexin
Tel: 0051-959212702
E-mail: revistachinaperu@gmail.com

General Editorial Office

Tel: 86-10-68996252
Fax: 86-10-68326628

Editorial Desk

Tel: 86-10-68996250

Partnerships

Tel: 86-10-68995807

E-mail: yecong@cicgamerica.com

Distribution

Tel: 86-10-68310644

E-mail: circulation@cicgamerica.com

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Embracing New Infrastructure

East-to-west transfer of data and cloud resources and many other new infrastructure projects are currently underway across China. Local governments have recently released their 2022 investment plans for key projects, which show expanding the coverage of 5G networks, starting the construction of big data centers and accelerating the industrial rollout of artificial intelligence (AI) have replaced traditional infrastructure as the new investment preference.

New infrastructure covers three sectors: infrastructure for information technologies such as 5G communications, the Internet of Things, industrial Internet, AI and cloud computing; infrastructure that helps upgrade traditional industries through the application of new technologies such as smart transportation and energy facilities; infrastructure that supports innovation, such as infrastructure for cutting-edge scientific and technological research.

The Central Economic Work Conference held in December last year vowed to invest in infrastructure in light of future needs, making new infrastructure a focus in 2022. The government work report this year has set the target of ensuring GDP growth of around 5.5

percent, and effective investment will be an important measure for ensuring this stable expansion. Under the guidance of government policy, new infrastructure also becomes a new favorite of investors.

The Chinese economy has been under pressure to achieve robust growth; thus new stimulus is badly needed. While traditional infrastructure has been greatly improved over recent decades, new infrastructure has become an equally worthy priority. New infrastructure is regarded as a new powerhouse for linking the huge investment and demand from businesses with the powerful and continuously upgrading consumption market.

What is more important is that, in addition to the role of ensuring stable growth in the short term, new infrastructure is vital to sustaining the momentum of the Chinese economy.

In the medium and long term, digital transformation will help optimize China's economic structure. Necessary for creating new opportunities for development and establishing future competitive advantages, new infrastructure is of high strategic value to both central and local governments. **BR**



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编委会：李雅芳 李建国 闫颖 杨琪 刘云云 曾文卉

主任：李雅芳

总编室电话：(010) 68996252 发行部电话：(010) 68310644

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THE CARIBBEAN CONNECTION

Inauguration of the China-Caribbean Development Center in Jinan, capital of Shandong Province, on July 6. The center is expected to strengthen China's cooperation with Caribbean countries.

The event also announced cooperation projects between China and Caribbean nations, including the center's donation of anti-pandemic materials, collaboration with Guyana on fisheries training, and the launch of an international information exchange platform.



Farming Experiences

Children pick hot peppers to experience agrarian life in a village in Xiangtan City, Hunan Province, on July 4.

Xi's Book Published

The fourth volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* has been published by Foreign Languages Press in both Chinese and English, Xinhua News Agency reported on July 2. The book will be available worldwide.

The latest volume contains a compilation of 109 pieces of spoken and written works of Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, from February 3, 2020, to May 10 this year along with 45 photographs taken since January 2020. It is divided into 21 sections by topic.

Xi has led the Party and the people in efforts to respond to changes and open up new prospects, while making a penetrating analysis of major theoretical and practical issues

concerning the development of the Party and the country, the publisher said.

Employing originality in vision and a wide range of ideas and strategies, Xi has provided answers to questions concerning the present and future of China and its people, as well as the wider world, according to the publisher.

This volume is designed to help officials and the public better understand and apply Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. It is also intended that this volume will keep the international community abreast of the latest developments in Xi's thoughts, and explain the development path that China has chosen and its governance approach and theory, the publisher said.

Power Transmission Project

A major part of China's west-to-east power transmission program kicked off on July 1, a further boost to the nation's coordination of development between regions.

With its transmission line stretching approximately 2,080 km, the Baihetan-Jiangsu 800-kV ultra-high-voltage (UHV) direct current power transmission project transmits clean hydropower from Baihetan, the world's second largest hydropower station, in Sichuan Province, to Jiangsu Province.

It is the world's first UHV direct current power transmission project using a new approach that combines the conventional direct current and flexible direct current technologies, according

to the State Grid Corp. of China.

The project has a power transmission capacity of 8 million kW and has the capacity to deliver more than 30 billion kWh of clean electricity annually, helping reduce carbon dioxide emissions by over 25 million tons every year, the company said.

Declining Erosion

China's water and soil erosion area continued to decrease in 2021, according to the Ministry of Water Resources.

The country's water and soil erosion area stood at 2.67 million square km in 2021, down 18,500 square km, or 0.69 percent, compared with 2020, according to monitoring data on soil and water loss analyzed by the ministry.

Among the total, the area of hydraulic erosion is 1.11 million square km, down 1.27 percent year on year. The wind erosion area of 1.57 million square km is down 0.27 percent from a year earlier.

The ministry said that in the future it will work with other departments to strictly control water and soil loss caused by human activities, strengthen forest and grassland restoration efforts, and elevate the level of scientific governance to tackle water and soil erosion.

New Highway

A new highway traversing the Taklimakan Desert in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was put into operation on June 30.

Located in south Xinjiang's Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, the highway, connecting Yuli and Qiemo counties, is the third to cross the Taklimakan Desert, the world's second largest shifting-sand desert.

With the designed speed of

60 or 80 km per hour for different sections, the highway has a total length of 334 km, with 307 km passing through the desert.

Construction of the highway began in October 2017 and total investment on the project is estimated at 1.75 billion yuan (\$261.5 million).

Access to Archives

China will grant its public wider-ranging and more convenient access to national historical archives, the country's National Archives Administration said.

The administration has recently introduced a set of new guidelines regarding the disclosure of archives to the general public. The new guidelines made stipulations regarding the principles, circumstances and procedure of archive disclosure, as well as how the public can access and use the archives.

According to the guidelines, individuals and organizations with proper credentials can access disclosed archives on-site or via virtual channels including on websites and via e-mail, ensuring streamlined archive access.

In addition, as per China's new Archives Law enacted in January 2021, foreign individuals and organizations now enjoy equal rights to access

disclosed archives in China. The administration reiterated that the disclosure of archives will be carried out in accordance with China's national security laws.

The guidelines will come into effect on August 1.

Hottest June

The average monthly temperature across China reached 21.3 degrees Celsius in June, the hottest June since 1961, China Meteorological Administration (CMA), the country's top meteorological agency, said on July 5.

The June temperature was 0.9 degree Celsius higher than usual. Many regions including Henan and Shandong provinces registered the highest June temperature in history, according to the CMA.

Heat waves blanketed parts of China from June 13 to 26, affecting over 600 million people. A county in Hebei Province saw its temperature hit 44.2 degrees Celsius on June 25.

Fang Xiang, Deputy Director of China's National Meteorological Center, attributed the high temperature to the strong warm high pressure system which controlled north China's weather during that period.

In July, south China, parts of southwest China and east China



Staying Cool

Children play at a water park in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, on July 1.

might see lower average temperatures than previous years, while the rest of China might report similar or higher temperatures, according to Fang.

Average Life Expectancy

Chinese people's average life expectancy has increased to 77.93 years, Mao Qun'an, deputy head of the office responsible for the promotion of the Healthy China initiative, said at a press conference on July 5.

In 2016 when China rolled

out the Healthy China 2030 blueprint, the figure was 76.5.

China leads middle and high-income countries in major health indicators, and the targets set for 2020 in the blueprint have largely been achieved, said Mao.

Mao said a policy system for health promotion has already taken shape, health risk factors have been brought under effective control, the capacity to provide health services has been substantially improved, and major diseases have been effectively controlled.



Tech Show

Visitors look at cotton automatically packed by a cotton picker during a regional agricultural machinery expo in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on July 3.

Financing Champion

The Chinese A-share market raised 311.9 billion yuan (\$46.5 billion) via initial public offerings (IPOs) in the first half of the year, up 46 percent from a year ago and topping the global chart for financing scale, according to data from financial information provider Wind.

In terms of funds raised, the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock exchanges ranked first and second respectively across the world during the period, accounting for nearly half of the global total, Wind data showed.

The boom in the A-share market stood in contrast with the global financial market, which has cooled off after hitting new highs in both the number of IPOs and financing scale last year.

The growth of the A-share market was mainly shored up by the Nasdaq-style sci-tech innovation board (known as the STAR market) on the Shanghai Stock Exchange and the tech-heavy ChiNext market on the Shenzhen

Stock Exchange, as well as the return of red chip companies, or companies registered overseas but operate in the Chinese mainland, analysts said.

Enterprises in emerging sectors of strategic importance, including information technology and high-end equipment manufacturing, dominated the IPO list, as they made up over 90 percent of the firms floated on the two bourses during the period.

Digital Economy

The proportion the digital economy contributes to China's GDP rose from 21.6 percent in 2012 to 39.8 percent in 2021, with its scale increasing from 11 trillion yuan (\$1.65 trillion) to over 45 trillion yuan (\$6.7 trillion) during that period, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

The country has built the world's largest and most technologically advanced network facilities. By the end of

May, it had provided full fiber-optic network coverage to all of its prefecture-level cities and established 1.7 million 5G base stations.

China has also accelerated the integration of big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence with such sectors as energy, healthcare, transportation, education and agriculture.

In 2021, the value-added output of major information technology manufacturers rose 15.7 percent year on year, hitting its highest level in a decade, while the revenues of software and information technology services as well as Internet and related services also registered double-digit growth, the ministry said.

ETF Trading

Trading of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) under the mainland-Hong Kong stock connect programs began on July 4, marking a significant step toward deepening cooperation between capital markets of both sides.

The inclusion of ETFs in stock connect programs will facilitate investment for both domestic and overseas investors, and help Chinese mainland and Hong Kong asset managers and brokers further improve their management and service, Cai Jianchun, General Manager of the Shanghai Stock Exchange, said at the online launch.

Among the first batch of ETFs included in the stock connect programs, 83 are from the Chinese mainland's A-share market and four are from the Hong Kong stock market.

As an investment product widely recognized by domestic and overseas investors, ETFs have the advantages of diversified investment, openness, low transaction cost and high efficiency, according to Sha Yan, General Manager of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

The inclusion of ETFs will enrich cross-border investment products, provide more investment convenience and

NUMBERS

(\$1=6.7 yuan as of July 7)

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



opportunities for domestic and overseas investors, and promote the sustained, stable and healthy development of both the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong markets, she added.

Business Profitability

Profitability of Chinese enterprises improved in the second quarter of the year, according to a survey conducted by the People's Bank of China, the central bank.

The profitability index stood at 51.2 percent, up 2 percentage points from the previous quarter, staying above the 50-mark separating expansion from contraction, according to the survey.

Among the surveyed enterprises, some 31.6 percent said they earned more profit or pared their losses in the April-June period, while 39.3 percent said profits or losses of their firms remained unchanged from the previous quarter.

The business climate index dipped to 48.7 percent from 53.4

percent in the previous quarter. Over 60 percent of the surveyed entrepreneurs deemed conditions "moderate," while about 17 percent said business operations were "good."

In this quarterly assessment, over 5,000 industrial enterprises were surveyed in all areas of the country except for Tibet Autonomous Region. The survey contained questions concerning the production, cost-effectiveness and investment activities of enterprises.

Rail Freight

Rail cargo volume, a key indicator of economic activity, rose 5.5 percent year on year in the first half of 2022, data from the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. (China Railway) showed on July 2.

A total of 1.95 billion tons of cargo was transported, 102 million tons more than that in the same period last year, according to the company.

The number of China-Europe freight train trips rose 2 percent

year on year to 7,473 in the six months. The trains carried 720,000 twenty-foot equivalent unit containers, up 2.6 percent from a year earlier.

Foreign Investment

In the first five months of the year, China received \$47.68 billion in foreign capital for major foreign-funded projects, each with a contracted investment of at least \$100 million, up 40.3 percent year on year, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed on June 30.

The sum accounted for 54.3 percent of paid-in foreign investment nationwide during the period, according to the data.

Shu Jueting, a spokesperson for the ministry, said at a press briefing that a bevy of global firms have sped up their business expansion in China, which shows an unchanged confidence in the Chinese market and their long-term business prospects in China.

The ministry will continue to ramp up support for major

foreign-invested projects and help address difficulties faced by enterprises, she said.

