

# Tibet Digest

*August 2019*



FOUNDATION FOR NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES (FNVA)

Tibet Digest is a monthly publication brought out by FNVA containing relevant news pertaining to Tibet, Chinese politics and Sino Indian relations that appear mostly but not restricted to the Chinese state media.



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# China's Tibet Policy

## Tibetan College Grads Struggle to Find Jobs Amid Chinese Claims of Progress

[rfa.org](http://rfa.org), August 29, 2019

Tibetan university graduates still struggle to find work in Tibetan regions of China despite reports in state media of high rates of employment, Tibetan sources say.

Figures quoted in an Aug. 20 report by China's news agency Xinhua said that 23,616 students have graduated this year in China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), calling the number "a record high."

And 67 percent of these have now found jobs with the help of 16 job fairs held by the TAR's Human Resources and Social Security Department, Xinhua said.

One large fair held on Aug. 20 in Tibet's regional capital Lhasa provided openings for about 3,900 jobs offered by 300 employers, with vacancies advertised in a range of state-owned and private enterprises including finance, administration, and engineering, the state-controlled news service said.

But with testing and hiring for positions handled by ethnic Chinese, the majority of Tibetan student graduates seeking jobs fail to find work, a recent graduate in Nyingtri prefecture's Pome (in Chinese, Bomi) county told RFA's Tibetan Service this week.

"Most Tibetan students can't pass their job entrance tests," RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"There are also fewer positions to fill, and too many applicants taking the exams for the jobs," the source said, adding, "Tibetan graduates are finding it increasingly difficult to get jobs."

'Tests are very hard'

Also speaking to RFA, a Tibetan graduate in computer science said he has been unable to find a job in his field.

"I sat the entrance test for employment in my field many times, but the tests are very hard, and I did not pass."

"I've now opened a business selling jewellery so I can make a living," he said.

A third source in Tibet said that the best opportunity for Tibetan college graduates now is to find work as a primary school teacher in the region's rural villages.

Changes in education policy in the TAR now make a university degree a requirement for teaching in the primary schools, the source said.

"Therefore, recruitment for these positions has recently been on the rise," he said.

Mandarin Chinese dominant

Employment for Tibetans in the coveted government sector has meanwhile been placed largely out of reach, with more Chinese university graduates coming in to Tibetan areas to compete for jobs, sources told RFA in earlier reports.

And requirements for proficiency in Mandarin Chinese in testing and consideration for employment have further disadvantaged Tibetan students, as China seeks to promote the dominance of Chinese culture and language in Tibetan areas, sources say.

Language rights have become a focus for Tibetan efforts to assert national identity in recent years, with informally organised language courses typically deemed "illegal associations," and teachers subject to detention and arrest.

## Tibetan Man Detained For Sharing Dalai Lama Photo on WeChat



*Dzoerge county resident Rinso, who was detained for sharing a photo of the Dalai Lama, is shown in an undated photo. Photo from Tibet*

A Tibetan resident of western China's Sichuan province was taken into custody by police in July for sharing a photo of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on the popular social media platform WeChat, Tibetan sources said.

Rinso, a resident of Thangkor township's Village No. 3 in Dzoerge county, a part of Tibet's historical eastern region of Amdo, was

held for just over a week and then released, a local source told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"Police released him on July 16 after he spent 10 days in custody," RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Chinese authorities are closely monitoring discussions on WeChat, and are quick to intervene," the source said, adding, "It is better to avoid speaking openly about certain things, and to avoid sharing photos."

Regarded by Chinese leaders as a dangerous separatist, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet into exile in India in the midst of a failed 1959 national uprising against Chinese rule, and displays by Tibetans of the Dalai Lama's photo or public celebrations of his birthday have been harshly punished in the past.

News of Rinso's detention and release was delayed in reaching outside contacts owing to strict Chinese clampdowns in the area on information considered politically sensitive.

Also speaking to RFA, a second Tibetan source confirmed that Rinso, age 50, had been briefly detained by police before being freed without explanation.

"It is true that Rinso from Thangkor township has been released. The police held him for just over a week," the source said, also speaking on condition he not be named.

"At the beginning of May, Chinese authorities issued a bilingual notice cracking down on what it called the improper use of WeChat for spreading political news," the source said, adding that discussions of developments in Hong Kong and Taiwan have been flagged as particularly sensitive.

"Only news reports approved by the Chinese government can be shared, and serious infractions of the rules can be punished by as much as eight years in prison," the source said.

#### Rewards for informants

Chinese authorities in Tibet are now offering cash awards of as much as 300,000 yuan (U.S. \$42,582) for information leading to the arrests of social-media users deemed disloyal to China, sources told RFA in earlier reports.

Behaviours specified as illegal include online activities aimed at "attempting to overthrow [China's] socialist system," "advocating extremism," "destabilising national security," and "defaming the People's Republic of China," according to a notice issued on Feb. 28 by three government departments of China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

Also banned are online expressions of support for the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Policy, which calls for greater autonomy for Tibet while acknowledging Beijing's sovereignty over Tibetan areas now part of China.

Authorities in Tibetan areas of China frequently monitor online discussions and search mobile phones for what they consider politically sensitive content, and foreign news broadcasts are heavily restricted.

## Human Rights Watch, World Report, 2109

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019>

Tibet Authorities in Tibetan areas continue to severely restrict religious freedom, speech, movement, and assembly, and fail to redress popular concerns about mining and land grabs by local officials, which often involve intimidation and arbitrary violence by security forces. Authorities intensified surveillance of online and phone communications. There were clear findings by UN human rights experts that the charges were baseless. Nonetheless, courts sentenced former political prisoner Tsegon Gyal in January to three years in prison and language activist Tashi Wangchuk in May to five years. Several hundred Tibetans traveling on Chinese passports to India for a January 2018 teaching by the Dalai Lama were forced to return early when officials in Tibetan areas threatened retaliation against those traveling abroad and their family members back home. Intensified political education has been reported in monasteries and schools, and for the public at large. Tibetan authorities have used a nationwide anti-crime campaign to encourage people to denounce members of their communities on the slightest suspicion of sympathy for the exiled Dalai Lama or opposition to the government. Several more cases were reported in 2018 of land grabs by local officials for construction projects, both in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas. In Driru county, 30 villagers were detained in May for allegedly sharing with international media information about the arrest of a village leader who had led popular opposition to a mining project on a sacred mountain. Tibetans continue to self-immolate to protest Chinese policies; four more

such protests took place between November 2017 and time of writing.

## Panchen Lama attends Buddhist activities in Jilung, China's Tibet

Xinhua, August 28, 2019

The 11th Panchen Lama Bainqen Erdini Qoigyijabu, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee and vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, attends a Buddhist activity at a monastery in Jilung County, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, Aug. 20, 2019. The Panchen Lama went on a research tour and attended Buddhist activities in Jilung from Aug. 19 to 24. (Xinhua/Chogo)

## The Tibet case in Spain's Constitutional Court

tibet.net. August 27, 2019,

Tenzin Saldon



(L-R) Alan Cantos, Director of Comité de Apoyo al Tíbet (CAT) and international coordinator of the Tibet case in the Spanish court, Thubten Wangchen, Tibetan Parliamentarian and plaintiff in the Tibet lawsuits, Palden Gyatso, who bore witness in the cases following 33 years in prisons and labor camps in Tibet, and Jose Elias Esteve Moltó, international lawyer, Tibet legal expert and main lawyer who researched and drafted the Tibet case in the Spanish court. Photo/ICT

Chinese pressures leading towards further impunity. Last Stop: European Court of Human Rights

By José Elías Esteve Moltó, Author and investigative lawyer of the Tibet cases, Professor of International Law at the University of Valencia and Alan Cantos, Director of CAT-Comité de Apoyo al Tíbet, main plaintiff and coordinator of the Tíbet cases\*

Since the Pinochet case, the Spanish courts have had a leading role in prosecuting international crimes. The absolute scope of universal jurisdiction culminated with the international arrest warrants issued against various authorities of the Chinese Communist Party for the alleged commission of genocide, torture, crimes against humanity, State Terrorism and other international crimes against the Tibetan people.

Soon after, the Spanish Government under pressure from the Chinese Government proceeded to a new revision of the Organic Law of Judiciary Power, proposing radical amendments and further restrictions to universal jurisdiction. Some of the new requirements of the Organic Law 1/2014 could be contrary to the Spanish Constitution and a myriad of international conventions ratified by Spain (especially the 1949 Geneva Conventions), all of which was denounced to the Constitutional Court.

Meanwhile, different judges have interpreted and applied the new bill with contradictory results. Nonetheless, the prevailing criteria of the Supreme Court which in sentence 296/2015 of 6 May 2015 interpreted universal jurisdiction in a restrictive manner have provoked a *domino* effect in Spain in the definitive shelving of almost all sensitive international cases.

A third Constitutional Court ruling, rejects with identical arguments, the appeals of the Tibet case plaintiffs, as it did weeks before with the appeals of the Falun Gong case and that of the Socialist Parliamentary Group against the reform of the Law of Universal Justice, under pressure from the Chinese Government.

The ruling that was formally communicated to the Comité de Apoyo al Tíbet (CAT) as chief plaintiff, the Fundación Casa del Tíbet as co-plaintiff, and Thubten Wangchen as private accusation. It is dated 25 February 2019 and rejects the appeal in 28 pages.

The Constitutional Court ruling that has now buried the Tibet case in the Spanish courts had been expected since late December. Indeed, the Court's ruling on 20 December 2018 declaring that Rajoy's Conservative Government's reform of universal jurisdiction did not violate the Constitution, only portended the subsequent debacle. The Constitutional Court judges rejected the appeal of unconstitutionality lodged by the Socialist MPs. Even so, and despite acknowledging the change of interpretive criteria for universal

justice since the 2005 ruling on the Guatemala case, and the fact that the 2014 legal reform had drastically changed victims' access to justice, they concluded that the legislative power had the right to bring about this restrictive modification. The fact that popular action has been abolished, international law is not considered to prevail over internal law, proceedings have been retroactively closed, or that this legal reform was motivated by pressure by a foreign country, China, has not prevented this new law being given the go-ahead.

Thus, since late December it was expected that the various cases that had been admitted to the Constitutional Court would be wrapped up irrevocably. The first case to fall was the other one that inconvenienced China, namely, that of the crimes committed against Falun Gong practitioners. And the following month the judges of the Constitutional Court's Second Court met again, to agree to finally bury the desire for justice of the victims of the Tibetan genocide.

The Spanish Constitutional Court reproduced the same arguments for all cases. In short, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes that had been under investigation for years cannot be tried in Spain, as the Chinese Communist Party leaders accused did not have Spanish nationality nor resided habitually in Spain. Nor was the fact that there was a Spanish victim – the plaintiff Thubten Wangchen – a motive for continuing with the lawsuit because at the time when he suffered persecution at the hands of the Chinese authorities he had not yet acquired Spanish nationality. Similarly, the ruling considers that closing the case retroactively does not constitute denying the victims access to justice, as the mere fact that they were able to appeal to the Constitutional Court implies the exact opposite.

It is not just with Tibet; the Constitutional Court's three consecutive rulings confirm the definitive end to universal justice in Spain and, specifically, to the cases against the Chinese Communist Party leaders, the Tibet case and the Falun Gong case. The timing of these rulings does not go unnoticed after over four years waiting for a reply. But also ditched are the victims of the Couso case, the Ashraf refugee camp in Irak, Guantánamo, the CIA flights, the Palestine Freedom Flotilla, and those of SS members in Nazi extermination camps.

Despite this huge obstacle and political interference, and even though the future gives little cause for optimism, there is still one last possibility outside Spain that the CAT will attempt until the bitter end, namely, going to the European Court of Human Rights in the next few months. Similarly, the new Spanish Government to be formed in the next months with Pedro Sánchez as President has a better chance to restore and extend our crippled law of Universal Jurisdiction.

It is of the utmost importance that this truth and reality of political and judicial interference is known and that together we denounce and stand in front of it.

Read the 18-page commentary by José Elías Esteve Moltó, (<https://tibet.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/UJ-2019-Esteve-commentary.pdf>) Author and investigative lawyer of the Tibet cases, Professor of International Law at the University of Valencia.

## **Tibetan monks attend training**

Global Times, August 25, 2019

Reincarnation never 'religious-only' issue: official.

Some 100 Tibetan Buddhist monks attended a training session on reincarnation for a living Buddha in Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, which includes government regulation on management of the reincarnation system, and was hailed by Chinese experts and officials as a necessary method to maintain religious harmony in the region.

The training session, launched in Lhasa on Friday, also covers history and rituals for the reincarnation of the living Buddha.

Trainees came from Tibetan Buddhist monasteries including the Sera and Drepung monasteries, [tibet.cn](http://tibet.cn) reported on Saturday.

The training session was organised by the Institute of Socialism in Tibet, the Tibet Buddhist Association and regional authorities in charge of religious affairs.

The training will last 7 to 10 days, a staff member of the Tibet Buddhism College in Lhasa, told the Global Times on Sunday. He requested anonymity.

Suolang Renzeng, a deputy chief of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Conference Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee, said at the training that the reincarnation system is "never a religious-only issue or a living Buddha's personal right" but an important representation of the Communist Party of China's strategies and policies in the region.

The training will help implement these strategies and policies and achieve religious harmony in the region, he said.

China issued Measures on the Management of Reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism in 2007 to institutionalise the reincarnation process, according to a white paper on democratic reform of Tibet released in March by China's State Council Information Office.

By 2018, 91 incarnated Living Buddhas had been confirmed through traditional religious rituals and historical conventions, said the white paper.

Suolang Renzeng also introduced the history of the reincarnation system.

Originating in the 13th century, reincarnation was adopted by the Gelug sect of Tibetan Buddhism in the mid-16th century and gradually embraced by other sects.

Both Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and the Republic of China governments had regulations on the selection and approval of living Buddhas, he said.

Bianba Lamu, head of the South Asia Institute of the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences, noted that holding such a training session suggested that reincarnation, written in government regulations and embedded in Tibetan Buddhism, will be carried out properly and not affected by any individual or the "Dalai Lama's separatist clique."

The Dalai Lama in 2014 said that the Tibetan Buddhism tradition of reincarnation should cease with his death.

Lamu told the Global Times on Sunday that the training session could educate key figures in Tibetan Buddhism to lead the religion in the direction of better compatibility with socialist society.

Living Buddhas are important in the heritage of Tibetan Buddhism and guidance of believers, Lamu said, noting the reincarnation process should guarantee that a living Buddha is profound in religious knowledge and respectable in morality.

Lamu said that strict regulations and implementation can encourage living Buddhas to take their social responsibilities and help

rule out monks not deserving the title of Living Buddha.

## New 'Social Security Card' For Tibetans Aims at Tightened Controls by Beijing

Rfa.org August 23, 2019



Tibet's new social security card is shown

Chinese authorities in Tibet are quickly expanding the distribution of controversial social security cards across the region this year, prompting fears that the cards will be used to further tighten controls over the Tibetan people, rights groups say.

The cards give access to a wide range of social services including banking, welfare, and medical insurance, and will be tied to a social-credit system that cuts off benefits to Tibetans deemed disloyal to Beijing's rule, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said this week.

"The rollout of the cards reflects the Chinese government's use of personal information as a tool of social control," ICT said, adding, "In Tibet today, even moderate and mild expressions of Tibetan national identity, religion and culture can be classified as 'splittist' and therefore 'criminal.'"

Electronic data collected by the cards, which replace a wide range of separate cards already in use, could be used to monitor and "directly punish individuals with penalties such as loss of employment or pension, torture, imprisonment or worse," ICT said.

Former political prisoners and persons suspected of loyalty to exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama will likely be subject to particularly close scrutiny, the rights group said.

Citing Chinese media reports, ICT said that 2.7 million of the new cards have already been distributed across China's Tibet Autonomous

Region (TAR), with a total of 3 million set to be issued by the end of the year.

"The new system—which authorities say achieves 'one person, one card,' in TAR—and the rollout of the social credit scheme will strengthen the Chinese government's comprehensive system of 'grid management' (the 'Iron Grid') in the TAR," ICT said.

Speaking to RFA's Tibetan Service, John Jones—campaign advocacy manager for London-based Free Tibet—said use of the cards had earlier been launched in limited areas of Tibet, "starting with Nyingchi prefecture back in 2017, and then moving to other places like Lhasa and then to eastern Tibet." "These cards are practical for day-to-day life, such as access to health facilities," Free Tibet said in a statement in April.

"[But] fears still remain that they could be used for the purposes of tracking and easily used to cut off social benefits and access to services as a punishment for behaviour that the Chinese Communist Party objects to," Free Tibet said.

### **Traditional Tibetan medical services available in 89 pct of Tibet's township clinics**

Xinhua August 20, 2019

BEIJING, Aug. 20 (Xinhua) – Traditional Tibetan medical services are available in 89 percent of township clinics in China's Tibet Autonomous Region, according to a forum on Tibetan studies held here Tuesday.

Figures also showed that Tibet now has 43 public-funded healthcare institutions of traditional Tibetan medicine and 13 private-run hospitals of traditional Tibetan medicine.

Tibet has held conferences on promoting Traditional Tibetan medicine thrice and laid out a series of policy initiatives towards the end, with funds allocated annually for improving traditional Tibetan medicine service capacity, according to the chief of Tibet Autonomous Region Hospital of Traditional Tibetan Medicine.

As of the end of 2018, the annual number of visits people made to seek traditional Tibetan medical treatment reached 3.29 million in Tibet, with more than 3,700 registered traditional Tibetan medicine practitioners.

Besides the Tibet Autonomous Region Academy of traditional Tibetan medicine, Tibet also has one center and two sites for monitoring Tibetan medicinal materials.

### **Tibetan Horse-Race Festival Draws Large Crowds, Undercover Police**

rfa.org August 15, 2019

A traditional Tibetan horse-race festival opened this week in northwestern China's Gansu province with official approval, but with large numbers of plain clothes police officers deployed around the festival grounds to monitor the crowd and discourage anti-China protests, according to local source.

The festival opened on Aug. 13 in the Kanlho (in Chinese, Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture's Machu (Maqu) county and drew participants from areas across eastern Tibet's historic Kham and Amdo regions, a local resident told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"Participants in this festival have come from all over Sichuan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces," RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"At least 30,000 people are present, along with a huge security presence of Chinese police officers dressed out of uniform."

The festival's first day opened with a 200-meter horse race, with distances increasing over the next five days from 500 meters to 5,000 meters, RFA's source said, adding, "And in the evenings after the races, there will be musical gatherings where singers from all these different areas will perform, drawing large crowds."

More than a thousand small tents serving as restaurants and shops have been rented out on the festival grounds at rates of from 500 to 1,000 yuan (U.S. \$71-142) per day, with play areas also provided for festival-goers' children, the source said.

"The scale of this year's horse-race festival in Machu is huge," he said.

Traditional gatherings in Tibetan-populated regions of China have greatly increased in size in recent years, as thousands of Tibetans gather to assert their national identity in the face of Beijing's cultural and political domination.

Though China in recent years has frequently allowed the holding of Tibetan festivals as a sign of stability and "progress" in Tibetan

areas, security forces often monitor and sometimes close down events involving large crowds, fearing spontaneous protests against Chinese rule.

In Lithang (Litang) county in western China's Sichuan province, a popular Tibetan horse race festival reopened in 2018 after being banned for 10 years following a public protest calling for the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet, sources told RFA in earlier reports.

## Buddhist Temples "Reformed" to Become CCP's Pawns

bitterwinter.org August 15, 2019

Sun Kairui

Uses a pseudonym for security reasons.

The CCP is training abbots as mouthpieces to spread propaganda and require temples to undergo standardised management assessments.

Buddhist abbots as CCP's "ambassadors" Don't be surprised if you hear personnel from government-approved religious venues say that China has full religious freedom, because the CCP is actively grooming envoys among the official clergy that are taught to spread the "good" word.

The person in charge of a temple in the eastern province of Zhejiang recently gave an interview to *Bitter Winter*. To avoid retaliation from authorities, he was unwilling to disclose his name.

The interviewee said that his temple receives numerous tourists every year, many of them from abroad. The temple, however, is in name only – it is primarily used to spread CCP's propaganda to the outside world. He also revealed that the government requires abbots at local temples to attend courses on international affairs, in particular, China's relations with Japan and the US. They also learn about China's advanced weaponry, business management, and other related matters. This is all done to prepare the abbots for receiving foreign visitors and teach them what they should say.

Also, temple abbots must receive specialised etiquette and official protocol training, such as welcoming foreign guests at airports, serving tea, showing visitors around, and alike. Special attention is given to details for receiving guests from Hong Kong, Macau, and

Taiwan, teaching abbots about sensitive topics that should be avoided – hosts must always act and speak within limits prescribed by the government.

"Certain topics cannot be discussed casually. For example, if someone asks how we regard the Dalai Lama, our view cannot be contrary to that of the government; there will be trouble for us," the person in charge explained, unable to hide his discontent. "All of these things are very complicated. When Taiwanese visitors come, some topics cannot be discussed because government personnel are always by our side, and every word we utter will be recorded. If we say something wrong, we will be reprimanded."

An abbot from the southeastern province of Fujian confirmed that he too is obliged to report to the Religious Affairs Bureau regularly, especially foreign-related matters. For example, when Tibetan Buddhists from abroad or people from Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan come to visit the temple, he cannot take photos with them; once officials from the Religious Affairs Bureau find out, they will come to conduct an inspection and accuse him of being a separatist.

*Temples required ISO quality certification*

The interviewed person in charge disclosed that state-approved temples must undergo an assessment of "advancement," organised by the local China Buddhist Association at the end of each year. It includes evaluations of individual advancement of each employee and collective progress of the place of worship as a whole; just like yearly evaluations in enterprises and public institutions. Some temples must also undergo national standardised quality management evaluations to receive International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) certification 9001, proving that a temple's management system is effective and appropriate. Mostly used for companies and organisations, ISO evaluations assess various products or services by proposing management improvements.

A mainland China media outlet reported in February that Lingyin Temple in Zhejiang's Hangzhou city formally became the first Buddhist temple in the country to achieve ISO9001:2015 quality management systems certification. The report states that the move was made to strengthen the management of the temple and is an effective extension of implementing the new *Regulations on Religious Affairs* and other related laws.

In response, social media was flooded with comments on the absurdity of these steps by the government, like: “What are the measures for gauging customer satisfaction in temples?” “How can a scientific management system guarantee client satisfaction for making a wish or the number of times a Bodhisattva appears?” “Was a satisfaction survey sent to Buddha? Does Buddha have any objections?” The person in charge said that it is as if the temple has become an enterprise or institution under the CCP’s command. He thinks that this is an outcome of “following the path of religion with Chinese characteristics” – “sinicization” of religion policy advocated by President Xi Jinping. “Following the path of ‘sinicization’ and accepting government management wasn’t the original intention of abbots,” the person in charge said helplessly. “But if you don’t follow the government’s requirements, or if you disobey the Party, the state will shut down your temple.” “It’s like holding a scalding earthenware bowl – you’re in great pain and agony, but you cannot put it down,” the person in charge ended the interview, attempting to best describe the plight of people of faith in China.

## Tibetan Monk Sentenced, Two Others Missing in Detention

rfa.org, August 14, 2019

A Tibetan monk enrolled in Sichuan’s restive Kirti monastery has been sentenced to four years in prison, with his present whereabouts and the charges made against him still unknown, Tibetan sources in exile say.

Lobsang Thamke, age about 37, was sentenced on July 30 after being arrested last year, Kanyag Tsering—a monk living at Kirti’s branch monastery in Dharamsala, India—told RFA’s Tibetan Service on Wednesday.



Tibetan monks Thubpa, Lobsang Dorje, and Lobsang Thamke are shown left to right in undated photo.

“But other than that, no details are available regarding what he was charged with and where he is now imprisoned,” Tsering said, citing sources in Sichuan’s Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county, a part of Tibet’s historical eastern region of Kham.

Thamke, son of Lhade Gongme Lokho, had previously graduated from the Buddhist Youth School formerly attached to Ngaba’s Kirti monastery but later closed by Chinese authorities, according to Lobsang Yeshe, also a monk at Kirti’s branch in India.

“They said they would not allow the school to operate as a part of Kirti, and they transferred it to the county’s jurisdiction. But after having a lot of difficulty it was finally closed at the end of 2002,” Yeshe said.

### Missing in detention

Two other monks from Ngaba have meanwhile gone missing after being taken into custody by Chinese police, Tsering and Yeshe said.

Lobsang Dorje, age about 36 and also a monk at Kirti, was arrested sometime around August 2018, with his present whereabouts unknown. And Thubpa, 32, was taken by Chinese police at night from Ngaba’s Trotsik monastery sometime toward the end of 2017.

“His whereabouts are also unknown,” Tsering and Yeshe said.

Thubpa had previously been arrested for shouting political slogans and burning the Chinese flag during a period of widespread protests in 2008, and his father Kalsang was arrested and jailed for shouting slogans on March 16, 2011 against China’s rule in Tibetan areas, Tsering and Yeshe said.

Ngaba’s main town and nearby Kirti monastery have been the scene of repeated self-immolations and other protests in recent years by monks, former monks, and other Tibetans calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Owing to strict clampdowns on communications by authorities in Tibetan areas of China, news of protests and arrests is frequently delayed in reaching foreign news outlets and other outside contacts.

## All Outdoor Buddhist Statues Must Go, No Matter the Cost

Local authorities spare no effort to ensure the demands from the higher-ups, forbidding anyone – organisation or individual – to have statues of deities displayed in the open air. Built with large sums of money, often donated by believers, religious icons are disappearing across the country, disregarding the massive funds spent and human resources used in the process.

*Government spends millions to demolish a statue*

Inside Qingguo Temple, located in Duqiao town, under the jurisdiction of Linhai city, in the eastern province of Zhejiang, a 15-meter-tall bronze Guanyin statue used to stand. It was built at the cost of three million RMB (about \$ 450,000). Last year, its abbot received a notice from the town government, ordering the Guanyin statue to be dismantled because “religious statues cannot be located outdoors.”

A local Buddhist told *Bitter Winter* that to save the Guanyin statue, the temple’s abbot submitted a request to the Religious Affairs Bureau, asking to cover the icon, not destroy it, but the government turned him down.

In May, Linhai city government officials came to the village where Qingguo Temple is located for a meeting and took the final decision to tear down the Guanyin statue. A month later, the city government initiated a bidding procedure for the demolition works. A company from Luoyang city in the central province of Henan won the bid to take down the statue for 1.08 million RMB (about \$ 160,000).

Shortly after the procedures were finalised, 20 workers came to Qingguo Temple and built a scaffolding with steel pipes around the Guanyin statue. In no time, the statue and its lotus-shaped pedestal were both dismantled. According to insiders, the removal of the Guanyin statue was an order from the central government. If the demand were not carried out, both city and town mayors and party secretaries could have been punished. Therefore, each level of government was pressured by their superiors: no one was willing to lose their official position over this matter. “The state is afraid that people who believe in Buddhism will increase in number and even outnumber the Communist Party

members, affecting their regime. It’s the same as how the government tears down crosses,” commented another local Buddhist. “The Communist Party is suppressing religion because it has the power and does whatever it wants. The Communist Party is afraid of being unable to control the people, so it suppresses them.”

In Hongyan Villa, a famous scenic area in Pingtan county of the southeastern province of Fujian, a Dripping-Water Guanyin statue, over ten meters in height, cost one million RMB (about \$ 150,000) to build. It was forcibly demolished in late May.

According to witnesses, to prevent believers from obstructing the demolition work, more than 100 personnel, including public security and anti-riot officers, were mobilised to surround the scenic area and prohibit villagers from approaching. The statue was composed of 99 stones, so it took more than ten days to dismantle it.

According to a source who requested anonymity, last August, authorities ordered Hongyan Villa to dismantle the Dripping-Water Guanyin statue, claiming that religious statues cannot be built at tourist attractions or exceed ten meters in height. Religious icons that violate building laws must also be torn down.

The county government didn’t want to dismantle the statue, but officials from above threatened to force the county committee secretary to step down unless the statue was dismantled, the source said, adding, “Xi Jinping is calling the shots now.”

“All outdoor Buddhist statues throughout the country are ordered to be torn down. If you protest against the demolition, it will be considered obstruction and defiance of the law. Ordinary people have never been a match to officials. The government is a criminal underworld. They may be smooth talkers, but they are bandits in reality,” a local believer wasn’t hiding his feelings toward the authorities.

In Fujian’s Fuzhou city, an ancient Wanfo Temple, built in 1010 and acclaimed as a Buddhist holy site, was also subjected to a crackdown. In March, 33 statues on the Guanyin Island, the temple’s iconic landmark, were ordered to be covered by the municipal United Front Work Department and Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau. The officials claimed that “there were too many Guanyin statues,” and the situation has to be “rectified.”

Pressured by the government, the temple had no choice but to spend nearly 200,000 RMB (about \$ 30,000) to wrap the Guanyin Island with a safety net. The temple's Arhat statues were also stacked together and covered with a red cloth.

## **China Raises Reward for Informants in Tibet**

rfa.org, August 8, 2019

Chinese authorities in Tibet are offering large cash rewards to informants in a bid to stamp out online activities considered threatening to Beijing's control over the restive Himalayan region, with amounts paid out now tripled over amounts offered last year, sources say.

Rewards of 300,000 yuan (U.S. \$42,582) are now being promised for information leading to the arrests of social-media users deemed disloyal to China, according to a notice issued on Feb. 28 by three government departments of China's Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

Behaviours specified as illegal include online activities aimed at "attempting to overthrow [China's] socialist system," "advocating extremism," "destabilising national security," and "defaming the People's Republic of China," according to the document, a copy of which was obtained by RFA's Tibetan Service.

Also banned are online expressions of support for exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama's "Middle Way Policy," which calls for greater autonomy for Tibet while acknowledging Beijing's sovereignty over Tibetan areas now part of China.

Attempts to send information on conditions in Tibet to foreign contacts will also be severely punished, the document says.

Authorities in Tibetan areas of China frequently monitor online discussions and search cellphones for what they consider politically sensitive content, and foreign news broadcasts are heavily restricted.

'No space left for anyone'

"Under these new regulations, the Chinese government is basically curbing the free flow of online information from within Tibet," Tsering Tsomo, director of the Dharamsala, India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), told RFA in an interview.

"And though [the authorities] have linked these regulations to the protection of cybersecurity and national security, in fact they are just another way to keep people uninformed and to bar them from expressing their views," Tsomo said.

"Raising the amount of the reward to informants from 100,000 yuan in 2018 to 300,000 yuan this year is a threat to citizens who are simply exercising their freedom of expression," Tsomo said.

Also speaking to RFA, Sonam Topgyal, a researcher at the Dharamsala-based Tibet Watch, said that similar restrictions on internet activities have already been in force in Tibetan areas of China "for a long time."

"These laws have even been implemented in elementary schools in Tibet," Topgyal said, adding, "The Chinese government has left no space for anyone to criticise the government in any way, and has deployed informants within different parts of the Tibetan community."

China's roll-out in February of the raised reward amount comes amid the launch of a separate Tibet-wide campaign against organised crime and "black and evil forces" that sources in the region say is being used as an excuse to crack down on Tibetans and has led to mistrust within local communities.

The campaign has resulted in the "detention, arrest, and torture of human rights and environmental activists and of ordinary Tibetans promoting the use of the Tibetan language," TCHRD said in a report released in May.

## **Aboluowang: Secrete Document Shows Social Credit System to Be Applied to Religious Sites**

[chinascope.org](http://chinascope.org) August 4, 2019

In recent years, communist China has continued to expand its persecution of religious groups. It was disclosed that the authorities have established a system in which it rates religious sites. Those that have a low score could face a temporary shutdown. If the points continue to fall below the threshold, they will be closed completely.

According to a document that the United Front Work Department of the Henan Provincial Government issued, the authorities have asked officials to rate each religious site from 1 to 5

# 民族宗教事务局文件

## 关于进一步加强宗教活动场所管理的通知

各宗教团体、各宗教活动场所：

为了进一步加强宗教活动场所管理，维护社会和谐稳定，积极引导宗教与社会主义社会相适应。现就有关要求明确如下：

### 一、进一步建立健全三个制度

1. **安全管理制度**：要全面建立治安管理制度、消防安全制度、卫生防疫等安全管理制度。建立治安管理制度，加强宗教活动场所治安管理，保护信教公民的合法权益；建立消防安全管理制度，宗教活动场所的主要负责人是消防安全第一责任人，对所有的消防安全工作全面负责，严禁在宗教活动场所内生产、经营、销售烟花爆竹等危险性物品，禁止乱烧高香，提供免费三根手香，严禁在场所内燃放烟花爆竹，

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An excerpt from a notice about strengthening the management of religious venues, issued by a locality in Jiangxi Province.

license will be revoked, which means that they will be completely closed.

The scoring criteria is quite strict and there are numerous ways for points to be reduced. For example, the authorities regard the illuminated cross as a "missionary act." If a religious place displays signs with neon, a horn, or an illuminated cross, it will lose ten points. If the relevant personnel are unfamiliar with the religious policy, 5 to 10 points will be taken off. If the party members enter the church for personal reasons, 5 points will be taken off. If religious print materials are distributed, 10 points will be taken off.

It is expected that the social credit system will be fully launched and implemented nationwide next year. The rights of the religious personnel could suffer further infringement.

## Jailed Tibetan Language Rights Advocate is Refused Visits From

### His Lawyers

rfa.org, August 2, 2019



Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk is shown in an undated photo.

Jailed Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk was denied a visit from his lawyers this week, with Chinese prison officials saying Wangchuk is being punished for being "uncooperative" in prison, one of his lawyers said.

Wangchuk's lawyers Liang Xiaojun and Lin Qilei were barred from Donchuan prison in northwestern China's Qinghai province on Aug. 1 despite presenting "all relevant paperwork" needed to permit the visit, attorney Liang told RFA's Tibetan Service on Friday.

"The prison officials accepted our documents and left the office, and then returned about 30 minutes later to say that what he had given them was not enough, and that we needed a

附件 2

## 宗教活动场所安装监控设备调查表

场所名称	宗教类别		
地址	邮编		
类别	( ) 寺观教堂	( ) 固定处所	
安装监控设备位置	佛教、道教	大殿 ( )	场院 ( )
	基督教	讲台 ( )	室外 ( )
	天主教	讲台 ( )	室外 ( )
场所监控设备日常监管人员			联系电话
主要教职人员			联系电话
管理组织负责人			场所联系电话
常驻教职人员数			

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An investigation form for the installation of surveillance equipment at Buddhist, Taoist, and Christian religious activity venues.

stars. The document shows that religious sites that scored 95 or more will be rated 5 stars. If the scores are between 50 and 75 for two consecutive years, they will be forced to stop operations for 1 year for internal restructuring and the management will be replaced. If they refuse to make changes or if their score is less than 50 points for two consecutive years, their

letter from the Ministry of Justice in Beijing," Liang said.

After reminding prison officials that the Justice Ministry had no mandate to authorise visits, the officials replied that "we would not be allowed to meet with Tashi Wangchuk in any case," Liang said.

Liang and Lin then went to Qinghai's Bureau of Prison Administration, where a junior official told them that Wangchuk had never accepted that he had committed a crime, and was uncooperative in prison.

"Given his attitude toward his sentence, you will not be allowed to meet with him," the official told them, adding that because Wangchuk's case was "sensitive," his lawyers should act carefully or risk damage to their careers, Liang said.

"Tashi Wangchuk does not accept his guilty verdict and has told us again to file an appeal, so that's why we came to see him," Liang told RFA. "But without meeting him in person, we can't accomplish many of the tasks required for the appeal."

Third year behind bars

Wangchuk has now marked his third year behind bars after being convicted on a charge of separatism for promoting the use of his native language in Tibetan areas of China.

He was sentenced on Jan. 4, 2018 by a court in Qinghai's Yulshul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture following a controversial trial in which the prosecution based its case on a video report by the *New York Times* documenting the activist's work.

Wangchuk was arrested on Jan. 27, 2016, two months after the *Times* ran its report, and was handed a five-year prison term on Jan. 4, 2018 by a court in Qinghai's Yulshul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

His sentence of five years will include his time already spent in detention.

In the video, Wangchuk is seen traveling to Beijing to press his case for the wider use of the Tibetan language in Tibetan schools. Prosecutors used this as evidence at his trial, despite his repeated disavowals of separatism and his stated intention to use China's own laws to protect the Tibetan language.

Writers, singers and artists promoting Tibetan national identity and culture have frequently been detained by Chinese authorities, with many handed long jail terms, following region-wide protests against Chinese rule that swept Tibetan areas of China in 2008.

Language rights have become a particular focus for Tibetan efforts to assert national identity in recent years, with informally organised language courses typically deemed "illegal associations" and teachers subject to detention and arrest, sources say.

## Big Brother's "Sharp Eyes" Monitor Religious Venues 24/7

bitterwinter.org August 13, 2019

Tang Zhe Uses a pseudonym for security reasons.