Trade Surplus

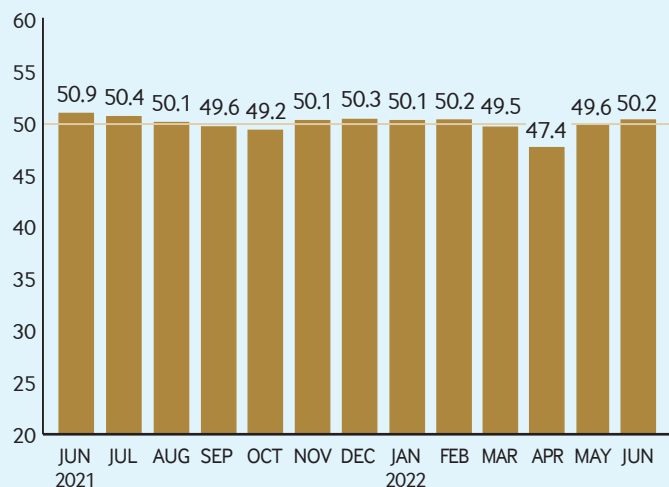
China's international trade in goods and services combined increased 14 percent year on year to 3.75 trillion yuan (\$560.2 billion) in May, according to the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

Exports of goods came in at 1.86 trillion yuan (\$278.3 billion) in May, and imports at 1.46 trillion yuan (\$218.3 billion), resulting in a surplus of 402.2 billion yuan (\$60 billion).

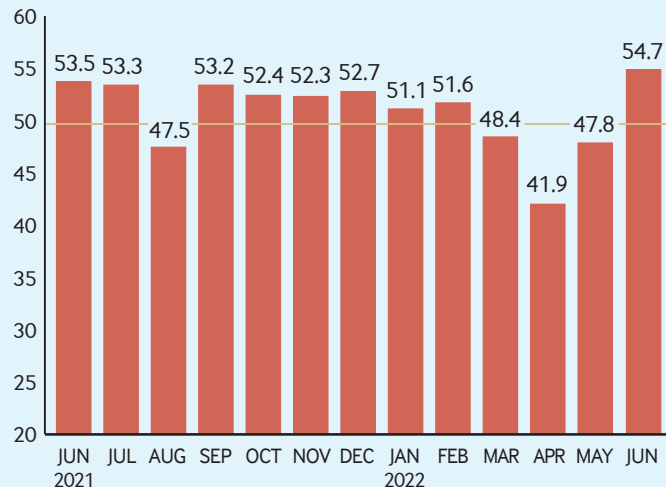
Trade in services saw a deficit of 50.8 billion yuan (\$7.6 billion), with the sector's exports and imports standing at 188 billion yuan (\$28 billion) and 238.8 billion yuan (\$35.6 billion), respectively.

In dollar terms, exports of goods and services trade reached \$306.3 billion in May, while imports stood at \$253.9 billion, resulting in a surplus of \$52.4 billion.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



AFGHANISTAN

A child poses with China-donated quake relief supplies in Paktika Province on July 2. China has pledged assistance worth \$7.5 million to regions affected by the 5.9-magnitude tremor on June 22



THE PHILIPPINES

Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. (second right) attends his inauguration ceremony as the Philippines' 17th president in Manila on June 30



BELARUS

People lay wreaths at the Victory Monument to commemorate Belarus' 78th Independence Day in Minsk on July 3



LATVIA

Aero L-39 Albatros jets of the Baltic Bees Jet Team in action at the Fly in Limbazi air show in Limbazi on July 2



GERMANY

Players perform during a parade of an international barrel organ festival in Berlin on July 2. A total of over 100 performers entertained visitors with their instruments on July 1-3



UNITED STATES

A police officer walks past floral tributes in Highland Park, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois, on July 5. A mass shooting at a Fourth of July parade in the community left seven dead and injured more than two dozens



↓ TIANJIN'S NEW MAYOR

Zhang Gong was appointed mayor of Tianjin Municipality, the largest coastal city in north China, on July 6.

Born in 1961 in Beijing, Zhang majored in electrical machinery in college. After graduating in 1983, he was employed by the Beijing Electric Appliance Research Institute and one decade later became its director. In 1997, he obtained a master's degree in economics.

From 2002 on, he ventured into a political career in Beijing where he was appointed as deputy director of the current Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology. From 2012 to 2018, he served as the capital's vice mayor.

On May 31, Zhang was named acting mayor of Tianjin, succeeding Liao Guoxun who died of a sudden illness in office at the age of 59.



The COVID-19 Stigma

Nanfang Daily
July 6

Businesses and factories in many places are reopening after China managed to control its recent COVID-19 resurgence. But media reports now indicate that a number of employers are rejecting jobseekers because the latter were once diagnosed with COVID-19.

This kind of discrimination against job applicants is groundless, especially because the chances of recovered cases testing positive again are very low.

Many of these employers are simply protecting their own interests. Under the current circumstances, if an employee relapses, a whole factory will have to shut down. These are realistic worries, but continuing a biased policy against job applicants with blatant disregard for scientific evidence can prove more harmful than the virus itself.

COVID-19 did wreak havoc on businesses, but this is no excuse to deny job applicants an opportunity to get back to work—and back to normal. Particularly not in those places accelerating the reopening of factories.



The 77 Theater in Dongcheng District, Beijing, on July 8

Beijing's Urban Renewal

People's Daily
July 7

Compared with other cultural parks in Beijing featuring skyscrapers and fancy facilities, the 77 Cultural and Creative Park hidden behind a quaint gray brick street wall in the capital's Dongcheng District

“We also need cultural bridge-building. The economy is certainly important to make money... But the cultural elements are crucial where we align ourselves with similar values.”

Felix Sutter, President of the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“We will stay in China. This is a single-country market that is growing the fastest in the long term.”

Michel Tran Van, Chief Operating Officer of Airbus China, in a recent interview with Xinhua

maintains a more common touch.

The 1950s printing-factory-turned-park started renovations in 2012 and went into operation in May 2014, starring film, theater and television drama as its core content. The park's purposely lowered production costs attract many actors and crews as well as enable audiences to catch a movie or two at a reasonable price.

The 77 Cultural and Creative Park is the epitome of Beijing's culture-driven urban transition, with more and more of the capital's old factories now getting a modern makeover.

Dongcheng District has turned a number of its old factories into cultural parks. So far, the district features 42 such parks, covering a total area of 730,000 square meters. Last year, these venues reported a revenue of 143.6 billion yuan (\$21.4 billion), setting a successful example for the functional transition of old factories.

Culture is of the utmost importance in any urban overhaul. Under the relevant guidelines rolled out by the Beijing Municipal Government, several cultural parks with distinctive features are on the rise in the city.

These venues not only revitalize the city itself, but also create more space and opportunities for its residents.

Checking up on Green Growth

Xinhua News Agency
July 6

In the past seven years, two nationwide inspections on ecology and environment have pushed forward China's pursuit of greener growth.

The country's central authorities first started the checks in late 2015 and finished the first round of inspections at the local level by 2018. The second round covered more than 30 provincial-level regions, two government departments, and six centrally administered state-owned enterprises from

2019 to the first half of 2022.

Based on a problem-solving principle, they prioritize the management of both major environmental issues and common public concerns.

So far, 95 percent of the 3,294 problems uncovered during the first round and its review period have been resolved, and half of the 1,227 issues already found in the second round have also been corrected, Vice Minister of Ecology and Environment Zhai Qing said on July 6.

Some 262 cases have been disclosed to the public, of which nearly half relate to pollution and weaknesses in environmental infrastructure; 33.2 percent are in the field of ecology and sustainable development.



LEADING SCREENWRITER AND NOVELIST DIES AT 87

Ni Kuang, one of Hong Kong's most distinguished screenwriters and novelists, passed away on July 3 at the age of 87.

Born in Shanghai in 1935, Ni moved to Hong Kong in 1957. He was a proofreader and editor, before embarking on a career as a professional writer. He wrote hundreds of novels and film scripts covering different genres, including detective, science fiction, horror, martial arts and romance. He once worked on serializations for 12 newspapers at the same time.

For the 1972 film *Fist of Fury*, he created the protagonist Chen Zhen, portrayed by Bruce Lee. The character went on to become a Chinese cultural icon starring in numerous remakes and adaptations.

Ni received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hong Kong Film Awards in 2012.



“How many George Floyd or Jayland Walker deaths are needed before the U.S. Government truly reflects on itself and takes practical actions to shed its arrogance and prejudice and achieve fairness and justice?”

Zhao Lijian, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, at a regular news briefing on July 5

“We are facing continued vaccine inequity, rising inflation, major supply chain disruptions and crippling geopolitical uncertainties. We are on a dangerous path to harming future generations, if we do not act now.”

Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the UN Economic and Social Council, during a UN forum on sustainable development which opened on July 5



COVER STORY

RIDING THE CLOUD

China embarks on big data's journey to the west By Wang Jun



A staff member works at a data center of telecom giant China Unicom in Zhongwei, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on March 1

keeps rising, driving the rapid growth of data centers,” said He Baohong, head of the Cloud Computing and Big Data Research Institute at the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT). According to He, in the past five years, the number of data center racks in China has grown at an average annual rate of more than 30 percent, with each supersized data center with more than 10,000 standard racks consuming at least 100 million kWh of energy every year.

East-to-west transfer

In February, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the Cyberspace Administration of China, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the National Energy Administration jointly unveiled plans to build eight national computing hubs with a total of 10 data center clusters, marking the launch of the east-to-west computing resource transfer project.

The hubs will be located in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle, Inner Mongolia, Guizhou Province, Gansu Province and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. They will constitute the backbone of a ►►

Twenty km south of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region’s capital, Hohhot, the grassland is surging with computer power. Located out here on the open steppe is the Big Data and Cloud Computing Information Park, home to 10,000 Internet data center (IDC) racks that operate around the clock.

The center was built in 2015 by China Unicom, one of the country’s major telecom operators, and has attracted more than 100 tenants, including government departments, well-known international cloud computing providers, large Internet firms, banks and insurance companies.

“The annual mean temperature of Hohhot is 8 degrees Celsius, and natural cooling sources can be used here for about five months every year,” an executive at the center told *People’s Daily*, adding that through using innovative cooling methods, the company saves approximately 5 million kWh of electricity each year.

“As 5G and other new technologies develop rapidly, China’s demand for data storage and computing

computing network that integrates data centers, cloud computing and big data. The project is expected to bridge the gap between eastern and less developed western regions in computing resources.

According to the Open Data Center Committee, a Beijing-based nonprofit organization formed by enterprises and institutions related to the data center industry, data centers across China consumed 93.9 billion kWh of electricity in 2020. The figure will reach 380 billion kWh by 2030. China's vast

central and western regions have abundant clean energy supplies such as wind and solar power.

"Using resources in the western region to meet the computing demand of the eastern region will gradually address the imbalance between the supply and demand of data centers in China, which will be conducive to cultivating a hyper-scale data market," said He, adding that the project will help lift the network capabilities of all regions and data centers, thereby improving the level of Internet connectivity across the country.

"Advancing the east-to-west transfer of computing resources is an important project to address the unbalanced development in China," said Li Hongwu, head of China Unicom Research Institute.

According to Li, the project will not only bring investment to the western region through the construction of new computing infrastructure to facilitate local industrial restructuring and economic transformation, but also boost the coordinated development of the country's entire digital economy.

Vast market opportunities

"The east-to-west computing resource transfer project covers a large number of areas with high data consumption, making the existing backbone networks (principal data routes) insufficient," Wang Tiejun, deputy general manager of the material business unit of Yangtze Optical Fiber and Cable Joint Stock Co. Ltd., told *People's Daily*. According to him, the project will propel the upgrading of the transmission speed of the backbone network, bringing new market opportunities for enterprises like his company.

Server producers also see a promising market. Huang Yue, an executive of Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions Group, said the project will give a strong push to the data center industry, and help maintain the prosperity of the server industry. He added that in 2022 the revenue of Chinese server producers is expected to grow by more than 10 percent.

Yu Xiaohui, head of the CAICT, said the number of data center racks in use nationwide reached 5.2 million in 2021, the IDC rack market had by then generated a total revenue of 150 billion yuan (\$22.35 billion), and the market size of cloud computing had reached 303 billion yuan (\$45.16 billion). The CAICT expects that, during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, the number of





A large LED display at a big data technology exhibition center in Guiyang, Guizhou Province, on May 26

data center racks across China will grow at an annual rate of around 20 percent, and the annual revenue growth from racks and cloud computing will reach 25-30 percent and 30 percent, respectively.

The east-to-west transfer of computing resources may channel in an additional investment of as much as 400 billion yuan (\$59.61 billion) every year, and the improvement of computing power-related facilities in the western region will bring opportunities to local information technology and green energy industries, said Xu Bin, deputy director of the Innovation-Driven Development Center of the NDRC.

Cross-regional management

Among the 5.2 million standard data

center racks across China, only 20 percent are located in the western region, said the *People's Daily* report. Nevertheless, those in east China are facing land and resource restrictions. As the east-to-west transfer of computing resources advances, will data producers and users of computing power downstream on the industry chain choose the western region as a location to store and compute the data?

"The total costs of a data center consist of spending on construction and day-to-day operations," said Ding Hongqing, Deputy General Manager of the Planning and Construction Department of China Mobile Communications Group Co. Ltd. Of the total, electricity bills account for more than 50 percent. "In the western region, natural cooling sources can be used to save electricity, and the power prices there are also much lower than in the eastern region," he added.

However, restricted by its inadequate network and technological capabilities, shortage of professionals and underdeveloped market environment, the western region still has a long way to go in the development of its big data industry.

Ding believes the western region should explore ways

of improving user experience by introducing new management methods for cross-region data storage and processing and building an efficient and flexible system for mobilizing computing resources.

"Data storage and computing are capital intensive with a long investment recovery period. It will be unsustainable if the western region only relies on government subsidies for electricity and land use to attract data centers," said Wu Hequan, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering. He suggested that the western region should improve the industrial ecosystem and focus on expanding both the upstream and downstream of the big data industry. **BR**

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Comments to wangjun@qicgamerica.com

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Booming new infrastructure in China attracts growing participants By Li Xiaoyang

After exploring the Chinese market for decades, U.S. tech firm Intel is now active in the nation's new infrastructure development. Starting from 2018, the company has been cooperating with China Unicom, one of the country's three major telecom operators, on 5G and Internet of Things projects. It also established a smart city center in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, in 2020, and introduced online platforms for enhancing efficiency, data security and remote management of enterprises in March this year.

Like Intel, many enterprises in China have sensed new opportunities brought by the country's new infrastructure drive. While traditional infrastructure like roads and bridges help improve transportation, new infrastructure facilitates the transmission of data and enhances operation of existing facilities. 5G networks, extra-high voltage power grids, inter-city rail transit, new-energy vehicle charging stations, big data centers, artificial intelligence (AI) and the industrial Internet all fall into this category.

The Chinese Government is channeling increasing investment into new infrastructure, as it aims to boost the development of the digital economy as a way to spur economic growth. Enterprises, especially large state-owned ones, are plunging head first into the sector to ride the tide.

Yue Xiangyu, a researcher with the Institute for the Development of Chinese Economic Thought at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, told *China City News* that new infrastructure development will boost weak areas of the economy and improve people's lives. The rising commodity prices are also beginning to reveal the advantages of investing in projects of new

infrastructure, he said.

"New infrastructure is open to investment from both public and private sectors, and there's great potential for hi-tech private firms and foreign-funded enterprises to be involved," Chen Baoming, a researcher with the Science and Technology Talent Center of the Ministry of Science and Technology, told *Beijing Review*.

The high ground

According to a press conference of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) in February, over 150 industrial Internet platforms had provided services for more than 1.6 million

enterprises, and more than 2,000 5G Plus industrial Internet projects were under construction across China. New technologies such as smart mining, smart transportation and tele-medicine are also emerging.

China had built over 1.6 million 5G base stations as of May, and plans to add another 600,000 this year, the MIIT said.

China Mobile, another telecom giant in China, has been expanding its 5G base stations and data centers in recent years, launching more than 8,000 5G commercialization projects. It has cooperated with the government of Shanxi Province, a major coal-producing region, in renovating a coal mine, enabling 5G-based automated inspection and operation. The smart solutions have reduced the need for labor, improved security, and enhanced efficiency.



A staff member tests a 5G-enabled service robot at CloudMinds, a robot manufacturer in Shanghai, on May 26

China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, a government think tank, projected that the total value-added output driven by the commercial use of 5G in China will amount to 24.8 trillion yuan (\$3.7 trillion) between 2020 to 2025. The commercialization of the new-generation wireless technology began in the country in 2019.

Green and low-carbon projects are another focus of new infrastructure development. As China gears up to achieve energy transition, traditional industries such as power and steel are working hard to deliver their share of contribution. Power companies are exploring the adoption of 5G and big data to improve efficiency, and establish more clean energy facilities using wind power and photovoltaic technologies. The increasing popularity of new-energy vehicles has also driven the construction of charging stations.

The new infrastructure boom is backed by government funds. More than 20 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have unveiled plans for the construction of 5G networks, industrial Internet facilities and data centers this year. Zhejiang Province has pledged to invest around 440 billion yuan (\$65.6 billion) in over 900 major projects in related fields. Guizhou Province plans to build 25,000 5G base stations this year and to establish itself as a national computing hub.

State-owned enterprises (SOEs) are playing a noteworthy role in this wave of spending. In 2021, over 700 subsidiaries of nearly 70 centrally administered SOEs invested a total of 400 billion yuan (\$59.6 billion) in new infrastructure projects. Between 2021 and 2025, they are expected to participate in more than 1,300 such projects worth over 10 trillion yuan (\$1.49 trillion), according to the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council.

More participants

The new infrastructure drive has also attracted a growing number of private and foreign-funded enterprises, which serve as smart solution providers.

Chinese tech company Huawei has developed cooling facilities that take ad-

vantage of natural winds to cut carbon emissions in data centers. Its AI technology for automated temperature adjustment also proves effective to save energy. Companies such as China Mobile have also adopted the cooling systems. According to Huawei estimates, one China Mobile data center would save over 400,000 cubic meters of water and cut 27,000 tons of carbon emissions over a decade by using its cooling solutions.

Operating for three decades in the Chinese market, German software company SAP has provided digital solutions for over 10,000 local enterprises. In 2020, it launched an innovation park in Shandong Province for providing digital services. The company has also cooperated with dairy product manufacturing giant Mengniu Group, allowing the latter to develop a platform for tracing its milk production resources and managing farms.

“Smart infrastructure will allow enterprises to obtain information quickly, and respond to market changes. SAP is working on empowering Chinese companies toward this kind of transformation,” Huang Chenhong, President of SAP Greater China, said at an online forum on July 5.

Homegrown players are also reaching out to other countries. Chinese online retail platform JD.com has launched automated warehouses in the United States and Germany, providing platforms for Chinese brands to go global and ensuring cross-border transportation through its logistics and supply chain network are backed by big data.

China has earned itself the

worldwide reputation of building traditional infrastructure fast. It is also seeking to improve the global presence of its new infrastructure.

A report from business consultancy KPMG earlier this year said new infrastructure facilities feature lower costs, lower risks and shorter delivery periods compared with transportation and energy projects, which appeal to investors.

As digital connectivity has become increasingly important during the pandemic, the Digital Silk Road program, part of the Belt and Road Initiative, will narrow the digital gap between participating countries. The initiative aims to build a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road routes.

Chinese enterprises see great opportunities created by the 5G network, cross-border e-commerce centers and data centers in other Belt and Road partners, according to the report.

Barriers to overcome

For enterprises that aim not only at smart transformation but also to enter the new infrastructure market, the door is still not wide open. “The market access barriers are high for private enterprises to participate in new infrastructure investment. As standards are not yet clarified, glass ceilings such as requirements on companies’ assets have made many private enterprises ineligible,” Liu Wei, President of AI service provider PCITECH, told *China Economic Weekly*.

The government needs to place all players on a level playing field to channel private investment into new infrastructure projects, Liu said.

The participation of a wider range of enterprises is conducive to the sustainable development of new infrastructure projects, according to Chen. He calls for accelerating the development of models for government-business cooperation in order to boost the industries the projects are in. **BR**

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A Giant Leap

Enhanced capacity-building protects national security By Liang Xiao

‘We must think of danger in times of safety and always get prepared.” This ancient political wisdom has become the consensus in China. In the decade since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) took place in 2012, China has made strides in enhancing national security.

For many Chinese, the concept of national security used to be a vague political narrative far removed from daily life. But, national security is essential for the political, social and economic development of any country. It’s the cornerstone of a country’s peace and prosperity.

A holistic approach

According to the 2015 National Security Law, “national security” refers to a status in which the country’s sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, welfare of the people, sustainable economic and social development, as well as other major state interests, do not suffer internal or external threats.

While presiding over the first meeting of the National Security Commission of the CPC Central Committee in April 2014, President Xi Jinping emphasized the need to pursue a holistic approach to national security.

Xi said this approach requires a focus on both internal and external challenges. Internally, it is essential for promoting development, continuing reform, maintaining stability, and creating a safe environment. Externally, it should promote international peace, seek cooperation and mutual benefit, and strive to bring harmony to the world. For the sake of our global community with a shared future, we should all work toward our goal of satisfying the world’s security needs in a way that is beneficial to all. We will continue to improve our national security system, strengthen our national security capacity, and defend our sovereignty, security and national interest as it concerns our development needs.

Since COVID-19 emerged, for example, the approach has guided China in the fight against



A kindergarten teacher in Xiangdu District of Xingtai, Hebei Province, explains the concept of national security to students on April 15, China’s National Security Education Day



Visitors at the Fifth National Security Education Exhibition held by the government of Macao Special Administrative Region on May 15

the pandemic. Driven by its understanding of non-traditional security threats, such as biosecurity threats, the Chinese Government has stuck to a people-centered approach, ensuring the safety and health of Chinese citizens and contributing to the protection of people in other parts of the world.

Legal framework

The United States enacted the world's first special national security law in 1947, continuously strengthening its legislative work in related fields and gradually establishing a complete legal system in the following decades. China's first National Security Law was only promulgated in 1993, with limited contents and no amendments for over 20 years.

Though a late starter, China is accelerating its progress in national security legislation. More than 20 laws directly related to national security have been formulated or revised since 2012, including laws on counterespionage, anti-terrorism, cybersecurity, biosecurity and nuclear safety.

The new National Security Law adopted in 2015 stipulates the tasks and institutional measures for safeguarding national security in political, economic, military, territorial and other fields. "China has put in place a legal Great Wall to safeguard national security by instituting new laws as well as revisions to existing ones in this regard over the past 10 years," Tong Weidong, an official with the Commission of Legislative Affairs of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, told a press conference on April 25.

In addition, the 2020 Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region marks an important milestone in the practice of One Country, Two Systems, a basic state policy the Chinese Government has adopted to realize the peaceful reunification of the country. The law provides a legal basis to punish activities endangering national security, playing a significant role in restoring peace and order in the region.

Anti-terrorism

Known as the political plague of the 21st century,

terrorism poses a huge threat to world peace and development.

China's anti-terrorism situation was once severe. Infiltrated by international terrorist forces and instigated by domestic separatist and religious extremist forces, a riot in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on July 5, 2009, left 197 people dead. A terrorist attack in the region's Shanshan County on June 26, 2013 left 24 people dead. On March 1, 2014, a serious violent terrorist incident occurred in Kunming Railway Station, Yunnan Province, killing 29 people and injuring more than 130. The Chinese people had begun to feel that terrorism was hitting very close to home.

"Resolute and decisive measures must be taken, and high pressure must be maintained to crack down on violent terrorists who have been swollen with arrogance," President Xi said in 2014. He pointed out that the fight against terrorism is a matter of national security, concerns the vital interests of the people, and relates to the overall situation of reform, development and stability.

Under the Central Government's leadership, public security organs have moved counterterrorism undertakings into a more prominent position, cracking down on all forms of terrorist crimes. On July 14, 2021, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) held a press conference to provide more information about the country's counterterrorism work. According to Liu Yunfeng, Director of the MPS' Counterterrorism Bureau, since the launch of the campaign to clamp down on terrorist activities in 2014, over 1,900 violent terrorist organizations had been eliminated, more than 14,000 people involved had been arrested, and more than 2,000 explosive devices had been seized.

While resolutely combating domestic terrorist forces, China also

actively supports counterterrorism cooperation among the international community. The country has ratified and acceded to 12 international counterterrorism conventions and fulfills its related obligations.

Cybersecurity

As of December 2021, the number of Chinese Internet users had reached 1.032 billion, and the digital economy is becoming an ever more important engine driving China's economic growth.

In roughly two decades, China's online industry has developed at supersonic speed, leading the issue of cybersecurity to become an increasingly hot topic of social debate over the past 10 years. On the one hand, the country continues to improve the construction and protection of its critical information infrastructure. This particular infrastructure is the nerve center of economic and social operations, involving finance, energy, electricity, communications and transportation. Once the infrastructure is damaged or attacked, it may lead to traffic interruption, financial disorder, power paralysis and other serious problems.

On the other hand, as the national security field closest to the daily lives of citizens nationwide, the government is committed to protecting the legitimate rights and interests of people in the digital sphere and has made sustained efforts in data security management and personal information protection by, for example, tightening the rules on mobile phone applications' collection and use of personal information, and cracking down on telecom fraud. Its "cyberspace is not beyond the scope of justice" promise has been delivered, effectively guaranteeing the security of netizens' personal information.