Each word and movement by believers now tracked, as churches and temples are included in the nationwide massive surveillance project for rural areas.

The "Sharp Eyes Project" – the surveillance program intended to cover all rural areas – has been gradually implemented in towns and villages since 2016, with the planned goal of achieving the blind-spot-free monitoring by 2020, "covering all regions, sharing across all networks, available at all times, and controlled at all points."

This intrusive surveillance system has also penetrated places of worship and has become an indispensable means for the government to control and suppress religious belief.

The number of fully-monitored churches and temples has been growing exponentially. In Huaiyin district of Huai'an city in the eastern province of Jiangsu, for example, 155 of the 170 government-approved Protestant churches had surveillance equipment installed in February; some were connected to the public security system network. The footage from religious venues often serves as a pretext to close them down permanently or used to harass believers. In some cases, cameras have been placed inside churches' washrooms, in stark violation of believer's privacy.

A comprehensive plan to monitor religious venues

According to a document issued last year by the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau of a locality in the southeastern province of Jiangxi, the authorities ordered to ensure that "Sharp Eyes Projects" also covered Buddhist, Taoist, and Christian religious venues in the area. "In principle, surveillance cameras must be installed in every religious activity venue, inside and outside, to ensure the venue's safety," the document states.

Presented as a project for public security, the cameras in religious venues under the "Sharp Eyes Project" are actually being installed for more scrutiny and surveillance of believers, making sure that the Big Brother monitors them at all times.

The document also sets out explicit requirements for the location of surveillance cameras at religious venues so that comprehensive monitoring and coverage is achieved. In Buddhist and Taoist temples, they should be installed in the main halls and courtyards. As for Protestant and Catholic venues – at the podium and outside buildings. Believers become anxious under tight surveillance

In the past, only China's public security institutions had access to surveillance footage. Now, even low-level local authorities – such as grassroots-level grid administrators and village Party secretaries – can view every surveillance image taken through the "Sharp Eyes Project" application in the area of their jurisdiction. Undoubtedly, such high-density surveillance in places of worship has instilled fear for people of faith.

On April 28, inside a Three-Self church in Jiangxi's Gao'an city, a believer was reading the Bible to the congregation when a woman holding a toddler entered the church. The reader's facial expression suddenly became tense, and he said in flustered tone: "We're finished! Take the child out immediately. There are surveillance cameras installed here; the church could be shut down." Other believers joined in, pleading the woman to leave, since, as per the new Regulations on Religious Affairs, children are not allowed to enter places of worship, and those violating the requirement are punished. Police officers who installed the camera at the church's entrance a week ago reiterated the prohibition. "Minors absolutely aren't allowed to enter the church," the police warned, threatening to seal off the church at once if the camera captures anyone with children entering the premises.

One of the congregants said that there is always a feeling of unease at their gatherings ever since the surveillance cameras have been installed. Believers feel as if someone is watching them closely at all times. They don't even dare to breathe freely, fearing to be accused of baseless charges if they are careless even for a moment.

Religious Party members fear to go to church

An elderly believer in Yichun city is a CCP member, even though Party members are prohibited from holding religious beliefs. Ever since surveillance cameras have been installed at his church, he no longer dares to attend gatherings, knowing that the local Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau is closely monitoring him. All he can do is secretly read the Bible and practice his faith at home.

"Although we've been persecuted in previous years, the surveillance has become so severe since the instalment of cameras at the church. I will be recognised as soon as I enter the church. I'll be called out by name, dragged before a public meeting to be denounced and humiliated, and expelled from the Party," the elderly believer said.

Congregation members at another Three-Self church in Yichun have been repeatedly cautioned by the clergy to be careful what they say or do during services after surveillance cameras were installed in April. "Now that the government has installed surveillance cameras and is tightly controlling religious belief, the environment has become extremely harsh," believers were warned.

## **Tibet inbound tourism management system begins trial operation**

Global Times, August 12, 2019

The Tibetan inbound tourism management system, aiming to simplify processing procedures of travel permits for foreigners, has been put into trial operation this month.

"Processing time is expected to be shortened to about 5 working days after the platform is put into [full] operation," said Yuan Xiaorong, an official with the Tourism Development Department of Tibet Autonomous Region, China News Service reported.

According to Tibet news website tibet.cn, the system started its trial on August 1. The Tourism Development Department has conducted online training on material submission for employees of more than 90 travel agencies in the region.

To travel to the Tibet Autonomous Region, all international travellers are required to apply for a travel permit. Tourists from the island of Taiwan must also apply for a travel permit.

Previously, it required about 15 days to process a travel permit.

The Tibet regional government in January proposed to halve the approval time for travel permits to overseas visitors and improve the travel service management plans for foreign visitors, the China News Service reported.

According to official data, Tibet received 13.4 million tourists from home and abroad between January to June, an increase of 20.2 percent compared to the same period last year. Total tourism income from January to June increased 19.8 percent, reaching 14.9 billion yuan.

Before, it took at least 15 days to receive a permit after the requisite documents had been submitted, but the department said that under the new system, the wait will be cut to three to five days.

## China Turning Buddhist And Taoist Temples Into Entertainment Centers

[bitterwinter.org](http://bitterwinter.org) August 5, 2019



Buddhist statues are covered with propaganda posters carrying slogans of "core socialist values" and portraits of Xi Jinping.

Across the country, the CCP is "transforming" temples into cultural auditoriums, government offices and elderly activity centres.

Zhejiang: Mahjong tables and Bodhisattva statues "cohabit" the same room

Nearly 10,000 "comprehensive rural cultural auditoriums" have been built in the eastern province of Zhejiang, designed to "enrich the spiritual lives" of farmers. But as those auditoriums increased in number, religious venues have decreased. It's part of the CCP's subtle way or persecuting believers. *Bitter Winter* has learned that the project is actively being continued.

According to the owner of a temple in Hangzhou city's Yuhang district in Zhejiang,

the government has forcibly converted some local temples into cultural auditoriums.

A temple with a history spanning over 800 years in the district has already been converted; it now contains chess rooms, which take up the entire first floor, a TV room and a reading room. Meanwhile, the temple's Bodhisattva statues have been hidden away.

"The government's current policies only allow elderly activity centers to be opened, worshipping Bodhisattvas isn't allowed," one local believer told *Bitter Winter*. "They [government officials] frequently come to conduct inspections. If anybody dares not to obey the government now, the CCP will arrest them under the pretext of 'cleaning up gang crime and eliminating evil.'"

Another temple in the same district was also converted into an elderly activity center for villagers to use for entertainment purposes. The Bodhisattva statues haven't yet been removed, so they now share a room with mahjong tables.

Shandong: Buddhist temple converted into Party's propaganda base

On March 21, the signboard of Qingliang Temple had been forcibly removed by the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau of Shan county, under the jurisdiction of Heze city in the eastern province of Shandong on the grounds that the temple was unlicensed. A new sign now reads: "Traditional Culture Training Base." And at the entrance, a sign reads: "Base for Respecting and Providing for the Elderly." The two main rooms to the right of the entrance have been converted into government offices.

The Buddhist statues and 18 Arhat statues inside the temple have all been covered and all the recognition plaques have been removed. The cloth used for covering the Buddhist statues is imprinted with the "core socialist values" and other propaganda slogans, as well as portraits of President Xi Jinping.

"The reason we left home was to cultivate our moral character and worship Buddha. We can see Buddha here but cannot worship him, so we have no choice but to leave Qingliang Temple," a believer from the temple told *Bitter Winter*.

In late April, Shan county's Puzhao Temple was also sealed off and "transformed." All the Buddhist statues and incense altars inside the temple were covered with cloth. The local government even covered all sides of the

Buddhist statues with slogans like "Always follow the Party."

Shaanxi: 16 Taoist temples repurposed in one town

Again in April, government officials from Fengming town, in Qishan county under the jurisdiction of Baoji city in the northwestern province of Shaanxi, issued a notice to each village stating that if they want to save their temples from being demolished, all statues inside the temples must be covered or removed. Within two months, at least 16 Taoist temples in Fengming town were repurposed. Some of them were converted into meeting rooms or elderly activity centers; some of them were converted into warehouses.

On May 12, statues at Guan Di Temple, located in Nanying village under the jurisdiction of Yongchuan town in Qishan county, have been covered; the walls and a large incense burner have been painted white; and a portrait of Mao Zedong has been hung on the wall. The temple has been converted into an "Elderly Activity Center."

## Important Visits to Tibet

**Wang Yang**

tibet.cn, August 22, 2019

Focusing on the "two guarantees and three guarantees" and winning the battle against poverty in Tibet

Wang Yang, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, recently visited Tibet. From the 19th to the 21st, Wang Yang travelled to Shannan, Lhasa, and Ali

where he visited the poverty alleviation and resettlement sites, poverty alleviation industrial parks, poor households, village committees and religious activities to understand the ground situation, and presided over a symposium on poverty alleviation and consolidation. Wang Yang fully affirmed the remarkable achievements in the work of poverty alleviation work in Tibet. He stressed that poverty alleviation depends on both quantity and quality. An important indicator for testing the quality of poverty alleviation is whether the results of poverty alleviation can be consolidated. We must combine the theme of "not forgetting the original heart and remembering the mission", carefully examine the problems existing in poverty alleviation, and conscientiously do a good job in rectification and implementation, and prevent problems such as poor quality of poverty alleviation and unconsolidated results of poverty alleviation due to lack of understanding and failure to implement. Where poverty has been lifted and poverty is about to be lifted, the main focus should be on consolidating poverty reduction results and preventing poverty alleviation, exploring anti-poverty monitoring and early warning mechanisms, and conducting regular verification and dynamic management of the poor, poverty-stricken and marginalised populations, and timely returning the poor to the poor. New poverty-stricken people are included in assistance. It is necessary to pay attention to the follow-up work of the ex situ poverty alleviation and relocation, adhere to the simultaneous relocation and supporting services, and continuously improve the ability of the poor to ensure that they can move, be stable, have employment, and become rich. We must base ourselves on the current and long-term perspective, and cultivate and develop industries with distinctive advantages such as youth, yak, tourism, clean energy, and ethnic handicrafts, vigorously develop the valley economy, and consolidate the foundation for the masses to get rid of poverty and gradually become rich. Adhere to the ecological benefits of the people, protect the blue sky and clear water of the snowy plateau and clean the air, and take the road of civilisation and development coordinated by economy and resources.

Wang Yang emphasised that Tibet is at the forefront of the struggle against the Dalai clique, and that poverty alleviation, religious

work, and anti-secession struggles must be balanced and mutually promoted. We should take the results of poverty alleviation as a vivid teaching material, and use the objective facts and lively cases to tell the story of Tibet's "poverty alleviation" so that the people of all ethnic groups can truly feel the care of the party and firmly listen to the party's words and the belief of the party. It is necessary to comprehensively implement the basic principles of the party's religious work, improve the long-term mechanism of temple management, thoroughly investigate and resolve various risk hidden dangers, and firmly grasp the initiative of the anti-separatist struggle. It is necessary to advocate a healthy and civilised lifestyle, guide the masses to rationally believe in religion, stimulate the endogenous motivation to get rid of poverty, and guide the healthy and orderly development of religion.

During his stay in Tibet, Wang Yang specially visited Tibetan cadres and veteran comrades such as Pabala Glelanger and visited the Zanda County CPPCC.

### Yu Quan

Xinhua August 21, 2019

In the investigation (inspection) of Sichuan, Yu Quan emphasised the work of ethnic and religious work to promote the development and stability of Tibetan areas.

Yu Quan went to the Honggan County Red Cultural Education Base in Hongyuan County, paying tribute to the Red Army's grassland monument and offering flowers, deeply cherish the memory of the revolutionary martyrs, emphasising not forgetting the initial heart, remembering the mission, fully tapping the red resources, and creating a good red culture and national unity education. Base, vigorously promote the flesh-and-blood ties between the party and the people of all ethnic groups.

Yu Quan successively came to Chengdu, Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, visited ethnic communities, religious sites, and resettlement sites for poverty alleviation, visited the peasants and herdsmen, understood the national work situation, and encouraged local cadres and masses to thoroughly implement the party's national work policy. Policies, solidly carry out activities for the establishment of national unity and progress, strengthen exchanges and exchanges of ethnic

exchanges, promote economic development, improvement of people's livelihood, progress of social civilisation, and constantly build up the awareness of the Chinese nation community. Yu Quan's discussion on religious work with party and government cadres and religious circles emphasises that the basic principle of the party's religious work should be fully implemented. The key is to think deeply, see through, and be accurate in the "guidance" and strengthen the religious affairs. Manage according to law, establish and improve a long-term mechanism for temple management, give play to the active role of religious figures, focus on promoting the Chineseization of religion in China, and unite the majority of religious believers around the party and government.

During the investigation, Yu Quan also visited the provincial committees of the democratic parties in Sichuan and the provincial Federation of Industry and Commerce. He fully affirmed the work of the Sichuan united front and demanded that the united front of the province be further consolidating and tackling difficulties. Development makes a greater contribution.

## Environment

### China tells India, no activities on dams happening in Tibet

[tibetsun.com](http://tibetsun.com), UNI, August 27, 2019

China has assured India that it will not do anything vis-a-vis constructions of dams in Tibetan and other regions that could adversely impact in terms of floods and related natural calamities in India.

"Our Indian friends be rest assured ....so far the water consumption in Tibetan region is

concerned, the outbound water is clean and moreover whatever is happening in Tibet is for socio economic development and for consumption of people," Dr YU Xingjun, Consultant at the Department of International Cooperation, Science and Technology, told a group of visiting Indian journalists here. He sought to clarify that making use of water in



*This picture taken on 23 November 2014 shows the Zangmu Hydropower Station in Gyaca county in Lhoka, or Shannan prefecture, southwest China's Tibet region. File photo/AFP/Getty Images/Stringer*

Tibetan region is not necessarily for any other reason but for mere survival of the Tibetan people who are living in much hardships and under development conditions.

"The Chinese side has always maintained a responsible attitude to the hydro power development," he emphasised adding whatever development is happening with regards to power projects in such areas is strictly for 'socio-economic development of the Tibetan people. Dr Xingjun also said conditions of local inhabitants in Tibet are really precarious. "I have been to such areas in Tibet many times and the conditions there are beyond imagination," he said.

Mr Xingjun was asked what is China doing to dispel apprehension of India especially with regard dam building areas in some rivers that flow down to India and could have an adverse impact. A group of Indian journalists are on tour of China as part of a programme organised by the Chinese embassy in India and the Chinese foreign ministry.

Dr Xingjun said that both India and China have over the years carried out fruitful cooperation in hydrological information and emergency and disaster handling.

To a question, he further went onto say that "... proceeding from the overall situation of China-India relations and the spirit of humanitarianism, China has overcome enormous difficulties but did provide India with

hydrological data of trans-border rivers in flood seasons".

This "fruitful cooperation" has made positive contributions to a closer development partnership between China and India. He also said the hydrological data in flood seasons provided by China has helped India to ensure the safety of people in coastal areas. Answering questions, he said China is facing four main challenges in water management related matters.

These are floods or water related disasters, water scarcity, water-environment pollution and water ecology. In this context, Dr Xingjun said in order to meet the challenges, the Chinese government is taking a multi-pronged measures. He said, China has also decided to lay emphasis on 'saving water'.

"Rather than taking up grand development, we will adopt grand protection of water," he underlined. Therefore, in many places projects are coming for water diversion from water rich areas to water scarcity areas, he said.

## **Wenchuan dam at risk of breaking due to heavy rains**

China Daily, August 23, 2019

A dam in Wenchuan, in Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, is at risk of breaking due to heavy rains, the Ministry of Water Resources warned on Thursday.

The dam, part of the Longtan hydropower station located at a tributary of the Minjiang River, lost power due to the rains, which caused its flood discharging gates to stop working after being raised only 1 meter on Tuesday.

The water level in the reservoir rose quickly and began to overflow the dam.

On Wednesday, the water level rose to about 4 meters above the normal level. This has overburdened the dam, and there is a chance it could burst, the ministry said in a news release.

Ninety-six people, including 54 tourists, were trapped upstream near the station due to the rising water level and collapsed roads near it after mudslides struck the area. Local authorities are making rescue plans to deal with the emergency.

According to the local water resources bureau, areas about 5 to 7 kilometers down from the station will be seriously affected if the dam breaks.

The ministry urged local authorities to analyse the impact of the possible flood and relocate people in areas that could be affected. People are not allowed to return by themselves until risks are eliminated.

The ministry said their options include forcibly opening the flood discharging gates or opening a temporary water channel for floods. The hydropower station was put into use in 1996 and was severely damaged by the earthquake in Wenchuan in 2008. After more than four years of reconstruction, the hydropower station resumed operation in 2013.

Ten people were killed and 28 were missing after multiple mudslides battered Aba on Tuesday, local authorities said on Thursday.

Rescue efforts are underway. The provincial emergency management bureau has sent 18 helicopters from King Wing aviation company to rescue people trapped across the prefecture and to deliver food and flashlights.

## **China conducts in-situ detection experiment on atmospheric turbulence**

Xinhua News August 21, 2019

Chinese researchers have completed an in-situ detection experiment on near-space atmospheric turbulence in northwest China's Qinghai Province and southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, according to Science and Technology Daily on Wednesday.

The energy and mass exchange and the pollutants transport and diffusion in the atmosphere are closely related to atmospheric turbulence. The flight experiment lasted 13 hours and eight minutes, with a maximum altitude of 21,625 meters, said the newspaper. The researchers received the completed data record. Developed by the Anhui Institute of Optics and Fine Mechanics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the atmospheric turbulence in-situ detection device is used to study the influence of near space atmospheric thermal turbulence on mass exchange.

## **Tibet to build more weather observatories for disaster prevention**

Xinhua August 19, 2019

LHASA, Aug. 19 (Xinhua) – Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region will build 490 automatic meteorological observatories for improving the region's weather monitoring and forecasting abilities, according to local authorities.

The stations will log data including wind direction, wind speed, rainfall, temperature and humidity, which will improve Tibet's capacity to forecast disastrous weathers, according to the regional meteorological bureau.

"The climate in Tibet is complicated and we are under great pressure to prevent climate disasters," said Lhadro, Party head of the meteorological bureau.

The bureau has developed a plan to improve its ability to prevent climate disasters in the primary-level government by 2022.

China's extreme weather events are on the rise and becoming increasingly severe as the climate risk level edges up, according to a report by the China Meteorological Administration. The Qinghai-Tibet region recorded the quickest temperature growth during the 1961-2018 period, the report noted.

## **First National Park Forum opens in northwest China**

XINING, Aug. 19 (Xinhua)

The first forum on national parks opened Monday in Xining, capital of northwest China's Qinghai Province.

The two-day event attracted more than 450 representatives of regulatory agencies, experts and scholars at home and abroad to discuss topics including construction and management of nature reserve areas, biodiversity protection, and the future of natural heritage sites.

The establishment of a national park system is crucial to the protection and maintenance of the ecological system and build-up of harmony between man and nature, said Zhang Jianlong, head of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

"We will build up a nature reserve system with national parks as its main body," said Zhang while addressing the opening ceremony.

China has approved the pilot plans for a spate of national parks.

"We will strive to largely finish the political task in 2020 to support the full establishment of the national park system," he said.

"Through this new national park system, China has the opportunity to contribute to world biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, and to show leadership in ecosystem services and the relationship between humans and environment," said Jonathan Jarvis, former director of the U.S. National Park Service, at the opening ceremony. "China has world class natural and cultural resources such as those I saw within the pilot Sanjiangyuan National Park."

Qinghai, located on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, boasts some of the richest biodiversity in the world and is one of the first provinces in China to carry out pilot programs for the national park system.

China aims to set up a batch of national parks and form a unified management system by 2020 with an aim to connect fragmented habitats and improve the management and conservation of wildlife.

Pilot projects are underway for 10 national parks, including one in Sanjiangyuan in Qinghai, which is home to the headwaters of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers.

The National Park Forum was jointly hosted by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the provincial government of Qinghai.

## **Eco-China: Tibet Autonomous Region**

Xinhua, August 17, 2019

BEIJING, Aug. 17, 2019 (Xinhua) – Tibet Autonomous Region is located in southwest China, it has seen significant progress in restoring biodiversity, with a forest coverage rate of 12.14 percent, said a white paper released in March this year by China's State Council Information Office.

The population of Tibetan antelopes has grown from 60,000 in the 1990s to more than 200,000 and Tibetan wild donkeys have increased in numbers from 50,000 to 80,000,

noted the document, titled "Democratic Reform in Tibet – Sixty Years On."

Since the Qomolangma Nature Reserve was established in 1988, Tibet has set up 47 nature reserves of all kinds, including 11 at state level, with the total area of nature reserves accounting for more than 34.35 percent of the total area of the autonomous region, the white paper said. Tibet has 22 eco-protection areas, including one at state level, 36 counties in receipt of transfer payments from central finance for their key ecological roles, four national scenic areas, nine national forest parks, 22 national wetland parks, and three national geoparks, figures showed.

The central government has continued to increase eco-compensation for Tibet in return for its cost for protecting the eco-environment and the consequent losses in development opportunities. The white paper said that since 2001, the central government has paid 31.6 billion yuan (4.71 billion U.S. dollars) in eco-compensation to the autonomous region for protecting forests, grassland, wetland, and key ecological reserves.

## **Qinghai-Tibet Plateau used to have warm lowland 26 mln years ago: study**

Xinhua, August 13 2019

BEIJING, Aug. 13 (Xinhua) – The hinterland of southwest China's Qinghai-Tibet Plateau was a warm and humid lowland nourished by warm air from the Indian Ocean 26 million years ago, according to a recently published study in the journal Chinese Science Bulletin.

The joint research of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology and Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences found the diversified fossils of animals and plants in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region and recognised the transitions of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau's ecosystem in the early Miocene, about 23 million years ago.

After researching numerous well-preserved fish fossils, researchers have found that fish in the late Oligocene, about 34 to 23 million years ago, lived in warm low-altitude areas, completely different from the fish in today's plateau.

More than 50 kinds of plant fossils demonstrated that the plants lived in the low-altitude tropical and subtropical areas of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the late Oligocene.

The geological evidence showed that the central part of the plateau rose to a height of nearly 3,000 meters in the early Miocene. Its terrestrial ecosystem thus turned from a tropical and subtropical environment into a cooler temperate climate. Cold-adapted mammals subsequently appeared in the Pliocene, five to three million years ago, according to the study.

The current ecosystem of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau consists of animals and plants which are adapted to the alpine frozen environment or the cryosphere.

## Lhasa to recruit chiefs to protect city's rivers

China Daily August 12 2019  
PALDEN NYIMA/DAQIONG



Aerial photo taken on March 4, 2018 shows a newly-built bridge across the Lhasa River, a tributary of the Yarlung Zangbo River, in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region. [Photo/Xinhua]

Lhasa, the capital city of southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region, plans to recruit 55 chiefs to protect its rivers, the city's water conservation bureau said.

The move was a response to local residents' long-standing support for river management and protection, the bureau said.

It will accept applications for the positions between Aug 21 and 31. Recruitment is expected to be completed by the end of October, and the river chiefs are expected to be on duty by the end of the year.

Migmar Samdrub, an official from the bureau's river and lake administration office, said the work would motivate people to get involved in river protection, and it would help to improve long-term ecological conservation.

The recruitment is open to the public, but preference will be given to government workers such as deputies to the people's congress, members of advisory bodies, law workers, journalists and educational workers.

"Recruitment is also open to elderly Party members, village leaders, ex-servicemen and retirees. After a first review and approval by the bureau's river chief office, those who are accepted will be accredited with recruitment certificates," Migmar Samdrub said.

The responsibilities of the river chiefs will include volunteering to participate in river protection, supervision, handling comments, publicising river protection and various river patrol activities, the bureau said.

"The river chiefs have to conduct at least one activity related to river protection every month," Migmar Samdrub said. "They have to regularly monitor and patrol the river, and they have to report any findings every month."

According to the qualification requirements of the position, a river chief has to be someone who has a strong education background with a profound understanding of regulations and policies related to water law and a solid understanding of green development. A chief must also be someone who knows the river, locals and their culture.

The river chiefs will be working along the city's main rivers in the region's districts of Chengguan (district of Lhasa), Dagze (district of Lhasa immediately east of the district of Chengguan) and Doilungdechen, (is a district in Lhasa, north-west of the main center of Chengguan) as well as Chushul county.

If the river chiefs see any actions that may compromise the protection of the rivers, they can report them by calling the government service hotline. They can also use platforms such as WeChat to raise awareness of the problems.

Dawa Tsering, a resident of Lhasa, said protecting the Lhasa River was the responsibility of everyone who lived there, and the work of the river chiefs was needed.

"We sometimes see people littering along the river," the 28-year-old said. "Deaths may even occur if people swim in the river without adequate safety awareness.

"I think it's very necessary to install a normalised legal practice to ensure the river is not polluted by people and that residents are not harmed by the river at the same time."

## 'Smartest' mega hydropower station to generate electricity in 2020 in SW China

Global Times, August 11, 2019

Wudongde Hydropower Station, dubbed the "smartest" mega hydropower station in the world, will go into operation in July 2020, media reported on Sunday.

Located in southwest China, the hydropower station is under construction using cutting-edge intelligent technologies, including real-time temperature monitoring and intelligent grouting equipment, making it the smartest power project in the world and showing the highest level of intelligent construction in China's dam industry.

Wudongde Hydropower Station has embedded thermometers and cooling pipes in the concrete to detect the concrete temperature in real time. Through the intelligent water flow system, the flow can be automatically adjusted to realise the cooling process of concrete in an intelligent way.

The 2.8 million cubic meters of concrete in the dam uses low heat cement that can withstand large temperature differences, which can cause cracking of concrete and threaten the safety of the dam, a worldwide problem in hydropower engineering, media reported.

The concrete temperature is 7.1 C at the construction site, while the atmospheric temperature is 29 C, according to measurements taken by a reporter from China Central Television (CCTV) on Sunday.

The hydropower station is the first dam in the world to fully use low heat cement.

Wudongde Hydropower Station is designed as a concrete double-curved arch dam with a maximum height of 270 meters. The foundation bed of the dam is only 51 meters thick, which makes the hydropower station the thinnest 300-meter arch dam in the world at present. The "thin" concrete will be able to afford a storage of approximately 7.4 billion cubic meters of water in its reservoir, according to CCTV news.

The excavation length of the main workshop of the underground power station in Wudongde dam broke the world record with a height of 89.8 meters, equivalent to 30-story building.

The hydropower station will be able to generate 38.9 billion kilowatts of electricity annually after its 12 generating units start operation. The station is scheduled to impound

its reservoir in July 2020, CCTV news reported Sunday.

The first batch of generator sets are scheduled to be put into production in July 2020, and the project is scheduled to be fully completed in December 2021, according to China Three Gorges Corp, constructor of the project.

As a green energy, the amount of hydropower produced by Wudongde will save 12.2 million tons of standard coal and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide by 30.5 million tons and 104,000 tons every year, according to CCTV news.

Wudongde Hydropower Station is on the Jinsha River, the name for the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, and sits between Southwest China's Yunnan Province and Sichuan Province.

Wudongde Station, together with Baihetan Hydropower Station, Xiluodu Hydropower Station and Xiangjiaba Hydropower Station, will form a cascade of power stations on the Jinsha River. The cluster will have an installed capacity of 46.46 million kilowatts, which is equivalent to twice the output of the Three Gorges Dam in the middle reaches of the Yangtze, and will generate about 190 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.

## Scientific survey on 10 lakes in Tibet has been completed

China Tibet online, August 1, 2019

According to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Research Institute of China's Academy of Sciences on July 26, the second Qinghai-Tibet plateau scientific survey has completed investigation on 10 lakes in Tibet for water depth and quality, including the first comprehensive water depth measurement for Yamdrok Yutso Lake.

Ju Jianting, an assistant researcher at the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Research Institute of China's Academy of Sciences said, since early July to present, a team of 10 researchers has finished the on-site investigation and measurement of 10 lakes in areas including Shannan, Nagqu, and Ngari of Tibet.

Early results showed that other than Chishangtso Lake of Nagqu City being a saltwater lake, most of the lakes surveyed were found to be brackish lakes or freshwater lakes. The lakes were also found to have varying

depths. Of them, the Yamdrok Yutso Lake has a depth of over 40 meters and the other lakes are as deep as 80 meters.

The second Qinghai-Tibet scientific survey plans to survey around 100 lakes with more than 50 square kilometer in area. As of now, data for water depth and water quality of about 28 thousand square kilometer water area has been obtained.

China's Sichuan Province, completed the main structure construction Wednesday.

The Chengdu Tianfu International Airport, one of the country's largest civil airport projects, is slated to be basically completed by the end of 2020 and officially put into operation in the first half of 2021.

Chengdu is expected to become the third city in China with two international airports.

Covering a building area of 330,000 square meters, Terminal 2 of the airport has five floors above ground and two underground.

The first phase of the airport construction is designed to meet the target of handling an annual 40 million passengers and 700,000 tonnes of cargo in 2025.

## Military and Infrastructure Development

### Terminal of Chengdu's new int'l airport completes main structure construction

[xinhua.net](http://xinhua.net) August 29, 2019



Aerial photo taken on Aug. 27, 2019 shows the construction site of Chengdu Tianfu International Airport in Jiayang, about 50 kilometers from downtown Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. The main structure of Terminal 2 of Chengdu Tianfu International Airport was capped on Wednesday. Chengdu Tianfu International Airport is expected to put into operation in 2021. (Xinhua/Jiang Hongjing)

The terminal of a new international airport in the city of Chengdu, capital of southwest

### China to hold grand celebration, military parade on National Day

Xinhua, August 29, 2019



A press conference is held by the State Council Information Office in Beijing, capital of China, Aug. 29, 2019. China on Thursday announced that it would put on a grand celebration, followed by a military parade and mass pageantry at Tian'anmen Square on Oct. 1, the National Day, to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). (Xinhua/Jin Liangkuai)

China on Thursday announced that it would put on a grand celebration, followed by a military parade and mass pageantry at Tian'anmen Square on Oct. 1, the National Day, to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The military parade is an important part of the National Day celebration and is not aimed at any other countries or specific situations, Cai Zhijun, deputy head of the office of the leading group for the military parade, said at a press conference held in Beijing.

Some advanced weapons will make their debut in the military parade, the scale of which is scheduled to be greater than the ones

commemorating the 50th and 60th founding anniversary of the PRC, as well as the V-Day military parade in 2015.

The military parade is expected to showcase China's achievements in building its national defense and armed forces in the past 70 years and reflect the outcomes of the reform of the people's armed forces, according to Cai.

## **Xi urges Chinese air force to enhance capability to win**

eons.cn, August 25, 2019

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called on the air force to enhance its capability to win and greet the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) with great achievements.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks Thursday when inspecting an air force base in northwest China's Gansu Province.

At the combat command center, Xi used a teleconferencing facility to inspect the troops including personnel at a radar station on the plateau over 3,600 meters above sea level and a transport and rescue regiment.

After listening to the work report of the base, Xi stressed the great significance of carrying out Party education campaign themed "staying true to our founding mission" as the nation marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC.

Demanding a stronger sense of responsibility, Xi asked for persistent efforts in improving military preparedness to ensure that the air force can fight and emerge victorious when called upon.

The combat forces and support forces should be developed through military training under real combat conditions and joint operations, Xi said. He also stressed the need to govern the military with strict discipline in every respect and make sure that the armed forces are highly centralised, unified, pure and solid, and that they stay secure and stable.

## **Tech China Weekly: astronomical device; AI processor; robotic industry; brain-controlled drone**

BEIJING, Aug. 25 (Xinhua) – The following are the highlights of China's key technology news from the past week:

### **SQUARE KILOMETER ARRAY**

Construction of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA), the world's largest astronomical device, is expected to start next year, and China, one of the founding members, is preparing to build a regional data center and developing its reflector antennas.

SKA will be the largest and most advanced radio telescope ever. It will combine signals received via thousands of small antennas spreading over 3,000 km to simulate a single giant radio telescope with a total collecting area of approximately one square kilometer and capable of extremely high sensitivity and angular resolution.

### **HUAWEI'S AI PROCESSOR**

Chinese tech giant Huawei on Friday launched the Ascend 910, which is described by the company as the world's most powerful artificial intelligence (AI) processor, and an all-scenario AI computing framework MindSpore.

The Shenzhen-based company said the Ascend 910, which will be used for AI model training, performs much better than previously expected.

### **ROBOTICS INDUSTRY**

Industrial robot production in China reached 148,000 pieces in 2018, accounting for more than 38 percent of the world's total, said an official at the 2019 World Robot Conference.

China's industrial robot market has become the world's largest, accounting for one-third of global sales. There are expected to be more than 130 robots per 10,000 people in China by 2021.

### **BRAIN-CONTROLLED DRONE**

Chinese researchers have developed a brain-controlled rescue drone that enables the unmanned aircraft to have precise and reliable identification in sandstorms, haze and other low-visibility weather.

The drone system mainly comes in the form of a headset with electrodes, which can detect the brain's electrical activity, or brain waves, using electroencephalography (EEG).

## New counter-terror force in Xinjiang

Global Times, August 20, 2019

The Chinese People's Armed Police have established a new counter-terror special operations unit in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region to adapt to the needs of counter-terrorism missions there, media reported on Tuesday.

The unit, called Mountain Eagle Commando, was revealed to the public for the first time, Chinese newspaper Cankao Xiaoxi reported on Tuesday.

It was formed under the military reform and aims to deal with counter-terror missions in Xinjiang and other places in China.

The name "Mountain Eagle" came from the unit's designated battlefield: mountains and plateaus. The unit's insignia is a flying mountain eagle with its beak pointed to the ground and claws open.

The report did not reveal when the Mountain Eagle Commando was established.

It said the unit has begun to take shape, has passed a strict evaluation process and is now capable of conducting combat missions.

In 2018, the amount of ammunition used by the new commando unit was equal to all of the other Armed Police units in Xinjiang in the past three years, said Peng Jingtang, chief of staff of Armed Police Force in Xinjiang.

The leader of the Mountain Eagle Commando Unit is Wang Gang, who fought in Xinjiang's counter-terror efforts and participated in dealing with more than a dozen of serious terrorist incidents.

Zhang Xiaoqi, director of the intelligence bureau of the People's Armed Police staff department, told the Xinhua News Agency previously that the expansion of China's security interests in the new era has placed a higher demand on the Armed Police special operation forces.

The scope of missions for these units has expanded from land to sea, from within borders to beyond borders, from stability maintenance to safeguarding rights and interests, Zhang said.

He noted that special operation forces need to focus on key locations but also cover the whole country.

China has two other counter-terror ism commandos - the Guangzhou-based Snow Leopard Unit, which was established in 2002,

and the Beijing-based Falcon Unit, established in 1982, according to media reports. This means the Armed Police now operate three special units each in the south, center and west, which reflects Zhang's vision.

The Armed Police aims to build commando forces capable of conducting missions at any time, in any place, under all weather conditions, and to deal with all factors, Cankao Xiaoxi said in a separate report in June.

## China's regional jetliner conducts plateau demo flight

China Daily, August 20, 2019

BEIJING -- China's homegrown regional jetliner, the ARJ21, has conducted its first plateau demonstration flight in the southwest province of Yunnan, demonstrating its adaptability to high elevations, the People's Daily reported Tuesday.

The jetliner completed a route linking Kunming, capital of Yunnan, with two other well-known tourist cities in the province Monday, the paper said.

Yunnan is located on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, a highland region in southwest China. Kunming has an average elevation of about 1,895 meters above the sea level.

A series of demonstration flights, held over three days, will test the jetliner's performance and its compatibility with high altitude airports. By the end of 2018, China's civil aviation had a total of 36 high altitude airports, mainly in the western areas.

The ARJ21, manufactured by the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China based in Shanghai, is the country's first regional jetliner to serve central and western cities. Apart from its adaptability to high temperatures and high altitudes, it has a strong crosswind resistance that can allow the aircraft to take off and land safely under complex conditions.

The Chengdu Airlines, for one, has used the the ARJ21 planes to connect more than 20 cities, carrying more than 450,000 passengers. More air service providers are following suit.

## China uses advanced weapons in plateau military drills

Global Times, August 19, 2019



Chinese Type 99A main battle tanks roll in a plateau area in a recent combat exercise. Photo: screenshot from China Central Television

In preparation for potential plateau warfare, China recently used, for the first time, some of its most powerful weapons and equipment, including Type 99A main battle tanks and battlefield robots to a snow-covered plateau in combat exercises.

Taking part in the exercises at an elevation of 4,200 meters was a combined brigade under the 76th Group Army of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), who conducted mock battles using live ammunition, China Central Television (CCTV) reported on Sunday.

The report did not identify the area, but such a terrain is usually found in western China.

Weapons and equipment, including Type 99A tanks and battlefield robots used for mine sweeping and reconnaissance, were deployed for the first time in a plateau, the CCTV report said.

Heavy weapons will usually suffer from the lack of oxygen on plateaus, military analysts said.

"Switching from the plains to a plateau, the tanks' mobility and assault capabilities suffered, so we devised some tactics that best suit plateaus. Our goal is to maximise these new weapons' combat readiness in a potential plateau warfare," Fan Hailong, an officer with the 76th Group Army, told CCTV.

"The exercises allowed us to further test the combat capabilities and gathered data for all kinds of weapons in high elevation and cold weather," said Zhao Xiang, another 76th Group Army officer.

The exercises lasted several days, during which time the troops discovered a dozen methods of breaking through enemy defenses, comprehensively expanding their combat

capabilities under all kinds of terrain, CCTV said.

The PLA will conduct more exercises involving new weapons and equipment on plateaus, according to Zhao.

## Air China to resume flights to quake-damaged Jiuzhaigou

Xinhua, August 19, 2019

CHENGDU, Aug. 19 (Xinhua) – Air China will resume flight services between earthquake-damaged Jiuzhaigou scenic spot in southwestern Sichuan Province and Chengdu, the provincial capital.

According to Air China's southwest branch, starting Sept. 6, the company will operate flights every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday with an Airbus A319 aircraft.

On August 8, 2017, a 7.0-magnitude quake forced the closure of the Jiuzhaigou National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its spectacular waterfalls, lush forests and serene plateau lakes. The Jiuzhai Huanglong Airport also halted the service.

On Aug. 8, Sichuan Airlines resumed operating the flight between Chengdu and Jiuzhaigou.

As an important transport hub linking tourist sites to the outside world, the airport plans to resume flight services to cities including Chongqing, Xi'an, Beijing and Shanghai within the year.

## Sky-high airport commissioned in China

Armenia News, August 17, 2019

A new civilian airport was commissioned today in Chongqing, Southwest China, Xinhua reported.

This morning, the first flight landed at Chongqing Wushan Airport which was nicknamed 'transcendental'.

It is planned to launch new flights connecting cities in the Chinese east and south in the near future.

The new airport is located at an altitude of more than 1770 m above sea level, about 15 km from the center of Wushan County.

It is expected that Wushan Airport, being one of the four regional airports in Chongqing, will

improve the Chongqing transport network and help develop tourism in the Sānxiá (Three Gorges Dam).

## China's fighter drones possible

with AI use: experts

en.people.cn August 15, 2019

China's plan to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) for drones would make fighter drones possible, allowing them to fly on their own, identify targets and make decisions to enhance their combat capability, Chinese military experts said on Wednesday.

Speaking on the future of China's military drones on a China Central Television (CCTV) program aired on Monday, Li Yidong, chief designer of China's Wing Loong series drones, said, "AI is a huge field with many basic technologies, which are developing. We are doing all sorts of work to apply these technologies on drones, and also piloted aircraft."

"We want [drones] to fly intelligently, have smart situational awareness, capable of identifying targets and automatically make some decisions," Li said.

Drones today are operated manually and remotely from ground stations, but the signals could be jammed in electric warfare and the aircraft could lose their combat capability, Wei Dongxu, a Beijing-based military analyst, told the Global Times on Wednesday, noting that AI installed on drones would solve this problem.

"AI is also a fundamental requirement for the development of fighter drones," Wei said.

Since lag time occurs in remote control over long distances, drones now have difficulty fighting air-to-air combat in which battle situations change very fast. But with AI, the drones can fight using their own judgment and without lag caused by data transmission, according to Wei.

AI developers must also consider the safety issue, as AI drones must still strictly follow human commands and not take unwished actions, analysts said.

Technological issues also need to be sorted out, like the development of the hardware and if the size of it can be fitted onto a drone, Wei said.

Li said that he is also developing drones that can fit into a whole combat system,

exponentially boosting the system's combat capability.

Li did not give any detail on this aspect.

The Wing Loong series of drones are domestically developed by the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China.

As of December 2018, 100 Wing Loong drones have been delivered for export, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

They have fired more than 3,000 rounds of live munitions on battlefields with an overall accuracy higher than 90 percent, according to a separate CCTV report in March.

## China's New Export Tank to Be Upgraded With Active Protection System

sputniknews.com August 8, 2019

The VT-5, a made-for-export version of the People's Liberation Army's new ZTQ-15 light tank, will be equipped with an active protection system that can shoot down incoming projectiles, according to a China Central Television report last week.

The new system will "detect incoming hostile projectiles before firing interception rockets to detonate them before they hit the tank," the Global Times reported on Sunday, citing the CCTV report.

Built by the China North Industries Corporation (Norinco), the VT-5 is a version of the ZTQ-15 light tank intended for export to foreign buyers. The tank is a scaled-down version of the PLA's VT-4 main battle tank, also called the MBT3000, which is in turn derived from the Soviet Union's T-72 tank.

"Compared to a heavy main battle tank, a light tank like the VT-5 carries lighter armour, meaning weaker passive protection. Using an active protection system would be a great choice," a military expert who requested anonymity told the Global Times. The tank can also be fitted with special explosive reactive armour that disrupts the penetration ability of shaped charges, or advanced composite armour for deflecting high-energy anti-tank (HEAT) weapons, according to The Diplomat.

The PLA reportedly intends to purchase 300 ZTQ-15s, which can operate at high altitudes and in rough terrain, such as that found in China's Tibetan Plateau. The purpose of a light tank design is to go where regular tanks can't

and to get there faster. At only half the weight of the VT-4, the VT-5 is a real speed demon, the Global Times noted.

## Completion of New Baishatuo Tunnel marked in SW China's Chongqing

xinhuanet.com August 7, 2019



Aerial photo taken on Aug. 6, 2019 shows a ceremony held to mark the completion of the New Baishatuo Tunnel in Fuling District of southwest China's Chongqing.

The 10.004-km tunnel along the second railway line connecting Chongqing and Huaihua of central China's Hunan Province completed Monday after over three years of construction work. (Xinhua/Wang Quanchao)

## China launches 3 Yaogon-30 satellites

New Delhi Times Bureau August 5, 2019

According to reports by Chinese state-owned Xinhua news agency, China has launched three more Yaogon-30 remote-sensing satellites from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwestern China on 26 July.

The report states that the satellites, which were placed into orbit by a Long March-2C carrier rocket, are primarily functioned for electromagnetic detection and "related technological tests". Analysts contend that the Yaogon-30 satellites are mainly designed for military signals intelligence (SIGINT) purposes and can geo-locate military platforms, particularly warships, by intercepting electromagnetic transmissions such as radar.

The satellites are operated as triplets, positioned in relatively close proximity, that can measure the angular or time difference of arrival of intercepted signals, from which the position of the source can be determined. The satellites have been positioned in a low-Earth orbit with an altitude of 600 km and inclination of 35°.

Shortly after the launch, all three satellites were reported to have reached the intended orbit. The first four groups of Yaogon-30 triplets were launched over a four-month period, from September 2017 to January 2018. The launch of the latest group increases the number of satellites in the constellation to 15.

The previous launch of a Yaogon satellite, on 22 May was unsuccessful because of a malfunction of the carrier rocket's third stage. Yaogon-33 is thought to have been configured as a synthetic aperture radar satellite.

The increasing number of Chinese military surveillance satellites will provide shorter refresh intervals for areas of critical interest, such as the East and South China Seas.

Near-real time updates of target position from remote sensors may be required by anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) if the high terminal velocity creates a plasma shield that adversely affects the performance of the missile's homing radar. The ability of SIGINT satellites to geo-locate ships at sea is clearly dependent upon those ships making transmissions that can be intercepted. While transmissions can be minimised to reduce the risk of detection by SIGINT satellites, radar will be required to detect incoming ASBMs.

## Key tunnel on Lhasa-Nyingchi railway completed

China Daily, August 3, 2019

LHASA – Construction on a pivotal tunnel on a railway linking Lhasa and Nyingchi in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region was completed Friday, marking huge progress of the mammoth project.

The Bukamu Tunnel, located in Milin County of Nyingchi, is 9,240 meters long with an average elevation of 3,100 meters above the sea level. It is also the 37th tunnel being finished, leaving just 10 tunnels to be completed by the end of the year.

Over 3,000 rock bursts were counted during the construction of the tunnel, while the oxygen level inside was merely 19 percent that of the plain areas, said Wang Shucheng, director of the project.

The Lhasa-Nyingchi railway is 435 km long, 75 percent of which are bridges and tunnels. It is expected to be completed in 2021.

## China's air force spreads its wings in 70th anniversary video

scmp.com August 2, 2019 Liu Zhen

China's air force has marked its 70th anniversary with a video highlighting the expansion of its mission to defend the country's interests well beyond Chinese airspace.

The promotional video, released on Thursday as part of China's Armed Forces Day celebrations, includes footage of the PLA Air Force's recent joint operation with its Russian counterpart, in a further indication of deepening military cooperation between the two countries.

"Wherever the national interest expands to, our air and space force follows," according to the introduction for the video, which includes patrols of the East China Sea, "guarding the South China Sea, advancing to the West Pacific, and encircling the island of Taiwan".

The PLA Air Force, the introduction continued, not only had the "capability of flying far" but also the "determination to fly out".

The two-minute long video features China's newest aircraft, including the stealth fighter J-20 and strategic bomber H-6K, taking part in recent trainings and drills. Other PLA Air Force warplanes, such as the J-16, J-11, J-10B/C, Su-35 and Su-27, also make an appearance.

Footage of China's H-6K bomber flying with a Russian Tu-95 bomber was probably filmed during last month's joint training exercise between the two air forces, which flew through the air defence identification zones (ADIZs) of Japan and South Korea over the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan – also known as the East Sea.

In that operation, a Russian early warning plane allegedly entered contested airspace over the Dokdo islets, called Takeshima by Japan, which are claimed by both Japan and South Korea. Warning shots were fired by

South Korean fighter jets and formal protests lodged by both the Japanese and South Koreans.

The PLA Air Force was founded in 1949 with help from the then-Soviet Union, and a strictly domestic mission. At that time, the Chinese air force lacked the capability to operate beyond a territorial defence role.

The video's title – which references the PLA's "founding mission" accompanying its troops to the battlefield – echoes Chinese President Xi Jinping's emphasis on returning to the original course of the Chinese Communist Party.

The introduction says the PLA Air Force is a "strategic force and its strategic capability should match the ever-expanding national interests and ever-changing security situation". It goes on to say that the service "should speed up its capacity building in strategic strikes, strategic early warnings, space defence and strategic power projection".

## Mobile howitzers help Tibet border defense

Global Times, July 1, 2019

Liu Caiyu and Ji Yuqiao



Soldiers from the People's Liberation Army in Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region attend a training mobilization meeting with new vehicle-mounted howitzers. Photo: courtesy of the People's Liberation Army Ground Force Saturday, the PLA in the Tibet Military Command is equipped with the new howitzer, which Chinese military analysts said is supposed to be the PLC-181 vehicle mounted howitzer.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) stationed in Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region has been equipped with new vehicle-mounted howitzers, which aims to boost their high-altitude combat capability to improve border security.

According to an article released by the WeChat account of the PLA Ground Force on The equipment was used in an artillery brigade in Tibet during the 2017 China-India stand-off.

Song Zhongping, a military expert and TV commentator, confirmed with the Global Times Monday that the howitzer has a 52-caliber cannon with a range of over 50 kilometers and shoots laser-guided and satellite-guided projectiles.

It will boost the high-altitude combat capability of the PLA in Tibet, Song said.

As part of military training in 2019, an artillery brigade in the Tibet Military Command ordered soldiers to take part in a military skills competition at a training ground on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau 3,700 meters above sea level.

Video from the China News Service on Sunday shows soldiers engaged in military boxing, standstill shooting and firing in motion, as well as assembling guns on the snowfields to improve their attack capability.

China's border issue has not been completely resolved, and was challenged by pro-Tibet independence forces and terrorists, analyst noted.

Zhao Gancheng, director of the Center for Asia-Pacific Studies at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, told the Global Times on Monday that the military investment in Tibet has been rising, but is primarily meant for defense and not to provoke conflict with neighboring countries.

The PLA troops stationed in Tibet need to improve their combat capabilities in plateau areas and strengthen their willpower in extreme weather as they are primarily responsible for the border defense against terrorists and foreign invaders, he said.

To cope with altitude sickness, the PLA built oxygen stations for the soldiers in Tibet in 2015, which were used for medical purposes, but are now also being used in regularly training, according to a press release on the Ministry of National Defense's website in August 2018.

In August, an armoured infantry of the Tibet Military Command conducted a drill on a plateau 4,800 meters above sea level, according to a report from chinanews.com.

## Xi scores coup and grabs party backing to be 'people's leader'

asia.nikkei.com August 29, 2019

KATSUJI NAKAZAWA

After twist at Beidaihe, president awards himself Mao Zedong's former title

On Aug. 25, the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, ran a splash headline on its front page that caught the eye of China watchers around the world.

"The people's leader loves the people," it said. The signed opinion piece took note of President Xi Jinping inspecting Gansu Province and described him as a leader who loves the people and is loved by the people.

State-run China Central Television, or CCTV, broadcast a similar commentary the following day.

The timing of the article was significant, coming a little more than 10 days after the end of this year's Beidaihe conclave, the annual summer gathering of incumbent leaders and party elders at the seaside resort town in Hebei Province.

It hinted that Xi had gotten the green light to portray himself as such at this year's Beidaihe conclave.

"The People's Leader" was the honorific reserved for Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China. It was a title he went by 70 years ago, when he was based at the party stronghold of Yan'an, Shaanxi province, on the Loess Plateau, before the founding of the People's Republic of China. He later held an even more exalted title, "Great Leader."

This is not the first time that Xi has toyed with the "people's leader" crown.

In March 2018, Xi muscled through a revision to China's constitution, doing away with presidential term limits and making it possible to remain president for life. His aides then embarked on a campaign to popularise "the people's leader" moniker.

Li Zhanshu, Xi's right-hand man who has known his boss since the 1980s, moved first.

During the closing speech of the annual session of the National People's Congress, China's parliament that he heads, Li praised Xi as "the people's leader" and "the figure who steers the country in a new era."

Toward the summer of 2018, Chinese media outlets began to trumpet the expression "the people's leader, Xi Jinping." A video about "the people's leader who came from the Loess Plateau" was spread widely. These moves were reminiscent of the old campaign to deify Mao.

But a pitfall was lurking. Xi's close aides were too hasty and did not give a detailed explanation to party elders. Their campaign faced fierce resistance from party elders and non-mainstream factions.

They specifically came under fire for allegedly moving to deify Xi and build a new form of personality cult around him. This was the key theme of last year's Beidaihe conclave.

The party's constitution clearly bans "any form of personality cult."

After Mao's death, the party introduced the ban under then supreme leader Deng Xiaoping to prevent a repeat of the disastrous Cultural Revolution.

Even Xi's faction, which was gaining ground following the constitutional revision, was unable to push ahead with moves smacking of a personality cult. Chinese media outlets also stopped trumpeting the expression, "the people's leader, Xi Jinping."

Why the return of the phrase?

The tacit understanding reached at Beidaihe seems to be: China needs a people's leader on a par with Mao to fight the protracted trade war with the U.S. under the unpredictable President Donald Trump and to deal with the Hong Kong situation, which could lead to a crisis for communist rule.

One source said, "For Xi, Trump's endless trade war and the Hong Kong issue have become unexpected gifts from heaven." Said another, "For China to fight a protracted war, it first needs stability and solidarit."

Therefore, the Chinese sources say, what was widely believed to be a double whammy for Xi has turned into a political jackpot.

Next on the political calendar is a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic that will be held in Beijing on Oct. 1.

China must build "a strong military in the new era," Xi said when he inspected an air force base in Gansu. This was a curtain raiser for the massive military parade planned on Oct. 1 to

play up national prestige amid the harsh confrontation with the U.S.

During these military extravaganzas, party elders, including former top leaders, will appear on the Tiananmen rostrum along with Xi, as they did for another military parade in 2015.

Among influential party elders are former Chinese presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao and former Chinese premiers Zhu Rongji and Wen Jiabao.

Ahead of the big parade, it will be natural for party elders to show respect to Xi as he faces up to "a national crisis." It is also customary for the party to project a unified front.

In that sense, the recent political developments in China appear heaven-sent. One interpretation is that last year's constitutional revisions, which were so unpopular among the elders, have now been accepted in name and reality.

Meanwhile, Deng's political legacies are being lost. His personality cult ban, spelled out in the party constitution to prevent a Mao-style dictatorship, remains but is currently being ignored. Deng also limited presidents to two five-year terms by writing a clause into the national constitution.

Deng's edicts helped end the confusion caused by the Cultural Revolution and pave the way for China's high economic growth.

While being responsible for overseeing the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown on pro-democracy student protesters, Deng laid the foundation for today's affluent China.

He died in 1997 but designated Jiang and Hu as successive national leaders before passing away. It would be safe to say that the Deng era lasted until Xi stepped into Hu's shoes in 2012.

The political climate Deng established still lingers, though it is at risk of being overtaken.

It is too early to say whether the Aug. 25 People's Daily article, "The people's leader loves the people," was implying a tentative party solidarity meant to cope with a crisis or the advent of a truly stable new Xi era.

Close attention should now be paid to the fourth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party, which has been delayed for nearly one year.

If there was no wrangling during this summer's Beidaihe conclave, there should be no problem with convening the fourth plenary session to discuss a basic medium- and long-term economic policy.

Many pundits think the fourth plenary session has been delayed due to disagreements within the party.

The session must be held by the end of this year so a basic economic policy can be adopted. This will have a significant impact on trade talks with the Trump administration.

If there is now no risk of Xi being, so to speak, shot from behind, due to his strengthened domestic political standing, his trade team will have some discretion to negotiate with its U.S. counterpart.

### **Xi to deliver major speech to 'mobilise the whole party, the whole military'**

Bloomberg, August 29, 2019

Chinese President Xi Jinping will deliver a major speech to mark 70 years since the official founding of the People's Republic of China, the government announced on Thursday.

The speech on October 1 will be accompanied by a national day parade showcasing China's advances in military technology, Wang Xiaohui, executive vice minister for the Communist Party's Publicity Department, said at a press briefing in Beijing. "The purpose is to motivate and mobilise the whole party, the whole military, and all of the people to unite closely around the CCP Central Committee with Xi at the core," Wang said.

The speech will be closely watched for hints on China's policy direction, especially with the nation facing pressure on multiple fronts, from the trade war with the US to protests in Hong Kong to a slowing domestic economy. Xi is expected to review the nation's achievements over the past 70 years and also talk about China's future.

He used a speech marking the anniversary of China's May Fourth movement earlier this year to urge the country's young people to stay loyal to the Communist Party.

The scale of the parade will be larger than those held to celebrate the 50th or 60th anniversaries of the PRC, Major General Cai Zhijun, who is vice director of the office for parade organisation, said at the press conference. Cai said the parade would show China's "great achievements" in national

defence and the "accumulation of power for promotion of national rejuvenation."

The parade will include strategic nuclear missiles and advanced fighter jets such as the nation's first stealth fighter, the J-20, the South China Morning Post reported today.

Installations preparing for the celebration are already being erected in Tiananmen Square and security is being tightened across the city in preparation for the event. The events will include a National Day Gala, an award ceremony and a musical performance, as well as commemorative stamps and coins, Wang said.

### **What Would Hippocrates Say? Patients Forced to Divulge Their Faith Before Getting Medical Care**

bitterwinter.org August 28, 2019 Tang Wanming

Uses a pseudonym for security reasons.

The CCP requires medical staff to register the evidence of patients' religious belief in databases that the state uses to control every aspect of people's lives.

Last October, a pregnant woman from the eastern province of Shandong was rushed to the hospital because of heavy bleeding. The doctor's prognosis was that the woman was in imminent danger, and she needed surgery immediately.

A nurse was sent in to take the woman's personal information. To the family's dismay, the nurse was more interested in the woman's religious beliefs rather than her health.

"She's in so much pain. Why are you asking her these questions?" a family member was distraught. The nurse replied that the government requires to collect information about each patient, including their religious status, to be entered into their medical records. She added that not asking about faith isn't an option.

Even though her life was hanging in the balance, the pregnant woman was asked twice about her religious status before she was taken to surgery.

Residents in Hebei, Heilongjiang, Shandong, Henan, and other provinces have also reported to *Bitter Winter* having been questioned by hospital staff about their religious beliefs before seeing a doctor. Some

residents said that similar incidents occurred as early as 2017.

Belief in God could affect treatment

*Bitter Winter* has interviewed several medical workers about their experience with collecting information about patients' religious status. All of them said that the government had imposed this requirement, but none could understand the real intentions for this.

The director of a hospital in Shandong revealed that patients' information - their personal and family's medical history, financial standing, religious denomination, and alike - is uploaded on a government-run database. "Not only the Public Security Bureau reviews these records, but employers can also access them. As soon as someone has a 'blemish,' they will be restricted to purchase tickets for travel. Employers won't hire them either."

"Some patients didn't know why such questions were asked, but they still gave a truthful account of their religious faith. It isn't a good thing. It may seem innocuous at the moment, but the government can exploit this information if it needs to," a medical worker from the central province of Henan said.

Since last year, local governments across China launched the campaign to register and investigate religious people, with databases of believers and religious venues springing up across the country. Apart from information collection in hospitals, believers' data are gathered in government institutions, the military, state-run enterprises, schools, and any other public domain. When their faith is disclosed, religious people are denied fundamental rights, such as jobs and social security.

Believers from religious groups listed as the *xie jiao*, association with which may result in a sentence to time in prison, acquire a criminal record after being arrested. Some of them discovered that their doctors already had information about their religious beliefs, an indication that their data is shared on a government network.

Members of religious groups that are not part of government-run churches worry that the collection of information on them is yet another means by the CCP to suppress religious liberties.

The religious status of citizens has also been reportedly added to the infamous social credit system that the CCP has been developing since 2014. As soon as the state blacklists someone, every aspect of their life, including traveling,

getting a loan, or receiving medical care, will be impacted.

"The government can use the information to restrict people's faith by not reimbursing believers' medical expenses or even arresting them," said a house church Christian who once truthfully reported her religious status to a doctor.

Seriously ill believer dies, not wanting to disclose his faith

A 46-year-old member of The Church of Almighty God (CAG) in Baoding city in the northern province of Hebei died because he was afraid to disclose the religious status of his family had he gone to the hospital.

The man's wife and son are also members of the CAG. To avoid persecution by the CCP, the entire family went into hiding a few years ago, wandering from place to place. The man already had diabetes before going into hiding. With time, his condition worsened, aggravated by high anxiety levels that he felt being on the run, having no home and being constantly malnourished. Scared to be found out and arrested, he didn't seek medical attention.

In August 2017, he had a severe insulin shock. A doctor at a small clinic that the man gathered all his courage to go to told him to seek immediate care at a larger hospital because he couldn't help him.

The man refused. "I would rather die than have my wife and son implicated and arrested along with me," he told the doctor in front of his family.

He died in September.

Any religious activities prohibited in hospitals  
*Bitter Winter* has obtained a document issued by a locality in Henan Province, entitled *Negative List of Persons in Charge and Clerical Personnel of Religious Activity Venue Management Committees*, according to which, "People must not take advantage of visiting patients to conduct preaching activities in hospitals and other public places."

A doctor from Pingyang county, under the jurisdiction of Wenzhou city in the eastern province of Zhejiang, revealed to *Bitter Winter* that the authorities in his area also adopted a similar document in the first half of 2018. Every healthcare worker in his hospital was required to acknowledge with a signature that they had read it. A sign reading "Conducting religious activities in medical facilities is prohibited" has also been posted in the hospital.

"Since last year, believers are not allowed to pray for their friends or relatives in hospitals. Those who do could be arrested," said a medical worker from Pingyang county. "In the past, seven or eight Three-Self church Christians would come every Saturday at 2:00 p.m. to pray for patients. But ever since the prohibition was issued, praying for patients is completely prohibited, and Christians stopped coming."

## Buddhist, Taoist Temples Destroyed Secretly at Night

[bitterwinter.org](http://bitterwinter.org) August 24, 2019, Zhou Hua

Authorities across China are demolishing places of worship at odd hours to avoid protests from believers, who are left with no chance to voice their grievances.

*Bitter Winter* has disclosed numerous incidents of demolished Buddhist and Taoist temples that authorities are cracking down on using a variety of pretexts. Believers lose their places of worship and also suffered considerable financial losses. Threatened and intimidated by the CCP, they have no choice but to suffer in silence.

Temple demolished despite believers' pleas  
Miaolian Temple, a Buddhist temple in Wu'an, a county-level city in the prefecture of Handan, in the northern province of Hebei, was destroyed on May 22. The original temple had a history spanning over 200 years. In 2015, local believers and monks raised money to rebuild it on the site of the old temple. Since then, the temple has served as an important religious activity venue for the local people.

The government claimed that the temple was "unlicensed" and "occupied arable land." According to village residents, on the day of the demolition, officials expelled all nuns and lay Buddhists from the temple. In an attempt to save their place of worship, believers got on their knees and pleaded with government officials for leniency. "This is a national policy," one of the officials said arrogantly. "The temple must be demolished! It's futile for anyone to try stopping it." One of the villagers refused to give up. Officials threatened that her son would lose his job if she continued obstructing their work and carried her away from the venue. Another villager was arrested for trying to block the demolition.

After a standoff that lasted until dusk, officials lied to the villagers that they would not demolish the temple's main hall, and only the side halls would be taken down. But after the villagers had dispersed, the main hall was nevertheless destroyed at night.

Infuriated by the duplicity of the government, one believer commented, "The government not only arrested people and demolished the temple, but even wanted to haul away and sell the steel reinforcing bars left behind after the demolition. They're no better than bandits and robbers!"

One more temple in Wu'an was also forcibly demolished on the grounds that it "illegally occupied arable land." More than a dozen statues inside the temple were smashed.

"The temple was rebuilt on the site of an old temple. It didn't occupy any arable land at all. We received consent from the Land Bureau to rebuild the temple, but now the government is framing us for illegally occupying arable land," the temple's owner said helplessly. "Who can resist CCP's policies?"

Taoist temple secretly demolished early in the morning

On June 6, at 4 a.m., more than 100 personnel from several government departments, including the county's Religious Affairs Bureau and Public Security Bureau, brought in two large excavators and a front loader to a Taoist temple in Shuangyashan city in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang. The person in charge of the temple never received any prior notice about the planned demolition. Moreover, he was away on a trip that day.

A local believer told *Bitter Winter* that when the temple was built in 2013, its owner signed a land-use contract with the village committee. Despite this, the temple was ordered to be destroyed because it "did not register with the Religious Affairs Bureau."

The believer also revealed that the temple owner sustained losses of nearly 200,000 RMB (about \$ 30,000). Attempting to get justice, he found a lawyer who told him that even though the case had sufficient grounds for a lawsuit, his suggestion was to drop it because this could "offend the Communist Party." The local government would make the owner's life extremely difficult, the lawyer said, and the owner was forced to give up his appeal.

Local Taoists were devastated, having lost their place of worship. "As long as the Communist

Party says that a venue was illegally built, then it will be demolished, regardless of sufferings by common people," a believer said. "It's harsher than during the Cultural Revolution."  
"People don't dare reason with the Communist Party. They always proclaim to be right, no matter what they say or do," another believer added. "You have nowhere to seek redress. All you can do is suffer in silence."

## Xi to Deliver Speech as Pressure Builds at Home and Abroad

Bloomberg News, August 29 2019

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The speech will be closely watched for hints on China's policy direction, especially with the nation facing pressure on multiple fronts, from the trade war with the U.S. to protests in Hong Kong to a slowing domestic economy. Xi is expected to review the nation's achievements over the past 70 years and also talk about China's future. He used a speech marking the anniversary of China's May Fourth movement earlier this year to urge the country's young people to stay loyal to the Communist Party.

The scale of the parade will be larger than those held to celebrate the 50th or 60th anniversaries of the PRC, Major General Cai Zhijun, who is vice director of the office for parade organisation, said at the press conference. Cai said the parade would show China's "great achievements" in national defense and the "accumulation of power for promotion of national rejuvenation."

The parade will include strategic nuclear missiles and advanced fighter jets such as the nation's first stealth fighter, the J-20, the South China Morning Post [reported](#) today.

Installations preparing for the celebration are already being erected in Tiananmen Square and security is being tightened across the city in preparation for the event. The events will include a National Day Gala, an award ceremony and a musical performance, as well as commemorative stamps and coins, Wang said.

## Chinese State Media Hire Digital Firms to Boost Followers on Facebook, Twitter

rfa.org August 22, 2019

A top news organisation run by the ruling Chinese Communist Party has hired two specialist social media and data management firms to boost their Facebook fans and followers on Twitter.

The China News Service, the second largest state-owned news agency in China after Xinhua, is run by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, which was absorbed into the United Front Work Department—the external influence and outreach agency—of the Chinese Communist Party in 2018.

Two official procurement documents seen by RFA for Twitter and Facebook specialists respectively offered contracts worth up to 1.3 million yuan each to companies that can boost their follower counts on those platforms by more than half a million.

The contracts were won by Beijing-based data and social media specialists OneSight and a company identified as Weina Industrial, also based in Beijing.

A customer service employee who answered the phone at OneSight confirmed that the company does indeed engage in such services. "[We can] look at the actual growth of a specific account you send us on Twitter, then we can research the audience for that account," the employee said. "We use a special department to evaluate this. We have specialist marketing teams targeting Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to aid your expansion. We can do it."

No contact details were available online for Weina, however.

Just an illusion

Fu King-wa, an associate professor at the Centre for Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Hong Kong, said that adding

a large number of followers in a short period of time actually just creates the illusion that more people are reading a certain account.

"The fact that they are using such methods to increase the number of people following their accounts and creating new audiences to encourage more people to read and share should tell us something," Fu said. "It tells us that there is important information [that they want to get across]."

"It's not at all surprising that it is the state-run media doing this," he said. "It helps give the impression that what they are putting out is important, and it may aid the spread of fake news."

Fu said the organisations seem to be neglecting the interactive nature of social media, in a country where the imparting of the government's official line is usually a one-way street.

"This is two-way, not one-way, communication, because you have likes, comments, and sharing, which are among the indicators that show if an account is active and influential," he said.

The tender documents also indicated that targets for new followers through February 2020 are based on follower numbers for other state-run media including the *People's Daily*, Xinhua, the *China Daily* and CGTN.

Pages and posts removed

Earlier this week, Facebook and Twitter both said they had taken steps to remove coordinated posts they had linked to the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

"Today, we removed seven Pages, three Groups and five Facebook accounts involved in coordinated inauthentic behaviour as part of a small network that originated in China and focused on Hong Kong," Facebook said in a news release on Aug. 19.

"The individuals behind this campaign engaged in a number of deceptive tactics, including the use of fake accounts—some of which had been already disabled by our automated systems—to manage Pages posing as news organisations, post in Groups, disseminate their content, and also drive people to off-platform news sites," it said.

"Although the people behind this activity attempted to conceal their identities, our investigation found links to individuals associated with the Chinese government," it said.

The groups and pages had been followed by at least 15,500 accounts prior to being removed, it said.

Twitter said it had uncovered "a significant state-backed information operation focused on the situation in Hong Kong, specifically the protest movement and their calls for political change."

It said some 936 accounts originating from within the People's Republic of China (PRC) were "deliberately and specifically attempting to sow political discord in Hong Kong, including undermining the legitimacy and political positions of the protest movement on the ground."

"We have reliable evidence to support that this is a coordinated state-backed operation," the company said on its official blog. "All the accounts have been suspended for a range of violations of our platform manipulation policies."

## China in 2022: One Surveillance Camera for Every Two People

China Scope, Central News Agency,  
August 20, 2019

Chinese cities are perhaps the most closely monitored places in the world. It is predicted that, by 2022, on average every two people in the country will be covered by a surveillance camera. The city of Chongqing currently has 2.6 million monitoring devices, or an average of 168 cameras per thousand people, higher than any other city in the world.

China plans to finish installing a social credit system by 2020. Surveillance monitors are becoming a weapon for creating so-called "smart cities" and "efficient governments." On the streets of Shanghai, when a traffic violation occurs, the camera will immediately capture and broadcast the faces of the offenders in public, to the surprise of many foreign tourists. The *South China Morning Post* quoted the British research firm Comparitech, which stated that, in the ranking of most monitors allocated to each thousand people, eight cities in China made it to the top 10. The top 10 are Chongqing, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Tianjin, Jinan, London (UK), Wuhan, Guangzhou, Beijing, and Atlanta (USA). Chongqing leads the world with 168.03 monitors per thousand

people, followed by Shenzhen, with every thousand people covered by 159.09 cameras. It is generally believed that China currently has about 200 million surveillance cameras. It is predicted that the number of cameras in China will grow by 213 percent by 2022 and reach 626 million. On average, about every two people will be within the sight of a camera.

## **Risk Prone Chinese Made Programs Abound in the World VPN App Market**

China Scope/Radio Free Asia, August 21, 2019

Chinese companies develop about 60 percent of the world's free VPN (virtual private network) programs and 90 percent of them have security risks. The overseas website "Top10VPN" published a survey last week, and indicated that 77 percent of the popular VPN programs have potential risks.

According to "Top10VPN," potentially risky VPN programs have been downloaded 210 million times from the Google App Store, while the figure at the Apple's App Store reached 3.8 million times a month. Although "Top10VPN" has already brought up the issue to Google and Apple regarding this issue and also reported that 80 percent of the free VPN programs in the app store violate Apple's own data sharing regulations, nevertheless, neither company seemed to care to look into the problem.

Ten years ago, the Chinese government installed a national firewall making many famous websites inaccessible in China, such as Google, Twitter, and Facebook. In order to access blocked foreign websites, many Chinese netizens try various circumvention methods, among which VPN is a stable technology.

One IT professional involved in the VPN business told the Taiwan based *Central News Agency* that Chinese companies' practices of launching VPN businesses or acquiring overseas VPN operations began in 2015. After China took over the VPN companies, it has been more and more difficult for the Chinese people to circumvent the Great Firewall. *Deutsche Welle* also reported the worrisome fact that many VPN operators chose not to tell their customers about the information of their parent companies.

Because it is very difficult for Chinese authorities to completely block netizens from accessing overseas websites, one interviewee told *Radio Free Asia*, "So the Chinese government has adopted the smartest approach. If it can't stop the users' needs, it creates a management model that can (put people) under surveillance. This is the main reason behind the proliferation of Chinese made VPNs in major app stores."

## **China's top legislature wraps up bimonthly session**

Xinhua, August 26, 2019

BEIJING, Aug. 26 (Xinhua) – The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, closed its bimonthly session Monday, adopting a revised drug administration law, amendments to the laws on land administration and urban real estate administration and the resource taxes law.

President Xi Jinping signed presidential decrees to release the laws.

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, presided over the closing meeting attended by 167 committee members.

At the closing meeting, lawmakers also voted to approve extradition treaties with Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Speaking highly of the revised drug administration law, Li stressed stringent enforcement of the law to ensure the public's access to safe and effective medicines.

The amendments to the laws on land administration and urban real estate administration are of great significance to empowering farmers with more property rights, protecting their legitimate rights and interests, and promoting rural vitalisation and integrated urban-rural development, Li noted.

During the session, lawmakers deliberated a report on the implementation of the national economic and social development plan, and a report on the implementation of this year's budget.

Legislators also reviewed reports on the reform and development of preschool education, the enforcement of the water pollution prevention and control law, and the enforcement of the law on employment promotion, respectively.

## China 'targeting personal links'

Taipei Times, August 25, 2019,  
Chung Li-hua and Jake Chung

Information warfare by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) does not stop at the Internet, but also targets people-to-people connections, the Mainland Affairs Council's (MAC) advisory committee said in a summary of committee proceedings released on Friday.

China uses traditional intelligence gathering, as well as cyber warfare and cognitive warfare tactics, the summary quoted a committee member as saying.

Most noteworthy is the cognitive aspect, as it could affect actual people-to-people connections, the summary said.

Teaching people to tell actual news apart from fake news is one solution, it said, adding that other options include legal methods – such as issuing heavier fines – or forming local organisations to counter such actions.

The summary quoted committee members as saying that China's attempts to influence and affect Taiwanese academia and education have been "exquisite."

China handles all expenses when inviting Taiwanese academics to visit and takes them on tours, the summary said, adding that these acts subtly influence Taiwanese academics' perception of China.

In other cases, Chinese students in Taiwan have been tasked with gathering information, and subtly influencing the thought and speech of their Taiwanese classmates and lecturers, the summary said.

The government should step up collaboration with Facebook, Twitter and other major social networking sites, and gather information about the actions of Chinese cyber activists and their cohorts to prevent further cyberattacks, it said.

The government should compile a database of previous incidents for people to reference online, so they can learn to tell actual information apart from fake news, it added.

The Taiwanese intelligence community and other public departments should also have effective countermeasures against cyberattacks, the summary said, adding that the government could consider establishing a warning system akin to the earthquake warning system.