China is also a staunch defender of global cybersecurity. It upholds that all countries should work together to contain the abuse of information technology, oppose cybersurveillance and cyberattacks and reject the arms race in cyberspace.

All in all, the Chinese Government has been working hard to build a real sense of security among its citizens. **BR**

New Digital Locomotives

By Luca Belli

In 1990, the landmark report of the South Commission, chaired by Manmohan Singh, who served as Indian prime minister from 2004 to 2014, represented a defining moment for the Global South, calling for South-South cooperation and consecrating the theory of the “locomotives of the South.” The report emphasized that Global South countries could not expect former colonizers and imperialist forces to be the driver of their development. “The new locomotive forces have to be found within the South itself,” it argued.

Representing 40 percent of the global population, 25 percent of global GDP and 20 percent of global trade, it is hard not to consider BRICS countries as such locomotives. Since the creation of BRICS in 2006, of which Singh was one of the protagonists, the number of governmental and multistakeholder meetings, partnerships and initiatives organized by the grouping every year has been growing consistently. No member state leader has ever missed an annual summit and BRICS has never lost momentum.

Despite the remarkably challenging situation that global governance, supply chains and global diplomatic relationships are facing, the commitment of BRICS members to the grouping remains solid and unchanged. The countries continue to consider the group as a diplomatic priority and, despite their—sometimes—very different opinions on several issues, they remain united in diversity.

Twenty years after Goldman Sachs economist Jim O’Neill coined the BRIC acronym in 2001, the fundamental goal of the grouping remains unchanged: to build a multipolar order where global governance and development can be led by the Global South for the benefit of developing countries.

To achieve and enable such an ambitious goal, it has become clear to BRICS and non-BRICS countries alike that digital technologies, digital governance

and digital policies have acquired a key role.

Digital technologies

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a harsh reminder that digital technologies play an essential role for our societies and economies, and are a key enabler of literally every service, be it private or public. From education to national security, passing through health, commerce or culture, any service has been or is in the process of being digitized, and this trend is irreversible.

Over the past five years, largely because of recent COVID-19-induced shocks, the way we organize work, communications and trade have changed much more than over the preceding 50 years. When the BRIC leaders met for the first time in 2009, before the S was added for South Africa, the terms “digital” or “cyber” were not even mentioned in their first joint statement. These terms are featured 23 times in the 14th BRICS Summit Beijing Declaration, adopted on June 23. Digital transformation is completely reshaping our lives at an unprecedented pace. This transformation brings incredible opportunities but also enormous challenges. In such a context, BRICS countries have demonstrated they are not only the “locomotives of the South,” but also capable of acting as drivers of innovations in terms of both digital technology and digital governance.

In less than a decade, BRICS countries have evolved into regional or global leaders in digital

technologies. As a telling example, it suffices to consider that China, India and Brazil have passed from being among the least connected countries in the world to global leaders in online payments in eight years. Together, BRICS countries have the potential to be the digital locomotives of the Global South.

Innovative digital governance

Since the revelations of former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden in 2013 about extensive Internet and phone surveillance by U.S. intelligence, BRICS has also promoted numerous governance initiatives aimed at fostering global digital cooperation.

In the aftermath of the Snowden revelations, Brazil convened the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, better known as NETmundial, in São Paulo in 2014, which adopted an ambitious declaration. Unfortunately, time has demonstrated that ambition alone is insufficient and must be accompanied with resources and stability to produce meaningful outcomes.

Aware of this, China launched, also in 2014, a new global effort aimed at fostering cyberspace governance: the World Internet Conference, also known as the Wuzhen Summit. The conference, which is convened annually in Zhejiang Province, provides a valuable venue for stakeholders to discuss solutions on a plethora of issues related to digital technologies.

India hosted the Global Conference on Cyberspace in 2017; Russia has organized its AI Journey Conference since 2019; and South Africa has emerged as the most active African country in most Internet governance forums.

Importantly, in July, the First Digital BRICS Forum was organized under the Chinese presidency of the grouping, thus providing an extraordinary opportunity to the member countries to further discuss their approaches to digital



An intelligent robot dog on display at an exhibition on the BRICS New Industrial Revolution in Xiamen, Fujian Province, on September 8, 2021

technologies and governance, and identify common ground to enhance cooperation.

Legal interoperability

The initiatives spearheaded by BRICS countries demonstrate the enormous importance they attach to digital technologies and governance, and to converging normative frameworks. It is increasingly evident that they have understood the value of interoperable digital technologies, which will allow them to exchange information and access or provide services globally, but also of interoperable norms, facilitating international trade while preserving national and digital sovereignty.

Preserving sovereignty and fostering openness are and should be seen as compatible goals if they are supported by legally interoperable frameworks. Legal interoperability can be achieved via many strategies, fostering convergent norms, providing similar levels of protection for users and similar obligations for producers of digital goods and providers of digital services.

Such legal interoperability should be at the

basis of BRICS efforts to enhance their digital cooperation, while offering an alternative model of digital governance, driven by the Global South, but aimed at openness and inclusiveness. Importantly, as the works of the CyberBRICS project have demonstrated, many digital policies and norms in BRICS countries are already remarkably compatible.

Despite their differences on numerous issues, BRICS countries have demonstrated incredible strength when acting together, for instance, by establishing the BRICS-led New Development Bank, universally considered a remarkable achievement.

Even on traditionally thorny issues, such as cybersecurity governance, they can reach consensus. BRICS countries were represented among the 25 states which appointed experts in the UN

Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace, which produced a consensus report in July 2021.

The same year, the BRICS Declaration, issued as the main outcome of the Delhi Summit, called for the establishment of “legal frameworks of cooperation among BRICS states [and] a BRICS intergovernmental agreement on cooperation.”

Considering this context, there is an incredible potential for BRICS countries. They have the strength, the relevance and the creativity to offer a Global South-led model of digital governance. As former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva once said, the logic behind BRICS is “to do something different and not copy anybody.” **BR**

The author is a professor at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) Law School in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he heads the Center for Technology and Society and the CyberBRICS project
 Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
 Comments to yanwei@cicgamerica.com

Pre-Handmaid's Tale

By Ma Miaomiao



Demonstrators protest against the Supreme Court's overturning of the Roe v. Wade abortion-rights ruling in San Francisco, California, the U.S., on June 24

May we compare real life today in the United States, a long self-proclaimed beacon of democracy and individual freedom, to Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, throughout which women are attempting to regain their freedom while having next-to-no agency over their own reproductive rights?

On June 24, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the 1973 decision on Roe v. Wade, which established a person's constitutional right to an abortion, as well as the 1992 decision Casey v. Planned Parenthood, which added another layer of protection by barring states from imposing an "undue burden" on someone seeking an abortion. Individual states will now have the power to ban the procedure.

In the fallout of the ruling, at least 26 states are poised to ban or further restrict access to safe and legal abortions, according to U.S. research organization the Guttmacher Institute.

Already, a 10-year-old rape victim

in Ohio has been denied an abortion as the state does not allow it once fetal cardiac activity is detected in the sixth week of pregnancy. Ohio is one of 13 states that have anti-abortion "trigger laws" in place that came into effect as soon as Roe v. Wade was overturned. The child was thus forced to travel to neighboring Indiana where the procedure has yet to be banned. Given the physical and psychological dangers of childhood pregnancy, the case exposes Ohio's double standard in attempting to protect the rights of an unborn child at the expense of a living one.

Many U.S. politicians seem insensible to the implications of the Supreme Court's decision, keen to continue pursuing partisan interests. President Joe Biden described the decision as a "tragic error," one which he instantly used to compel voters to head to the polls at the midterm elections. At the same time, former President Donald Trump praised it as "the biggest win for life in a generation," noting that it was "only made possible" by his

actions as president.

In recent years, the U.S. has become increasingly divided. Many social issues fall along partisan lines. In general, many Democrats favor legal abortions, gun control and bans on religion in the public sphere, while the majority of Republicans stand with religion and gun ownership and want abortions banned or strictly regulated.

Fighting for abortion rights has been a part of the American women's movement since the 1960s, and is key to securing gender equality and equal political and economic participation. In practice, the Supreme Court's decision, which drastically increases the financial resources necessary to secure an abortion, sets these goals back decades by targeting poor, minority and rural women—those who can least afford abortions and who can least afford an unplanned pregnancy.

Some will have to source abortion pills from unregulated pharmacies. Others will have to seek the help of illegal abortion clinics, even in cases of rape and incest, or be faced with no choice but to shoulder the huge mental, physical, economic and social cost of pregnancy. In many states, a pregnant person who finds themselves in a medical emergency will now be at the mercy of doctors and lawyers to determine if the necessary procedure is legal. Physicians are also being placed in a precarious situation, faced with new restrictions on their ability to provide care. As an extreme case, pregnant cancer patients may die in the U.S. as doctors fear treating them could count as an illegal abortion, reported U.S. financial and business news website Business Insider on July 5, citing experts.

In response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet said access to safe, legal and effective abortion is firmly rooted in international human rights law and is at the core of women and girls' autonomy, and ability to make their own choices about their bodies and lives, free of discrimination, violence and coercion.

The Supreme Court, which is supposed to uphold and protect citizens' rights, looks to be more of a factionalized arena where human rights and women's wombs can be sacrificed. So what's next? **BR**

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Comments to mamm@cicgamerica.com

The Supreme Sacrifice

By Lan Xinzheng

The United States Supreme Court ruled on June 30 that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) doesn't have the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants or to demand existing power plants replace fossil fuels with renewables.

Fossil fuel power plants are the second largest source of pollution in the U.S., the world's second largest carbon emitter. The Supreme Court's verdict is likely to derail U.S. efforts to manage the threats of climate change and undermine people's confidence in the commitment of President Joe Biden's administration to cutting emissions.

Tackling the climate crisis was an ambitious point on Biden's campaign agenda and remains a key policy of his current administration. In April last year, the president pledged to cut America's emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 50 percent over 2005 levels and set the goal for an emissions-free power sector by 2035. But, as Bloomberg wrote on April 27, "A year after he promised to cut U.S. emissions in half by 2030, experts say the goal is virtually out of reach now."

Climate change is among the rare areas where China and the U.S. are still working closely together, given that the Biden administration and the Chinese Government are of the same mind when it comes to the climate crisis, despite rising tensions between the two countries since former President Donald Trump dented the bilateral relationship.

Yet whereas China is doing the utmost to hit the two goals of peaking carbon emission and achieving carbon neutrality before 2030 and 2060, respectively, the U.S. seems to have fallen behind. Some people cite the separation of powers (executive, legislative and judicial) to justify the administration's inaction and argue that the Biden administration opposes the Supreme Court's decision.

This argument lacks conviction. Laws and



politics are two peas in a pod. The Supreme Court's verdict means to serve American interests. At a time when the U.S. is grappling with spiking inflation and economic slowdown, relaxing control over carbon emissions is a useful stimulus tool. When the Supreme Court decides to limit the EPA's authority to regulate emissions, not only will the U.S. economy get a boost, but the Biden administration will manage to keep its reputation intact.

Moreover, the verdict centers more on economic than legal

Whereas China is doing the utmost to hit the two goals of peaking carbon emission and achieving carbon neutrality before 2030 and 2060, respectively, the U.S. seems to have fallen behind

issues. In a 6-3 ruling, the Supreme Court's conservative majority invoked the "major questions" doctrine, a concept that's been percolating for decades but only now has been fleshed out. Chief Justice John Roberts said agencies "must point to clear congressional authorization" when undertaking policies of great "economic and political significance."

The goal of carbon neutrality and peaking carbon emissions surely will cause huge losses to the Chinese economy, as many high-polluting and energy-intensive businesses will have to shut down. But in stark contrast to the American approach, China has never swayed its decision to cut emissions despite downgraded projections for economic growth. As one of the world's major carbon emitters, the U.S., too, must rise to the occasion and deliver on its promise to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Taking action against climate change should be considered a small sacrifice for the greater good to avoid future generations paying the ultimate price.

Statistics from Rhodium Group, a New York-based independent research provider, show that greenhouse gas emissions by the U.S. in 2021 rose by 6.2 percent year on year, mainly stemming from increased coal power—up 17 percent over the past two years.

The U.S. Government used to take bold and swift action in this regard. The Clean Air Act of 1963 grants the EPA the authority to formulate regulations and oversee the states' plan enforcement. In 2014, President Barack Obama's administration proposed the Clean Power Plan, demanding all existing power plants reduce their carbon emissions. The plan was scheduled to take effect in 2022, but the Supreme Court's verdict has reduced it to a mere scrap of paper. That's one reduction the world wasn't waiting for. **BR**

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Comments to lanxinzheng@cicgamerica.com

The Price of Protection

By Liang Xiao

Ending decades of neutrality, Sweden and Finland are now on the cusp of joining NATO. This development occurred during the military alliance's summit in Madrid, Spain, on June 28-30, one of the most consequential meetings in seven-plus decades of NATO history.