Taiwan must implement measures that limit or control acts that, while not strictly illegal, nonetheless serve to influence others, it said.

The public cannot simply let foreign attacks slide and should consider where to draw the line to protect the nation's democratic system, the committee added.

## Guidelines for strengthening ideological, political education published

Xinhua, August 26, 2019

BEIJING, Aug. 26 (Xinhua) – A booklet of guidelines for strengthening reform and innovation of ideological and political theory courses in schools in the new era has been published by the People's Publishing House.

The guidelines were issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council.

The booklet is available at Xinhua Bookstore outlets across the country.

## China denies visas to German lawmakers over their human rights criticism

scmp.com August 21, 2019 Stuart Lau

- Germany's parliament says human rights committee is denied entry, and another committee scraps a trip after MP is barred for speaking out on China's rights record
- Barred MP says she has been monitored for a decade since Chinese officials asked her to decline invitation to World Uyghur Congress in Germany

Two groups of German MPs recently cancelled trips to China due to visa restrictions, as Beijing stepped up diplomatic clashes with lawmakers in the European country that has been most vocal on Chinese human rights issues.

The German parliament, the Bundestag, announced that its human rights committee was not allowed entry to China for a planned trip to Beijing, Tibet and the western region of Xinjiang, which had been scheduled for next month.

Another group of MPs from the digital affairs committee has also decided to scrap a trip in late August to Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing after China refused to grant a visa to a delegate who has been

outspoken about its human rights record and an avid supporter of the dissident artist Ai Weiwei.

A diplomatic source in Europe told the South China Morning Post that China was adamant in rejecting the two groups, although negotiations were continuing. "The message is plain and simple: China does not welcome any politicians who are biased against it," the source said.

China's embassy in Germany declined to comment about the visa issue, but the strong resistance from Beijing shows China's readiness to block critical European lawmakers from visiting the country. Michael Brand, the human rights spokesman for the parliamentary grouping of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats party (CDU), said the refusal "is about making an example of people who dare to clearly address the topic of human rights and touch on sensitive issues". The digital affairs committee, which hoped to learn about developments in China's artificial intelligence efforts, had firmed plans to visit in April, but those plans were scrambled when the committee wanted to include in the delegation Margarete Bause, an opposition lawmaker for the Green Party who has repeatedly called out human rights abuses in China.

Bause is not normally on the committee, but she had been nominated by her party to take the place of a Green member who could not make the trip, Politico reported.

The Chinese foreign ministry has consistently refused to issue a visa to Bause and would not allow the delegation to visit if Bause remained a part of it. "As long as there is no invitation that includes Bause, we won't travel to China," Dieter Janecek, another Green member of the committee, told the Post.

Bause was the politician greeting Ai Weiwei in Munich's airport in 2015, the dissident artist's first trip abroad since Chinese authorities confiscated his passport for four years in 2011 and put him under house arrest.

"China wants to show that anyone who wants to travel to the country should kindly shut up. I've experienced such attempts to intimidate me for over a decade - but the pressure is increasing," Bause was quoted by Politico as saying.

Bause told Politico that Chinese diplomats in Germany had monitored her for a decade.

In 2008, when Bause was a member of the Bavarian state parliament, she received an

invitation to a conference held by the World Uyghur Congress, which represents members of the ethnic group native to the autonomous Xinjiang region in western China. The organisation's headquarters is in Munich, which is home to most Uyghurs living in Germany.

At the same time, the Chinese consulate general in Munich began calling Bause's office. She met the consul, who urged her not to attend the conference in order "not to strain the good Bavarian-Chinese relations", Bause said. Bause, now on a two-week holiday, could not be reached for comment.

Manuel Hoferlin, a member of the digital affairs committee, called it "inconceivable" that China could decide who could take part in committee visits by the Bundestag.

However, imposing visa bans for Western lawmakers is not a new tactic for Chinese officials.

In 2014, weeks after the end of the Occupy movement in Hong Kong, China banned a senior committee of British MPs from entering Hong Kong, with the deputy ambassador to London threatening to deport the group should they attempt to enter China.

## **Premier Li stresses promoting steady economic growth, improving people's livelihoods**

Global Times, Xinhua, August 20, 2019

Premier Li Keqiang has underscored greater efforts in reform, opening-up and innovation to promote steady economic development and improve people's livelihoods.

Li, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during his inspection tour in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province from Monday to Tuesday.

While visiting a rice-growing village in Mudanjiang city, the premier said the northeastern region should tap into its favorable conditions as one of the country's major grain producers, properly raise the level of scale operation and promote the use of large-scale agricultural machinery and tools to accelerate the modernisation of agriculture.

He also visited a farm-produce market in Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang, where he

stressed taking comprehensive measures to ensure vegetable supply and safety and stabilise prices.

Local officials briefed Li on the province's efforts to improve the skills of its workers, saying they plan to provide vocational training to one million people in the next three years.

Li underlined the importance of vocational training to China's industrial upgrades, noting that the country's more than 2,000 technical schools should expand enrolment to cultivate more skilled personnel to meet demand.

While visiting the new-economy park in Harbin that has drawn many technology startups, the premier said the key to the all-round revitalisation of northeast China lies in reform, opening up and innovation and more should be done to improve the business environment and attract talented people to start businesses and innovate in the region.

He also called for promoting the vigorous development of small and medium-sized private businesses and the introduction of new growth drivers.

The premier also visited the Harbin Pharmaceutical Group, where he said pharmaceutical enterprises should work to ensure the production and supply of commonly used medicines, keep prices stable, ensure the quality of drugs and develop new drugs to meet the needs of the people.

## **Beijing Unveils Plan to Promote Shen Zhen as New Center for "One Country, Two Systems"**

chinesescope.org, rfa.org, August 19, 2019

At the time when Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill protests continued, the Chinese government announced its plan to support Shenzhen as a pilot zone for a new practice of "one country, two systems." Some scholars believe that the move shows the central government's wish to tell Hong Kong that China's development will not be affected by the situation in Hong Kong and that Shenzhen, with strong support from the central government, may replace Hong Kong in terms of its financial and economic standing.

On August 18, the State Council issued an opinion about developing a "Pilot Zone for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" in Shenzhen. The document indicated that the

plan is conducive to promoting reform and opening up, implementing the strategy of the Greater Bay Area of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and enriching the development of "one country, two systems." It includes a total of 19 specific goals, aims to make Shen Zhen a world top city by 2025, and a national model by 2035.

He Ping, a professor at Tsinghua University told *Radio Free Asia* that Hong Kong's frequent protests in recent days has led to political instability. At this juncture, the central government's plan to develop Shenzhen vigorously is actually to show Hong Kong that Shenzhen can be as prosperous as Hong Kong. He believes that if Hong Kong's demonstrations continue and the economy stagnates, Hong Kong's status as an international financial center may not be sustainable, and Shenzhen may replace Hong Kong.

However, Liu Kaiming, a scholar at a Shen Zhen think tank, pointed out that even if the central government strongly supports Shenzhen, Hong Kong's full-fledged rule of law and financial institutions, which are in line with international standards, makes it impossible for a mainland city to take over. If the mainland wants to attract foreign investors, it has to change and use the rule of law and the financial system, but that cannot be done in the short run.

## **Beijing to introduce 190 measures for greater openness**

china.org.cn August 16, 2019

Beijing will introduce 190 measures over the next three years to enhance openness in technology, the internet, finance, education, culture and tourism, healthcare, old-age care, and professional services, the city announced at a press conference Thursday.

For the tech sector, the city plans to launch 15 measures aimed at recruiting talents overseas.

They include providing equal treatment to foreigners with permanent residence status the same as Chinese nationals in setting up technology companies, and rewarding foreigners who make outstanding technological contributions.

Beijing will also strive to ease market access to the internet sector in the city or in its

demonstration industrial parks. Moreover, it plans to introduce model projects and companies in emerging fields such as industrial internet, 5G, and artificial intelligence.

In terms of professional service sectors including legal services, accounting, exhibition, design, and human resources, the city plans to reduce the restrictions for professionals from Hong Kong and Macao to acquire professional qualifications.

Furthermore, Beijing will introduce 38 measures in the financial sector to relax market restrictions for financial institutions, expand cross-border use of the RMB, internationalise financial services, pool global financial talents, and increase financial security and stability.

For example, it will ease market access for banking and insurance institutions as well as credit rating agencies, and support the establishment of clearing houses for foreign-funded bank cards in Beijing and the setup of overseas RMB investment funds.

In addition, Beijing plans to build 11 international schools and launch trials of international hospital practices in seven hospitals and six districts.

The city will introduce the measures while referring to international economic and trade rules and the latest practices in various sectors across the country, said Yan Ligang, head of the Beijing Municipal Commerce Bureau.

## China's Central Bank Close to Releasing Digital Currency

[www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org) August 16, 2019

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) appears closer to releasing its own digital currency. The central bank has been working on the currency for the past five years, but has ramped up development since the announcement of Facebook's proposed Libra currency, which Beijing sees as a potential threat to its own e-payment systems and the stability of national currencies. Based on patents filed by the Digital Currency Research Lab of the PBOC, people will most likely convert cash into digital currency kept in digital wallets managed by the PBOC, granting government access to payment records. The digital currency is supposed to replace circulated cash and should not impact monetary policy.

## Xi's article on Poverty Relief to be Published

Xinhua, August 15, 2019

An article by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, on poverty relief will be published Friday in the 16th issue of the Qiushi Journal this year.

The article by Xi, also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission, called for efforts to address prominent issues to ensure rural poor people do not have to worry about food and clothing and have access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing.

Solid efforts must be made in the work on poverty alleviation in 2019 and 2020, the article says, adding that new and greater contributions must be made to win the battle against poverty and realise the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects as scheduled.

Poverty alleviation has made notable progress, yet the difficulties and problems in winning the battle against poverty should be clearly recognised, the article says.

It points out that the basic requirements and key indicators for poverty alleviation are that rural poor people are free from worries over food and clothing and have access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing by 2020.

Worries about food and clothing have been generally addressed, while securing access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing remains weak, the article says, noting that tasks must be completed on time.

Since the battle against poverty has entered a key phase, the most important thing is to guard against slackness and slipping back, the article reads, laying out six work priorities that include strengthening the sense of responsibility and overcoming the hardest obstacles.

The article is the speech Xi delivered on April 16 at a symposium to address the problems concerning food and clothing of rural poor populations and their access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing, during his inspection tour of southwest China's Chongqing Municipality on April 15-17.

## Premier Li stresses greater reform, opening-up

Global Times, July 27, 2019

Premier Li Keqiang has called for greater efforts in expanding reform and opening-up to boost development and improve people's livelihoods.

Li, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during an inspection tour in Shanghai from Monday to Tuesday.

His stops included a new section of the Shanghai pilot free trade zone and domestic and foreign firms.

Calling the section a new expansion of opening-up and new progress in reform, Li called for aligning it with advanced international levels and greater efforts in advancing reform and opening-up.

Spatial planning should be improved to enable intensive development in the section where "an inch of land is an inch of gold" so that it can be home to the best, the premier said.

During his visit to the Shanghai Electric Group, a leading equipment manufacturer, Li encouraged the company to be more competitive in the international market and further contribute to boosting the country's capabilities in making key equipment.

The premier also visited the Zhangjiang AIsland, where he highlighted the utilisation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the manufacturing and service industries to foster new growth momentum and benefit the people.

During his visit to IFFP Professional Skills Training (Shanghai), a wholly foreign-owned vocational training institute of financial services in the pilot FTZ, Li called for enhancing international cooperation in education and training.

He said efforts should be made to speed up the training of more financial professionals who are familiar with domestic laws and regulations as well as international rules and have innovative ideas and strong management skills.

Li also stressed strengthening financial supervision and risk prevention and promoting high-level development of the financial sector.

After hearing reports on Shanghai's internet-enabled "one-stop" government services, the premier said efforts should be made to improve and reengineer the government

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## **Xi calls on Party Members to Progress along the Long March of a new Era**

Xinhua, August 19, 2019

President Xi Jinping has called on members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and officials to keep firmly in mind the Party's original aspiration, mission, nature and purpose, and progress along the Long March of the new era.

Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks in a recent instruction about an activity for journalists to retrace the route of the Long March.

Xi's instruction was delivered at a meeting to review the achievements of the activity. The meeting was held in Huining of northwest China's Gansu Province Sunday.

The activity has been of great significance to expound the spirit of the Long March in the year marking the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and amid the Party education campaign themed "staying true to our founding mission," Xi said.

He urged Party members and officials to attentively study the history of the CPC and the PRC, consolidate their faith, and thoroughly implement the Party's theories and policies so they can overcome the barriers along the Long March of the new era toward national rejuvenation.

This year marks the 85th anniversary of the start of the Long March. From June 11 to Aug. 18, more than 1,300 journalists retraced the route of the Long March and produced more than 10,000 reports.

## **China to Build Shenzhen into Socialist Demonstration Area**

Xinhua, August 19, 2019

China will build the southern city of Shenzhen into a pilot demonstration area of socialism with Chinese characteristics, a document said Sunday.

The building of the demonstration area will help deepen reform and expand opening-up comprehensively, according to the document issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council.

It is also conducive to the implementation of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area plan and the fulfilment of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.

By 2025, Shenzhen will become one of the leading cities in the world in terms of economic strength and quality of development. Its research and development input, industrial innovation capacity, and the quality of its public services and ecological environment will be first-rate in the world, according to the document.

By 2035, Shenzhen will become a national model of high-quality development, as well as a hub of innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity with international influence.

By mid-21st century, the city will become one of the top cosmopolis in the world and a global pacesetter with outstanding competitiveness, innovative capacity and influence, said the document.

International talents with Chinese permanent residence permits will be allowed to set up sci-tech companies and act as legal representatives of scientific research institutions in Shenzhen.

Great efforts will be made to promote the development of emerging industries with strategic importance, and set up a prudent and inclusive supervision system with greater flexibility, the document said.

Shenzhen will also vigorously develop new industries including the intelligent economy and the health care industry, and support the research on digital currency and the application of innovations such as mobile payment.

The city will establish a maritime university and a national deep sea research center, and explore the establishment of a maritime development bank.

Shenzhen, a major city in south China's Guangdong Province, is the country's first special economic zone. It has a population of about 13 million and its gross domestic product hit 2.42 trillion yuan (about 346 billion U.S. dollars) in 2018, up 7.6 percent year on year.

## Guangdong Police Take Saliva Samples Amid Fears of Nationwide DNA Program

rfa.org, August 7, 2019



Authorities in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong have begun taking saliva samples from bus passengers arriving in Foshan, sparking concerns that the government may be rolling out a nationwide DNA database.

Officers from the Danzao police station in Foshan were taking mouth swabs from passengers passing through the local bus terminal on Monday after checking their ID, sources told RFA.

Photos taken of the process have led to concerns among social media users that police would be using the samples to build a nationwide DNA database.

An employee who answered the phone at the bus terminal confirmed the social media reports when contacted by RFA on Wednesday.

"Security checks are very strict right now, and everyone has to get checked," the member of staff said. "They are checking whether you have taken drugs or not. The checks are being carried out by the Danzao police bureau."

An officer who answered the phone at the Danzao police bureau also confirmed that the samples were being collected.

"Yes, that is happening," the officer said. "We have arranged for police to go out and collect samples of saliva from anyone going to the bus station as a way of preventing unexpected incidents."

"Everyone will have to do this, because we have had orders to do it," he said. "We have to collect samples from these people to prevent incidents such as robbery from occurring."

The police were also spotted storing the samples in a saliva collection card similar to those made by companies specialising in the collection and storage of DNA samples.

An agent for biotech firm Shandong Heze confirmed that public security bureaus across

the country are among the largest customers for such equipment.

"Saliva collection cards are used by the police, and are generally entered into a database," the agent said.

High-tech totalitarianism

The saliva collection policy in Danzao comes after authorities in the northwestern region of Xinjiang rolled out a massive DNA and biodata collection program, in a bid to monitor every aspect of people's lives.

U.S.-based legal scholar Teng Biao said the practice could now be rolled out across the rest of the country.

"What we have here is the rolling out of the Xinjiang model to the entire country," Teng said. "It is a trend that's known as high-tech totalitarianism."

"They are using various forms of contemporary digital technology and facial recognition technology to implement comprehensive and ubiquitous social control. It's an enhanced version of 1984," he said in a reference to George Orwell's dystopian novel about a surveillance state under the watchful eye of Big Brother.

"Collecting such data within a system like China's is entirely aimed at tightening social control," he said.

Teng called on the international community to condemn or sanction international companies and local Chinese companies that provide digital surveillance technology to the Chinese government.

'Free health care'

The New York-based group Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in December 2018 that Chinese authorities in Xinjiang are collecting DNA samples, fingerprints, iris scans, and blood types of all residents in the region between the age of 12 and 65.

"DNA and blood types are being collected through a free annual physical exams program called Physicals for All," the group said in a report.

"The mandatory data banking of a whole population's biodata, including DNA, is a gross violation of international human rights norms, and it's even more disturbing if it is done surreptitiously, under the guise of a free health care program," HRW China director Sophie Richardson said at the time.

The biometric collection scheme is detailed in an official document called "Regional Working Guidelines on the Accurate Registration and

Verification of Population," dated July 2, 2017, it said.

"Chinese authorities seem to think they can achieve 'social stability' by placing people under a microscope, but these abusive programs are more likely to deepen hostility towards the government," said Richardson. "Beijing should immediately stop these programs, and destroy all data gathered without full, informed consent."

DNA information is highly sensitive and can facilitate a wide array of abuses if it is collected or shared non-consensually, according to HRW, which called any compelled collection or use by the government "a serious intrusion on the right to privacy."

## Protests, Detentions and other news from the PRC

### Wife of Disappeared Human Rights Lawyer Speaks of 'Endless Suffering' For Family

rfa.org August 14, 2019



*Geng He, wife of human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, is shown in an undated recent photo.*

*Photo courtesy of Geng He*

Two years after the disappearance of a prominent human rights lawyer from his home

in the northern Chinese province of Shaanxi, his wife says she still has no idea where he is. Gao Zhisheng was reported missing from his cave dwelling in the northern Chinese province of Shaanxi on Aug. 13, 2017.

Gao's U.S.-based wife Geng He called on the ruling Chinese Communist Party to make public her husband's whereabouts.

"Over the past 10 years, Gao Zhisheng's forced disappearances have become the norm in our lives," Geng said. "Before this one, the longest disappearance lasted 20 months, but it's now been 24 months."

"This is because Gao Zhisheng, as a public interest lawyer, has represented the [banned] Falun Gong [spiritual] group, Christians, and the petitioners who have been persecuted by the Chinese Communist Party," she said.

"Gao Zhisheng's suffering has yet to end, and it has put our family through several years of turmoil," said Geng, who fled China in 2009 with the couple's daughter, now 25, and son, now 16.

"Before Gao Zhisheng disappeared in August 2017, he had almost no teeth left [following his release from prison]," she said. "Whenever I and the kids would eat good food, I could barely swallow it, and I always had his image in my mind."

"Society needs good people, but endless suffering has been visited on our family," she said.

Call for immediate release

Rights groups including Amnesty International have repeatedly called on the Chinese government to immediately and unconditionally release Gao.

Gao, once a prominent lawyer feted by the ruling Chinese Communist Party, began to be targeted by the authorities after he defended some of China's most vulnerable people, including Christians, coal miners, and followers of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement. In a published memoir, Gao details the torture he later endured at the hands of the authorities during his time in prison, as well as three years of solitary confinement, during which he said he was sustained by his Christian faith and his hopes for China.

Activists say his continuing house arrest even after being "released" from jail mirrors the treatment meted out to fellow rights lawyers and activists detained in a nationwide police operation since July 2015.

## Court in China's Hubei Jails Activists After Altercation With State Security Police

rfa.org August 13, 2019



Chinese legal activist Chen Jianxiong, who was handed a three-and-a-half year prison sentence for "picking quarrels and stirring up trouble" on Aug. 12, in undated photo.

A court in the central Chinese province of Hubei have handed down jail terms of up to three-and-a-half years to two rights activists who complained of state security police interference in their lives.

Legal activist Chen Jianxiong was handed a three-and-a-half year prison sentence on Monday by the Chibi People's Court, after it found him guilty of "picking quarrels and stirring up trouble," his lawyer said.

Chen's co-defendant Yuan Bing was sentenced to three years imprisonment on the same charge.

"This was about stuff he wrote online, and also about some rights activism that he engaged in," Chen's lawyer Ma Gangquan told RFA on Tuesday.

But he declined to comment further.

"If I give you too much information, then there may be an issue with my being able to meet with my client in future," Ma said. "If they refuse to let me meet with him, that'll be a big problem."

Chen's girlfriend Liang Yiming said Chen and Yuan were both deeply unhappy with the verdict and sentences.

"He will definitely be appealing this," Liang said. "Actually, appealing is really only symbolic ... there's not much likelihood of the appeal court overturning this."

She said the sentencing had been carried out by court officials at the Chibi Detention Center, where Chen and Yuan have been held since October 2017.

"There wasn't a hearing or anything of that sort," Liang said. "They just sent over the judgment, and showed it to them:

extreme persecution is the norm for the authorities, who want to make you afraid, and if you're not, they beat you down until you are."

Yuan Xiaohua, a close friend of Yuan Bing's, said both activists had engaged in street protests as well as online posting on human rights issues, but always within the law.

"The sort of activism they did was within the framework of the law," Yuan Xiaohua said. "They were just exercising their legal rights as citizens."

He said Yuan and Chen had showed up at the offices of the local state security police in October 2017, and gotten into a verbal dispute with officers over "stability maintenance" restrictions ahead of the ruling Chinese Communist Party's 19th National Congress.

The altercation came after state security police went to Yuan Bing's son's school and spoke to his son and his son's teachers.

"This was the authorities' revenge," Yuan Xiaohua said, adding: "I think the sentence ... and the level of persecution directed at citizens carrying out legal activities was inappropriate and clearly illegal," he said.

An employee who answered the phone at the Chibi People's Court confirmed that sentence had been passed on Chen and Yuan, but hung up without giving further details.

"The judgment has now been made public and delivered [to the defendants]," the employee said.

Liang, Chen and Yuan were initially detained in October 2017, ahead of the 19th Congress of the ruling Chinese Communist Party, after taking issue with state security police restrictions on their activities and freedom of movement.

Liang was released on bail, but Chen and Yuan remained in custody.

## **Rights Group Demands Immediate Release of 'iLabour Three' as China Deepens Crackdown on Labor**

### **Activists**

VOA News, August 12, 2019,  
Joyce Huang

Amid China's deepening crackdown on labor activists, Wei Zhili, the editor of an online labor rights advocacy platform called iLabour,

was officially arrested on the charge of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" on Friday – almost five months after he was taken away from his home in China's southern city of Guangzhou.

Police presented a statement allegedly made by Wei to dismiss the lawyer of his family's choice – a decision his family said is "clearly against his will."

"We are afraid that the police may have tortured him and threatened him so that he decided to unhire that lawyer," one of Wei's family members told VOA over the weekend anonymously.

### **Legal Presentation Denied?**

Wei's family said they feel "sad and hopeless," fearing that Wei has been deprived of his basic rights to seek legal presentation or his next government-appointed lawyer will not look after his best interest.

Wei's wife Zheng Churan, a well-known feminist in China, is barred from talking to foreign media about her husband's case. Three months ago, she began a running campaign with a goal to complete 10,000 kilometers and hopes that her loved one will be set free by the time she meets the goal.

If convicted, Wei may face up to a 10-year jail term, according to the lawyer of his family's choice, whose requests to meet with his client were rejected twice by local police.

Two of Wei's colleagues – Yang Zhengjun and Ke Chengbing, who were also seized by police from Shenzhen respectively in January and March – may face a similar fate, according to rights groups, which have been demanding the immediate release of the three journalists, dedicated to labor rights.

The three, known as "iLabour Three," had used the news outlet to publish information on the cases of migrant workers from Hunan province who had contracted pneumoconiosis – an occupational lung disease, while also counselling them about defending their labor rights and petitioning over their grievances.

### **Set iLabour Three Free**

"These journalists were serving the public interest by exposing life-threatening labor violations, and therefore they should never have been arrested," said Christophe Deloire, Secretary-General of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in a press statement released last week.

He insisted that the Chinese Constitution "enshrines freedom of the press and safe working conditions."

RSF estimated that "at least 114 journalists and bloggers are currently imprisoned in life-threatening condition in China."

In its 2019 World Press Freedom Index, the international group ranks China's level of press freedom the 177th out of a total of 180 countries, which suggests China's reporting environment only outperforms that in Eritrea, North Korea and Turkmenistan.

#### Sweeping Crackdown

Also, a group of online campaigners, which run a Facebook page titled Global Support for Disappeared Left Activists in China, noted that, since last July's Jasic Incident, more than 130 labor rights activists have been detained or disappeared in China. Over 50 of them remain missing or in custody.

The Jasic incident was a month-long labor rights conflict, in which, workers from Jasic Technologies Co in Shenzhen, dissatisfied with what they alleged were low pay and poor working conditions, staged protests and sought to form a labor union.

Their calls drew support from students and professors at more than 20 universities. The Facebook group says more than 60 workers and supporters ended up being detained.

China's state-controlled Xinhua news, in August, placed the blame on labor groups and foreign forces, saying a Shenzhen-based labor center that partners with Hong Kong-based Worker Empowerment, fanned the protests. It failed to mention that the workers were protesting due to labor rights violations and state violence.

Since then, the group observed that the authorities' targets of arrests have ranged from worker organisers, leftist students, labor organisations staff and even social workers.

Analysts noted that the detention of workers and supporters, plus the state media's efforts to discredit them, showed the lengths Chinese authorities would go to, to crush worker disputes.

And China's crackdown on labor activists has become so widespread that it's hard to tell what activities are viewed by the authorities as crossing the red line, said Li Qiang, founder and executive director of China Labor Watch.

#### Riskier Labor Activism

In other words, anything that is beyond the Communist Party's control will threaten the party's rule and risk being suppressed, Li Qiang added.

"The Communist Party is concerned that, once highly-educated students or intellectuals with

ideology join hands with the working class and get involved in the workers' movement, the situation may get out of control and become detrimental [to its rule]. What worries the party the most is workers groups being organised," said Li, who is currently based in New York.

Caught in the government's crackdown, labor rights activists in China face an even more unclear and riskier fate if they continue their activism, Li said.

## Threats to Family of Chinese Student Who Attended Protest Spark Concern Over Beijing's Influence

rfa.org August 9, 2019

Threats from the Chinese authorities aimed at a mainland Chinese student who supported Hong Kong's anti-extradition movement during a campus protest in Australia have sparked further concern over Beijing's overseas influence campaign.

The family of a Chinese student who participated in protests at the University of Queensland in Brisbane was warned by the authorities of the potential consequences of political dissent, the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper reported this week.

"The apparent intimidation tactics suggest the Chinese government was monitoring the demonstration at the University of Queensland to record who attended," the paper said.

The student, who took part in a show of support for anti-extradition protests in Hong Kong and to condemn Beijing's repression of minority Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang, told the paper that his mother had warned him not to attend any more gatherings.

It said other students who attended the protests had also complained of intimidation and harassment online, including death threats.

Feng Chongyi, associate professor in China Studies at Sydney's University of Technology, said the reports were in keeping with the Chinese Communist Party's operating methods among Chinese groups overseas, including students.

"This could mean they they are using informants ... not necessarily professional spies, to report things of benefit to them," Feng said. "Some of the Chinese students will

voluntarily take on the job of reporting on students and monitoring their mental state."

"They don't just report on students, but also on their teachers," he said.

The Australian government passed legislation last year banning foreign governments from secretly interfering with Australian politics.

The law was widely seen as a way to address concerns over growing Chinese influence in Australian political and intellectual life.

"It was a transparency law for foreign agents, which means that if you do political work on behalf of foreign governments without registering, you are breaking the law," Feng said.

#### Widespread infiltration

Wu Lebao, a Chinese student currently studying in Australia, said that mainland Chinese political infiltration is now widespread in the country's colleges and universities, with certain student organisations believed to be funded by the Chinese government.

"I don't believe that they are independent Chinese student organisations, as they claim," Wu said. "They are completely controlled by the Chinese Embassy."

"They will report any anti-China speech to the Chinese Embassy."

While the University of Queensland said the university wouldn't tolerate behaviour that impeded freedom of speech, Wu said students from the People's Republic of China are too lucrative a source of income for overseas universities to crack down on such attempts to influence public debate.

In April, U.K. lawmakers called on the government to "recalibrate" its China policy in the light of the power held by President Xi Jinping, who began an indefinite term in office in March 2018.

In a report titled "China and the Rules-Based International System," the House of Commons foreign affairs committee said that China does not intend to reform the rules-based international system "but rather intends to subvert it, by promoting an alternative version of human rights which stresses economic development at the cost of the universality of individual civil and political freedoms."

The Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department is tasked with developing allies and influence outside party ranks, including overseas, and has been linked to a number of reports on growing Chinese influence in liberal democracies.

## Police From China's Hunan Detain Three NGO Workers For Subversion

rfa.org July 30, 2019



Cheng Yuan (L) and Liu Yongze (R), two of three detained members of the public interest law NGO Changsha Funeng, in undated photos.

Police from the central Chinese province of Hunan have detained three non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers on suspicion of subversion, RFA has learned.

Cheng Yuan, Liu Yongze and Xiao Wu, all of whom are members of the public interest law NGO, Changsha Funeng, have been incommunicado since about 12:45 p.m. on July 22. The three are being held by the state security police in Hunan's provincial capital Changsha on suspicion of "subversion of state power," according to a lawyer connected with the case.

They are being held at the Hunan Provincial Security Agency Detention Centre in Changsha, according to online posts made by Cheng Yuan's wife Shi Minglei.

"At about 8:30 a.m. on the morning of July 22, as we were getting ready to go to work, [state security police] charged in through the door," she wrote.

Cheng, his wife and kindergarten-age daughter – who were living in the southern city of Shenzhen -- were escorted to the daughter's school by several female officers, where Cheng left her in the care of the teacher, Shi wrote.

Both Cheng and Shi were then handcuffed, and their home searched by state security police.

Cheng was then taken away, while Shi had a black hood placed over her head, and was taken to the nearby neighbourhood committee offices for interrogation, she said.

"By about 5.00 p.m. that day, they had announced that Cheng Yuan was suspected of subversion of state power and was being

placed under residential surveillance," Shi wrote.

Cheng's brother Cheng Hao said police had taken him to a detention centre run by state security police in Changsha

No likelihood of violent resistance

He said that the level of brute force used by police in the arrest was unnecessary.

"My sister-in-law said they smashed in the door and came charging in, with somebody behind filming the whole thing," Cheng Hao said.

"I can't see why they would do this, unless it was just to show the great power of the police, because Cheng Yuan had no gun or knife, so there was no likelihood of violent resistance," he said.

"Even if there had been, they shouldn't have acted that way in front of his wife and daughter," he said.

State security police have prevented friends or relatives from visiting any of the detainees.

Liu Yongze and Wu were arrested at their homes in Changsha.

Wu's father, Zhejiang-based lawyer Wu Youshui, said he had received notice of his son's criminal detention.

"I can't express my opinions on this matter for now, because there are very strict regulations on me right now, and I'm not allowed to give any interviews to foreign media," Wu Youshui said. Changsha Funeng co-founder Yang Zhanqing said the organisation's Changsha office has stopped operating, while other members of staff were also detained by police. "Changsha Funeng is a public welfare NGO, not a political organisation," Yang said. "We mainly promote transparency of government using [requests for] government information disclosure."

"We investigate the legality of official documents issued by local government," he said. "Our legal activities are all carried out within the framework of the Chinese constitution and existing laws, and are also in line with international human rights regulations."

Changsha Funeng was set up in 2016 to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, as well as to promote government transparency via its document review process.

Cheng Yuan, who heads the organisation, is an experienced public interests and legal activist, having been involved in defending the rights of the vulnerable for over 10 years, according to the Democratic China website.

"He has represented about a dozen hepatitis B and AIDS discrimination cases, and contributed hugely to removing systematic hepatitis B discrimination in China," the group said.

It also cited his involvement in an AIDS employment discrimination case in Jinxian county, Jiangxi province in 2013, the first ever in which someone living with HIV received compensation for employment discrimination.

Since 2013, Cheng has also worked for the abolition of the "one child" population control policy, and reform of China's Hukou, or household registration, system, it said.

## China jails award-winning cyber-dissident Huang Qi

BBC, July 29, 2019

A Chinese court has sentenced a civil rights activist widely referred to as the country's "first cyber-dissident" to 12 years in jail.

Huang Qi is the founder of 64 Tianwang, a news website blocked in mainland China that covers alleged human rights abuses and protests.

An official statement said he had been found guilty of intentionally leaking state secrets to foreigners.

Huang has been detained since being arrested nearly three years ago. He has already served previous prison sentences related to his journalism.

The statement, from Mianyang Intermediate People's Court, added Mr Huang would be deprived of his political rights for four years and had also been fined 20,000 yuan (\$2,900; £2,360).

Huang has kidney and heart disease and high blood pressure. And supporters have voiced concern about the consequences of the 56-year-old remaining imprisoned.

"This decision is equivalent to a death sentence, considering Huang Qi's health has already deteriorated from a decade spent in harsh confinement," said Christophe Deloire, the secretary-general of Reporters Without Borders.

The press-freedom campaign group has previously awarded Huang its Cyber freedom Prize. It has now called on President Xi Jinping to "show mercy" and issue a pardon.

Amnesty International has called the sentence "harsh and unjust".

"The authorities are using his case to scare other human rights defenders who do similar work exposing abuses, especially those using online platforms," said the group's China researcher Patrick Poon.

Repeated arrests

Huang created his website in 1998 to help people search for friends and family who had disappeared. But over time it began covering allegations of corruption, police brutality and other abuses.

In 2003, he became the first person to be put on trial for internet crimes in China, after he allowed articles, written by others, about the brutal crackdown of 1989's Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests to be published on the site.

That led to a five-year jail sentence.

He was subsequently sentenced to a further three years in prison, in 2009, after giving advice to the families of children who had died in an earthquake in Sichuan the previous year. The relatives had wanted to sue the local authorities over claims that school buildings had been shoddily built - a claim the central government denied.

Huang was detained again, in 2014, after 64 Tianwang covered the case of a woman who had tried to set herself on fire in Tiananmen Square to coincide with the start of that year's National People's Congress.

Then he was arrested in November 2016 and accused of "inciting subversion of state power", since when he has been incarcerated.

Since then, several human rights organisations, including Freedom House and the China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, have called for his release and raised concerns about reported threats to his 85-year-old mother, who had been campaigning on his behalf. And in December 2018, a group of the United Nations' leading human rights experts also pressed for Huang to be set free and be paid compensation.

## Minorities Held in Chinese 'Thought Transformation' Camps

CBN News, July 7, 2019

Will Maule, Faithwire

<https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2019/july/terrifying-footage-shows-thousands-of-religious-minorities-held-in-chinese-thought-transformation-camps-i-love-the-communist-party>

A wildly disturbing report from the BBC has revealed the sheer number of Muslims and other religious minorities being held against their will in educational detention centers.

Though the government has been attempting to brand the facilities as "schools," the reality could not be more different. Simply put, the government is seeking to rid this religious minority of all their deeply-held beliefs in exchange for a sole trust and faith in President Xi Jinping and the Chinese state. It is political indoctrination of an incredibly sinister nature.

But when the BBC journalist asks questions of those held, they espouse scripted, almost robotic answers.

"Is it your choice to be here?" one man was asked. "Yes," he replied, without hesitation. "A policeman at my village told me to get enrolled in the school and transform my thoughts."

As interviews are conducted by a heavily-screened group of journalists, Chinese government agents watch on.

Eradication of Faith and Cultural Identity

Within the confines of the bleak detention camps, the religious minorities undergo a strict regiment of political reeducation, the simplicity of which is painful to observe. "I love the communist party of China," many are instructed to write out repeatedly.

Though the number one objective of the program is "thought transformation," those held in these facilities must also partake in Mandarin lessons, self-criticism sessions and forced labor.

Other menial tasks include a four-month-long course in "how to make a bed." The instructor being interviewed did, however, say most people are able to learn in two months rather than four.

Journalists Painted a Fake Picture of Camp Conditions

Chinese authorities have been extremely careful about who they allow in to see the inner workings of their reeducation programs,

and evidence suggests they are not being entirely honest about the reality on the ground. Indeed, satellite images indicate that the Chinese authorities had erected watchtowers and implemented strict security measures on each facility so that they function more like a supermax prison than a school.

However, when it was time to bus in the group of foreign journalists, all these structures were nowhere to be seen – they had been swiftly removed to ensure that no tough questions were asked.

But when the BBC team ventured onward to a different, more ominous looking camp, they were promptly accosted by authorities and told to leave.

It was clear that the Chinese authorities were presenting a picture of the camps that was very different to the day-to-day reality.

The BBC interviewed one woman interviewed had been held in the camp system for over a year before managing to flee to Kazakhstan. Her crime? Having WhatsApp on her phone.

The woman disclosed that, ahead of any press visits to the camps, the inmates were issued a stark warning: “If any of you speak out, you will go to a worse place than this,” officials would tell them.

“That’s why everyone is scared and does what they are told,” she noted.

Still, the Chinese government believes it is doing good work through the militant re-education of people who they believe have been compromised by cultural norms and religious beliefs which lead to terrorism and violence.

“Some people, before they commit murder, already show they’re capable of killing,” said Zhang Zhisheng from the Xinjiang Foreign Affairs Office. “Should we wait for them to commit the crime? Or should we prevent it from happening?”

“We aim to change their religious extremist thoughts,” a member of staff at the facility expressed.

“We would call that.. brainwashing,” the BBC journalist firmly replied.

“We’re not completely changing their thoughts,” the staff member qualified. “We only remove the extremist elements.”

According to the camp’s officials, each “student” gets one day of home-leave every week.

However, when the time for this supposed recess rolled around, not a soul was seen leaving the facility.

“I’m wondering why we don’t see any students leaving?” the reporter asked, as he stood outside the silent front gates.

“I told you, eight o’clock,” the principal replied, clearly fuming that they had been caught in a blatant lie.

“So, in the next few minutes they will leave?” the reporter pressed.

To this, the head official at the school had no answer. “Some days they leave, some days they don’t.” he said bluntly.

Immediately, the principal was called over by government minders and given a stern talking to. “You need to think carefully before you answer the questions,” one official told him angrily.

The Pentagon has previously stated that it believes upwards of three million people could be detained in facilities just like this one, and has urged the Chinese government to stop violating the human rights of minority groups like the Uighurs.

“We call on the Chinese government to release immediately these individuals’ family members and all others arbitrarily detained in the camps,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in March, adding that the State Department was “working to convince the Chinese that this practice is abhorrent and ought to be stopped.”

# Archeology & Palentology

## Chinese paleontologists set out to study 'Big Footprint' in Tibet

phayul.com August 29, 2019  
Tenzin Sangmo

DHARAMSHALA, August 29: Paleontologists from China have set out on a two-week expedition in Tibet on Monday to study the recently discovered dinosaur footprints in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

The renowned "Big Footprint" found on a cliff in Chamdo, a prefecture-level city in TAR has attracted thousands of tourists.

Xing Lida, a dinosaur footprint expert at the China University of Geosciences in Beijing and his research team are undertaking the expedition with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) whose members reportedly found the footprints last year.

Scientists say dinosaurs once lived on the world's highest Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. *Science and Technology Daily* in February reported that Deng Tao from CAS's Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology proved that dinosaurs once lived in the southeastern part of Tibet.

In the paper "First record of dinosaur trackway from Tibet, China" that Lida co-authored in 2011 with Philip J. Currie and Jerry Harris, it says the Tibetan Scientific Expedition Team of CAS discovered a large quantity of early and middle Jurassic dinosaur fossils in Chamdo (Qamdo) Prefecture in the 1970s, but these specimens have never been published.

It is stated that during the construction of the State Highway No.214 in the same area in 1999, at least eight pairs of huge footprints were discovered when workers used explosives, the largest footprint being 1.7 meters long.

After visiting the "Big Footprint," Xing said it was likely left by a brontosaurus, which lived during the early to middle Jurassic Period.

The dinosaur footprint expert also found abundant cracks and ripples near the

footprints, suggesting Tibet's geography was very different at the time of dinosaurs.

"Although affectionately known as "the roof of the world", with some of the globe's highest mountainous peaks, Tibet was once the bottom of a prehistoric sea."

## Ancient Buddhist cliff carvings found in China

Xinhuanet August 25, 2019



Photo taken on Aug. 10, 2019 shows the relics of Buddha figure carvings found at Bangbang Village of Baiyu County in Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, "southwest China's Sichuan Province". The relics of Buddhist cliff carvings date back about 1,200 years. (Xinhua)

The relics of Buddhist cliff carvings dating back about 1,200 years have been found in southwest "China's" Sichuan Province, local authorities said. The Buddha figure carvings were found in Baiyu County of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the first time in the county's history. Archaeologists believe they were created in the late Tibetan Tubo Kingdom (about 618-842), based on their style. Luo Wenhua, director of the Tibetan Buddhist cultural relics institute of the Palace Museum, said the carvings' style resembles that of the Tubo stone carvings discovered in some places in Tibet Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province. The discovery may give evidence to the view that the ancient road linking the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and the Tibetan Tubo Kingdom is not a single road but a road network. "Baiyu might be located on one road in the network, but this needs further proof," Luo said. "The carvings provide important materials for us to rethink the distribution of cliff carvings from the Tibetan Tubo Kingdom," Luo added.

# Sino-Indian Relations

## After Doklam, China boosts civil & military capability at Tibet's

### Gonggar airport

The Print August 29, 2019 COL. VINAYAK BHAT



(RETD)

New T3 terminal under construction at Gonggar airport. | Source: Col. Vinayak Bhat (retd.) | ThePrint

The Gonggar airport in Tibet's capital Lhasa is one of 60 dual-use airports in China, and has seen increased activity since the Doklam stand-off in 2017.

Since the Doklam stand-off with India in 2017, China's People's Liberation Army has stepped up its activities in Tibet, with troop concentrations and frequent exercises being the order of the day. Now, the Gonggar airport in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, is being expanded to increase civil as well as military capabilities.

All the airports in Tibet are dual-use – meaning they are utilised for civilian and military purposes. There are 60 such airports in China. ThePrint had earlier reported a sharp increase in air activities as well as infrastructure development in the region. During the Doklam stand-off, an inclined airstrip had been added to the Shigatse airport, where fighters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones were observed later. The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) logistics and supply chain in Tibet was also rehased to

make it difficult to intercept, by having a three-pronged automated replenishment system. ThePrint takes an exclusive look China's latest air-related activity in Tibet through satellite imagery.

UAV hangar

The Gonggar airport in Lhasa received a new UAV hangar at its south-eastern end soon after the Doklam stand-off.

Satellite images from November 2017 show that a blue-topped hangar of 22mx17m was created to host BZK-005, the People's Liberation Army Air Force's (PLAAF) high-altitude long-endurance (HALE) UAV.

The BZK-005, with a wingspan of 18m, has a ceiling limit of 8km and a range of 2,400km.

Parking apron for fighters

The parking aprons east of Terminal 1 earlier catered to a squadron of fighter aircraft and about four to six transport and/or airborne early warning (AEW) aircraft.

The aprons were extended after the Doklam stand-off to hold an additional squadron of helicopters and two AEWs.

Satellite images from November 2017 indicated increased presence of fighters, AEWs and UAVs at this airport.

The latest images suggest that a parking apron has been created very close to the mountain south of the airport, which is connected with a taxiway of 18m width, and caters for 36 fighter aircraft.

An operational deployment, possibly of surface-to-air missiles (SAM), was observed on this apron from August to November 2018.

New civilian terminal

The new Terminal 3 at Gonggar airport, covering almost 21.75 acres, is designed to cater to 5.5 million passengers by 2020 and about 9 million passengers by 2025.

The arrowhead-shaped terminal building with a total length of 750m is assessed to be able to project out 20 aerobridges at a time, to provide all-weather dry access to aircraft and enhance the security of terminal operations.

Until now, the two existing terminals provided for only five aerobridges.

A large area in front of the new terminal is left open for parking and circular gardens to beautify the surroundings.



Source: Col. Vinayak Bhat (retd.)



Source: Col. Vinayak Bhat (retd.)

## Indigo opens bookings on Delhi-Chengdu sector

Business Traveller, August 26, 2019, Natasha Nitturkar

After receiving the required regulatory approval, Indigo has announced the opening of sale for daily non-stop flights to Chengdu, China. Starting from September 15, the low-cost carrier will commence daily operations between Delhi and Chengdu. Chengdu will be Indigo's 20th international destination. William Boulter, chief commercial officer, Indigo said, "We are pleased to open bookings for Chengdu, our 20th international destination. China, besides being a popular destination for Indian tourists, is also the world's largest source of outbound travellers.

"Increased connectivity between India and China will attract Chinese tourists to the country, contributing to economic growth and social cohesion between the two nations. China is a market with immense potential and holds prominent trade, cultural and tourism value". Booking for these flights are open effective immediately with fares starting from ₹8399

## India keeping watchful eyes on Pakistan-China exercise near Ladakh

India Today, August 26, 2019  
Manjeet Singh Negi

China and Pakistan are holding air-to-air war games close to the Indian border near Ladakh and the Indian Air Force (IAF) is watching it closely, the government sources said.

"Chinese J10 and Pakistani JF-17s are participating in an aerial exercise Shaheen around 300 km north of Leh city at a place called Hotan City," sources said.

The Air Force is keeping a close eye on the activities of the exercise for which the Pakistani JF-17 planes passed through the Skardu airbase in Gilgit Baltistan area.

The Pakistanis have used the base after a long time to join the Chinese Air Force which has built several bases in the northern region with India. China has been making incursions and transgressions in the Indian territory around Chumar and Demchok in Ladakh, claiming them to be part of its Tibet region.

## India studying early Chinese proposals on boundary issue

Hindustan Times, August 18, 2019 Shishir Gupta

The 22nd round of the India-China Special Representatives dialogue on the boundary issue will take place in New Delhi in mid-September. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is evaluating the "early harvest" proposals sent by Beijing to build trust between the two sides ahead of the meeting.

Dates for the meeting between Doval and Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi, the interlocutors, haven't yet been finalised, Hindustan Times learns from Chinese and Indian diplomats.

The foreign ministers dialogue on August 11-13 in Beijing and the Special Representative talks are precursors to the October 11-12 informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in India for which Varanasi is being considered as the potential venue.

Senior Chinese diplomats said Beijing was very serious about getting the longstanding boundary issues with both India and Bhutan out of the way, and that Wang had sent "early harvest" proposals to India.

Neither side is willing to share the contents of the proposals. However, Beijing, as indicated by HT's conversations with Chinese diplomats, is showing no signs of changing any positions with New Delhi, be it India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) or full political support to its "all weather ally" Pakistan.

The trust factor between the two sides has also taken a hit after China, joined by the United Kingdom, still living in its imperial past, supported Pakistan in the informal United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting on Monday against the Narendra Modi government's decision to nullify Article 370 and Article 35 A of the Indian Constitution pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir.

The overall sense from the UNSC meeting was that both countries were hopelessly outnumbered and outmanoeuvred in their quest for a formal outcome by the remaining 13 members led by the US and France.

In his meeting this month in Beijing with State Councillor Wang, who is also foreign minister, external affairs minister S Jaishankar had made it very clear that both countries should be sensitive to each other's core concerns. "If Beijing wants India to support One China that includes Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, then it also must support One India," said a top official.

Indian diplomats based in the US said the latest Chinese move in support of Pakistan on Kashmir will lead to a cooling of ties; Article 370 and Article 35 A have nothing to do with beaching either the UN Charter or the 1972 Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan, they say. Despite Chinese diplomats vehemently denying it, Beijing wants to play elder brother to South Asia as the dominant power in the region and will support Pakistan for its own economic and strategic interests.

In the circumstances, mutual trust between the two countries can only be built if President Xi, or Xi Dada (elder brother as he is called), can overrule the status quoists in Beijing and opt for a mutually beneficial and mutually acceptable solution to the long-pending dispute over the boundary.

## Indian Army to raise 2 porter companies in Arunachal Pradesh

eastmojo.com August 17, 2019 Rishu Kalantri

Tinsukia: The Indian Army is planning to raise two companies of porters consisting of up to 1,000 members to cater to its requirement on the eastern and western fronts of Arunachal Pradesh.

Porters play an important role in the hilly terrains and forward areas to ferry essential goods and other items required by the Army from one place to another in absence of motorable roads.

The 5 Kumaon Regiment of the Army, on the western front, has been nominated to raise a porter company for which a special recruitment drive would be organised from August 17 to 20 at Manigong in Arunachal's West Siang district and on September 17 at Tato and Mechuka in Shi Yomi district of this easternmost state of the country, official sources informed *EastMojo*.

"A similar four-day rally from August 19 to 22 – two days for residents of Assam and two days for residents of Arunachal Pradesh – will be organised at Hayuliang in Arunachal's Anjaw district to raise a porter company on the eastern front," the sources added.

The Army will recruit around 400 persons for the porter company on western front and around 600 persons for the porter company on the eastern front.

India shares a 3,488-km border with China, of which 1,126 km falls in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to sources, approximately 700 candidates are likely to participate in the recruitment rally at Manigong in West Siang district. "The porter recruitment rally is an important event for both, civil and army authorities, as it will provide job opportunities to the local people."

"The recruitment drive on western front includes 290 in Monigong, 40 in Tato, 60 in Mechukha and 50 in Kaying," the source added.

The district administration and police department are making detailed arrangements for cleaning of the ground, provision for drinking water, electricity supply, security and seating arrangements, medical facilities besides transportation for the participants, a source in the West Siang administration told *EastMojo*.

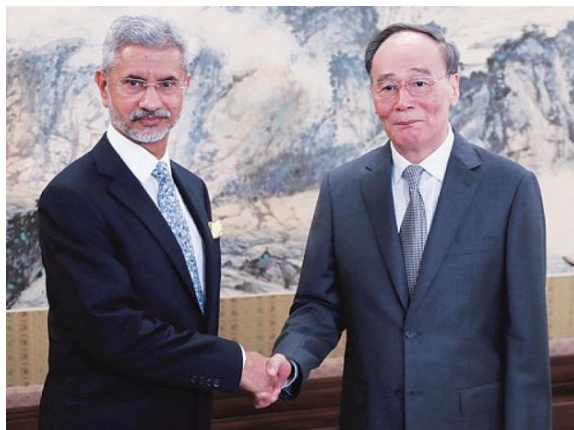
The participants are required to bring some documents including identity card, address proof, police verification report, medical fitness certificate and photocopy of first page of pass book of savings account among others. The recruitment is going to be for a period of almost six months, a source in the army said.

## India-China ties will hinge on respect for core concerns, says

**Jaishankar**

business-standard.com. PTI, August 13, 2019

India's decisions on Jammu and Kashmir are the country's "internal" matter and have no implication for either the external boundaries of India or the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi amidst Beijing's objection to the formation of Ladakh as a Union Territory.



(Left) Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar with Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound in Beijing on Monday. photo: Reuters

During his bilateral meeting with Wang, Jaishankar also said it was important to ensure that bilateral differences should not become disputes and emphasised that the future of the ties will depend on the mutual sensitivity to each other's "core concerns".

The remarks came in response to Wang, who brought up developments pertaining to legislation passed recently by the Indian Parliament on J&K, saying China is "very closely" following the Indo-Pak tensions over Kashmir and its "ramifications" while asking New Delhi to play a "constructive role" for regional peace and stability.

According to an official release from the external affairs ministry, during the bilateral meeting, Jaishankar conveyed that this was an "internal" matter for India and the issue related to changes in a temporary provision of the Constitution of India and was the sole prerogative of the country.

Asserting that the legislative measures were aimed at promoting better governance and socio-economic development, Jaishankar also said there was no implication for either the external boundaries of India or the LAC with China.

"India was not raising any additional territorial claims. The Chinese concerns in this regard were therefore misplaced. The minister also conveyed that so far as the India China boundary question was concerned the two sides had agreed to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the Boundary Question on the basis of the 2005 Political Parameters and Guiding Principles," the release said.

Jaishankar, who is on a crucial three-day visit to China, also called on Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan, considered a confidant of President Xi Jinping.

Welcoming Jaishankar, Foreign Minister Wang referred to the Indo-Pak tensions without directly mentioning about India scrapping the Article 370 of the Constitution that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

"On the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, we can have mutually beneficial cooperation. This is in the fundamental interest and long term interest of our two peoples and also contribute to world peace and human progress," Wang said.

"At the same time, China and India as two big nations, also have important responsibilities for upholding the regional peace and stability," he said.

"When it comes to the recent tensions between India and Pakistan and the possible ramifications, we follow these developments very closely. We hope that India would also play a constructive role for the regional peace and stability," Wang said.

The visit of Jaishankar, the first Indian minister to tour China after the Modi government began its second term, is taking place after India's decision to revoke the special status of J&K and divide it into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

## Jaishankar in China: 4 agreements signed to strengthen cultural ties

business-standard.com PTI, August 13, 2019

The two countries signed four agreements on cultural exchanges, healthcare, sports and cooperation in museum management, according to an official statement

The agreements were signed after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi attended the 2nd meeting of the India-China High Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges here.

Jaishankar is on a three-day visit to China. He called on Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan and held talks with Wang Yi.

The two countries signed four agreements on cultural exchanges, healthcare, sports and cooperation in museum management, according to an official statement.

Both the countries agreed to promote cultural exchanges for preservation of intangible cultural heritage, organisation of cultural activities and management of archaeological heritage sites, it said.

Both, Jaishankar and Wang Yi, expressed the importance to enhance cooperation in the field of traditional medicine- where both India China have a rich knowledge accumulated over centuries, with the objective of promoting the development of Traditional Medicine in two countries' healthcare systems.

"The two leaders agreed to promote exchanges between our National Sports Associations, sports persons and youth for strengthening cooperation on international sports events," the statement said.

Also, they agreed to cooperate in museum management for promoting collaboration between Hubei Provincial Museum, Wuhan and the National Museum, New Delhi in the field of exhibitions, protection and restoration of collections and archaeological excavations for museums, it said.

The Hubei Provincial Museum is one of the best known museums in China, with a large amount of state-level historic and cultural relics.

The National Museum of India, is one of the largest museums in India. Established in 1949, it holds a variety of articles ranging from pre-historic era to modern works of art.

The two leaders also agreed on a Plan of Action for bilateral engagements for the year 2020, it said.

The visit of Jaishankar, the first Indian minister to tour China after the Modi government began its second term.

## China threatens retaliation if India bans Huawei

taipeitimes.com Reuters New Delhi, August 8, 2019

'China has told India not to block its Huawei Technologies Co Ltd (華為) from doing business in the country, warning there could be consequences for Indian firms operating in China, sources with knowledge of the matter said.

India is to hold trials for installing a 5G network in the next few months, but has not yet taken a call on whether it would invite the Chinese telecom equipment maker to take part, Indian Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad has said.

Two sources privy to internal discussions in New Delhi said that Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri was on July 10 called to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hear China's concerns about the US' campaign to keep Huawei out of worldwide 5G infrastructure.

During the meeting, Chinese officials said there could be "reverse sanctions" on Indian firms engaged in business in China should India block Huawei because of pressure from Washington, one of the sources said, citing a readout of the ambassador's meeting.

Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying (華春瑩) said that Beijing hopes India would make an independent decision on 5G bidders.

"Huawei has carried out operations in India for a long time, and has made contributions to the development of Indian society and the economy, that is clear to all," Hua said in a statement.

Indian companies have a far smaller presence in China than other major economies, but firms such as Infosys, TCS, Dr Reddy's Laboratories Reliance Industries and Mahindra & Mahindra have a foothold there in manufacturing, healthcare, financial services and outsourcing. A potential row over Huawei could revive tensions in the broader India and China

relationship just as the two sides have been making efforts to ensure their long-standing territorial disputes do not escalate.

In October, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to host Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) in Varanasi, his parliamentary constituency in northern India, where the two are expected to address trade issues, including a US\$53 billion trade deficit in 2018-2019 that India is concerned about.

The main right-wing group tied to Modi's ruling alliance has stepped up criticism of Huawei.

In a letter written to Modi last week, Ashwani Mahajan, head of the economic wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, said that there were concerns about Huawei's operations in India.

"We as a country are not yet sure of relying on Huawei. Globally, the Chinese companies, including Huawei, are facing allegations that they 'underbid' projects, and position themselves and their establishment back home to snoop and enable them to shut remotely, if required be," he wrote.

Prasad told the legislature that six proposals have been received for 5G technology trials, including from Huawei.

He did not name the others, but firms such as Sweden's Ericsson, Finland's Nokia and South Korea's Samsung Electronics are expected to participate.

A high-level group of officials has been looking into whether to open the 5G trials to Huawei.

The committee has found no evidence to suggest that Huawei has used "backdoor" programs or malware to collect data in India, the first source and another official in the Indian Department of Telecommunications said. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs has issued no directive to curtail Huawei's entry, the telecom official said. "We can't simply reject them just because they are Chinese," they said.

One option that a tech expert at the Indian National Security Advisory Board has suggested is to ensure that the hardware and software for the 5G network are not both sourced from Huawei.

## China and the Region

### Pakistan & China are building an SEZ in PoK's Gilgit-Baltistan, satellite images show



Moqpondass SEZ: an overview | Source: Col. Vinayak Bhat (ret.) | ThePrint

The Moqpondass SEZ in Gilgit is part of the CPEC, and began construction after Imran Khan's visit to China in April 2019.

**New Delhi:** After ignoring India's objections to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Islamabad and Beijing are now in the process of setting up a Special Economic Zone in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan has long facilitated China's forays into the Jammu and Kashmir region, ceding vast tracts of land in 1963 in the Shaksgam Valley, north of the Siachen Glacier. The Chinese built a road and military posts there in 2017.

ThePrint takes an exclusive look at the latest satellite imagery of the new SEZ, called Moqpondass.

Feasibility, approval and agreements

Feasibility studies were carried out in May and June 2016. Satellite images of the time indicate vehicular movements and a helipad, possibly constructed to ferry VIPs.

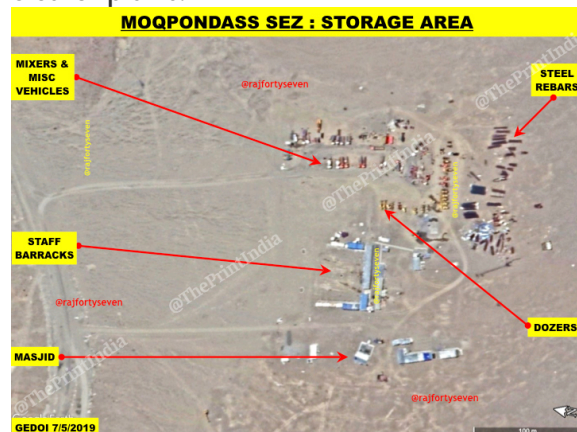
In May 2019, Pakistan's Board of Investments (BoI) approved the fast-track development of nine SEZs, including Moqpondass, about 40 km from the city of Gilgit.

The agreement was reportedly signed between China and Pakistan during PM Imran Khan's visit to Beijing in April 2019.

#### Construction

Construction began immediately after the signing of the agreement. Although the Pakistani government's CPEC website says the area allotted is 250 acres, satellite imagery shows that the Chinese are utilising an area more than 750 acres.

The area occupied by the construction company consists of a storage area, a cement concrete production and mixer plant, and two crusher plants.



Source: Col. Vinayak Bhat (retd.)

The construction is in the early stages. Staff barracks are in typical hollow square shape. There are separate barracks, probably for Pakistani staff.

The storage area is littered with steel reinforcing bars (rebars), and huge earth-moving equipment and vehicles.

The crushers and cement concrete plants are already operational and functioning efficiently. A small masjid has been constructed, possibly for the use of Pakistani staff.

### How China is trying to colonise PoK: India Today ground report from Gilgit, Baltistan

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/video/india-today-gilgit-baltistan-china-colonise-pok-pakistan-china-cpec-987660-2017-07-31>

Click the link above to watch the clip.

## Industrial Park Boost Sino-Nepale Economic Cooperation

china.org.cn August 18, 2019

Ritu Raj Subedi

Nepal and China have opened a new chapter in their economic cooperation by giving the go-ahead to construction of the China-Nepal Industrial Friendship Park at Damak of Jhapa in eastern Nepal.

At a time when the two nations are negotiating on the choice of major projects to be executed under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the industrial park is a catalysing factor to enhance other components of the global initiative in Nepal.

"It is the first BRI project being implemented in Nepal, which is expected to boost the national economy and bilateral cooperation between Nepal and China," said the park chairman Govinda Thapa.

The first phase involves 600 hectares of land, targeted to create 45,000 jobs. The second phase will bring expansion to over 1,500 hectares. When it is in full operation, more than 100,000 people will have job opportunities, according to Thapa.

The project has been designed as a platform for diversified economic growth, encompassing all types of economic activities such as tourism and retail sales, permitting workers to reside on-site and providing a much broader set of incentives and benefits to domestic and foreign companies.

Local people see it as game changer in the economic development in the eastern region that holds huge potential for modernisation of agriculture and national industrialisation.

It is likely to improve overall economic competitiveness, be a channel for the transfer of technologies and management know-how, and forge business and trade cooperation.

Given Nepal's excessive dependence on imports to meet its needs for basic as well as luxury commodities, the country stands to benefit from the industrial park that will primarily focus on manufacturing export-oriented items to achieve a better trade balance.

Its key products will include herbal and cosmetic items, electronic equipment and chips for vehicles, agro-industrial goods and textiles, among others. Their potential markets are Bangladesh, India, China and Europe.

Nepal has been facing huge trade deficits for several years. The deficit reached almost Rs1,321.42 billion (\$11.79 billion) in fiscal year 2018/19. The country exported goods worth Rs97.10 billion (\$86.60 million) while the imports totalled Rs1,418.53 billion (\$36.76 billion) during the review period, according to the Foreign Trade Statistics released by the Department of Customs.

Thus, it's obvious that anything that can create greater trade is welcome.

Another noticeable impact is in boosting the local labor market. It will definitely discourage Nepali workers from having to go abroad to find work.

Enhancement of the skill level of local labourers is another positive aspect. Chinese technical experts will train Nepali workers before they are employed in various construction and manufacturing units.

Once the industrial park gets off the ground, it will have an effect on other BRI development projects in Nepal considered to be vital to stimulating the economy marred by the decades of instability, energy crisis and shabby infrastructure.

The BRI is not just about building industries and roads. It is an open and inclusive framework with five components: policy coordination, connectivity, unhindered trade, financial integration and people-to-people relations. Nepal and China have witnessed growing bilateral activities in all these areas.

Nepal joined the BRI in 2017 to bring in more Chinese investment to build critical infrastructure projects and promote connectivity.

At the moment, Nepali government has stressed infrastructure connectivity for it has been compelled to pay at least 20% additional costs to its production and transit-transit cycle because of its landlocked status, which has reduced its competitiveness in the global market, hence its desire to join the BRI to overcome trade and development bottlenecks.

Against this backdrop, the Nepal-China Industrial Park will go a long way towards promoting trade, investment, technological and skill transfer and economic cooperation between the two neighbours.

## **China Firm Wins tender to Build Sri Lanka Hydropower dam**

Economynext.com August 16,2019

ECONOMYNEXT- Chinese firm Gezhouba Group Co. Ltd has won a tender to build the main civil works, which includes a dam, of the Moragolla Hydro Power Plant, Sri Lanka's cabinet office said.

A statement from the cabinet office said that a proposal of Power, Energy and Business Development Minister Ravi Karunanayake to award the tender to the Beijing-based firm was approved.

The Standing Cabinet Appointed Procurement Committee had selected Gezhouba Group as the winning tender.

The main civil works consists of a 37-metre high concrete dam with five spillway gates, intake, head race tunnel, surge tank, penstock tunnel and shaft, surface type powerhouse with switch yard, relocation of irrigation facilities and access roads.

The Moragolla Hydro Power Plant is a part of the Green Power Development and Energy Efficiency Improvement Investment Programme.

The power plant is being built on the Mahaweli River, and is located in Ethgala, Kandy, according to the Power and Energy Ministry.

The Asian Development Bank will be providing 113.86 million US dollars in financing for the power plant, while the remaining 1.93 billion rupees is to be funded by the government.

The total installed capacity of the project is 30.20 megawatts, with an annual energy generation of 100 gigawatt hours.

The main civil works component is to be followed by 'Lot B' for electrical and mechanical facilities and 'Lot 3' for project management and supervisory support for the power plant.

The power plant is expected to be commissioned in 2022. (Colombo / Aug16/2019)

## **Reuters report confirms China's infiltration of Taiwan: Tsai**

<http://focustaiwan.tw> August 10,2019

Taipei, Aug. 10 (CNA) President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) said Saturday that a report by Reuters a day earlier saying that China was buying positive coverage in Taiwanese media

confirmed Beijing's widespread infiltration of Taiwan.

Speaking with the reporters on the sidelines of a visit to a temple in Kaohsiung, Tsai said China's infiltration of Taiwan was "ubiquitous" and worries over Beijing's influence here were not unfounded.

She was responding to a Reuters report saying that Chinese authorities, including China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO), have paid at least five Taiwan media organisations for favourable coverage in various publications and even on a TV channel.

Among the stories, the report said, were two feature stories about a new Chinese government program aimed at luring Taiwanese business people to China and winning the hearts of Taiwan's people.

According to Reuters, the articles, for which the TAO paid 30,000 Chinese yuan (US\$4,300), lauded the Chinese government program, saying China "treated Taiwanese businessmen like its own people."

Tsai said the judicial system will launch an investigation into the articles if the deals between the Taiwanese news media and China violated the law.

People in Taiwan should be aware of China's influence and establish clearly whether the reports they see are real or false to eliminate false news in the first place.

"Getting rid of false news and stopping the circulation of false news is critical to protecting democracy" in Taiwan, Tsai said.

Tsai also urged news media in Taiwan to provide fair and objective coverage to gain credibility with readers and viewers.

The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) also issued a statement Saturday, saying DPP lawmakers will speed up efforts to amend laws to counter what they said was "red infiltration" and do more to educate the public on detecting such Chinese propaganda.

Beijing should not underestimate the will of Taiwan's people to defend their freedom and democracy, DPP spokeswoman Lee Yen-jong (李晏榕) said in the statement.

## **Mainland Netizens Reported Young Chinese Scholar for Joining Parade in Hong Kong**

chinascope.org August 6, 2019

Chen Chun, a scholar from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, recently circulated pictures of himself on social media participating in a parade in Hong Kong. Chinese netizens reported Chen and protested. Chen introduced himself as a Ph.D. in ethics and a columnist, born in 1985.

The incident began on July 14, when some Chinese netizens found that Chen's WeChat account showed photos of him wearing masks at Tai Wai MTR station, as part of the "black silence" parade that seven labor unions of the Hong Kong press industry had initiated.

After the incident went viral in cyberspace, some netizens posted comments on Chen's Weibo account, a twitter like Chinese microblogging account, criticising him and calling him a member of the "Hong Kong independence" movement. Although Chen has closed the comment function on his Weibo account, some mainland Chinese continued to slam him. One post said, "(We) may not be able to handle foreigners, but are you daring us to teach you a lesson?"

Chen Chun has not offered any response.

Source: Central News Agency, August 6, 2019  
<https://www.cna.com.tw/news/acn/201908060187.aspx>

## **Chinese "evacuation" from PoK confirms Beijing's presence in occupied territory**

Economic Times, August 2, 2019  
Dipanjari Roy Chaudhury,

Pakistan has this week "evacuated" more than 50 Chinese nationals working in PoK amid exchange of fire along LoC by Indian and Pak troops confirming presence of China in the territory illegally occupied by Pakistan.

The Chinese nationals who were moved to a 'safe zone' by Pakistani officials were working on a dam being constructed in PoK along the confluence of the Neelum and Jhelum rivers, ET has learnt. The Chinese nationals were

shifted by local disaster management authority.

It is not yet clear whether these Chinese nationals were troops stationed to guard the projects or engineers and workers on the project. It is also not yet clear whether Chinese nationals were working on projects closer to LoC.

China had invested heavily in infrastructure projects worth \$ 11-12 billion in PoK even before the BRI was launched. India in past had protested with both China and Pakistan against Chinese funded projects in PoK. Last year India has lodged strong protests with China and Pakistan over the proposed bus service between the two countries through PoK. China Pakistan Economic Corridor or CPEC a key pillar in mega BRI also passes through PoK violating Indian sovereignty, officials here asserted.

Last year local activists in PoK have come out in protest against the so-called China Pakistan Economic Corridor's actual intention. The activists had also raised concerns about serious environmental problems in PoK and Gilgit Baltistan due to construction of dams and other projects. The over \$60 billion CPEC that connects Kashgar in western China with Gwadar port in Pakistan, spanning 3,000 kilometres, is among key reasons why India has not endorsed BRI. Pakistan and China do not share border. Pakistan's only link to China is through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's Gilgit-Baltistan region, which is part of Jammu and Kashmir. It is India and Afghanistan which share a border, now cut-off by PoK

## Tibet in Exile

### **Kyabje Ling Rinpoche calls on Special Advisor of the International Religious Freedom at the US State Department**

tibet.net, August 26, 2019

Ling Rinpoche informed the special advisor about the dire situation in Tibet in general and religious freedom in particular. It makes no sense at all, for communist Regime of China, which do not profess any faith to interfere in Tibetan Buddhists belief and practice of reincarnation explained the Rinpoche. By meddling in the Reincarnation tradition of Tibetan Buddhist, China is actually making a mockery of Tibetan Buddhist followers' profound belief in the life after death, the Representative Ngodup told US official.

Rinpoche further mentioned about different measures introduced by CCP, like setting up of monastic management committees, in each monastery in Tibet to govern the daily activities of the monastery-making normal practice impossible. Rinpoche eloquently brought home the pressing threat to the Tibetan language, religion and culture in Tibet. Special Advisor showed deep concern and assured that his Bureau will do whatever possible.

The Special advisor explained how Ambassador Brownback spoke at the recent religious event in the United Nations, which caught the Chinese delegation unexpectedly. The Special Advisor recounted his experience in Nepal where the religious freedom is in peril and assured the Rinpoche that his Bureau will do whatever necessary to protect the religious freedom of all faith community including Tibet. Rinpoche offered him a traditional white scarf and biography book of his predecessor, the most revered Ling Rinpoche—the former senior tutor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

**Department of Education  
inaugurates inter-school Buddhist  
philosophical debate**  
tibet.net, August 26, 2019

Dharamshala: The inauguration of a week-long Buddhist Philosophical Debate between Tibetan schools was held earlier today at upper TCV hall. A total of 142 students from various Tibetan schools in exile are participating in the debate on Tibetan Buddhist dialectics. There are 67 students from Tibetan schools around Dharamshala, 59 students from Tibetan schools around Mussoorie and two schools who have won the debates in the preceding years. Accompanying the students are 20 Buddhist Philosophy teachers of the respective schools. The dialectic debate is organised by the Department of Education of the Central Tibetan Administration, in an effort to boost understanding of traditional Tibetan wisdom among Tibetan students.

The inauguration ceremony of the Buddhist dialectic debate was held with the presence of Geshe Lhakdor and Kalon Dr Pema Yangchen of Department of Education as the Chief guests. The inaugural ceremony was also attended by Tenzin Dorjee, head of the academic section DoE, Upper TCV Director, Principal, and Education Director, Philosophy teachers of the schools participating in the debate and the students.

**Former Madhya Pradesh Chief  
Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan  
visits Central Tibetan**

**Administration**  
tibet.net August 20, 2019

Honourable Shivraj Singh Chouhan, National Vice President of BJP, former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and the current member of the legislative assembly of the State today paid a courtesy call on the President of Central Tibetan Administration Dr Lobsang Sangay at the Kashag Secretariat in Dharamshala.

Their meeting focused on various issues related to Tibet and the long-standing historical relationship between India and Tibet. Dr Lobsang Sangay offered gratitude to the Indian government and the state leaders for hosting and supporting the Tibetan people.

The Honourable BJP Vice President was accompanied by Shri Kishan Kapoor, Member of Parliament of Lok Sabha from Kangra constituency and other dignitaries from the state government.

**USCIRF Chair Dr Tenzin Dorjee on  
Religious Freedom and Inter-  
Cultural Communication**

tibet.net, August 20, 2019

The first Tibetan Buddhist elected Chair of the Bipartisan United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Dr Tenzin Dorjee on Monday greeted the staff of Central Tibetan Administration at a special talk on International Religious Freedom and Communication.

Organised by the Tibet Policy Institute, the expert talk was held at the T-building of Central Tibetan Secretariat.

In the 40-minute talk, the USCIRF Chair Dr Tenzin Dorjee reflected upon the United State's unwavering commitment to protecting freedom of religion and, especially under President Trump's administration, the prioritisation of the protection of unalienable rights like religious freedom in the US foreign policy.

Dr. Tenzin Dorjee who was appointed to the Commission on December 8, 2016, by US House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and reappointed to the Commission by Leader Pelosi on May 10, 2018, said Religious freedom is an undeniable universal human right and is the key to defending all the other freedoms and rights.

**CTA's Second Five Fifty Youth  
Forum: Shaping Tibet's Future  
concludes on a high note**

tibet.net August 20, 2019

The much-celebrated Five Fifty Youth Forum of the Central Tibetan Administration concluded on a high note today. The second Five Fifty Youth Forum: Shaping Tibet's Future has brought about a confluence of 100 young Tibetans in the diaspora who are excelled in many areas of study to discuss and deliberate on CTA's Five Fifty Vision particularly on the

challenges and opportunities facing the Tibetan freedom movement.