Sweden and Finland both announced their membership intention in May, after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in late February caused a sudden shift in attitudes toward joining the bloc.

NATO's core principle of collective defense means that an attack against one member is considered an attack against all members.

However, this protective umbrella comes at a cost. In 2006, the bloc's defense ministers agreed member countries should commit a minimum 2 percent of their GDP to military expenditure and undertake a series of obligations.

Currently, only one third of NATO's 32 member states have fulfilled the spending requirement.

Sweden's defense budget, though increasing year by year, accounts for only 1.3 percent of GDP. The Swedish Government has said it will increase military spending as soon as possible, even though the hike in this expenditure will require budget cuts in social welfare.

During Donald Trump's administration, the U.S. repeatedly pressed other NATO members to

increase their military spending: to relieve the U.S. spending burden and to sell more "Made in USA" weapons to the European continent.

On February 27, three days after Russia moved its troops into Ukraine, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced that Germany's military expenditure would increase from 1.5 to 2 percent of GDP and at the same time allocated 100 billion euros (\$102.5 billion) to the makeover of its armed forces this year. On March 14, Scholz said Germany would be buying 35 U.S.-made F-35A fighter jets.

On June 6, the Spanish cabinet approved the injection of 1 billion euros (\$1.03 billion) into the country's military budget. The one-time spending aims to cover the unexpected cost associated with the war in Ukraine, government spokesperson Isabel Rodriguez said. The increase also aligns with Spain's promise to NATO to allocate 2 percent of its GDP to its military by 2029. Currently, Spain budgets just 1.01 percent of its GDP on defense, the lowest share of any NATO country—except for Luxembourg.

As the world's largest arms

supplier, the U.S. will surely be happy to see the increase in European defense budgets.

At the recently concluded summit in Madrid, leaders of member countries decided to expand the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF) from about 40,000 to more than 300,000 troops, with the reorganization to be completed in 2023. For NATO members, sharing this cost is another huge expense.

As an extension and development of the 1948 Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Program led by the U.S., in the military field, the U.S. joined Western European countries to establish NATO in 1949 on the grounds of resisting the Soviet Union's expansion following World War II and controlling the European defense system. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the foundation for the alliance's presence ceased to exist, but NATO continued to expand eastward with Russia as its imaginary enemy, intensifying regional tensions.

In his 2019 interview with *The Economist*, French President Emmanuel Macron warned Europe "is experiencing the brain death of NATO," believing there is little coordination in strategic decision-making between the U.S. and its NATO allies.

Macron has repeatedly proposed the formation of a "European army" independent of NATO to achieve self-defense. This initiative was also supported by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel; she emphasized Europe "must take its destiny into its own hands."

With the U.S. seemingly making a strong international comeback, Europe's efforts to free itself from American reins are once again overshadowed. The question remains, who will benefit most from NATO's continuous expansion? Not Europe, that's for sure. **BR**

With the U.S. seemingly making a strong international comeback, Europe's efforts to free itself from American reins are once again overshadowed. The question remains, who will benefit most from NATO's continuous expansion? Not Europe, that's for sure

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to liangxiao@qicgamerica.com

Will NATO Stay Out?

By Anthony Moretti

Leaders of the NATO member states, joined by several special guests, gathered in Spain for the military bloc's summit from June 29 to 30. And make no mistake: a peaceful and shared future was not the main theme in Madrid.

The Western media narrative suggests the highlight of the event was NATO's formal invitation to Sweden and Finland to join the alliance; NATO leaders insisted these additions were necessary because Russia continues to demonstrate a belligerent attitude toward Europe. In fact, hours before the meetings officially began, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg had announced 300,000 NATO troops would be placed at high-readiness over the next year, up from 40,000 previously, a new military lineup designed to better counter Russia, the country the alliance has designated as posing the greatest threat.

President Joe Biden contributed to the "one-cannot-trust-Russia" theme by announcing the U.S. would soon send another \$800 million in weapons to Ukraine, a move that will extend a tragic war now in its fifth month. When asked about the war, he offered a head-scratching answer, saying, "I don't know how it's going to end, but it will not end with Russia defeating Ukraine. Ukraine has already dealt a severe blow to Russia."

What?

The United Kingdom was also banging the war drum. Secretary of State for Defense Ben Wallace added NATO must consider whether to demand additional money from its partner nations in the near future. "As the threat changes, so must the funding," he said.

All the while, inflationary pressures throughout the West mean more and more people are struggling to pay their bills, put food on the table, send their kids to college and fill up their gas tanks. Justifiably, more and more Americans and Europeans are asking why they must suffer because of a war that seems to have no direct



Demonstrators take part in an anti-NATO protest ahead of the alliance's summit in Madrid, Spain, on June 26

relevance to their countries and that lacks a clear endgame.

Nevertheless, the White House chooses to send more arms to Ukraine, ensuring an even longer war that will cause even more damage to Ukraine, extend the humanitarian crisis there and irritate already higher prices for basic goods and services throughout the world.

And make no mistake, for roughly 30 years, NATO officials insisted that inching ever closer to Russia was necessary in order to ensure peace. They deliberately ignored warnings from important international figures and Russian politicians that Russia felt threatened by the expansion and at some point would respond. The Russia-Ukraine conflict—brought about in part because the West continued to entertain the idea that Ukraine could join NATO—has provided the perfect we-told-you-so moment for the West. In a convenient twist of logic, they assert it's all Russia's fault

for getting angry because it was consistently irritated [by the West].

At the same time, we must not forget Western leaders will tell you that Russia is not the only country they will not trust. China, too, is not in NATO's good graces.

NATO's Strategic Concept, released during the summit, alleges that China poses "systemic challenges."

In fact, the alliance might have its eyes set on expanding into Asia. The ripple effect of NATO's potential ambition: The leaders of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea attended the summit for the first time. Chinese officials have now sounded the alarm: Any NATO move into Asia will jeopardize peace in the region and the world.

So will NATO listen and stay out of Asia? Recent history suggests the answer here is quite obvious: Not a chance. **BR**

The author is an associate professor at the School of Informatics, Humanities and Social Sciences, Robert Morris University, the United States
 Copiedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
 Comments to yanwei@cicgamericas.com



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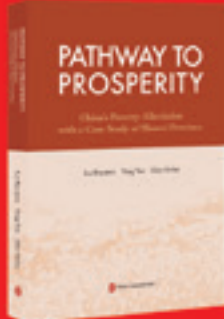
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Inclusive or Exclusive?

America's Indo-Pacific Strategy and its negative implications for regional security and progress By Ma Miaomiao

In an attempt to address the lack of strategic clarity on the United States' overall policy in the Indo-Pacific region, President Joe Biden's administration released a new strategy on February 11. Then, on May 23, Biden launched an economic initiative, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).

Developing a successful strategy for the Indo-Pacific is critical for the U.S. to secure its vital national interests in the region, reads an article on *The Diplomat*. This, as Ryan Hass, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, asserts, means that Washington "needs an Asia strategy for dealing with China, rather than a China strategy for Asia."

During a regional forum held in Japan in May, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad cautioned that the IPEF was formulated with the intention of isolating China and will not benefit regional economic growth.

How can we evaluate the strategic consequences of the Indo-Pacific Strategy on the Asia-Pacific region, the world's most vibrant and promising economic powerhouse that has enjoyed its own 40-year long peace and rapid growth? How will the IPEF affect regional economic integration, which is already progressing through institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)? How can we ensure U.S. competition with China under the strategy will be managed responsibly? These topics were discussed by a panel at the 10th World Peace Forum. The high-level seminar on international security, themed Preserving International Stability: Commonality, Comprehensiveness and Cooperation, was hosted by Tsinghua University in Beijing on July 2-4.

Regional security

In the region, generally, no single power is happy with the present situation, with many believing they are reacting defensively to the actions of others, said Shivshankar Menon, former national security adviser of India. "So we have, in Asia today, [many] powers who display the classic features of a series of security dilemmas," he added.

More countries are forced into the strategic competition between major powers, according to Zhou Fangyin, Dean of the School of International Relations at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. It is even more difficult for most East Asian countries to stay out of the way, and their attempts to maintain a relatively balanced diplomacy between China and the U.S. are becoming more difficult to achieve than in the past, he added.

Moon Chung-in, a former special advisor for foreign affairs and national security to the president of the Republic of Korea (ROK), shared at the panel discussion his concerns. In his eyes, there is a contradiction between collective security and defense in the Indo-Pacific Strategy. The strategy seems to emphasize the logic of a collective defense system that assumes common enemies and threats, he said, adding "such a strategy orientation is bound to undermine the mandate of a common security while destabilizing overall security architecture in the region."

Asia is different from Europe. Instead of a polarized security order with a military alliance like NATO, there are several bilateral alliance commitments in Asia, but many more partnerships, said Menon, adding that he believes partnerships differ from alliances in that partnerships accommodate common interest, but also divergent approaches.

For instance, India is a member of the

A plenary session of the 10th World Peace Forum takes place in Beijing on July 4



Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with the U.S., Japan and Australia (commonly referred to as the QUAD), “but that doesn’t mean India endorses every stance on every issue that our partners have,” he said.

The current modality and security cooperation embodied in the Indo-Pacific Strategy is a kind of “small groupism,” as advanced by the trilateral security alliance of the U.S., the UK and Australia (or AUKUS), the QUAD and several trilateral dialogues including the one among Japan, the ROK and the U.S., Moon told the forum. “Such security cooperation can destabilize an overall security architecture by creating what I call the ‘spaghetti bowl effect’ (the increasing number of security cooperation mechanisms within a region actually slows down its progress). They can really force some kinds of chaos and disorder,” he noted.

Inclusivity needed

The U.S. claims that the IPEF is not an exclusive economic bloc, but China

perceives it differently. If, in real practice, the framework functions as an exclusive one, it will significantly impair the institutional foundation of free trade and open regionalism, Moon said.

According to Zhou, the U.S. is endeavoring to leverage its strength in security and in international discourse and rule-making to influence the regional economic sphere and push the regional environment in a direction unfavorable to China.

For decades, China’s prosperity and rapid economic development have been the engine of growth in East Asia. Most East Asian countries, including friends and allies of the U.S., trade more with China than with the U.S. Moreover, China is capable of raising much more money than the U.S. to fund development in the Indo-Pacific region, said former U.S. Ambassador to China J. Stapleton Roy at another panel discussion during the forum.

Ong Keng Yong, a Singaporean diplomat who served as secretary general of ASEAN between 2003 and 2007, believes the strategy does at least demonstrate some economic faith in the Asia-Pacific region, as the U.S. economy needs the region, a growth-driver, to make itself more economically competitive worldwide.

The strategy is based on the premise of cooperation among like-minded countries which share common values and interests. However, this kind of cooperation is insufficient to unite the region. “The U.S. should be willing to engage in dialogue and even cooperation with non-like-minded countries,” Moon said. “Otherwise, the dichotomy of like-minded versus non-like-minded countries can easily precipitate the advance of a new cold war division into hostile blocs,” he added.

Comparing the weight the Chinese economy holds within the RCEP to the weight of the U.S. economy in IPEF “suggests that this is a race, but the Chinese economic growth is going to win,” said Bob Carr, former Foreign Minister of Australia, who attended the forum online. **BR**



COURTESY PHOTO

Party Gatherings Zoom In on Development

Local Party congresses review past progress and chart the course for the future

By Ji Jing

Fucheng Commercial and Trade Market, a wholesale clothing market in Beijing's Fengtai District, was last year transformed into Fengtai's government service center and library. The transformation is an example of how the local government is relieving the city of functions nonessential to its role as the nation's capital.

The area surrounding the market was a classic example of Beijing's "big city malaise," with crowded living conditions, traffic congestion and a lack of sanitation. To address issues such as these, a program of decluttering and rejuvenation was initiated in 2012.

Since then, Beijing has relocated more than 3,000 low-end manufacturing companies, renovated more than 980 markets and logistics centers and demolished 276 million square meters of unapproved buildings.

Beijing has become China's first megacity that "has managed to sustain growth while consuming fewer resources over the past five years," Cai Qi, Secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), said while delivering a report at the opening ceremony of the 13th CPC Beijing Municipal Congress on June 27.

Reports from Party secretaries are particularly significant assessments because a CPC local committee exercises overall leadership in a region.

All-round progress

As a result of the program, the permanent population of Beijing's six major urban districts has declined by 15 percent since 2014, and the municipal government has also restricted new construction projects in both urban and rural areas, cutting the amount of land earmarked for construction by 110 square km over the past five years.

While nonessential functions have been

relocated, high-end industries have been encouraged. In Xicheng District, a former wholesale clothing market has been converted into a national financial and technological demonstration zone, now home to more than 130 enterprises.

According to statistics from the office under the Beijing Municipal Government for promoting the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the number of Beijing's newly established market entities in high-end industries such as science and technology, commerce, cultural and information industries continues to increase. Their proportion increased from 40 percent in 2013 to 62 percent last year.

Over the past five years, Beijing's environment has also improved. The annual average concentration of major airborne fine particulate matter, or PM2.5, fell to 33 micrograms per cubic meter last year, decreasing by 43.1 percent from the level in 2017.

Carbon emissions have also decreased. Beijing peaked its carbon emissions in 2012 and has promised to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, 10 years ahead of the national deadline of 2060.

As a megacity with a population of more than 20 million, Beijing is plagued



Fengtai Railway Station in Beijing on June 20, the day it reopened after four years of reconstruction. The capital's oldest railway station is now the largest passenger railway hub in Asia

A Closer Look at Party Organizations

The Party's highest leading bodies

are the CPC National Congress and the Central Committee it elects. The CPC National Congress is held once every five years.

Local Party congresses at provincial to county levels are also held once every five years. Their functions and powers are:

- hearing and examining the reports of local Party committees;
- examining the reports of the local commissions for discipline inspection;
- discussing and adopting resolutions on major issues within the scope of their local areas; and
- electing local Party committees and commissions for discipline inspection.

A local Party committee carries out the directives of the Party organization at the next level up as

well as the resolutions of the Party congress at its own level, directs work in its own area, and reports to the Party committee at the next level up.

Primary-level Party organizations

are formed in work units such as enterprises, schools and research institutes. A primary-level Party committee, a general Party branch committee or a Party branch committee is elected for a term of three to five years. Their main tasks include:

- communicating to the public and carrying out the Party's principles and policies;
- giving full play to the exemplary role of Party members; and
- uniting and organizing Party members and non-Party members to fulfill work assignments.

(Compiled by Beijing Review)

by traffic congestion. The city has increased the capacity of its public transportation system to ease the problem. The length of urban railways in operation increased from 574 km in 2016 to 783.1 km at present.

Over the past five years, Beijing's annual economic output has grown from 2.8 trillion yuan (\$417.5 billion) to 4 trillion yuan (\$597.6 billion). Looking to the future, Cai said the capital's annual economic output will exceed 5 trillion yuan (\$745 billion) in the next five years, with the per-capita GDP and overall labor productivity taking the lead in the country.

In the next five years, Beijing will improve its role as a center for international relations by strengthening related facilities and capabilities. It will build its fourth embassy area and draft plans for the construction of new zones for international organizations, the report said.

"At the same time, Beijing will accelerate the establishment of an international science and technology innovation center to better serve the country's national strategy," Cai said.

International metropolis

In addition to Beijing, other provincial-level regions also held Party congresses ahead of the 20th CPC National Congress later this year.

At the 12th CPC Shanghai Municipal Congress, held from June 25 to 27, Li Qiang, Secretary of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee, delivered a report outlining the city's achievements over the past five years. Notably, in 2021, the total trading volume of the city's financial market surpassed 2,500 trillion yuan (\$372.8 trillion) and the container throughput of Shanghai Port exceeded 47 million twenty-foot equivalent units, ranking the first in the world for 12 consecutive years. Research and development expenditure accounted for 4.1 percent of the city's GDP last year.

Development of Lin-gang, a new area added to the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone in 2019, has been accelerating. The total output of industrial enterprises each with an annual main business revenue of 20 million yuan (\$2.97 million) or above hit 264.2 billion yuan (\$39.5 billion) there last year, a year-on-year increase of 72.7 percent, official data showed. The Shanghai Stock Exchange's STAR Market, a Nasdaq-style sci-tech innovation board established in 2018, has helped companies raise funds for research and development and production expansion.

The China International Import Expo (CIIE), an annual trade fair which has been held in the city every November since 2018, has become an emerging platform for business cooperation.

The Fourth CIIE, held last year, saw \$70.7 billion worth of deal intentions sealed, significantly more than the \$57.8 billion four years before, official data revealed.

By the end of last year, the number of foreign companies surpassed 60,000 in the city, and the number of regional headquarters of multinationals reached 831 and foreign-funded research and development centers totaled 506, according to the report.

The report also set out goals for Shanghai's development over the next five years, including, for instance, increasing the global rankings of its economic strength.

"We will promote Shanghai's deeper integration into the global economic system and its participation in global economic governance," Li said. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to jijing@qicgamerica.com

Prepare or Perish

The tourism industry is recovering but many businesses must adapt to survive By Lu Yan

Twenty-seven-year-old Wang Peng's favorite memories are of scaling China's mountains. For the Shanghai-based designer, conquering the dizzying heights provides a sense of satisfaction and the natural landscapes of different regions inspire a sense of wonder. However, it has been more than two years since Wang last put on his hiking boots.

"I can't wait to get back to traveling. The pandemic has really disrupted my life," Wang told *Beijing Review*, adding that it seems his wish will soon come true. In late June, China announced updates to its pandemic prevention and control guidelines, after measures began producing positive results in Shanghai and elsewhere.

Previously, China's national COVID-19 contact tracing smartphone app, which was necessary for travel, had applied an asterisk to the digital pass of anyone in cities with COVID-19 cases in the preceding 14 days. The presence of the asterisk precluded users from traveling to many destinations. But now, this measure has been abolished in order to better facilitate intercity movement. The government also announced it would reduce inbound travelers' mandatory time in centralized quarantine from 14 days to seven.

"The rollout of these new measures is a signal aimed at boosting people's and companies' confidence in population movement, tourism and economic growth," Wei Xiang, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences National Academy of Economic Strategy and a specialist in the leisure and tourism economy, told *Beijing Review*.

A good prospect

Upgrades to the guidelines, including the removal of the asterisk, were announced by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT). The contact tracing app, known as the *Xingcheng Ka* (travel card), was developed in 2020 by the ministry's scientific research institute, the China Academy of

Information and Communications Technology, in cooperation with the country's three major telecom operators—China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom. The app obtains location data from any user's phone to produce a digital pass that must be displayed when traveling between cities.

"The rollout of these new measures does not signal a relaxation of COVID-19 control measures, nor does it mean abandoning the dynamic zero-COVID-19 strategy," Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, posted to his personal account on Weibo, China's Twitter equivalent.

Wei echoed Wu by saying that the adjustment was based on the latest global and domestic situation, and in accordance with China's current needs. "It demonstrates that China's approaches toward pandemic control are not rigid. They are dynamic and continue to update in response to the changing situation," Wei said, adding that while minimizing the possibility of virus spread, policies are also being geared toward creating a sound environment for economic and business recovery and development.

According to statistics from Qunar.com, an online travel service provider, searches for air and train tickets on the platform surged within 30 minutes of the



A guide introduces bird specimens via live-streaming at a museum in Handan, Hebei Province, on May 17



Tourists walk on the beach at a scenic spot in Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, on June 28

new policy announcement, as did the search for hotels. Some netizens also took to social media with photos comparing Beijing South Railway Station before and after the announcement—one was almost empty and another was packed with people carrying luggage.

“Traveling during this time has some perks. Many hotels are reducing room rates and scenic areas are offering ticket discounts,” Wang said.

Despite the government’s positive signal, many people still have concerns about taking a long trip. “What if the local government or hotel at my destination has some kind of additional regulations or travel restrictions?” asked Liu Yi, a graduate student in Beijing who is a fan of traveling on a budget. “It would be terrible if I only found out about it after I arrived there, so I’d rather not go to another place to avoid the trouble,” she added.

Liu’s concern is understandable. While Wu said the removal of the asterisk will help prevent local authorities from imposing excessive travel restrictions, a number of netizens have reported cities introducing their own alternatives to maintain control, including Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, which introduced its own system using a red exclamation point in place of the asterisk.

The State Council’s Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism, China’s top epidemic control authority, recently reiterated its adamant stance prohibiting excessive virus containment measures and abuse of related tools, stressing that local authorities should not impose excessive travel restrictions, use digital health codes for unrelated purposes or rigidly turn away logistics workers, which has been a common occurrence in recent months.

“Wrongdoings such as the adoption of one-size-fits-all approaches and the implementation of additional control measures must be prevented,” Lei Zhenglong, Deputy Director of the National Health Commission’s Bureau of Disease Prevention and Control, said at a news briefing in June.

Technology is key

The pandemic has significantly disrupted tourism, but it can also serve as a strong push for industry actors to transform through the application of

technology, Wei said.

For example, during the Water Splashing Festival, one of the most important holidays of the Dai people of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, which fell in April this year, the local government sponsored an online celebration. About 130,000 people around the nation watched the live-streaming, flooding the comments section with volleys of water droplet emojis, pretending to splash one another online.

“Although I wasn’t able to return for the festival this year, the innovative event gave me a feeling of participation and also a platform to express my best wishes for my family,” Liu Xinyu, a Dai person living in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, told news portal Chengdu.cn. “It can also help promote our culture to the rest of the country and even the world.”

“In the past two decades, the technological upgrading of the tourism industry in response to COVID-19 has been slow compared to that of other industries. From a positive perspective, now is the opportunity to develop it. The industry and the government are already aware of that and are exploring options,” Wei said, adding that the process will weed out weak players in the tourism industry, leading to a rejuvenation. Wei also said he believes the government should offer preferential fiscal, taxation and credit policies to companies that embrace technologies that are used by travelers throughout their journeys.”

“These technologies, including apps that offer travel services, can be used by travelers to plan their entire trip before they leave, and even to view their destinations in advance using virtual reality technology,” Wei said.

Armchair travel is also becoming increasingly feasible in China. In 2018, the charitable China Foundation for Cultural Heritage Conservation and Internet giant Tencent developed a mini-app on Chinese super-app WeChat that enables people to “climb” sections of the Great Wall through their phones. Users can see the beauty of the World Heritage Site in the morning, noon and at dusk depending on the time they log in. They can also learn history and other facts through the Q&A function, and earn digital rewards for answering questions, which can be converted into donations to cultural relic preservation projects. **BR**

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Comments to luyan@qicgamerica.com

Never Too Young to Learn

The world's youth inspire new actions on climate change

By Yuan Yuan

Wu Changhua, the China/Asia Director of the Office of Jeremy Rifkin and a dedicated advisor to governments and corporations on sustainability strategy and innovation, has most recently been working with Rifkin on his latest book *The Age of Resilience*. The book will hit the shelves in November, with its Chinese version slated for publication soon after.

This new work by Rifkin, an American scholar and bestselling author of more than 20 books, brings up some inspirational ideas on how to educate people on environmental protection, Wu said. "Education is the key to awakening people's awareness of climate change," Wu told *Beijing Review*. "Among all the issues concerning education, what to teach is a very important one."

Though the COVID-19 pandemic barred many from going to work or school, this did come with a silver lining: People started paying more attention to nature. "This is very important, especially for young children who finally got to observe the fauna, flora and phenomena that surround us. This is a much more active and engaging approach than just sitting in a classroom and telling them how important it is to protect nature."

A critical time

As an environmentalist who's been raising awareness of the negative effects of climate change on nature and humans alike for more than 20 years, Wu said the world's climate today is much worse than she'd expected it to be two decades ago.

"We're already experiencing more extreme weather events," Wu said. "People everywhere can feel it. I'd dare say the planet is on fire."

She recalled how at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen (COP15), then President of the Republic of Maldives

Mohamed Nasheed told her how he and his ministers had held the world's first underwater cabinet meeting in a symbolic cry for help over rising sea levels that threaten the tropical archipelago's existence. Their climate SOS made headlines around the globe.

"If you look at small island countries, often low-lying coastal regions [which are high-risk areas vulnerable to sea-level rise], in many parts of the world, people are losing their homes," Wu said.

The international community has witnessed developed countries and developing countries pointing fingers over the years, accusing the other group of not fulfilling due responsibilities in managing carbon emission reduction and global warming.

The COP15 in Copenhagen eventually saw developed nations commit to the goal of channeling \$100 billion a year to less wealthy nations by 2020, to help them adapt to climate change and mitigate further temperature rises.

They reiterated their commitment at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. The Paris Agreement reached during that meeting extended the deadline for the original pledge to 2025.

But a 2019 United Nations report concluded that "the only realistic scenarios" showed the \$100-billion target was out of reach. "We are not there yet," UN Secretary General António Guterres conceded at the time.