The three-day forum saw an optimum discussion, debate, and learning from one another while the participants chalked out action plans regarding the future political status of Tibet.

## Taiwan, Tibet and Uygur expats join Hongkongers in New York to show support for protests

scmp.com August 11, 2019 Jodi Xu Klein, US correspondent



Nicole Izsak, one of the rally's organisers, said there was now an "existential" fear of 2047. Photo: Jodi Xu Klein

Taiwanese, Tibetan and Uygur expatriates joined Hongkongers in New York on Saturday to show their support for the city's anti-government protesters.

The demonstration at Pier 81 in midtown Manhattan was staged across the street from the Chinese consulate and attracted more than 100 people dressed in black and carrying yellow umbrellas – two of the symbols associated with the Hong Kong protest movement.

Overseas Hongkongers have staged a series of protests in recent weeks and the demonstrators on Saturday primarily consisted of students and professionals from the city. But a number of Tibetans, Taiwanese and Uygurs were also involved.

"Our hearts share in the pride of seeing students, parents, grandparents on the streets of Hong Kong, proclaiming a story of intergenerational resistance," said Canada-born Taiwanese Gloria Hu, a co-organiser from the Keep Taiwan Free group.

"For so many of us this struggle for freedom is not only this summer. We have been born into this struggle on the backs of our families and communities, who taught us that no matter

where we are, no matter where we were born, our greater calling is to be a living testament to the resilience of our people," Hu said.

"This greater calling is what allows us to stand wherever we are and say I am a proud Taiwanese, I am a proud of Hong Kong or I am a proud Tibetan."

Dorjee Tseten, an activist with Students For A Free Tibet, said: "Today, I'm here to stand in solidarity with the people of Hong Kong more than ever before. The time has arrived for all of us to stand together, to fight for freedom and democracy.

"For the last 60 years, when people inside Tibet has been continuously fighting for our freedom, and they have not lost their hope.

"Today, we must tell the international community now is the time to stand with the people of Hong Kong, now is the time to do the right thing, now is the time to make sure that you are standing on the right side of the history."

The rallies in New York have become a near weekly phenomenon amid growing unrest back in Hong Kong.

The protests grew out of opposition to a now shelved bill that would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China and demonstrators have now set out a series of demands, including calls for an inquiry into allegations of police brutality and fully democratic elections.

On Saturday, the crowd in New York chanted repeatedly "Hong Kong, add oil!" – a popular rallying cry for the city's protesters.

Participants also chanted: "What do we want? Democracy!"

"In many ways we want to express our concerns about the current suppression of freedom and human rights crisis in Hong Kong," said one protesters, who only wished to be identified as Ken.

"One way is to urge US Congress and President Trump to pass the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act to reaffirm the principles and the importance of Hong Kong remaining sufficiently autonomous from China," said Ken.

"It also makes clear that applicants who reside in Hong Kong shall not be denied visas on the basis of the active arrest, detention, or other adverse government action taken as a result of their participation in non-violent activities.

"Most importantly, it sets a deadline of the year 2020, that there has to be improved universal suffrage, a truly democratic election

of, not just half, but all of the seats in the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. And also to set the deadline for the next Hong Kong chief executive election in 2022," Ken said.

Alex Chow, a 29-year-old PhD student studying on the west coast of the US, said Hong Kong people have historically made concessions as they have "never had a chance to voice what we wanted" since the 1997 handover from British to Chinese rule.

"But you see thousands or millions of Hongkongers rallying to the streets, confronting brutality and indiscriminate attack from gangsters. Hongkongers have changed," he said. "We need a change, a real one, and we need it now."

"We also urge the US government to stop selling tear gas and all the crowd control equipment to the Hong Kong police," he added.

Social unrest in Hong Kong moved into a new phase on Saturday, with a number of guerilla-style clashes between police and protesters at multiple locations across the city, where multiple rounds of tear gas were again fired by police and petrol bombs were thrown.

## India A Priority For China, Tibet To Play Key Role, Says Tibetan Official

NDTV, August 10, 2019

LHASA, TIBET: Highlighting the role of Tibet in Indo-China friendship, Sun Xiaobo, Deputy Director-General of Foreign Affairs Office in Tibet Autonomous Region, has said that the "roof of the world" can play an important role in boosting bilateral relations.

"China's relationship with India is on the priority of Chinese diplomacy and Tibet has a very long history of exchanges with India in terms of culture and religion. Tibet can play an important role in promoting relations between China and India," Mr Xiaobo told news agency ANI on Friday.

Highlighting the significance of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra for Tibet, the Deputy Director-General said that pilgrimage is a very important component of exchange between the two countries.

"We all understand the significance of providing better service for Indians, who undertake the pilgrimage in Tibet. We will

maintain this policy and do what we can to make Indians visiting Tibet feel at home," Mr Xiaobo said.

Focusing on the future of India-China relations, Mr Xiaobo said that the governments and foreign ministries of both countries have a lot of scope to improve bilateral ties by undertaking exchanges.

"Our two leaders - Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping - also pay great attention in this respect. There are lots of measures ready to be implemented. We are confident that efforts by the two governments will create a better future," he stressed.

Thousands of devotees participate in the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through a treacherous route that crosses territorial boundaries of India, Nepal, and China.

According to the schedule for this year, 18 batches will trek across the Lipulekh pass in Uttarakhand while 10 other batches will go via the Nathu la route in Sikkim. Each batch will comprise of not more than 50 people.

The Ministry of External Affairs organises the annual pilgrimage via two different routes - Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand, and Nathu la in Sikkim. While the Lipulekh route passes through a very mountainous area, the fully motorable Nathu la route that opened a few years ago requires minimum walking and will, therefore, help senior citizens participating in the pilgrimage.

## America is a strong supporter of Tibet: His Holiness the Dalai Lama

thetibetpost.com August 3, 2019,  
Yangchen Dolma



A bipartisan U.S Congressional delegation during their meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala, HP, India on August 3, 2019. Photo: Tenzin Choejor

A six bipartisan Congressional delegation of U.S House of Democracy Partnership received a special audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence Saturday afternoon. The delegation led by Congressman and Chair David Price and Vice-chair Vern Buchanan engaged in hour-long interaction and discussion with His Holiness the Dalai Lama followed by a luncheon reception for the delegation with His Holiness.

The meeting was attended by Dr Lobsang Sangay, President of the Tibetan government in-Exile and Pema Jungney, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in-Exile.

"I think America is a strong supporter of Tibet. Our hope also entirely and mainly depends on America's support. Then, in 1973 I visited Europe and then in 1979 in America. So I felt strong support, not just for political reason, but for moral principles," the spiritual leader of Tibet told The members of the bipartisan congressional delegation.

On the relationship between Tibet and the U.S., His Holiness said that "there were a number of people who know about Tibet and they support Tibet. They also have a very warm feeling toward Tibet. Since then America become the main supporter of Tibet and now today, members from both houses and parties, also US Ambassador to Delhi came here and you are most welcome."

"This place is my home, around since after 1959, I have spent one year in Mussoorie and then came to Dharamshala. The Government of India has arranged all these things. So I have been living here for over sixty years. Therefore, I want to welcome you all to my home," His Holiness added.

The US Congressman David Price raised His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his teachings all over the world. "Freedom for you to teach and relate to of-course the Tibetan community, But, to people all over the world and you have so much to offer and we should all value that freedom."

David Price then handed over a letter from Nancy Pelosi is the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He said, "you have mentioned our Speaker Nancy Pelosi; I want to first to bring you greetings from her and to give a letter which just expressing her esteem."

His Holiness responded as saying, "she visited China, meantime in Tibet. After that, she helped your visit?" "Yes, after she has arranged our visit to Tibet," David Price replied.

"One of my beliefs, source of inner strength and source of peace, I consider myself one of the human beings and all the seven billion human beings, mentally, emotionally and physically— we are the same. We all want a happy life," said His Holiness the Dalai Lama, describing himself as a simple Buddhist monk.

"As I already mentioned basic human nature is more positive. So now, I have a critical view of the existing education system, which very much oriented about material values. We should include in education how to bring inner peace, without touching religious faith, but secular way," His Holiness said, adding: "That is my commitment".

"To think about these things and to be stimulated to think about what really motivates us and what we believe in that so I thank you for that and be happy to turn my friend and Co-chair HDP, Congressman Vern Buchanan of Florida," David Price responded.

"Thank you, Your Holiness, Chairman put it very well. We are six members of the Congress; we want to quickly just add. We want to continue to build our friendship and our partnership is going forward. I would like to get your thoughts at some point what more we can do and I did want to touch on you mentioned about and you talked a lot of different things," Congressman Vern Buchanan said.

"Its child welfare, it all starts there, in my mind, there's a saying that goes: I went to boys and girls clubs. Children make up 25% of the population in the U.S. but a 100% of the future, so I appreciate you weighing in on all the other points that you made your inspirational and leadership, is incredible. I just can't imagine anybody else on the planet that adds more to the conversation than what you do," Buchanan added.

"So I can tell you when this came up as an opportunity to be with you and the Tibetan people in your presence. David and I thought about it for about 30 seconds, we really feel special to being in your presence to have this opportunity and know that we are going to continue to build friendship and like to get your thoughts when you can about how we can take it to another level," he further added.

The bipartisan congressional delegation of House of Democracy Partnership consisting of L-R: Congressman Neal Dunn, Congressman Vern Buchanan (Co-chair, HDP), Congressman David Price (Chairman, HDP), Congressman John Rutherford, Congresswoman Susan Davis,

Congressman Gerry Conolly, accompanied by the head of the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC, Ngodup Tsering, who in this capacity is the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to North America.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is known throughout the world as a leading advocate for world peace and non-violence. His message is one of kindness and compassion to all sentient beings. Over the past 60 years, he has traveled around the world spreading a message of Peace and Universal Responsibility. He also believes that the common aim of all religions, an aim that everyone must try to find, is to foster tolerance, altruism and love. He retired from politics in 2011. But, as one among six million Tibetans, His Holiness said he will continue to serve the cause of Tibet.

In 1959, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama along with thousands of others escaped to India, where he was given political asylum. The spiritual leader has set up a government and rebuilt monasteries where masters pass on their teachings to young monks. Tibetans in exile have succeeded in gradually rebuilding their monasteries, preserving their culture, restructuring their society and keeping it alive, in spite of the extremely difficult circumstances.

the roar of a fighter jet, bringing home how close the Asian powerhouse is perched vis-à-vis India. It also weakened the theory that the Himalayas were a "natural barrier" between the two countries. Also unmissable, just outside the terminal, was a pedestal with pictures of Chinese leaders Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, and the Chinese national flag.

These were my first impressions of Tibet, or Xizang, as the Chinese call it. Coincidentally, our visit (of a group of eight Indian journalists invited by the Chinese embassy in New Delhi to visit in early July) was taking place a few months after the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan spiritual leader's flight in March 1959 to India. The Dalai Lama had fled after a failed uprising against Beijing, eight years after China's "annexation" (as described by Western officials and media) or "assimilation" (as many controversy-averse Indian authors put it) of Tibet in 1951.

We couldn't stop marvelling at the unforgiving mountain terrain of sharp ridges, sheer-drop valleys and winding hill springs. The hour's drive to Lhasa reinforced China's infrastructural prowess—wide all-weather roads stretched for miles, winding round stark grey-brown mountain sides. Long tunnels have been bored through the base of some mountains. Passing through one of the tunnels, I recalled an agreement between Chinese leaders and their Nepalese counterparts to link the two countries with a railway line (to reduce Nepal's dependence on India after the 2015-16 economic blockade). New Delhi's hope that geography will act as a constraint is clearly misplaced.

Modern-day Lhasa is nothing like the imaginary "Shangri La" of yore. The city had all the trappings of a global cosmopolitan hub, with its nightclubs, high-end hotels and glitzy shops. The imposing Potala Palace, once the Dalai Lama's home, was the only structure to offer a sense of the past. Right opposite it stood another towering pedestal with images of Mao, Deng, Jiang, Hu and Xi. Foreign tourists appeared few. But there were Han Chinese everywhere.

The Chinese imprint on Tibet was palpable. All signs directing people and traffic were in Tibetan and Mandarin. Though Chinese authorities claim that people of Tibetan stock comprise over 90% of Tibet's population, Han Chinese seemed to have a major presence, running shops and businesses in Lhasa and

## Commentaries

### Opinion | A Tibet where China would like monks sold on Ferraris

livemint.com August 29, 2019

Elizabeth Roche

The Chinese imprint on Tibet is palpable, be it in pictures of its leaders in public places or such signs of prosperity as flashy cars, which could be a reason why Tibetans seem content. After landing at Lhasa's Gonggar airport, among the first things to catch my eye were two fighter jets of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force. Layers of clouds masked my view, but there was no mistaking

Shigatse; those employed in construction activity across the stretches of Tibet we visited, seemed overwhelmingly Han Chinese. Five-starred red flags and traditional lanterns were visible not only along roads, but also outside shops, and there were fancy cars and signs of prosperity—at least in Lhasa city—all around.

What was unclear, though, was whether it's the "good life"—jobs, infrastructure and modern education—that was keeping Tibetans content. Those one got to speak to in English, mostly in the hospitality industry, did convey that impression. In the villages we visited, one could see efforts to preserve Tibetan traditions of paper and incense making, an obvious counter to the criticism that China was destroying the Tibetan cultural legacy.

The drive from Lhasa to Shigatse was across a rugged landscape dotted with huge greenhouses growing vast varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains, besides flowers. The produce was for domestic consumption in China, aside from its export. There were many dairy farms of animals shipped from Europe and New Zealand. All these involved local Tibetan participation and appeared responsible for the seeming contentment and prosperity among the local populace. The declining number of Tibetans fleeing to India via Nepal was due to this, we were informed, with one Chinese official pointing out that Tibetans in the Tibetan Autonomous Region were aware of the "hardships" endured by those who had followed the Dalai Lama. The decline has been acknowledged by the Tibetan government in exile in India. Development apart, it's a fact that the Chinese have been exerting pressure on Nepal to block routes for escape. By one line of thinking, one of the reasons Beijing befriended Kathmandu was to ensure Tibetans do not flee.

Conversations with Chinese analysts and officials in Beijing and Tibet indicate that China is prepared to cope with the aftermath of the eventual passing of the Dalai Lama. A reincarnation would be found among Tibetans in China, they said. So what happens if the population in exile name a reincarnation from among them? That wouldn't work, we were told, as the Dalai Lama, for historical reasons, has to be recognised by the Chinese government.

Controlling the institution of the Dalai Lama is seen as key, given the hold that the Buddhist faith has on Tibetan life. This is why the Panchen Lama, who stayed back in Tibet and

is seen as second only to the Dalai Lama, is considered a "patriot" by Beijing, while the Dalai Lama is billed as a "dangerous splittist". That China will want India to endorse its choice of the next Dalai Lama seemed amply clear—leaving me wondering how long the "Tibetan issue" would bedevil our ties.

## Letter to the Editor: The missing Buddhist leader China wants you to forget

[irishe Examiner.com](http://irishe Examiner.com) August 29, 2019 John Jones

Campaigns and advocacy manager Free Tibet

Earlier this year a Tibetan man called Gedhun Choekyi Nyima turned 30. Around the world, thousands of Tibetans and friends of Tibet gathered to mark the day, in their homes, local Buddhist centres and temples, and in the streets.

But not one person there was celebrating the birthday, because someone was missing — Gedhun Choekyi Nyima himself.

To understand why we need to travel 24 years into the past. In May 1995, two weeks after his sixth birthday, this boy was identified as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, the second most important position in Tibetan Buddhism and one that draws the respect and devotion of millions of Tibetans.

To the ruling Chinese Communist Party, which has occupied Tibet since launching a military invasion in 1950, the news of the succession was not a source of satisfaction.

The CCP has long regarded Tibetan Buddhism as a threat to its rule, a view borne out by the work of the Dalai Lama and the resistance which countless Buddhist monks and nuns have mounted against the occupation.

The idea of another well-respected opposition figure emerging could not be tolerated by the CCP. On May 17, 1995, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family disappeared and have not been seen since.

The anguish among Tibetans that such an important religious figure was taken by force is matched only by the knowledge that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was just a boy when he was seized. His abduction made him the world's youngest political prisoner and is a source of great sorrow for Tibetans.

Meanwhile, Beijing says he's happy and doesn't want to be disturbed. Disappearance is

the price that countless Tibetans have been forced to pay during the occupation.

Those who are taken are cut off from the world, often mistreated and sometimes tortured. Family members, friends and fellow monks and nuns are left to wonder what has happened to their brother or sister, father or mother, daughter or son.

The state security laws that the CCP uses so liberally in Tibet prevent detainees from access to a lawyer or family visits. They also allow for long sentences.

Even today, the CCP's efforts to erase every last trace of the Panchen Lama can be seen. In late April, 20-year-old Wangchen and a group of friends gathered on a hillside in Sershul, eastern Tibet, to mark the Panchen Lama's birthday and call for his release. The authorities arrested Wangchen for this.

When his aunt, Dolkar, shared the news of Wangchen's arrest, she too was charged. On May 8, Wangchen was found guilty of leading "a conspicuous protest in public against the law of the land", and sentenced to four and a half years in prison.

Dolkar was found guilty of "causing social instability" by disclosing information of the arrest and was sentenced to one year and three months in prison.

Their current whereabouts and condition are unknown.

Today, on August 30, the Day of the Disappeared, we remember those who the CCP would try and make us forget.

Erasing someone's physical presence from their home, community or monastery cannot obliterate their memory, and it is for this reason that such disappearances do not intimidate Tibetans into silence; it brings them out to push for transparency and truth.

Tibetans' efforts to find the Panchen Lama and see him freed demand our support. Next May will mark 25 years since he was taken. A quarter of a century in captivity is an outrageous penalty to impose on a Tibetan child who is too young to commit a crime. We need unified, concerted pressure from governments to challenge the CCP over its ongoing efforts to disappear

## China's Czech advance hampered by Huawei jitters, Tibetan flags

[reuters.co](http://reuters.co), August 30, 2019,

Michael Kahn, Jan Lopatka

Additional reporting by Ben Blanchard

PRAGUE (Reuters) - Fizzled investments, cyber security warnings and a Prague mayor defying Beijing by forging his own diplomatic path are muddying inroads China has made into the Czech Republic as it seeks to extend its influence in Europe. Finding a more hospitable reception on eastern ground than in western Europe in recent years, China had been keen to take advantage of a Czech hunger to foster ties, led by President Milos Zeman, who has carried political favor with Beijing since taking office in 2013.

From the Czech perspective, the relationship was aimed at drawing Chinese investment into the nation of 10.7 million and opening the door for Czech companies to do business in the world's second-largest economy.

But a series of diplomatic spats since the start of the year has frayed relations, and highlighted the limited returns the Czechs have received for Zeman's goodwill.

"It must be a big surprise for the Chinese," said Vaclav Kopecky, a China expert at Prague's Association for International Affairs. "They expected... they wouldn't have any problems. It turned quickly in a very different direction."

The Czechs had kept Communist-run China at arm's length following the 1989 Velvet Revolution that propelled Vaclav Havel - a personal friend of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Chinese-ruled Tibet - into office.

That changed under Zeman. In 2015, he attended a military parade in Beijing to mark the end of World War Two, the only Western leader to do so, and he has visited China five times, more than neighboring Germany.

He also took the Czech Republic's richest man, billionaire Petr Kellner, to a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2014. Kellner's Home Credit has become one of the biggest consumer lenders in China.

These better relations, analysts say, aligned with China's global Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aimed at linking trading networks to Beijing, and a series of "16+1" economic

summits to whip up Chinese-led investment into central and eastern Europe.

#### CYBER-SECURITY HIT

But the burgeoning friendship took a hit with the Czech cyber security watchdog's December warning - the first explicit one in Europe - that infrastructure operators should guard against security threats from equipment made by Chinese telecom suppliers Huawei and ZTE.

Prague Mayor Zdenek Hrib's refusal to eject a Taiwanese diplomat from a conference at the demand of a Chinese official, and his decision to fly the Tibetan flag at City Hall to highlight human rights issues, further fractured the relationship.

"We want to have an apolitical relationship with partner cities, based on mutual cultural exchange," Hrib, who spent two months in Taiwanese capital Taipei as a medical student, told Reuters.

Those cultural ties have come under strain, however, with China cancelling tours planned by at least two Czech orchestras in the last two months.

While a foreign ministry spokesman warned in July that the Prague mayor's actions could harm relations, the Chinese foreign ministry assured Reuters on Friday it was "willing to work hard with the Czech side to continue to strengthen bilateral cooperation".

But overall, Chinese investment has failed to deliver jobs or the flow of money into the country envisioned when President Xi visited Prague in 2016.

Up-and-coming Chinese conglomerate CEFC China Energy led the Chinese investment charge in the Czech Republic, splashing out over \$1 billion on Czech company stakes. Zeman appointed its chairman Ye Jianming as his largely symbolic economic adviser.

CEFC, which opened its European headquarters in Prague in 2015, took holdings in high-profile firms including J&T Financial Group, the Lobkowicz breweries, Czech soccer team Slavia Prague, and its largest airline Smart wings.

But in 2017, its chief lobbyist was arrested in the United States on bribery and money-laundering charges. The following year its founder Ye was detained and the firm imploded, with Chinese state-owned investor CITIC taking over its Czech interests.

Slideshow (4 Images)

According to the Czech central bank, foreign direct investment from China, which reached 713 million euros (\$795 million) in 2015-2016, turned negative to the tune of 642 million euros in 2017 and 2018.

"It wasn't so much about business and investments," said Kamila Hladikova, a China expert at Palacky University in Oloumoc. "It was more about finding political support for China in the European Union."

(\$1 = 0.8973 euros)

## Communist China Plans Largest Military Parade in Its History for 70th Anniversary

China plans to carry the most important navy parade in its historical past to rejoice the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Individuals' Republic of China on October 1. The parade will reportedly showcase a few of China's most superior weapons.

AFP on Wednesday relayed assurances from Chinese language officers that the parade won't be belligerent in tone, saying:

"We have to point out that this military parade won't be targeted at any countries or districts and any specific incidents," stated Common Cai Zhijun, a member of the Chinese language Military Common Workers, at a press convention in Beijing Thursday. Cai stated that the dimensions of the navy parade was not an indication of aggression and the Chinese language military was "committed to safeguarding world peace and regional stability."

China's state-run *International Instances* quoted the State Council Info Workplace promising the parade can be an excellent larger present than the one held in 2015 to commemorate "the 70th anniversary of the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan," which is China's most popular title for its slice of World Warfare II. The 2015 parade featured 12,000 troops, 500 armoured autos, and flyovers by greater than 200 plane.

The State Council Info Workplace additionally made soothing noises about how the upcoming show of navy energy is just not meant to intimidate anybody specifically, saying:

Some superior weapons will make their maiden appearances within the tools formation of the parade, demonstrating the Chinese language nationwide protection's degree of growth. All tools that might be on show within the parade is domestically made. The navy parade is just not geared toward any particular nation or area, the workplace stated on the Thursday press convention. A ceremony to award highest state honours to 36 nationwide heroes might be held to rejoice the 70th anniversary on October 1. China can even award memento medals to individuals who have made contributions to the institution of the Individuals's Republic of China. Commemorative cash and stamps for the 70th anniversary can even be launched. A web-based exhibition might be organised for netizens to understand China's achievements over the past 70 years. Those that sacrificed for his or her nation won't be forgotten within the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the PRC's founding. Native authorities will go to veterans, previous Social gathering members and the households of martyrs.

The *International Instances* additionally touted a present that includes performers from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan who "love the motherland and uphold the 'one country, two systems' principle and support the reunification of China."

In response to the *South China Morning Submit*, Chinese language leaders are poring over an inventory of dozens of weapons that may very well be showcased on the parade, with a choice for giant and impressive-looking that will add to the patriotic spectacle of the parade.

The ultimate decisions will "depend in some part on relations with the U.S.," which severely undermines these Chinese language assurances that the parade might be a peaceful upbeat affair with no belligerent undertones.

"If the relationship with the U.S. improves in the coming months, then [Communist Party leader Xi Jinping] is likely to go for a less aggressive show of force in the parade," stated a "military insider" quoted by the SCMP.

"There is a lot of hi-tech equipment that has been put into service by the PLA but only a small number will be shown in the parade. It is unlikely that cutting-edge weapons, especially those strategic items such as the hypersonic glide vehicles or electromagnetic rail guns, will

be on offer so as not to upset countries like the US and some of our neighbours," one other navy supply advised the SCMP.

One weapon reportedly being thought-about for the parade is the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile, allegedly able to delivering a number of nuclear warheads to targets in the US. Chinese language leaders would see its inclusion within the parade as a rebuke to the US for putting in the superior THAAD missile protection system in South Korea.

THAAD is meant as a defend in opposition to North Korean aggression, however the Chinese language always protest its deployment and regard it as a risk to their safety as a result of its highly effective sensor methods can see into Chinese language territory.

Different potential inclusions embrace the JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missile, which can be nuclear-capable; the long-range H-6N bomber; and the Chengdu J-20 stealth fighter jet, which is in lively service and has flown over navy parades earlier than.

"We are good at organising military parades - we've staged over a dozen big military parades in Tienanmen Square over the years," chirped Individuals's Liberation Military Floor Drive commander Gen. Han Weiguo, selecting probably the most unlucky methods he might probably have boasted about Communist Chinese language parade self-discipline.

"Some of my foreign friends asked me how could we command so many soldiers and weapons in a parade. And I told them it's a secret," stated Common Han. "We test our soldiers' responses and discipline through their performance in the parades, which are part of our combat readiness requirements."

Though some Chinese language navy sources stated rehearsals for the parade have already begun at numerous bases, others stated apply marches will start in earnest as soon as the chilly climate in Beijing clears up.

## China Intercepts WeChat Texts From U.S. And Abroad, Researcher Says

[NPR.org](http://NPR.org), August 29, 2019 Emily Feng

The popular Chinese messaging app WeChat is Zhou Fengsuo's most reliable communication link to China.

That's because he hasn't been back in over two decades. Zhou, a human rights activist, had been a university student in 1989, when the pro-democracy protests broke out in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. After a year in jail and another in political reeducation, he moved to the United States in 1995.

But WeChat often malfunctions. Zhou began noticing in January that his chat groups could not read his messages. "I realised this because I was expecting some feedback [on a post] but there was no feedback," Zhou tells NPR at from his home in New Jersey.

I realised this because I was expecting some feedback [on a post] but there was no feedback," Zhou tells NPR at from his home in New Jersey.

Chinese cyberspace is one of the most surveilled and censored in the world. That includes WeChat. Owned by Tencent, one of China's biggest companies, the chat-meets-payment app has more than 1 billion monthly users in China and now serves users outside the country, too, although it does not divulge how many. Researchers say its use abroad has extended the global reach of China's surveillance and censorship methods.

As Chinese technology companies expand their footprint outside China, they are also sweeping up vast amounts of data from foreign users. Now, analysts say they know where the missing messages are: Every day, millions of WeChat conversations held inside and outside China are flagged, collected and stored in a database connected to public security agencies in China, according to a Dutch Internet researcher.

"The intention of keeping people safe by building these systems goes out the window the moment you don't secure them at all," says Victor Gevers, co-founder of the nonprofit GDI Foundation, an open-source data security collective.

Zhou is not the only one experiencing recent issues. NPR spoke to three other U.S. citizens who have been blocked from sending messages in WeChat groups or had their

accounts frozen earlier this year, despite registering with U.S. phone numbers.

"It doesn't matter where the user is, as long as I send a message to more than three people, my message cannot be seen in any group," says Stephen, a Chinese American technology professional. He declined to share his full name because he fears his criticism could draw retaliation against himself or his family by the authorities in China, where he travels often and where most of his family lives.

Stephen is baffled that he was blocked. He doesn't consider himself political. "It isn't shocking that China has that kind of censorship," he says. "The shocking piece is that China is exporting that kind of censorship to other parts of the world."

Every day, Gevers scans the Internet for vulnerabilities to find unsecured databases, and he has exposed a large number of them, particularly linked to China.

This March, Gevers found a Chinese database storing more than 1 billion WeChat conversations, including more than 3.7 billion messages, and tweeted out his findings. Each message had been tagged with a GPS location, and many included users' national identification numbers. Most of the messages were sent inside China, but more than 19 million of them had been sent from people outside the country, mostly from the U.S., Taiwan, South Korea and Australia.

Estimates of total WeChat accounts outside China are hard to come by, and the number is believed to be low – possibly in the tens of thousands – in the U.S. compared with popular networks like Facebook and its Messenger and WhatsApp platforms.

Gevers says he found patterns in the texts: Messages containing certain word combinations were archived in the database. Most of the flagged phrases were political, such as Tiananmen, the site of the 1989 protest crackdown, or Xi Jinping, the name of China's leader. Messages with such phrases sent by users in China were immediately flagged and the user information was sent to police, according to Gevers after examining the code. He says the system resembles the global surveillance methods used by the U.S. National Security Agency.

For decades, the U.S. had unparalleled capabilities to monitor Internet traffic passing through servers within its borders. But Chinese tech companies like Tencent are now global,

meaning this dragnet is believed to be sweeping up information about users from outside of China.

"I think that really raises serious questions and challenges for users but also for regulators outside China," says Sarah Cook, a senior research analyst at Freedom House, an independent democracy watchdog.

Cook points out WeChat is used internationally not just by traveling Chinese citizens, but also by politicians in democracies communicating with Chinese constituents and dissident communities. "They're communicating with somebody else who's outside of China who has WeChat, but they're still for the most part often operating under the rules that are inside China," she says.

For some, the censorship came in stages. For example, a user could be temporarily blocked, as if to encourage better behaviour. Sometimes a cat-and-mouse ensues between the censors and users.

Last February, David, a Chinese American doctor who does not want to use his last name for fear of backlash against his relatives still living in China, noticed his posts on WeChat's Moments – akin to a Facebook news feed – were not going through. Undeterred, he kept sharing politically charged articles.

Within days, he couldn't send messages to any group chat: "Although I was able to read the other people's messages, when I posted my message, nobody could see it. It was like I wasn't there," he says.

David then dialed back his sharing of news articles, limiting his conversations to trivial chitchat and music-sharing. His group chat function was quickly restored. Emboldened, he began sharing his political posts in group chats, only to find himself blocked again.

"Now I am very careful [on WeChat]. I feel like this censorship has affected both my psychology and my behaviour," says David. He says he has abandoned his old account and created a new WeChat account to talk to loved ones in China. He lost thousands of contacts in the process. "This is just my main connection to my Chinese friends inside and outside of China."

Tencent, WeChat's owner headquartered in the southeastern city of Shenzhen, declined to comment.

Whether China's government can compel companies to hand over data access is a key question facing the country's major technology

companies as they seek a larger share of world markets. For instance, telecommunications giant Huawei is trying to build a mobile network upgrade, known as 5G, around the world and says it would refuse Chinese government requests for data access. But legal experts say national security trumps privacy in China, even if companies put up a fight. U.S. officials allege that Huawei is controlled by the Chinese government, something the company and China's government have repeatedly denied.

"It's a bit of a red herring I think to argue about what the law says or does not say," says Donald Clarke, a George Washington University professor who specialises in Chinese law. Despite economic reforms, Clarke says, "China is essentially a Leninist state in which the government does not recognise any limits on its power."

Back in New Jersey, the activist Zhou says he will continue using WeChat in spite its vulnerabilities. His work depends too much on it.

"I have to use it to communicate. I just have to know what's going on [in China]. But it is very dangerous," he concedes. "It's a natural choice. We have to use WeChat even though I know it's under surveillance all the time."

## Stephen Bannon on Huawei and the Communist China Threat

The Epoch Times, August 29, 2019 Jan Jekielek Irene, Luo

Huawei is the greatest national security threat that America has ever faced—even greater than the threat of nuclear war—according to former White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon.

The Chinese company Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, has close ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), Bannon noted, and it is vying for control of 5G, the fifth generation of cellular mobile communications.

"The backbone of the future of technology is 5G," Bannon said in an interview with The Epoch Times' program "American Thought Leaders." "Right now, the path that Huawei's taking, as a front for the PLA, is to basically take over the networks and the components throughout the world. If we allow this to happen even for a couple more years, Huawei

is going to control basically the communications systems of the West, and therefore will be able to control the West.”

Under the laws in communist China, companies have to cooperate with Chinese authorities and grant access to data when asked. U.S. legislators have highlighted the fact that Huawei equipment could be used by Beijing to engage in espionage or disrupt communication networks.

“Huawei has a methodology, a high-tech methodology to basically have domination over the world,” Bannon said. In his view, Huawei expanded its business largely under the radar for years. It now operates in more than 170 countries across the globe and serves more than 3 billion people, according to the Huawei website.

The threat of Huawei is spotlighted in a new film, “Claws of the Red Dragon,” which was executive produced by Bannon. The plot of the film was largely inspired by the 2018 arrest of the chief financial officer of Huawei, Meng Wanzhou, who is also the daughter of Huawei’s founder. In the indictments, U.S. prosecutors charged Huawei with stealing trade secrets from T-Mobile and violating sanctions against Iran.

The film calls attention to the intimate relationship between telecom giant Huawei and the CCP and highlights the regime’s hegemonic ambitions.

“People will be shocked when they see it,” Bannon said. The 54-minute film, which will be released in September, is being distributed by New Tang Dynasty Television.

Huawei, Bannon said, isn’t a “fine corporate citizen,” as they would have people believe. Instead, “it’s a branch of the People’s Liberation Army. It’s an intelligence branch.”

Bannon, the former executive chairman of Breitbart, is currently chairman of the Rule of Law Society and co-founder of the Committee on the Present Danger: China. Both organisations focus on the communist China threat to the West, as well as the Chinese regime’s suppression of the Chinese people.

The film, Bannon said, will “cause a lot of controversy. It’s going to cause a lot of conversation. That’s what we want.”

## **Be Wary of WeChat Becoming the Chinese Communist Party’s Weapon in International Unrestricted Warfare**

Epoch Times August 28, 2019 GE BIDONG

When I mentioned the Hong Kong protests to some Chinese people who had lived in the United States for many years, they exclaimed, “Why do you support those ‘Hong Kong separatist thugs’?” When I tried to tell them what’s really happening in Hong Kong is a fight against encroaching CCP control, almost all of them came up with information from WeChat to support their ill-informed point of view.

In recent months, international society was surprised to find that although the purposes of the protest in Hong Kong seem self-evident, mainland Chinese people’s strange reactions to it are caused by the information blockade and so are understandable. However, it’s unbelievable that some Chinese expatriates also support the CCP and deride Hong Kong. Looking closer, we see that these perverse groups have something in common—WeChat. To many overseas Chinese, WeChat is important in their life and is playing the role of the wolf who deceived little red riding hood by shaping their political opinions.

Recently, the FBI and Twitter have become aware of the malicious infiltration of CCP consciousness and taken measures to counteract it. However, what people may be ignoring is a big, powerful weapon that the CCP controls: WeChat.

WeChat has been spreading elaborate lies fabricated by the CCP

According to Tencent, more than 100 million people outside China use WeChat, including almost all overseas Chinese. WeChat users include a large number of Taiwanese and others who do business with mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese. WeChat’s coverage and impact are surprisingly large.

Overseas Chinese are accustomed to using WeChat’s free video calling to contact their family members and business associates in China. At the same time, they release and receive various information from WeChat groups and WeChat Moments. Many of them do not know or are not used to using other social media like Facebook, Twitter, or Line

due to language limitations or just habit. WeChat is the only social media app they use. Over the past few months, I have seen that almost everything about Hong Kong posted on WeChat was completely contrary to the truth. In widely circulated messages, the Hong Kong protests were portrayed as horrific acts of violence by Hong Kong separatists. I asked myself, if I didn't have other sources of information and saw only a flood of fake news, would I also be angry with the Hong Kong protesters? So, I tried countless times to deliver some facts on WeChat, but all were blocked. Some university professors in China sent me various lies that were circulating on WeChat, hoping I would believe them. No one knew the information was fake because I couldn't send any real information.

WeChat blocks all information that conveys the truth, so people are used to receiving only undifferentiated information.

On August 18, at a rally for Hong Kong in Los Angeles, a man shouted abuse at the crowd. He told them that this is the place of Genghis Khan and China. It turned out that he believed that the United States was occupied by the Mongolians, and since Mongolians are also Chinese now, the United States is also owned by the CCP like Taiwan. That's why some people are unscrupulous even though they live in the United States.

Where do they get such disinformation that they believe so firmly? WeChat. They're all devoted users of WeChat.

In fact, the beatings of marchers in New York, the violent communist crowds in Canada and Australia, and the Fujian gang that appeared in Hong Kong are mainly launched through WeChat group connections.