"China, though, has played a positive role in recent years by setting carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals [before 2030 and 2060, respectively] and created national strategies targeting climate change," Wu said. "China has been a major champion in this regard."

In early June, China released the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2035, following the first such strategy released in 2013.

"I'm delighted to see the Chinese Government released China's first national climate change adaptation



A teacher takes students on a trip into nature in Fenxi County, Jiangxi Province, on May 30





strategy a couple of weeks ago,” Wu said. “That is a fascinating document for me to read as it highlights the country’s level of awareness, i.e., how big and pressing this crisis actually is.”

Youth power

Earlier this year, Wu was invited to come on board as a senior advisor for the Global Young Leaders Dialogue (GYLD), a program facilitating exchanges between Chinese and foreign youth launched by the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies affiliated to China International Communications Group in collaboration with the Center for China and Globalization, to review proposals on mitigating climate change and promoting green development sent in by candidates from all over the world. She found some of the proposals from the younger generations to be “absolutely inspiring.”

Kseniya Otmakhova, a 30-year-old from the Netherlands, has been living in China for four years. With a master’s degree in urban planning and design, she came to China in 2018 as a student through a Schwarzman scholarship, a one-year graduate program at Tsinghua University in Beijing. After graduation, she started working at the Beijing office of Ballistic Architecture Machine (BAM), an international multidisciplinary design studio.

BAM’s proposal submitted to the GYLD program is about building waste-to-energy (WTE) plants in the urban core rather than on the far outskirts of cities.

“Since the 1960s, the landfill has been the most widely used waste management option,” the proposal read. “Landfills are essentially underutilized and under-extracted resources.” To this extent, the demand for a sustainable alternative to landfills is growing rapidly.

The WTE Power Plants provide a solution to extract more embedded energy from waste. Moving disposal infrastructure into the urban core is key to furthering the paradigm shift in overall waste management, Otmakhova explained. This can cut emissions from trucks hauling the waste to the cities’ far outskirts.

“It is common for people to have concerns over the construction of waste treatment facilities in their neighborhood,” Wu said. The concerns cover both health and aesthetic reasons given WTE plants are usually considered ugly and smelly pollution hazards.

“We bring in experts who advise on specific solutions that suit the urban core,” Otmakhova said, adding that the emissions either get captured or purified, depending on the project, to minimize pollution.

The BAM team uses a wide range of design solutions to help make the WTE technology look people-friendly. Their proposal is based on a Harvard University study on design, architecture and waste which demonstrates that architects can be crucial to integrating WTE plants within their context and reducing the negative public perception of such facilities.

And this is not just an idea. The BAM team was responsible for designing the Baoshan WTE project in Shanghai.

In Otmakhova’s opinion, technology, art and design play different roles in dealing with trash treatment and climate change. “Technology is about providing solutions. Art can drive the discussions necessary to generate change. Design, though often sided with art, is about the implementation of the new concepts we come up with, and it has a real and functional side to it,” she added. Summing up, “Scientists change your mind, artists change your heart and design integrates that change into our lives.”

Wu hailed the GYLD program as “a contributor to promoting education on climate change.”

“I hope the organizers in the future can do more on a larger scale to establish a huge talent pool for younger generations from different parts of the world,” Wu said. **BR**

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Comments to yuan yuan@qicgamerica.com

Nature's Remedy

Traditional Chinese medicine contributes to global public health governance

By Li Qing

Shanghan Zabing Lun, or *Treatise on Febrile and Miscellaneous Diseases*, is a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) classic compiled by Chinese pharmacologist and physician Zhang Zhongjing in the late Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-A.D. 220). The work is amongst the oldest complete medical textbooks in the world and is considered one of the four canonical works of TCM.

The book focuses on treating infectious diseases and internal diseases. It inspired the development of the Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying Decoction formula. With no fewer than 21 herbal components, this recipe is effective against fever, cough and fatigue, as well as helps clear the lungs. It has shown definite therapeutic effects on COVID-19 patients.

Humans have fought against diseases throughout history. "TCM protects the health of the Chinese people and bears unique Chinese characteristics," Du Zhanyuan, President of China International Communications Group (CICG), said at the International Forum on Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture in Beijing on July 5. "It's China's contribution to the health of humanity," he added.

On the frontlines

TCM has thousands of years of experience in fighting different epidemics and has over time contributed many effective treatments and drugs, Zhang Boli, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Engineering and President of the Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said at the forum.

"Facing COVID-19, TCM has served different areas across China and played a critical role in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation where there were no targeted remedies available," he added.

Since early 2020, when it was used in Wuhan, Hubei Province, TCM has had an excellent clinical track record in fighting COVID-19. In February, Chinese authorities officially recognized three finished medicines and three herbal formulas, including the Lung Cleansing and Detoxifying



Decoction, as effective medications and recommended these to the public.

He also suggested that by giving full play to the advantage of prevention, TCM can follow in the footsteps of vaccines and create another line of defense, especially for high risk groups.

Traditional treatment emphasizes each patient's individual physical characteristics and adheres to personalized diagnosis and therapy. In addition, the integration of TCM and Western medication increases the cure rate and reduces the risk of death.

For example, mechanical respiratory and circulatory support is at times crucial to saving lives. TCM can help solve any adverse reactions following these types of medical interventions and, at the same time, improve the blood's oxygen saturation levels—subsequently protecting organs.

TCM practitioners have gained priceless experience during the battle against COVID-19 and shared it with the world, Zhang said.

And the world has welcomed their know-how.

According to a report unveiled by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March, the early application of TCM may result in better clinical outcomes for patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19, reducing the risk of progression. When administered as add-on interventions to conventional treatment, it may shorten the time for viral clearance and length of hospital stay, and facilitate resolution of clinical symptoms, compared with conventional ones alone.

Du Zhanyuan, President of China International Communications Group, delivers a speech at the International Forum on Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture in Beijing on July 5



COURTESY PHOTO

“Facing COVID-19, TCM has served different areas across China and played a critical role in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation where there were no targeted remedies available.”

—Zhang Boli, President of the Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

“The report proves that TCM has stood the test of time and remains effective in the prevention and treatment of emerging infectious diseases, benefiting global public health,” Yu Wenming, Commissioner of the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said at the forum.

As of late 2021, China has released a multilingual version of the TCM treatment plan for COVID-19, helping over 150 countries and regions. Related products have been distributed to more than 10 countries and regions in need, and experts have visited 28 countries and regions to help locals with pandemic prevention and control efforts.

Going global

In March, the Chinese Government issued a new five-year plan for TCM development, introducing comprehensive arrangements for related undertakings. The blueprint aims to enhance the capacity of health services, TCM inheritance, protection and innovation, and encourages a combination of Chinese and Western medicine.

The document also proposes acceleration of the promotion of TCM by integrating it into the Belt and Road Initiative, implementing international cooperation and upgrading the construction of overseas Chinese medical centers and international operation bases.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, we should also advance exchanges between TCM agencies and other social forces, such as companies and organizations engaged in research and development, Yu said.

TCM is now available in 196 countries and regions with 30 TCM centers abroad and 56 international cooperation centers serving people worldwide. The private sector has also participated in the introduction of TCM to the world. For example, Tong Ren Tang, a TCM brand with 350 years’ history, operates about 140 retail stores in 28 countries and regions to treat patients.

According to a report on China’s image in 2020, conducted by the Center for International Communication Studies under CICG, about 30 percent of overseas respondents had had experience with TCM, of whom more than 80 percent evaluated it as positive.

Acupuncture is a classic and star TCM product in the global market. In April, *Time* magazine released an article titled Why Acupuncture Is Going Mainstream in Medicine. “A blend of anecdotal success, research-backed results, and a growing level of openness from the medical community are all driving the popularity of acupuncture as a therapy,” it read.

According to a 2021 WHO report, acupuncture is becoming more and more popular in the U.S. In 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services even began covering acupuncture for the first time for the treatment of chronic lower-back pain. “Acupuncture has been used for centuries. Only in the past decade has there been a seismic shift in acceptance by both Western doctors and patients,” the article further stated.

As an important part of TCM, acupuncture has been applied in 193 countries and regions, making it the most widely used traditional medicine in the world, President Liu Baoyan of the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies, a nongovernmental organization, said at the forum.

“It creates a channel for the world to understand TCM culture and Oriental philosophy,” he added.

TCM reveals the law of human health and disease from a macroscopic, systematic and holistic perspective. “It’s a symbol of Chinese culture as an inseparable chapter in the nation’s history, customs and diet,” Du said, adding that CICG will expand its domestic and international cooperation to enhance the brand recognition of TCM in the future.

“We must strengthen the research on the international communication of TCM culture like *yang sheng*, a core TCM component that focuses on the prevention of illness and the nourishing of the body,” Yu suggested.

He also stressed decoding the culture in an open fashion during international exchanges so that non-practitioners can more easily gain an understanding of its functions, value and cultural connotations. **BR**

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Comments to liqing@cicgamericas.com

Hope on Delivery

Social worker distributes medication to people with HIV and AIDS during Shanghai lockdown By Lu Yan

Life got hectic for Chen Jun in April and May when Shanghai was largely under lockdown as it grappled with flare-ups of the COVID-19 Omicron variant. Shanghai's restrictions on movement meant many HIV-positive residents could not go to hospitals in person to get their antiretroviral prescriptions refilled. Working at the Shanghai Qing'ai Health Center, a nonprofit organization seeking to facilitate access to treatment and related health services for people living with HIV and AIDS in the eastern megacity, Chen decided to help these people access their regular medication.

"I didn't really overthink things before deciding to lend a hand. The most important aspect, for me, was to make sure they got their medicines on time and didn't suffer any serious negative health outcomes," the 38-year-old social worker told *Beijing Review*.

On the road

As head of the center's department that offers HIV-positive persons a range of counseling services, Chen had been receiving calls from patients dealing with medication shortages since late March.

In Shanghai, hospitals can distribute necessary antiretroviral drugs and other related treatments mostly for free for HIV patients holding a local *hukou* (household registration) or temporary residence permit. Yet those without must either pay all costs or return to their hometowns where they have *hukou* status to get treatment free of charge.

Under China's *hukou* system, a baby is registered in the same place as either parent; in adulthood, a person can apply to change the location of registration. The system is a major means of determining eligibility for public services and welfare.

Many people working in Shanghai are still registered in their birthplaces. Getting access to medicines in Shanghai can therefore be quite complicated, a fact exacerbated by COVID-19-induced lockdowns and quarantines.

Chen said HIV patients usually receive three months' worth of medication at once, and the Chinese

New Year holiday in early February was the perfect time for many to get them back home as they were visiting family there. Consequently, April would see patients' next regular refill. But not this year.

So what happens if they don't take their medicines on time? For most people with HIV, once they start antiretroviral therapy to stop the virus from replicating, they must continue it at all times. Discontinuation or interruption may wake up dormant cells, leading to a rebound in viral load and potential drug resistance—the former being life-threatening and the latter resulting in the possible failure of existing treatment options.

As calls for help flooded in, Chen, working from home at that time given offices were closed, decided to step in. "The result [of having no access to medication] can be deadly. No matter how tired I was, I just had to make sure they had medicines to take," he explained.

He applied for permission to leave his home (and compound), explaining the urgency of the situation to both the residential committee—a basic-level autonomous organization in China's mainland for residents' self-management and self-service—and local government officials. He was allowed outside on condition that he took a daily nucleic acid test and submitted the negative results to committee staff.

When COVID-19 paralyzed Wuhan, Hubei Province, in 2020, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued a new guideline coming to the aid of HIV carriers unable to return to their original treatment institution due to epidemic control measures or other related reasons. It stated patients could temporarily receive free refills at their current location, provided the hospital where they'd first received antiretroviral treatment issued a letter stating the emergency need. They could then show this letter to the hospital in their cities of employment and get their medicines.

Chen's job was to gather all the information from those in need, then personally present the hospital in Shanghai with the relevant documents, subsequently obtain the medication and finally



"The most important aspect, for me, was to make sure they got their medicines on time and didn't suffer any serious negative health outcomes."

—Chen Jun, a social worker in Shanghai



Chen Jun waits for an express delivery courier to pick up HIV medications and deliver them to patients' doorsteps

COURTESY PHOTO

deliver their medicines with the help of intra-city express delivery services.

The hospital was 15 km from his home. Chen first rode shared bikes, pedaling his way to and from the pickup. But it wasn't long before one of his acquaintances, who happens to be living with HIV, learned about the Good Samaritan's endeavor and lent him an electric one, saving Chen much time and energy. After the initial "chaos" subsided, Chen and his colleague managed to sort out all the details and came up with a proper operating mechanism within two weeks. By late April, they found some volunteers who were able to leave their compound and happened to have a car, so they were able to drive around and deliver the medicines. In two months, they carried out more than 1,000 distribution rounds to hundreds of people in need.