Through WeChat, the CCP easily controls and incites a large number of people who use WeChat as their only source of information.

The Ministry of Public Security in charge of WeChat back-end server

According to information released by Tencent, the number of active people on WeChat in China is one billion. That is almost all of the Chinese people who use the Internet.

In China, all users of WeChat know that they are monitored by the Internet police, and that "keyword blocking" and account blocking, which have no clear rules, exist. In 2014, Chinese news reports mentioned that the China's Ministry of Public Security officially took over WeChat's back-end server, making

WeChat not just a social tool but part of the machinery of the communist regime.

In China, Party newspapers and TV broadcasts have no credibility. After the emergence of the Internet, QQ, Weibo, and BBS became the main platforms for the young generation to release and obtain information. In order to prevent Internet "we media" from impacting the regime, the CCP took a series of control measures, set up an international firewall, expelled Google, and weakened the "we media" publishing platforms such as blogs and microblogs. WeChat was designed and launched under such an environment. It turned people's release of public information online into a "living room-style" release, making it convenient for the CCP's monitoring, screening, and one-sided delivery of information.

The CCP has blocked all international social media and vigorously developed new WeChat functionality, making WeChat the only choice for Chinese people. Moreover, using high mobile phone communication fees, the Party forced people into using WeChat's free communication functions. When WeChat published its commercial payment function, people couldn't get rid of it anymore and it eventually became a daily habit.

Yet, at the back-end of the WeChat server, officers from the CCP Ministry of Public Security collect all user information and monitor almost all Chinese people through the app. WeChat has actually become a tool for the Party to control the people.

A former newspaper editor in China sent me a video from WeChat that said: "Denise Ho Wan-see made anti-communist and Hong Kong Independence remarks at the United Nations. After returning to Hong Kong..." The video was linked to a sexual abuse crime in South Korea a few years ago. This video became the most viewed video on WeChat, which is used for "patriotic" education. Such is the information people have been getting on WeChat for a long time. The person who forwarded me the video is not pro-communist, but he had no way of telling true from false because there are no unbiased information sources. Therefore, when people are incited by lies on WeChat, they have no counteracting input.

WeChat has become the CCP's nuclear weapon in international warfare

Since there are so many people using WeChat as their only means of instant communication,

their business or social contacts need to use WeChat as well. This increases the scope of the CCP monitoring and intelligence collection. When people using WeChat are all over the world, the CCP's Ministry of Public Security in its back-end server can collect massive amounts of intelligence almost effortlessly.

At the same time, the CCP sitting at Tencent headquarters uses WeChat to spread elaborate lies, to cover up the truth, to deceive and incite those who are tied to WeChat, making them ignorant, impulsive, and a destructive force that will attack democratic societies.

WeChat is no longer just an internet social app; it is a weapon of war for CCP internal repression and external attacks. WeChat is what the CCP claims, is an important weapon for unrestricted international warfare. Due to people's reliance on WeChat and its staggering collection of user data, WeChat has become as terrifying as a nuclear bomb.

Should the international community be on high alert about the uses of WeChat? Should something be done before it's too late?

## China's missing million: the search for disappeared Uyghurs

New Statesman, August 28, 2019  
MORGAN MEAKER

China is believed to have detained one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in a dystopian network of "re-education" camps. For relatives in the West, it feels like they disappeared into thin air.

When Aiziheer Ainiwaer talks about his father, Ainiwa Niyazi, he paints him as a comedian and the joker of his friendship group. He describes how the 57-year-old teacher always had the room in stitches with his impersonations of famous pop stars. But at home, the father-of-two would be more serious. "My father constantly used to tell us we should study and be well educated," says Aiziheer. Throughout Aiziheer's childhood, that mantra resulted in regular trips to the local bookshop, where his father would wait while he chose an armful of books.

Ainiwa is one of around 11 million Turkic speaking Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic group living in the troubled Xinjiang province of Western China. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members are encouraged to forgo their

religious beliefs, and although Ainiwa was born a Muslim, "he never practiced... never prayed," Aiziheer says. "He never said anything against the government, he was always very loyal". By the time Ainiwa went missing, he'd been a member of the party for 30 years

But loyalty wasn't enough to spare Ainiwa from China's crackdown on Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. Human rights groups estimate that between one and three million people are being detained right now in a dystopian network of "re-education" camps. In April 2018, Ainiwa became one of them.

China has a long, fraught relationship with Xinjiang's Uyghurs. During the past decade, Uyghurs have reported ongoing human rights abuses and the violent suppression of peaceful protests, while Chinese authorities have linked Uyghur militants to several deadly attacks. Xinjiang has declared independence twice in modern history; once from 1931 to 1934, and again between 1944 and 1949, at the same time the region was absorbed into Communist China. While some Uyghurs are still calling for the return of the independent state of East Turkestan, experts say that there is no single agenda uniting the group; some Uyghurs are happy to integrate into China.

Adrian Zenz, an independent researcher and expert on China's minority policies, says the region's re-education camps are linked to China's anxieties about Uyghur separatism, but they are ultimately about "Beijing's inability to assimilate these Turkic minorities." Recent policies in Xinjiang, which have included banning the Uyghur language and rolling out a far-reaching surveillance programme, suggest Chinese authorities are attempting to strip the Uyghur minority of their religious and cultural freedoms.

Over email, Zenz writes that assimilation has long been a goal of the Chinese state. "Assimilation enables control", he says. "It makes minorities easier to understand and reduces the difference in their perceived identity compared to the Han majority. The Chinese leadership are suspicious of people who are different and speak different languages."

Nobody knows what happens inside these "re-education" facilities, which have been described by Chinese government documents as "transformation through education" centres, and by Uyghur activists as "concentration camps". Human Rights Watch (HRW) says that

detainees are politically indoctrinated and forced to sing patriotic songs and watch propaganda videos. A HRW report from 2018 raised concerns about deaths and abuse in the camps, as well as poor conditions, overcrowding, and indefinite confinement.

Sophie Richardson, HRW's China director, says rights violations in Xinjiang worsened when Chen Quanguo, formerly the party secretary of Tibet, was transferred to the region as the party's secretary of Xinjiang in 2016. Since then, Quanguo has used the "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" as an excuse to systematically repress local Uyghurs. "It's very important to understand there is literally no legal basis for these detentions," Richardson says.

Yet these policies towards minority groups may be more about quashing an ideological competitor than responding to genuine threats of religious extremism. "Organised religions have historically presented a strong ideological alternative to Communism," Zenz says. For the Uyghur diaspora, it feels as if relatives disappear into thin air. When they are detained, contact stops abruptly – details of their detention instead leak back via family friends through China's social network, WeChat. Reasons are never given for why they have been taken, only speculation of when – or if – they will be released.

Aiziheer, who now lives in Belgium with his own children, is haunted by his father Ainiwa's disappearance. "We – the diaspora – are deeply affected by the situation." He is addicted to reading survivor testimonies and news stories about the camps that circulate on Facebook. Over the phone, he says: "I try to imagine how harsh the situation must be for my father. It kills me".

In a press conference reported by the *New York Times* in July, Alken Tuniaz, vice chairman of Xinjiang's government, claimed that "over 90 per cent of the students have returned to society and returned to their families and are living happily." He used the official language to describe the camps, labelling them "education" centres – and those inside "students."

That statement was met with derision among the Uyghur diaspora. "This is a complete lie," Dolkun Isa, President of the World Uyghur Congress which is based in Germany, told me in London. He has seen no evidence that a significant number of people have been let go. "Nothing has changed but because

international pressure is growing, China has been forced to defend their position; to try and hide reality."

In May 2018, Isa's mother, 78-year-old Ayhan Memet, passed away in a camp. He found out three weeks later. "I don't know any details, I just got news that she died. I don't know how many family members I have in the camps, I don't know whether my 90-year-old father is alive or not", he tells me.

In response to Tuniaz's statement, Uyghurs on Twitter began posting about their missing relatives with the hashtag #Provethe90%. One Tweet was written by Arfat Erkin, who sometimes goes by the name of Alfred Uyghur, a 22-year-old student living in the United States. It read: "China show me my parents, my cousin Ilzat and my other relatives. #prove90 % concentration camp detainees r being released as u stated. It's been years since I last heard my parent's voice..."

LinkedIn is also the only major American social media platform not blocked in China because the company has agreed [to censor posts](#) containing delicate material.

Chinese agents often make offers over various channels, including LinkedIn, to bring the prospective recruit to China, sometimes through the guise of a corporate recruiting firm offering to pay them for speaking or consulting engagements or aid in research. From there, agents develop the relationship.

"The Chinese want to build these options with political, academic and business elites," said [Jonas Parellø-Plesner](#), the former Danish Foreign Ministry official who reported the apparent recruiting attempt by the Chinese that began over LinkedIn. "A lot of this thrives in the gray zone or the spectrum between influence-seeking and interference or classical espionage."

People who have just left government are especially vulnerable because they are often looking for new employment, he and other former officials say.

Nicole Leverich, a spokeswoman for LinkedIn, said the company [proactively finds fake accounts](#) to remove and has a team that acts on information from a variety of sources, including government agencies.

"We enforce our policies, which are very clear: The creation of a fake account or fraudulent activity with an intent to mislead or lie to our members is a violation of our terms of service," she said.

## How China Uses LinkedIn to Recruit Spies Abroad

New York Times, August 27, 2019  
Edward Wong

Western intelligence officials say Chinese agents are contacting thousands of foreign citizens using LinkedIn, including former government officials.

WASHINGTON – One former senior foreign policy official in the Obama administration received messages from someone on LinkedIn offering to fly him to China and connect him with “well paid” opportunities.

A former Danish Foreign Ministry official got LinkedIn messages from someone appearing to be a woman at a Chinese headhunting firm wanting to meet in Beijing. Three middle-aged men showed up instead and said they could help the former official gain “great access to the Chinese system” for research.

A former Obama White House official and career diplomat was befriended on LinkedIn by a person who claimed to be a research fellow at the California Institute of Technology, with a profile page showing connections to White House aides and ambassadors. No such fellow exists.

Foreign agents are exploiting social media to try to recruit assets, with LinkedIn as a prime hunting ground, Western counterintelligence officials say. Intelligence agencies in the United States, Britain, Germany and France have issued warnings about foreign agents approaching thousands of users on the site. Chinese spies are the most active, officials say. “We’ve seen China’s intelligence selt was the first time Facebook and Twitter had taken down accounts linked to disinformation from China. Many governments have employed similar playbooks to sow disinformation since Russia used the tactic to great effect in 2015 and 2016.

LinkedIn, owned by Microsoft, is both another vehicle for potential disinformation and, more important, an ideal one for espionage recruitment, American officials say.

That is because many of its 645 million users are seeking employment opportunities, often from strangers. To enhance their prospects, many former government employees advertise that they have security clearances.

“Services doing this on a mass scale,” said William R. Evanina, the director of the National Counterintelligence and Security

Center, a government agency that tracks foreign spying and alerts companies to possible infiltration. “Instead of dispatching spies to the U.S. to recruit a single target, it’s more efficient to sit behind a computer in China and send out friend requests to thousands of targets using fake profiles.”

The use of social media by Chinese government operatives for what American officials and executives call nefarious purposes has drawn heightened scrutiny in recent weeks. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube said they deleted accounts that had spread disinformation about the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. Twitter alone said it removed nearly 1,000 accounts.

It was the first time Facebook and Twitter had taken down accounts linked to disinformation from China. Many governments have employed similar playbooks to sow disinformation since Russia used the tactic to great effect in 2015 and 2016.

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## Arms Racing With China: Land Based Missiles

Epoch Times, August 23, 2019,  
Rick Fischer

An accelerating arms race will determine the contest for strategic primacy between the United States and China. Perceptions of American weakness could tempt China to risk war. At stake is whether future generations benefit from a prevailing liberal democratic order or become enveloped by a spreading illiberal anti-democratic order organised, led, and armed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

One important aspect of the China-U.S. arms race is a growing competition in land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

On July 23, China released its latest Defense White Paper, which re-states long-standing policy rhetoric, “China does not engage in any nuclear arms race with any other country and

keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security." However, People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) modernisation trends point to the possibility that China could seek nuclear "parity" with the United States, or even superiority.

China is deploying one or two new liquid-fueled silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and two to three new solid-fueled and mobile ICBMs. It also may be building mobile solid-fueled space launch vehicles (SLVs) as a "reserve" ICBM production capability.

On Aug. 2, satellite imagery released for the Chinese Weibo web page showed that eighteen new DF-41 ICBMs had for the first time surfaced near Beijing as staging for the October 1 70th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Appearance in this military parade serves as informal confirmation that the DF-41 has entered the arsenal of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF). The PLA is also developing a railroad-based version of the DF-41 which may be hidden underground.

This 80 ton ICBM is carried by a 16-wheel transporter-erector-launcher (TEL), making it capable of off-road launch missions. It has an estimated range of 14,000 kilometers and may be able to carry up to ten multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) nuclear warheads.

Also revealed in the Aug. 2 imagery were 18 of the new DF-31AG, the latest version of the DF-31 ICBM, first seen in 1999 during the 50th Anniversary PRC parade. It is also carried by a new off-road capable TEL, and Chinese sources suggest it may carry up to three warheads, a multiplier yet to be confirmed.

In January 2017, the PLA tested a 10-warhead version of the silo-based and liquid-fueled DF-5 ICBM which first flew in 1971. It is not known whether the DF-5C has entered service, but the three-warhead armed DF-5B is in PLARF service.

Rejecting Western notions of military transparency, the PLA has never revealed numbers for its missile forces, but in the 2019 issue of the Pentagon's annual "China Military Power" report, the PLA is credited with having "90" ICBMs. If 18 ICBMs, as seen gathering for the upcoming parade, constitutes a "Brigade," or the basic missile unit, then 90 ICBMs might indicate the PLARF has five ICBM Brigades.

However, an informed Chinese blogger who posts useful military information on the popular Meiyet website, suggested on Aug. 11 that the PLARF was going to be increasing the size of a missile Brigade to 60 missiles. This at least raises the possibility that the PLARF may increase its land-based ICBMs to 300. Another 120 ICBMs might be added with one Brigade each of the DF-5C and rail-mobile DF-41.

There also is the issue of potential "reserve" ICBM production capacity, as China's two main military missile companies are marketing four new mobile, solid-fueled space launch vehicles that could easily be converted into mobile ICBMs.

A force of 300 PLARF ICBMs could potentially field about 1,000 warheads. Adding a Brigade of DF-5C and rail-mobile DF-41 ICBMs could raise the total to over 2,000 warheads. This does not include additional warheads on JL-3 submarine-launched ballistic missiles expected to arm the new Type 096 ballistic missile submarine, nor cruise missiles that may be carried by an intercontinental range stealth bomber expected by 2025.

For its part, following the 2005 retirement of 50 silo-based LGM-118 Peacekeeper 96-ton ICBMs capable of carrying up to 11 warheads, the U.S. Air Force has relied on a force of LGM-30G Minuteman-III silo-based ICBMs. The force of 550 missiles with three warheads each, first deployed in the early 1970s, has been reduced to a force of 400 with one warhead, in order to comply with 2011 New Start Treaty with Russia. These missiles are spread over 450 fixed silos.

One of the U.S. Air Force's most important modernisation programs is to replace the Minuteman-III, sustained by repeated life-extension and upgrade programs, with a new ICBM called the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD). Research and development of this system must be funded in the next year, or it will not be ready to deploy by the end of the 2020s, when Minuteman-III becomes prohibitively expensive to maintain.

But the GBSD is opposed by some in Congress and in academia, who assert that the United States may still be able to deter its nuclear-armed enemies by moving from a "triad" nuclear delivery systems to a "dyad" of just submarine launched ballistic missiles and bombers.

However, eliminating ICBMs would only increase America's vulnerability to preemptive nuclear attacks. As nuclear ballistic missile

submarines and bombers are concentrated in only a few bases, there would be a greater temptation for our enemies to launch a first strike. But taking out the larger number of ICBM silos cannot be assured, so the adversaries are more likely to be deterred. Russia maintains a nuclear triad, and by the mid-2020s China will have a triad with potentially, a much larger number of ICBMs. America requires an effective triad with a new ICBM to deter Russia, China, and fast-arming nuclear rogues such as North Korea.

### **China plans to use information to 'dominate in the future,' says defense intelligence chief**

www.washingtonexaminer.com, August 20, 2019,  
Russ Read

China's government plans to leverage the growing data industry and cutting-edge technologies as part of its strategy to get an edge on its competitors, according to the Department of Defense's intelligence chief.

The data industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, set to reach \$100 billion by 2020, and China is laser-focused on using it to its advantage when competing with the U.S., according to Army Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

"[I]nformation is how China plans to dominate in the future. That is their strategy," Ashley said during a keynote address at a conference in Tampa, Florida, on Monday.

"That is their strategy to get behind decision advantage."

Decision advantage is when intelligence is used to help leaders make informed decisions. Intelligence agencies are looking for ways to leverage computing power and the massive amounts of data produced around the world to help gain an advantage on their adversaries. Speed is key to the process, which is why artificial intelligence and super-fast quantum computers are crucial investments for countries that want an edge.

China acknowledged the role these technologies will play in a military context in a white paper published last month, titled *China's National Defense in the New Era*. The paper offers a rare glimpse into

China's military strategy, with technology being touched on at length.

"War is evolving in form towards informationized warfare, and intelligent warfare is on the horizon," the paper read.

Cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things are identified as a key areas that are being increasingly adopted for military use. Technological advancements are a central focus of Chinese President Xi Jinping's goal of making China a world leader in artificial intelligence and a world-class military capable of taking on the U.S. by 2035.

Some of these new technologies are already being used within China. The Communist Party is well on its way toward developing a nationwide social credit system, which aims to keep tabs on the actions each of its more than 1.3 billion citizens. Chinese security officials are also using artificial intelligence and big data to control ethnic minorities, specifically Muslim Uighurs in western China who are living in what has been described as a high-tech modern police state. The People's Liberation Army is applying similar technologies to weapons, increasingly taking the human out.

"Chinese officials generally expect drones and military robotics to feature ever more extensive AI and autonomous capabilities in the future. Chinese weapons manufacturers already are selling armed drones with significant amounts of combat autonomy," a report by the Center for a New American Security published in February read.

To confront the challenges posed by China, Ashley said it is crucial for the U.S. to be able to solve problems with speed and at scale. He pointed to interoperability across the defense community as a major challenge toward this goal and emphasised the responsibility defense officials have in today's environment.

"[I]n great power competition, you gotta bring your 'A' game on day 1, because if you don't, you may not get a day 2," he said.

Chinese officials appear to have similar concerns about falling behind technologically, according to the white paper.

"China's military security is confronted by risks from technology surprise and growing technological technological generation gap," the paper read. "Greater efforts have to be invested in military modernisation to meet national security demands."

## How China's Military Is Becoming Stronger

nationalinterest.org August 19, 2019 Elsa Kania

### Continued Evolution of PRC "Core" Interests

The PRC claims that its policy for national defense is inherently defensive. However, the scope and scale of what the PLA may be called upon to defend is expanding, motivated by the "fundamental goal" of "resolutely safeguarding China's "sovereignty, security, and development interests." This phrasing has replaced, and is tantamount to, earlier assertions of China's "core interests" (核心利益, *hexin liyi*). There have been changes and a degree of consistency in the framing of these interests over time. [2] However, the characterisation of the tasks of the Chinese military and objectives of Chinese defense policy have evolved slightly between the 2015 and 2019 NDWPs. [3] In particular, the PRC's commitment to safeguarding "national sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security" is expanding.

"China's National Defense in the New Era" declares, "The South China Sea islands and Diaoyu Islands are inalienable parts of the Chinese territory." Although the militarisation of islands in the South China Sea has provoked serious concerns in the region, the PRC's apparent confidence in its approach appears to have only increased. In 2015, "China's Military Strategy" had highlighted the importance of "safeguard[ing] maritime rights," calling for the PLA to "strike a balance between rights protection and stability maintenance." By contrast, this 2019 NDWP lacks that emphasis on stability, and instead provides a direct defense of PRC actions: "China exercises its national sovereignty to build infrastructure and deploy necessary defensive capabilities on the islands and reefs in the South China Sea, and to conduct patrols in the waters of Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea." The justification of such measures as defensive reflects the flexible concept of defense that animates China's strategy of active defense, which involves an offensive approach at the operational level.

China's national interests are continuing to expand into new domains and territories. The concern with threats and security interests in new domains, such as space and cyberspace, has been a consistent feature across the 2011,

2013, 2015, and now 2019 NDWPs. However, this latest document is more explicit in describing these as interests to be secured in China's national defense, including not only outer space and cyberspace, but also the "electromagnetic space." The PRC intends not only to improve its situational awareness in space but also to "enhance the capacity to safely enter, exit and openly use outer space." The PRC's future "use" (利用, *liyong*) of outer space could involve not only leveraging this domain for military purposes but also pursuing the exploitation of resources. At the same time, China's attention to cyber security remains consistent with the concentration on cyber sovereignty, which requires reinforcing "national cyber border defense." The emphasis on the electromagnetic space again highlights the spectrum as another domain for PRC interests.

China has continued to concentrate on safeguarding its "overseas interests," which are expanding worldwide. This imperative has been relatively consistent across the past couple of NDWPs, but the language in this document indicates its heightened importance. In particular, China's armed forces intend to "address deficiencies in overseas operations and support," including "build[ing] far seas forces" and "develop[ing] overseas logistical facilities," such as the base in Djibouti and a potential base in Cambodia, which may be the first such bases of a number to come (China Brief, March 22). Inherently, China's national defense requires supporting "the sustainable development of the country." At a time when growth is slowing and depending ever more directly upon access to markets and resources worldwide, China's future growth is directly linked to this global outlook. This concern justifies the call for the PLA to contribute to "global security goods," which may see continued internationalisation of China's military power in ways that could start to challenge the United States.

### China's Response to Global Military Competition

"China's National Defense in the New Era" reflects the PRC response to the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy, which centered on sharpening the U.S. military's competitive advantage. [4] American initiatives have evidently provoked a powerful response in the PLA, spurring on Chinese defense innovation (China Brief, October 4, 2016). As a result, the

PLA has been greatly concerned with the risks of “technology surprise attacks” (技术突袭, *jishu tuji*), wary of a “growing technological generation gap” that could emerge as a result of this competition. By its own assessment, the PLA “still lags far behind the world’s leading militaries,” and a failure to adapt could place the PLA in a position of dangerous disadvantage. This unfavourable situation necessitates innovation as a military, and indeed strategic, imperative.

The PLA is confronting the challenge and opportunity of the “Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA, 军事革命, *junshi geming*)” believed to be currently underway. This 2019 NDWP builds upon notable themes from the 2015 edition, which stated that the global RMA was “proceeding to a new stage.” In particular, those trends were assessed to involve the development of weaponry and equipment characterised as “long-range precision, intelligent, stealthy and unmanned.” In the “new era” described in the 2019 edition, China is particularly concerned with advances in cutting-edge technologies with promising applications in the military domain, especially artificial intelligence (AI), quantum information, big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things. As a result of these trends, the form (形态, *xingtai*) of warfare “is accelerating in its evolution towards informatized warfare, and intelligentized (智能化, *zhinenghua*) warfare is on the horizon.” [5]

The PLA’s recent reforms have introduced unprecedented transformation into a force once considered resistant to change. However, the PLA continues to confront considerable challenges as a result of the disparities that persist even within the force. Chinese military leaders must “promote the integrated development of mechanisation and informatization and accelerate the development of military intelligentization.” [6] The PLA today must undertake all three processes simultaneously, which presents distinct difficulties and potential chances to leapfrog in its development. Notably, this innovation is reportedly extending to the development of new military theories that may be formalised eventually into new “doctrine” or operational regulations (作战条令, *zuozhan tiaoling*) (The Diplomat, June 6, 2017). However, the PLA’s approach to the

requisite technical and conceptual challenges is still taking shape.

New Paradigms of Chinese Military Power

Today, the PLA is changing its paradigm for military power: the PLA is “striving to transform from a quantity-and-scale model to that of quality and efficiency, as well as from being personnel-intensive to one that is S&T-intensive.” This objective has involved a significant downsizing of personnel, with 300,000 demobilised on the course of these reforms, and increased investment in human capital. At the same time, the PLA’s approach to military research has been restructured: the CMC Steering Commission on Military Scientific Research has been established, and a transformed Academy of Military Science (China Brief, January 18) has been officially designated to lead the military scientific research enterprise. Guided by Lieutenant General Yang Xuejun (杨学军)—the former commandant of the PLA’s National University of Defense Technology, known for his expertise in artificial intelligence and supercomputing—AMS appears to be undertaking rapid recruitment of the talent required to promote defense innovation in emerging technologies. The “new” AMS is also leading a new initiative to facilitate the integration of theory and technology (理技融合, *lijì ronghé*), which could enable the innovative thinking required to realize the potential of emerging capabilities (Xinhua, February 14).

The PLA is also improving and modernising its system for weaponry and equipment. The PLA, once described as the world’s largest military museum, is phasing out older equipment while working towards introducing a new “system of systems” (体系, *tixi*) composed of high-tech weapons, such as Type 15 tanks, type 052D destroyers, J-20 fighters, and DF-26 intermediate and long-range ballistic missiles. The PLA’s next-generation capabilities could prove to be more sophisticated, from higher levels of autonomy to hypersonics and a range of “new concept” systems, such as directed energy weapons. Whereas prior armaments development had been characterised by a lack of jointness, current initiatives mentioned in the 2019 NDWP are intended to improve capabilities by “coordinating the efforts of all services and arms,” while “promoting the balanced development of main battle equipment, information systems, and support

equipment" in order to increase "standardisation, serial development and interoperability."

The PLA's apparent enthusiasm for technology and innovation can appear incongruous when juxtaposed against a concurrent attachment to tradition. For instance, Mao Zedong's concept of "people's warfare" (人民战争, renmin zhanzheng) was described in "China's Military Strategy" as a "magic weapon" (法宝, fabao) for the PLA. Even as China's national defense enters this "new era," the espoused dedication to "give full play to the overall power of the people's war[fare]" is again reiterated with calls for "innovating in its strategies, tactics and measures." This is not merely rhetorical, but rather reflects a core concept: "China's national defense is the responsibility of all Chinese people," as the 2019 NDWP declares. This approach may appear to be anachronistic in an age of informatized warfare, yet arguably possesses enduring relevance, from cyber defense to a whole-of-nation approach to national defense mobilisation. [7] The juxtaposition of low-tech concepts and options with high-tech ambitions can be strikingly incongruous. For example, the much-derided discussion of the PLA's reintroduction of bugles in the 2019 NDWP can also be characterised as a measure with practical relevance, including to resolving the challenges of command and communications in a highly denied environment (China Military Online, September 12, 2018). China's armed forces continue to attempt to reconcile such apparent contradictions.

#### PLA Reforms in Progress

The 2019 NDWP introduces certain updates regarding force structure that are worth highlighting. The PLA has apparently succeeded in overcoming considerable bureaucratic impediments to adjust its force structure—away from the prior dominance of the Army to expand the Navy and Rocket Force—while increasing investments in "new types of combat forces." This adjustment and rebalancing of China's armed forces has shifted resources to new priorities: there is a new focus on special operations, "all-dimensional offense and defense," amphibious operations, far seas protection and "strategic projection," with the objective to "make the force composition complete, combined, multi-functional and flexible."

As a significant innovation in force structure, the PLA Strategic Support Force (PLASSF) is a unique outcome of the reforms. The PLASSF has consolidated capabilities for space, cyber, and electronic warfare, contributing to Chinese capabilities to "fight and win wars in the information age." At the same time, its supporting function is officially described as including battlefield environmental protection, information and communication assurance, and information security protection, as well as new technology testing. The PLASSF is called upon to "accelerate the integrated development of new-type combat forces," which may allude to recognition of potential synergies in capabilities across these domains. In a notable indicator of progress, the PLASSF is "actively integrated into the joint operations system, and solidly carrying out new-type domains confrontation drills and emergency response training." For instance, the PLASSF has engaged in exercises in which it acted as a "blue force" through engaging in electronic countermeasures.

Today, the PLA's capabilities for "strategic deterrence" (战略威慑, zhanlue weishe) thus extend beyond the PLARF to emerging capabilities in new domains. In particular, the new strategic capabilities for space and cyber warfare have been consolidated through the PLASSF. [8] The PLA Air Force was described in 2015 as endeavouring to "build an air-space defense force structure that can meet the requirements of informationized operations." However, this discussion of "air-space defense" is not included in the 2019 NDWP, potentially reflecting organisational decisions that have resulted in the space mission being primarily entrusted to the PLASSF. [9] This shift thus appears to reinforce the assessment that the PLASSF is more likely to possess responsibility for the PLA's space mission, though there is a possibility that the PLAAF and/or PLARF may retain some role in kinetic counter space capabilities.

The PRC's capabilities for and strategic thinking on deterrence are evolving. The subtle changes in phrasing across these NDWPs convey notable nuances regarding the role of its missile forces. In 2015, the role of the former Second Artillery was described as involving "strategic deterrence and nuclear counterattack," whereas in 2019, the PLARF was characterised as responsible for "nuclear deterrence and nuclear counterattack." The fact that the PLARF is not described as the

service with the sole role in strategic deterrence further confirms the shift in the PLA's nuclear posture: from a monad to a triad, in which the PLA Navy and Air Force are also called upon to serve as newly "strategic" services in their own right. Also new to this defense white paper, the PLARF is called upon to "enhanc[e] strategic counter-balance capability" (增强战略制衡能力, *zengqiang zhanlue zhiheng nengli*). The meaning of this phrasing is not clearly defined, but it could be an allusion to the potential of new capabilities, such as hypersonics, intended to maintain deterrence in the face of missile defense. As the PLA continues to improve "preparations for military struggle," its capability to "fight and win" future wars will depend upon the realism and sophistication of its training. This "actual combat" (实战, *shizhan*) training appears to be improving across the services. [10] For instance, the PLA Navy has started to concentrate on training in the far seas, reportedly deploying its new aircraft carrier task group for its initial "far seas combat exercise" in the West Pacific. The PLAN has also introduced "live force-on-force exercises codenamed "Mobility" (机动, *jidong*). Significantly, the introduction of the theater commands (战区, *zhanqu*) provides a critical mechanism to enable joint operations. This 2019 NDWP reveals that the theater commands have "strengthened their leading role in joint training and organised serial joint exercises codenamed the East, the South, the West, the North and the Central, to improve joint combat capabilities." The existence of these exercises had not been previously disclosed, and their announcement is noteworthy as a new mechanism for improving joint combat capabilities. Today's PLA is very different from that of yesteryear. Chinese military power has increased dramatically over the past several decades, consistently surpassing the estimates of most analysts. The PLA is adapting to the challenges of military rivalry among great powers and pursuing new mechanisms for victory in future warfare. Of course, the PLA continues to confront numerous weaknesses and significant shortcomings—lagging behind the U.S. military, which is seen as the target of and teacher for these efforts. The apparent ambitions for the PLA to become truly "world-class" as a force by mid-century should not be dismissed. The gestures towards transparency,

including new details on China's defense budget, which reached \$151.6 billion as of 2017, should be welcomed, but hardly resolve concerns about PRC intentions and growing capabilities. Meanwhile, the PLA remains more opaque about its actual military strategic guidelines and operational regulations, which are not, and are unlikely to be, publicly disclosed. [11] However, it is clear that China is well on its way to creating a military commensurate with its global standing and interests in this "new era." This latest NDWP thus provides one more piece of the puzzle of reckoning with the rise of China's military power.

#### Notes

[1] See this volume that provides significant assessments of major elements of the reforms: Phillip Saunders et al. (ed.), *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms* (National Defense University Press, 2019). <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Publications/Books/Chairman-Xi-Remakes-the-PLA/>.

[2] See these earlier assessments of the evolution and characterisation of China's "core interest" (核心利益) over time: Caitlin Campbell, Ethan Meick, Kimberly Hsu, and Craig Murray, "China's 'Core Interests' and the East China Sea," *US-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, 2013. Michael D. Swaine, "China's Assertive Behavior: Part One: On 'Core Interests,'" *China Leadership Monitor* 34, no. 22 (2011): 1-25.

[3] For instance, the only mention of the South China Sea in the "China's Military Strategy" included the statement: "Some external countries are also busy meddling in South China Sea affairs; a tiny few maintain constant close-in air and sea surveillance and reconnaissance against China." The question of whether the South China Sea was considered a 'core interest' was previously debated and debatable, but "China's National Defense in the New Era" seems to settle that issue more conclusively.

[4] Department of Defense, "Summary of the National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Advantage," <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

[5] Potentially, the PLA's military strategic guidelines may be revised someday to reflect

its focus on preparing to fight and win future “intelligentized” wars.

[6] For more context on the Chinese military’s approach to intelligentization, see: Elsa B. Kania, “Chinese Military Innovation in Artificial Intelligence,” Testimony to U.S.-China Economic and Security June 7, 2019, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/June-7-Hearing\\_Panel-1...](https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/June-7-Hearing_Panel-1...)

[7] For a more detailed assessment of China’s approach to national defense mobilization, see: Elsa B. Kania, “Testimony before the National Commission on Service’s Hearing on “Future Mobilisation Needs of the Nation,”” April 24, 2019, [https://www.inspire2serve.gov/\\_api/files/200](https://www.inspire2serve.gov/_api/files/200).

[8] For initial assessments of the PLA Strategic Support Force, see: John Costello and Joe McReynolds, *China’s Strategic Support Force: A Force for a New Era*, National Defense University Press, 2018; Elsa B. Kania and John K. Costello, “The Strategic Support Force and the Future of Chinese Information Operations,” *The Cyber Defense Review* 3, no. 1 (2018): pp. 105-122.

[9] As a potential indicator of inter-service rivalry or dynamics, it may be notable that the PLASSF’s new commander, Lt. Gen. Li Fengbiao (李凤彪) is a career PLAAF officer who formerly commanded the PLAAF Airborne Corps. Potentially, his selection is an indication that the PLASSF is becoming more joint as an organisation. For context and confirmation of this change, see: “CCTV screen leakage of personnel adjustment” [央视画面泄密人事调整], Duowei, May 15, 2019, <http://news.dwnews.com/china/news/2019-05-15/60133898.html>. For the original video of footage from the May 2019 conference, see: “Xi Jinping at the All-Nation Public Security Work Conference Emphasised” [习近平在全国公安工作会议上强调], CCTV, May 8, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ7ytxpinT4&feature=youtu.be&t=507>.

[10] As for other services, the PLA Army has continued such major exercises as “Stride” (跨越) and “Firepower” (火力), the PLA Air Force has continued to engage in regular system-vs.-system exercises, such as “Red Sword” (红剑), and the PLA Rocket Force has focused on “force-on-force evaluation-oriented training”

while continuing major exercises, such as “Heavenly Sword” (天剑).

[11] For a much more extensive discussion of the evolution of China’s military strategy over time, see: M. Taylor Fravel, *Active Defense: China’s Military Strategy Since 1949*, Princeton University Press, 2019.

## China's military is stronger than ever, so why does it still need the humble yak?

abc.net.au August 19, 2019 Alan Weedon

China's meteoric economic rise has benefitted many pillars of the Chinese state, but one area that has arguably reaped the most benefits has been its military, officially known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Key points: In 2018, China invested some \$US239.2 billion (\$354 billion) in its military – a sum greater than the gross domestic products (GDPs) of entire countries such as New Zealand, Greece or Portugal in the same year – according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Today, this means the PLA is swiftly catching up to the technological prowess of Washington and Moscow, and Global Firepower estimated the Chinese military draws upon about 2.18 million active personnel.

In January, Beijing reached a milestone with the testing of an electromagnetic railgun – a ship-mounted gun that can fire a projectile at speeds of up to 2.5 kilometres per second. But within China's rapidly-developing military there remains one tried and tested piece of equipment – the humble yak.

- Yaks are native to China's far-western borders and survive in harsh conditions
- The terrain is too difficult for horses and motorised vehicles to traverse
- China's historical continental power may be one reason for continued yak use

Military analysis website Global Firepower listed the PLA – including the army, navy, and air force – as the world's third most powerful military in 2019, only behind the United States and Russia.

The mountain-trotting animal is a staple of the Himalayan regions of Pakistan, India, Nepal,

and China – they can also be found in remote parts of Siberia and Mongolia.

For most modern forms of transport, these areas are simply impenetrable.

The animals are related to cattle, and unlike horses, they have the ability to traverse the region's snow-capped mountains, glacial rapids and alkaline soils at high altitudes.

In July, the PLA Daily on Weibo wrote about a yak mission that involved a patrol across a dam that sat 5,000 metres above sea level.

A yak's ability to perform within these climes is down to a centuries-long evolutionary process that has adapted their respiratory systems, outer coats, and bodies to these incredibly punishing environments.

Their blood takes in more oxygen than their other bovine siblings and they usually don't sweat, according to research from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Where are they stationed?