Chen not only went out of his way to guarantee people's physical health; the situation in Shanghai also put many a patient's mental wellbeing at stake. He would be there for them, listening and giving them an outlet to vent or express anger. "It's understandable. The situation was hard on everyone," Chen said. "What we do isn't just about pills; it's about helping them psychologically and bringing in positive vibes."

The future focus

Shanghai restored the normal order of production and living on June 1. Chen, too, returned to his office at the Shanghai Qing'ai Health Center. Established in 2008, the center has five staff members as well as hundreds of volunteers.

Chen joined the center in 2014, after suffering a severe bout of bacterial pneumonia,

a frequent complication of HIV infection. After narrowly escaping death, he decided to disclose his positive status and use his experiences to help more people living with the same condition. His job ranges from encouraging potentially infected individuals to get tested and addressing common concerns to organizing support group meetings and making videos about HIV and AIDS.

The past two months have inspired him to do more. He's come to realize that the most vulnerable group amid the pandemic is senior patients. "Whereas we previously focused on younger male patients, we now want our future work to include more senior, as well as female patients," Chen said, adding that educating people about HIV and AIDS is an imperative task. When Chen was gathering all the information, some patients were unable to give him the accurate names of their medication, only referring to them as "the red pill" or "the yellow round one." "If more of them can get all these details right, it'll save us a lot of time, which in turn can be used to help others," Chen said.

He also wants to motivate more people to volunteer, preferably those who, just like him, are HIV-positive because they can best relate to patients in need and offer targeted assistance.

"I wish I had more time and energy to make all this become a reality," Chen said.

But what Chen and Shanghai Qing'ai need most right now is funding. Currently, the organization runs on donations from pharmaceutical companies as well as social and charitable projects under government procurement. But these sums are a world removed from the amount needed for the organization to function more effectively.

"For non-profits like us, funding is key. I truly hope the government, enterprises and broader society can pay more attention to us and this group of people," Chen concluded. **BR**

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Comments to luyan@cgicamericas.com



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SPRING BUD PROJECT

TOGETHER LET'S HELP LITTLE FLOWERS BLOSSOM

A Trove of Forbidden Treasures

Beijing's Palace Museum gems find a new home in Hong Kong

By Tao Zihui

Located at the western tip of the West Kowloon Cultural District and adopting an innovative curatorial approach, the Hong Kong Palace Museum opened its doors to the public after five years of planning, designing and construction.

More than 900 treasures from Beijing's Palace Museum collection, housed in the capital's former imperial palace, are on rotating display during the inaugural exhibitions. Some of the pieces have made their way into Hong Kong for the first time in history.

Spanning nearly 5,000 years, the artworks range from paintings, calligraphy, bronze, ceramics and jade, to costumes and textiles, jewelry, rare books and architecture. About 160 are classified as national-level treasures.

"The culture of the Palace Museum is the carrier of our five millennia of Chinese civilization," Louis Ng Chi-wa, Director of the Hong Kong Palace Museum, said. "We are applying new technologies and creating new interpretations to explain these cultural relics so that they can resonate with contemporary audiences."

In less than 1,000 days, Ng and his colleagues built a brand new museum. The documentary *Witness the Hong Kong Palace Museum* has recorded how they achieved this architectural miracle from scratch, as well as the actual stories behind the design, construction and transportation arrangements of the museum.



The trapezoid-shaped Hong Kong Palace Museum, Hong Kong's newest cultural landmark located in West Kowloon Cultural District

The resume of Zhou Bing, the documentary's principal director, also boasts the famous documentaries *The Forbidden City* (2015) and *When the Louvre Meets the Forbidden City* (2010). The filmmaker believes that in addition to the cultural significance, there is also the consideration of presenting traditional art and culture with Chinese characteristics to the world through Hong Kong, in its capacity as an international communications platform.

Whether it's the cultural or historical

details, Zhou's filmic undertakings are feasts for the eyes. But with *Witness the Hong Kong Palace Museum*, he opted for a different stylistic approach. "I chose not to pay too much attention to the lens as a technical tool, but focused on the reality in front of it," Zhou told *Beijing Review*. "I hope that when people watch this film 10 or 20 years from now, they will still see and understand what this group of people did, what efforts they exerted, to design and build such a museum," he said.

Rebirth of a relic

Surrounded by the sea on three sides, the elevation plan of the Hong Kong Palace Museum shows a trapezoid-shaped structure with a wide upper section and narrow base.

There are nine exhibition halls and three atriums connect the different floors of the museum vertically, representing the Beijing Central Axis threading through the former imperial palace.

A demonstration of Hong Kong's modern architectural temperament, the institution's art installations integrate the concepts of up-to-the-minute technologies and contemporary art, but maintain the undisputable aesthetic and spirit of the Palace Museum.

"Someone asked me why Hong Kong needs a new museum," Carrie Lam, former Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), explained in the documentary. "I think, in a way, the museum had the right team in the right place at the right time."

West Kowloon Cultural District already has a modern museum—the M+, Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture. "And so now, we also have another museum displaying ancient cultural relics, which can have a complementary effect," she added.

The story of the new venue started in the autumn of 2015. The Palace Museum in Beijing welcomed a group of guests from Hong Kong. Lam, then Chief Secretary for Administration of the Hong Kong SAR Government and Chairperson of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, was among them.

Shan Jixiang, then Curator of Beijing's Palace Museum, asked Lam: Is there any land in Hong Kong? Can we cooperate and set up a museum project in Hong Kong?

"My answer was yes," Lam recalled. "We will take the 40,000-square-meter land in West Kowloon near the sea, and turn it into a cultural district."

"The Palace Museum holds the richest

collection of Chinese cultural relics in the world," Shan said. "This is an important feature in enhancing Hong Kong's cultural status, and making Hong Kong's energy shine brighter worldwide."

As a global financial center, the SAR is seeking a new direction of development, transforming the West Kowloon Cultural District into an international arts and cultural community, sitting right next to the international financial center and close to Victoria Harbor.

So, at the beginning of 2016, the West Kowloon Cultural District established a team of five experts for this purpose, and they started preparing for a grand architectural "rebirth." In December 2016, the SAR Government officially announced in Beijing that the Hong Kong Palace Museum would become another cultural and artistic landmark of the region.

Inherit and innovate

The design process was one of trial and error.

A well-known architect in Hong Kong, Rocco Yim has designed many works, including Hong Kong landmarks like the Central Financial Center and Kunming's Yunnan Provincial Museum which houses an exhibition centered on Yunnan's ethnic minorities. In 2017, he accepted the assignment to design the Hong Kong Palace Museum, a new challenge in the field of cultural institution construction.

Yim considers the new museum a modern venue reminiscent of China's vast historical and cultural heritage.

"But we all know that the design and construction periods are intense. A museum can only have five years from design to completion, which is really rare," Yim said.

To make sure the new building would have the staying power to become a future classic, he visited the original in Beijing.

"The Palace Museum in Beijing is an exhibit in itself," Yim said. "As a 600-year-old building, it possesses eternal

value." If the museum in Hong Kong wants to keep its value both in the contemporary era and in the future, it needs to have an image that arouses association, namely, the suggestion of traditional Chinese visual art culture, Yim explained.

Yim wanted the new museum to be a reinterpretation of the original in Beijing, not its replica.

The Hong Kong version, for example, doesn't feature the traditional brick and tile elements typically seen in ancient Chinese architecture. Yet by mixing and merging modern architectural techniques and traditional design concepts, the new building's classical Oriental charm remains palpable.

Zhou agreed with Yim's vision. The collection of the Beijing museum not only inspired the architect's design, but also brought the film director a whole new cultural production format. "I could feel the elegant layers, their flow and order, like a work of calligraphy; the unique texture and color in the tiles; the subtle shimmer in the porcelain," he told *Beijing Review*. "The old is reflected in the new."

In addition to channeling the art and philosophy of the Palace Museum in Beijing, modernity, safety, practicality and environmental protection are all factors to consider when constructing a new building.

"Architecture is part of the city so, for me, a design can never be self-centered and must take into account its urban impact. Plus, buildings are made for people to use and in this case, how a visitor experiences the architecture determines the museum's permanent value," Yim said.

The Hong Kong Palace Museum team hopes the venue can help this generation of talent in Hong Kong create more space to express themselves.

"It is a museum of Chinese culture and art," Ng said. "We hope to bring cultures from all over the world to China and present our Chinese legacy to the world." **BR**

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Comments to taozihui@cicgamericas.com

Soar and Score!

Ultimate frisbee (known simply as “Ultimate” to players and aficionados) has become a vibrant summer sight across the squares and soccer pitches of China’s first-tier cities. This fast-paced, non-contact, mixed-team sport played with a flying disc (or frisbee) merges features of American football and netball into one simple yet physically demanding game.

The game traces its origins to the United States in the mid-20th century. It first glided into China in the late 1970s,

and Shanghai and Beijing are arguably the home of Ultimate in the country.

Many amateur frisbee players and clubs in Beijing make sure to reserve a pitch well in advance. Clubs with a membership system may have stricter rules and regulations but paying a membership fee will also get players better services, including professional coaching and more intensive training programs. **BR**

(Text and photos by Wei Yao)

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5





1. A player showcases his skills with this two-handed catch

2. Two players throw around a frisbee on a Beijing soccer pitch on June 29. To them, playing the physically demanding game takes up just as much energy as playing soccer

3. Players stretch and warm up before a training session. Ultimate is played by teams of seven players

4. Two women enjoy a leisurely game of regular frisbee while camping in the green suburbs of Beijing

5. Ultimate fan Li Mi (right) throws a forehand frisbee. Frisbee usually is a mixed competition with both men and women competing side by side



The Advent of Living Wills: To Codify or Not to Codify?

Hospitals across Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, will be required to respect patients' wishes in carrying out end-of-life medical treatment starting in 2023, as the southern Chinese city in late June became the first place on the Chinese mainland to incorporate the living will into local legislation.

According to the regulation adopted by the Standing Committee of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Congress, a living will is a written, legal document that spells out if a patient does not want to receive treatment, such as intubation or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or be placed on life support; medical workers must respect that decision.

Following reports in local media, Shenzhen's move quickly sparked nationwide debate.

Some believe it's great as it shows respect for a patient's own choices, demonstrating how quality of life for many outweighs longevity. Others still have their doubts. For example, how to prove the will was made when the patient was still conscious? This new practice requires further standardization

to avoid those with less than honorable intentions exploiting it.

Jin Zegang (Red Star News): Actually, there are already examples of living wills on the Chinese mainland. The Beijing Living Will Promotion Association, which provides online services to people wanting to draft a living will, for one, was established in 2013.

The attempts to legalize living wills reveal a deep respect for the right to quality of life. It gives patients the right to manage their own life's ending, and hospitals also receive clear guidance on how to treat these patients. It is different from euthanasia because living wills are made when there is no hope for recovery and what follows is a process of natural death. Euthanasia, however, is a way to help end a person's life by injecting a cocktail of medications.

To make a will so that patients can die without having to endure excessive pain is to protect the decency of life. To try and keep a terminally ill patient alive is not necessarily the humane thing to do.

Shi Ben (Beijing Youth Daily): The legalization of living wills is a boon to patients who can no longer face having to undergo

excessive treatment. In their last weeks and days on Earth, patients often tend to find themselves unable to express their real intentions or to even speak at all. They can only passively endure extreme pain until they eventually die. With living wills legally available, they can decide whether to be tube-fed or ventilated or resuscitated and so on. As this will is legally binding, testators won't have to worry about family members or doctors tampering with it. Living wills not only relieve testators of their pain but also help to save medical resources.

Many family members of terminally ill patients are afraid that if they do not try their best to save their dying relative, they might be criticized by those around them, despite knowing all too well the patients are miserable. In this sense, living wills will set them free as well.

Mu Xuchong (Workers' Daily): Different from a regular will, a living will does not include property distribution after the testator has passed away. It only focuses on their quality of life.

Although living wills remain a controversial topic, a growing number of people are beginning to understand and accept it. People are increasingly adopting a more rational attitude toward death, instead of treating it as a taboo. They are realizing quality of life is more important than longevity. Besides, malady brings double misery. Physical pain aside, many patients often feel they are a burden to their families, realizing that the longer they live on, the worse their families' financial situation will get.

Shenzhen's move to legalize living wills has granted terminally ill patients the right to choose: to receive treatment or not to receive treatment. But there must be clear standards, for patients and hospitals alike, as to what can be done and what cannot. **BR**



A nurse records patient information at the intensive care unit of the Affiliated Hospital of Guizhou Medical University, Guiyang, Guizhou Province, on May 11

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