PHOTO: (Weibo: PLA Daily)

China's Himalayan borders prove too difficult for conventional motorised transport.

China's far western regions of Tibet and Xinjiang are home to the yak's habitat, which extends to Russia and Kazakhstan's borders in the north; Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan's borders in the west; and Nepal, Bhutan and India's in the south.

Tibet and Xinjiang both came under the Communist Party's rule after the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, and both are home to communities that Beijing considers a threat to the One China policy.

In recent years, Beijing's fears of these threats have led to an estimated 1 million ethnic Uyghurs – a Muslim-majority Turkic-speaking ethnic group – being allegedly interned in mass detention camps in Xinjiang.

Next door in Tibet, Beijing has repeatedly suppressed efforts to grant the majority-Buddhist region greater political and cultural autonomy.

Most recently, China's border with India and Pakistan has come under the spotlight, following New Delhi's dissolution of the political autonomy of Indian-administered Kashmir – a Muslim-majority disputed region home to competing territorial claims from India, Pakistan and China.

Why does China still bother with yaks?

Considering how remote China's far-flung mountainous borders are, you'd be forgiven for wondering why the PLA bothers with its yak unit, especially given how seemingly harsh the area is to begin with.

For Professor James Goldrick, a former Royal Australian Navy commander and defence strategy expert at the University of New South Wales Canberra, Chinese military history may be able to offer one suggestion.

"China was historically the ultimate continental power," Professor Goldrick said.

He explained that for most of Chinese history, maritime protection was not a priority as its economy was "largely self-sufficient and self-sustaining", which meant that its land borders took precedence.

It was only in the mid-19th century, Professor Goldrick said, where this strategy unravelled, leading to a string of military losses against imperial Western powers and Japan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has pointed to this self-described century of shame (or humiliation) during a 2017 address to the nation and has identified the PLA's growth as one way to restore China's place as a global power.

Whether yaks will play a part in the PLA's continued rise remains to be seen, but for the time being, the animal will continue to take the PLA where no horse has gone before.

## Persecution and Sexual Abuse of Tibetan Buddhist Nuns by the CCP

bitterwinter.org August 19, 2019

Tashi Choedon

The Assault on Yachen Gar's Nuns

The recent news of the CCP's detention of around 3,500 Tibetan monks and nuns from the Yachen Gar Buddhist Centre, currently situated in Palyul County, Kardze Prefecture, Sichuan Province, unveils another dimension to China's ongoing persecution of minority groups such as Tibetans and Uyghurs. Looking

back at the history of CCP oppression, a similar pattern of inflicting abuse and torture upon the Tibetans has been a pervasive feature of China's policy in Tibet. The CCP's effort to "sinicize" Tibetan religion and culture through indoctrination programmes continues. The detained monks and nuns are forced to become "patriotic" towards China in internment camp, and any hint of dissent or resistance would lead them to undergo severe torture and abuse.

Taking stock of China's human rights abuses of Tibetan people inside Tibet, we can see that detainees have been overwhelmingly monks and nuns. And one of the most striking features of such repression is the gender-based violence perpetrated against Tibetan nuns. The CCP's heavy crackdown on dissent and resistance is not unknown. However, amidst such oppressive milieu, what specific kinds of violence are exclusive to Tibetan nuns? How their overlapping identities of gender, ethnicity and religious beliefs render them doubly marginalised?

#### Subverting Buddhism Through Arbitrary Detention of Tibetan Monks and Nuns

Yachen Gar monastery, like Larung Gar, is a non-political sphere, a hub of monastic education, academic learning and meditation training since it was founded in 1985 by Achuk Rinpoche. The institute, as envisioned by its founder, is one of the places dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist culture after the Cultural Revolution. It has been home to an estimated 10,000 nuns and monks belonging to different parts of Tibet. It is one of the largest monasteries of nuns in the world.

Hence, it has also been called the "city of nuns." After the eviction of Tibetans and subsequent demolition of Larung Gar, the number of residents at Yachen Gar has increased.

However, Yachen Gar Centre has been a topic of contention for the Chinese authorities, due to the expansion of Tibetan Buddhist influence that is attracting people from various parts of the world. The Jiang Zemin led-Communist Party administration in 2001 had partly carried out the demolition of many dwelling places for nuns and monks. In 2017, the Chinese authorities razed "over a hundred dwellings of nuns" after their forced eviction from the Centre. The site was banned to foreign visitors for two years. And now, with the Xi Jinping's administration, the state has reasserted its policy to incorporate "religions"

into Chinese "socialist" characteristics, as evidenced from the speech Xi made in April 2016 at the National Religious Conference, in which he emphasised the need of actively guiding "the adaptation of religions to socialist society, an important task in supporting China's religions' persistence in the direction of sinicization."

But in reality, Xi Jinping's policy is insidiously reducing Tibetan Buddhism within the framework of a monolithic Chinese state discourse. It is a plot to reduce the influence of Tibetan Buddhism and strengthen and uphold the CCP's monopoly of nationalism. Essentially, it is form of persecution of Tibetan monks and nuns, who are already in the periphery of the Chinese state apparatus. And Tibetans nuns and monks at Yachen Gar, who can be naturally seen as the guardians of Tibetan Buddhism, pose a threat to the state's policy of sinicization.

A series of evictions in May 2019 has seen 3,500 people being forcibly expelled and now, as of July 16, the number has increased to 7,100, with the expulsion of another 3,600 monks and nuns from the Yachen Buddhist Centre. Those expelled are then held in detention centres for two to three months.

#### Psychological and Sexual Violence on the Nuns

The detained nuns are made to disrobe and wear military uniforms, and nuns who are formerly from Jomda County are being made to routinely sing patriotic "Red Songs" praising the CCP. These nuns are also encouraged to watch "propaganda war films": movies that glorified Chinese victories over Japan. When some of the nuns were found to have "broken down" and "wept," they were severely beaten for their "alleged show of disloyalty."

In the detention centres, nuns are subjected to sexual violence. A testimony by a monk who spent four months in the detention centre situated in Sog County, Nagchu Prefecture, Tibetan Autonomous Region, confirms such reports of sexual violence. According to a report published by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, citing a Tibetan monk, the nuns were forced to pay from their own pocket for their military uniforms. The report also states that monks and nuns were sent to prison without any due process, and without having committed any crime.

One of the most horrific aspect of the CCP's human rights abuses is the gender-based

violence nuns are subjected to in the detention centres. The monk witnessed Chinese officers sexually assaulting nuns by “fondling the breasts” of the nuns who fainted during military training in prison camps. There have been many cases of Tibetan Buddhist nuns being sexually assaulted, as told by the same monk. Chinese party cadres were accused of “groping nuns’ bodies” and “lying in the nuns’ bedroom pressing unconscious nuns underneath.”

These nuns, who are deprived of their right to pursue their monastic education, are also routinely subjected to physical and sexual violence. It is unlikely that nuns of Yachen Gar will be exempted from similar gender-based violence by the CCP authorities, as these nuns are at present the targets of Xi’s most repressive political measures. It also becomes extremely difficult for these nuns to seek legal recourse, when the CCP law enforcement officers themselves are complicit in perpetrating state-sanctioned and gendered violence against them. Indeed, the state itself is the symbol of unbridled power and discriminatory policies that silences the voices of Tibetans nuns.

Colonial studies argue that the narrative of the colonisers’ subjugation of the colonised people is commonly disguised as liberation and bringing modernity to primitives. This rhetoric is often used in justifying mass murder and violence. The sexual abuse of the Tibetan Buddhist nuns by the CCP officers can be seen as the CCP’s (atheistic) attempt to subvert Buddhism by going against the set principles of its philosophy, and to impose Chinese hegemony in all spheres of Tibetan life. There are many recorded cases of forcing nuns and monks to get married, forcing them to carry faeces over *thangka*, raping nuns with cattle prods in prisons, and sexually assaulting them in detention centres. The female nuns’ bodies have thus become a tool to advance the CCP’s political ambitions.

CCP tactics of rounding up Tibetans monks and nuns in Tibet strikes a parallel ring to the mass detention of another “minority group,” i.e. Uyghur Muslims in East Turkestan (the name Uyghurs give to what Chinese call Xinjiang). Just as Tibetan women, Uyghur women have been subjected to harsh policy with the launch of “Project Beauty” that ban their veils so that they would “look modern.” Refusal is followed by arbitrary detention, and extreme measures to “re-educate” them on “socialist” values in

what the CCP calls transformation through education camps.

#### Intersectionality and Oppression

Kimberle Crenshaw proposed a theory of intersectionality to describe the experiences of black women in the US, who face multiple forms of oppression that “intersect” based on their gender and racial identities. Similarly, in the context of Tibetan women under CCP rule, their ethnic and gender identities, i.e., being Tibetan and women, make them vulnerable to such multiple and converging forms of discrimination. Tibetans, particularly (in this case) nuns, can be doubly marginalised because of the intersecting inequalities meted out to their bodies, religious belief and ethnicity. Their ethnicity and gender, in an increasingly Han-centric environment, restrict their social mobility as they are usually under heightened state-surveillance that restricts their possibility to travel beyond their home county. Monks and nuns are not allowed to go back to their monasteries and should regularly report to the local authorities of their respective hometowns.

One wonders about the fate of monks and nuns of Yachen Gar after their eviction. Once they are forced to disrobe and are not allowed to continue their monastic pursuits, how can they fulfil their aspirations of pursuing the life they want? Since most of these monks and nuns will not have any laypersons’ skills to sustain themselves, how will they navigate through life or earn a livelihood? What about their basic human dignity? Or their freedom? How will they recover from the physical and mental violence and agony they have endured in the detention camps, if they are not allowed access to the healthcare system?

### **View: India must respond to Chinese provocation**

economictimes.indiatimes.com August 19, 2019,  
Kanwal Sibal (former Foreign Secretary GoI)

China took the lead to internationalise the Kashmir issue in league with Pakistan by seeking the intervention of the UN Security Council on India’s move to revise its internal constitutional status.

Unlike China’s opaque political functioning and decision-making processes, national media control, suppression of dissent and draconian

internal security laws, the change in J&K's constitutional status was done through an open political process – a publicly aired parliamentary debate and voting.

Opponents in the media, academic and civil society circles have vociferously questioned the government's decision and it has been challenged in the Supreme Court.

China approached the Security Council with soiled hands. It violated the status quo in J&K and the UN resolutions that it invoked by annexing a part of the state in 1963, occupying Aksai Chin after the UN resolutions and constructing the Karakoram highway through the territory which it calls "disputed", and more blatantly still through the CPEC project that makes its presence permanent in PoK.

Pakistan changed the status quo in PoJ&K by integrating Gilgit-Baltistan with Pakistan in 2009, with a view to giving itself and China a freer hand to develop Chinese link through PoJ&K to Gwadar. Unlike India, Pakistan has changed the demography of PoJ&K by allowing non-Kashmiris to settle there, besides allowing the presence of China's military and civilian personnel close to India's border.

China has also changed the demography of Tibet and Sinkiang by settling Hans in large numbers, imposing the Chinese language and grossly interfering in their Buddhist and Islamic practices

China's hypocrisy is unabashed when its PR to the UN speaks of human rights violations of Kashmiris.

China has incarcerated a million Uighurs in "re-education" camps and keeps the Tibetans suppressed under military jackboots, against which the non-violent Tibetans have no choice but to self-immolate.

If India keeps a large number of troops in J&K it is because both Pakistan and China have territorial claims on the state, and also because of the terrorist onslaught on J&K by Pakistan and China's protection of its "all-weather friend" against mounting international pressure to curb its jihadi links. Why has China militarised Tibet? India has accepted Chinese sovereignty over Tibet and has no territorial claims on it, and neither the Tibetans nor the Indians are engaged in terrorist activities against the Chinese occupying forces.

China claims the changes in J&K constitutional status, especially in Ladakh, affect its sovereignty. If China claims J&K's status is undecided and it is an internationally

recognised dispute, it applies equally to Aksai Chin as part of Ladakh. How can China protest as its own claim over Aksai Chin is "unilateral"?

India must respond to China's grave provocation in tabling the J&K issue at the UNSC after half a century despite external affairs minister S Jaishankar clarifying India's position cogently and persuasively in Beijing. China's UN posturing is encouraging Pakistan, terrorist organisations in Pakistan and Kashmiri separatists to promote violence so as to keep international focus on the situation there.

India has multiple choices – reiterating India's claim over Aksai Chin as an unsettled territorial issue on the agenda of the special representatives, eliminating Huawei from 5G trials, placing curbs on China's economic inroads into India in sensitive sectors, making a statement on developments in Hong Kong because of our concerns on the security of our community there, inviting a Taiwan minister to India officially and giving the Dalai Lama a major platform to speak in Delhi, with an Indian minister in the audience.

India must respond to the Chinese provocation, otherwise we will politically weaken our position before the next Modi-Xi summit in the success of which both sides should have equal interest. China has given itself all the space it needs to ignore and hurt our core interest, but we are yet to act.

## **China's International Partnerships: Pakistan, CPEC, and Central Asia**

globalriskinsights.com August 18, 2019

Matthew Johnson

China is redrawing the global security map beyond Asia-Pacific. This article, the second in a four-part series, examines how Beijing's 'march West' strategy is impacting regional security architecture in Pakistan and Central Asia.

Part one of the series focused on the strategic logic of China's western expansion, the growth of security ties with Bangladesh, and new China-brokered integration platforms linking Bangladesh with Southeast Asia.

Part Two: Pakistan, CPEC, and Central Asia

China's deep relationship with Pakistan is anchored by security. PRC officials Wang Qishan and Guo Shengkun have recently met with Pakistan counterparts, including Joint

Chiefs of Staff Committee chair Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat in late July 2019, to discuss anti-terrorism and security cooperation. At stake is the protection of its headline-grabbing 60 billion dollar investment in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other One Belt, One Road-related projects. The discussion highlights that CPEC has grown from a connectivity-focused initiative to link the port of Gwadar with China through infrastructure into a sprawling web of investment and construction involving at least 10,000 PRC nationals living abroad in Pakistan.

During the meeting, Wang Qishan reiterated that Pakistan is China's only 'all-weather strategic partner'. Since the most recent meeting between Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan and PRC top leader Xi Jinping during the Second Belt and Road Forum in April, high-level exchanges and cooperation intended to 'enhance' this partnership, including law enforcement and political advising, have been evident in the scope and participation of discussions.

Beijing places particular emphasis on its unique relationship with Pakistan, owing to what leaders refer to as the 'changing international situation'. This stock phrase refers to slowing economic growth, the rise of anti-globalisation and populist forces, and increasingly strained relations with the West – and particularly the United States – over the past decade. There is a track record of cooperation between the two militaries, which China views as an essential goal in ensuring regional stability. Pakistan is Beijing's top arms destination, followed by Bangladesh and Myanmar. All of these Asian countries are in the immediate neighbourhood of Pakistan's greatest rival, India. Pakistan, however, represents the 'flagship' of the One Belt, One Road plan within South Asia. The Indian Ocean, in turn, represents trade and energy routes of critical importance to China's economy and growth. Linking Gwadar with China's inland city of Kashgar via CPEC also provides more direct access to the Persian Gulf.

#### China-Pakistan Security Ties

The depth of China's relations with Pakistan is increasing due in part to a proliferation of agreements and commitments which have joined the two countries at multiple levels. In April 2019 the two countries ended the second phase of free trade agreement negotiations and signed a protocol for

upgrading the original agreement signed in 2006. Pakistan is committed to CPEC as the country's main driver of foreign-aided growth and development and views China as a supporter of its sovereign claims, which extend into contested Jammu and Kashmir. India, by contrast, sees China as supporting and investing in Pakistan's illegitimate occupation of the Kashmir region, despite signs that Beijing is taking a moderate, non-committal role in the dispute. As a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Pakistan has signed an additional declaration in support of the One Belt, One Road plan and pledging to 'dock' its economy with China's development agenda; India has abstained.

Strategic ties between China and Pakistan show signs of increasing coordination between the two militaries. Pakistan is China's largest defence customer and transfer recipient. Frequent joint military and counterterrorism exercises add further ballast to the bilateral security relationship. Both countries share a mutual strategic rival in India: Pakistan views India as an existential threat, while China sees India as a regional rival in the Indian Ocean and Himalayas, albeit one which also potentially poses a direct nuclear challenge. Allegations persist, despite outward denials, that Pakistan has exclusive military use of China's Beidou satellite information system. Since 2018 Pakistan news sources have nonetheless hinted that Beidou will 'reduce' military reliance on the US-owned Global Positioning System by 2020 or earlier.

The two countries also share maritime interests in the Arabian Sea, where China has aided Pakistan in conducting oceanographic and geological research. Pakistan (along with Iran and Peru) has also been a recipient of telescopes for space surveillance as part of China's Asia-Pacific Ground-Based Optical Space Object Observation System.

#### CPEC in the String of Pearls

The crown jewel of CPEC, Pakistan's Gwadar deep-sea port is also the centrepiece of China's plans to create a network of commercial port investments with potential military value – dubbed the 'string of pearls' by foreign analysts – spanning the Indian Ocean. Gwadar provides China with a shorter land-and-sea gateway to the Middle East and eastern Africa, and an alternative to the crowded and potentially blockade-prone Strait of Malacca, through which 80 percent of

crude and much of China's natural gas imports must pass. While doubts persist concerning the economic viability of Gwadar and the Gwadar-Kashgar link, the port still has strategic significance as a potential naval base and logistical support point linked to other port facilities encircling the Indo-Pacific. Other rumoured plans for CPEC include linking the transport corridor to Afghanistan and countries in Central Asia.

Pakistan's security infrastructure is being further transformed by agreements to create telecommunications and monitoring systems. Including, the involvement of PRC companies in digital projects and the tentative steps already taken toward large-scale regional coordination, information flow, and merged operations directed at terrorist activities.

China's interests in Pakistan are now manifold, though Pakistan's relationship with the United States has shown new signs of life at a time when internal opposition to CPEC seems to be rising among quarters ranging from Baloch rebels to the Pakistan military. China has fully funded construction of the New Gwadar International Airport, a new project undertaken by the China Airport Construction Group. The concentration of other projects are in the real estate, technology, agriculture, finance, and utility sectors; energy and transport, however, remain the key focal points.

Meetings between the China International Trust and Investment Corporation and Pakistan's advisor to the prime minister on finance, Miftah Ismail, held in early 2019 further highlighted China's keenness to continue investing in Pakistan. Along with financial ties, China has also focused on cultivating closer relationships with Pakistan's senators and ambassadors via the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which has acquired new significance as a tool of political lobbying under Xi Jinping.

#### Reconfiguring Post-Soviet Space

China's growing interests in and security ties with Pakistan underscore efforts to play a more influential role in adjacent Eurasia. The political and economic sensitivity of China's northwestern region of Xinjiang makes border security and preventing incursions by new political-military forces of paramount importance. Likewise, China must also protect energy supply lines connecting the populated eastern coast to Central Asia. China's primary conduit for shaping regional security dialogue

and coordination is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which Pakistan joined, along with India, in June 2017. Many analysts have observed that China's investment and influence are beginning to crowd Russian interests out of the five post-Soviet republics, particularly Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with which China shares a border.

Within the SCO itself, China is leveraging on deepening relationships with member states like Pakistan to chart a new direction for the organisation. These rhetorical and agenda-shaping efforts include Xi Jinping's frequent references to the "Shanghai spirit" of the SCO's creation - a reference to its establishment in China in 1996 as the Shanghai Five grouping. His words draw attention to China's role and that the SCO should build on its success in anti-terrorism cooperation to evolve into a free trade zone linked to the One Belt, One Road framework. Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin have already agreed to "join" their respective One Belt, One Road and Eurasian Economic Union geoeconomic projects. Through the SCO, however, China appears to be pursuing more complex coordination efforts, as evidenced by the NGO-focused Shanghai Cooperation Organisation People's Forum, first held in Xi'an in April 2018, and bilateral and multilateral meetings held on the sidelines of the annual SCO summit.

Notably, the SCO and Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) have been proposed by quasi-official sources as platforms for the implementation of Xi Jinping's 'new security concept' for Asia. The fundamental tenets of the concept are that it is regional - that it fits the needs and interests of countries that China views as belonging to the Asian region - and that it rejects the concept of 'alliance', associated with the United States and allies, in favour of a China-centered network of partnerships. China will likely need Russian's support if the new security initiative is to succeed.

A first-ever China-Russia joint strategic bomber patrol over Northeast Asia in June 2019 seemed calculated to indicate that cooperation already agreed by the two countries will now become a regular feature of the already tense security environment. The release of a new white paper, China's National Defense in the New Era, positions China as an independent,

cooperative power committed to global peace and stability and strong national defence.

The paper also highlights China's international responsibilities and commitments to providing 'public security goods to the international community', with special mention of border safety and security mechanisms with neighbouring countries across three levels: national defence ministries, theatre commands, and border troops. The paper further elaborates on the extent to which the People's Liberation Army is responsible for protecting overseas interests and Chinese citizens abroad. Directly related to these measures, there is scattered evidence that China's military presence in Central Asia is increasing beyond visits, meetings, joint patrols, and joint exercises. China is reported to have offered in September 2016 to build checkpoints and a new military base along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border; more recent accounts assert the posting of hundreds of China's troops in Tajikistan, adjacent to Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor.

Informally, China has created a counterterrorism quadrilateral arrangement with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. China has also signed another trilateral agreement with Pakistan and Afghanistan to enhance counterterrorism security cooperation while seeking to engage the Taliban as a diplomatic partner to protect its regional interests. The list of China's meetings and entanglements with other local stakeholders is becoming increasingly extensive, with a new defence cooperation plan with Uzbekistan signed in April 2019, and further bilateral cooperation between China and Tajikistan on law enforcement and security.

What's next

China's changing security relations with Pakistan and Central Asia indicate that, at a minimum, there is an increasing likelihood to establish a new military base in the region. It would be to complement existing locations in Djibouti and Cambodia – though both governments have strenuously denied the evidence. China also seeks to become a broker in the Afghanistan peace process, as evidenced by recent multilateral meetings with Russia, the United States, and Pakistan. Geopolitically, the China-Pakistan 'all-weather' partnership has the potential to draw other states into its orbit through the outward diffusion of China's investment, infrastructure,

and influence, with the result that Eurasia further loses coherence as a region.

The muted existence of Russia's Common Security Treaty Organisation and the Greater Eurasia integration project nonetheless serves as a reminder. The U.S. alliances in Asia may not be the only frameworks at risk of disruption by China's new security concept and 'march West'. At the same time, the revival Kazakhstan provides another scenario – that of the emergence of a new pan-Turkic pole in the region.

Close relations with Pakistan also represents a logistical stepping stone toward Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, and the Balkans. China is currently building a network of Internet deep-sea cables and Beidou satellite technology to connect beyond Pakistan to Djibouti and eastern Africa. It is the so-called 'digital silk road' and 'space silk road': introduced in the Pakistani coastal city of Karachi, the first Beidou base station of the Space Silk Road became operational in 2017.

Spreading across Southeast Asia, BeiDou is progressing rapidly now, and 30 BRI countries are linked up. Striving for better accuracy, Beidou aims to replace the American GPS satellite network that has dominated the field for decades'. Extending outward into other 'Belt and Road' signatory countries, the Beidou system also incorporates South Asia, Central Asia, the Arab League, and Africa.

Such a fast-growing overseas presence makes China a target, as evidenced by numerous attacks on CPEC projects and personnel by the Balochistan Liberation Organisation. However, other states such as Turkey have been keen to enhance strategic cooperation in return for investment as the One Belt, One Road plan extends further afield. Focusing on trade, finance, and closer political ties with all stakeholders has, for the time being, seemingly allowed China to remain uninvolved in deep-seated rivalries between Pakistan and India, Iran and Israel, and Iran and Saudi Arabia.

At some point, the damage that such contentions, if pushed to conflict, may do to China's perceived interests will need assessment. Beijing will require firmer decision-making and 'leaning' – as the Communist Party termed its early Cold War alliance with the Soviet Union against the United States – to prevent.

## Organs on Demand: China's Illegal Transplant Industry Flourishes

bitterwinter.org August 15, 2019 Li Mingxuan  
Uses a pseudonym for security reasons.

Despite international condemnation, organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in China has never stopped. One can get a kidney of choice in just two weeks.

In an interview with Bitter Winter, Dr. Huige Li, an expert on the plague of forced transplants of human organs in China, pointed out that in the United States, median wait time for a kidney transplant was 3.6 years in 2017. According to the US Government Information on Organ Donation and Transplantation, in 2018, more than 145 million people over the age of 18 were registered as organ donors in the US. China, on the other hand, has only 373,536 registered donors. Despite this difference in the number of people willing to give away their organs, it takes only about a dozen days in China to find an organ donor suitable for a patient. This is truly shocking.

## The Chinese Panchen Lama on the Indian Border

Claude Arpi Blog August 15, 2019

Interesting developments have recently taken place in Western Tibet (Ngari Prefecture).

The Chinese Panchen Lama, Gyaltsen Norbu is said (by the Chinese media) to have conducted an 'inspection tour' of the region, including a village bordering Ladakh.

Extensive Media Coverage

Hundreds of pictures were published showing the Chinese-selected 11th Panchen Lama touring areas such as Purang/Taklakot, Mt Kailash, Manasarovar lake, Minsar, the monasteries in Tholing/Tsaparang, Ngari town, Rutok, the Panggong tso Lake and even a village on the Indian border in East Ladakh.

He visited monasteries, villages, and larger towns such as Tholing, Nagari and Rutok; he 'inspected' many projects i.e. an Ecological Agricultural Industry Park of Gar County.

The Chinese media extensively covered his two-week long visit.

Norbu had come to Ngari prefecture five years ago, but he then had remained in Purang and Kailash area.

*China Tibet Online* reported that on July 26, Gyalsten Norbu (called Choskyi Gyalpo by the Chinese media) traveled to Jaggang Village in Rutok County "for survey and research"; he paid a visit to two Tibetan families named as Wangdul Phuntsok's and Tashi Dundrup's.

The Chinese website said that "Jaggang Village is located in the southern part of Rutok County, 70 kilometers away from the county town. It is a typical plateau village."

But it is not an ordinary village, it is also known as Chagkang or Chiakang and situated very close to Demchok in Ladakh.

It seems that it is the first time, that such a 'senior' religious leader, adventures himself on the Indian border, which China says is 'disputed'.

A 'disputed' border?



One still remembers that three weeks earlier, some 'Tibetans' (probably PLA soldiers in disguise) protested against the Ladakhis and Tibetans in Demchok/Koyul/Dungti area of India who had celebrated the Dalai Lama's 84th birthday.

*China Tibet Online* wrote that Gyaltsen Norbu went inside the home of one Wangdul Phuntsok and 'carefully' asked about the family's production and living conditions. "Are there changes between your past and present life?" "Are you keeping well; what about your knees?" "Do you go out for a travel?" "How do you keep warm in winter?" "How do the livestock sustain when it snows?" "How many TV channels do you get?"

The website reported that Norbu chatted happily with Wangdul Phuntsok and his family. Everything seemed scripted, including the tape-recorder on the table. Wangdul Phuntsok would have said: "The previous generation of our family were all nomads, and living conditions were very poor. Now we live a happy life. And our life has improved a lot."

The discussion continued, Norbu learnt that there is a college graduate in Wangdul Phuntsok's family who hoped to stay in his hometown (village) and find a good job, Norbu advised: "Your generation has already

grown up, you should return home and contribute to the development of your hometown."

Later, the Lama visited the home of one Tashi Dundrup, probably a Communist cadre in the village: "Our family used to live in a mud brick house, but look at this big house where my family lives now. I only paid 60,000 yuan (8,500 US dollars), and the rest of the money was paid by the government,"

Tashi Dundrup informed the Lama about his financial situation: "This amount of money was no burden on my family. Because the government gives us grassland subsidies, border resident subsidies, and forestry subsidies, this earns us around 50,000 yuan (7,120 US dollars) per year."

It is interesting to note that the villages bordering India are getting 'border resident subsidies'.

Incidentally, there is no forest in the area as it is located above the tree-line.

According to the news article, the 63-year-old Tashi Dundrup's most important task was to take his grandchild (courtesy one-child policy!!) to school and bring him back home every day.

Gyaltzen Norbu advised: "You must prioritize education and educate your children well, because the future development depends on the next generation. This way, future generations will live happy lives one after another. I will pray for you every day and pray for your happiness and health. When I have the chance, I will come visit you again."

This raises serious questions:

1. Norbu's visit was probably a message to Delhi and Dharamsala; Beijing has already done a lot of homework on the 'succession' of the Dalai Lama. Norbu will be projected as the next Tibetan leader by Beijing.
2. China has decided to fully play the card of Gyaltzen Norbu in the years to come. Today, Norbu is a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee and vice president of the Buddhist Association of China.
3. Beijing trusts Norbu enough to let him visit the border with India. And let us not forget that China today claims large parts of Ladakh.  
Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi recently told his Indian counterpart Dr.

Jaishankar that the Indian government's announcement of the establishment of the Ladakh Union Territory, "involves Chinese territory, [it] has posed a challenge to China's sovereignty and violated the two countries' agreement on maintaining peace and stability in the border region". The fact that the Chinese Panchen Lama visited this area a few days before Jaishankar's trip to Beijing, should not be over-looked by Delhi.

4. China banks on the fact that the system of 'succession' by reincarnation' is a poor system of governance, as it has a gap of 20/25 years between the passing away of a Lama and the time, the 'returned' one is capable to 'rule' spiritually or otherwise.  
Even if China selects its own Dalai Lama (with the help of Gyaltzen Norbu), the latter will continue to 'rule' on behalf of the Communist Party for decades (provided, the Communist Dynasty lasts this much).
5. On July 21, Gyatsen Norbu visited the Chuguo (Trügo) Gumpa near Mt Kailash, on the southern banks of Lake Manasarovar. He is said to have held a grand lake worship ceremony: "Hearing that the 11th Panchen Lama would come to Chuguo Temple, local people dressed in festive clothing and came one after another, waiting for the 11th Panchen Lama to receive his blessings." If the photos are to be believed (see below), a large gathering welcomed him.  
From July 24 to 25, he visited Toling Monastery in Zanda (Tsamda) County "to worship the Buddha and gave longevity empowerment to local Buddhist followers. During his stay, the 11th Panchen Lama also visited the site of the Guge Kingdom ruins and visited local farmers," said the Chinese media.
6. Incidentally, Norbu also visited a Nyingma monastery (Tirthapuri Gumpa) in the vicinity of Mr. Kailash. This shows that China plans to use him as ecumenical leader, not just a Lama of the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism..
7. Let us remember that the 10th Panchen Lama was also 'fake' (because recognized by China, groomed by China and trained by China) and later in his life he became one of the most patriotic Tibetans.

8. Later, Gyalsten Norbu visited Nam tso and Nagchu prefecture where he witnessed the Ling Kesar Horse race. He was then accompanied by Danko, a Tibetan member of the Standing Committee of the Tibetan Autonomous Region's Communist Party and United Front Dept Head (and TAR CPPCC Vice Chairman).
9. China is clearly putting people/system in place for the succession of the Dalai Lama. Though the Dalai Lama may hopefully remain on this planet to guide his people for many years, it would seem prudent to have something in place at the earliest to counter China in the Great Reincarnation Game; Dharamsala should take a decision at the earliest and tell the world which direction it wants to go and announce it.

**Researching Tibet has become more like working on North Korea, says rights watchdog chief**  
 hongkongfp.com August 10, 2019

The way that Human Rights Watch researches Tibet has become more like its work on North Korea as Beijing has reduced the flow of information leaving the Himalayan country, Sophie Richardson, the China Director for Human Rights Watch (HRW) has told Free Tibet.

Richardson called learning about what's happening in Tibet like "fitting puzzle pieces together," adding that the situation there is deteriorating as China tightens its hold on the country.

"The way we work on Tibet is now a little bit more like the way we work on North Korea in the sense that we can't sit down at the beginning of the year and write a planning memo and say well 'these are the three or four issues we can address'. Rather we have to wait and... see what we can piece together," Richardson said.

China has stemmed the flow of Tibetan exiles escaping across Tibet's border in recent years, clamped down on Tibetan language social media and made it more difficult for foreigners to contact people living inside the country. In 2017 the Tibetan Reception Centre for New Arrivals in Dharamshala, northern India, which

welcomes and documents Tibetan refugees, recorded around sixty people who had escaped the country and registered there. It marked a 40 per cent drop in refugees from the year before, the Tibetan Journal reported.

"There used to be a small but reasonably predictable stream of people who would make it out of the country, and you could interview them about relatively recent developments across the plateau," the HRW China director told Free Tibet.

"It's a very different ball game now because so few people come out and those who do are... somewhat less inclined to talk, especially if they've still got family members inside the country."

Beijing has reduced the information flow partly by tightening security and surveillance in Tibet, putting pressure on neighbours like Nepal not to accept refugees, and making it clear to those who escape or speak to foreigners from inside the country, that members of their family may suffer consequences.

"[They're] making the stakes higher for people inside to talk... There can be consequences for family members. I think those are often very powerful deterrents for people. They would be for anyone," Richardson said.

Despite the challenges, Richardson sees both Tibet and Xinjiang as "urgent" research needs because of the "particular hostility" reserved for Tibetans and Uyghurs by the central and regional authorities of China, adding that HRW spends a lot of time on these areas.

Human Rights Watch produces a series of reports on Tibet every year. The latest, from May, highlighted cases of Tibetan political prisoners who China has put behind bars.

HRW use a range of sources to compile information including exiles who are able to escape combined with leaked government documents, and even Chinese state propaganda which Richardson called a "remarkable repository of human rights violations... often presented as public policy triumphs."

Heavy Chinese restrictions, including on basic communications are what concern Richardson most about the situation in Tibet.

"I think states don't do that unless they've got something to hide," she said. "The authorities are trying very hard, not just to cut people off from information sources, but really to discourage certain kinds of research or enquiry."

Peter Irwin, a program manager and spokesperson for the World Uyghur Congress, told Free Tibet he believes there needs to be a fundamental change in the government of China before the communications open up and the human rights conditions in both Xinjiang and Tibet improve.

"People seem to like to talk about how the government's going to fall. But I think there's too many people who are benefiting too much in that country to have that happen," he said, adding that one of the most important tasks is to get more information about the situation in those places.

Richardson said that human rights for Tibetans and Uighurs have deteriorated and the decline in both cases are "symptomatic of the same problem."

"[Rights in places like Tibet and Xinjiang] have deteriorated during a period in which the Chinese government has become more affluent, integrated into the world, voluntarily signed multiple human rights treaties," Richardson said.

"The trends aren't just negative inside those regions... they're indicative of the threat that China now poses globally as a threat to, not just the human rights of people inside China, but to the norms and the institutions that are meant to protect [everyone]... Does that have beneficial side effects for other authoritarian regimes? Hell yeah."

## China is expanding its UN presence, in belt and road push

[climatechangenews.com](http://climatechangenews.com) August 6, 2019  
Chloé Farand

As the US withdraws from the international arena, China is playing for dominance in UN spaces.

And while Beijing strengthens its influence at the top of international institutions, president Xi Jinping's promise to green China's belt and road initiative (BRI) – its ambitious campaign of foreign investments – is being tested.

Will China walk the talk, or is Beijing's increased participation in global forums an attempt to neutralise its critics?

Reflecting its growing economic clout, China has become the second largest UN donor after the US and the largest contributor of troops for peacekeeping operations among permanent members of the Security Council. In recent

years, it has played an ever bigger role in environmental and development agencies.

The inauguration last week of Qu Dongyu as the first Chinese director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) – the UN's largest technical agency – is the latest example of that. The outgoing Chinese vice-minister of agriculture and rural affairs, who worked on the BRI's agriculture policy, Qu was elected in a secret ballot for a four-year mandate, with the possibility of running for a second term.

This could see him oversee the organisation in the critical period to 2030 – the deadline to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The FAO also has an important role to play in climate action. The publication of a major UN scientific report this week is expected to highlight tensions between growing food and preserving land and forests as carbon sinks.

"I'm very grateful to my motherland. Without 40 years of successful reform and open-door policy I would not have been who I am," Qu told the FAO in his acceptance speech.

Elsewhere, the city of Fuzhou on the country's eastern coast is to host next year's session of Unesco's World Heritage Committee meeting.

And the southern city of Kunming will be the stage for the 2020 UN biodiversity talks – a meeting which is expected to deliver a global framework for plant and wildlife protection beyond next year.

"China actually competed down to the wire to host [the biodiversity meeting] in 2020," said Li Shuo, climate and energy policy officer at Greenpeace China.

This aligns with Beijing's broader diplomatic move away from the "hide your power, bide your time" approach, which has long dictated China's foreign policy, Li told CHN.

The Kunming summit is anticipated to be one of the most important events in China next year, said Jinfeng Zhou, secretary-general of the Beijing-based China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation.

In an email to CHN, Zhou said the "era of ecological civilisation" – one of president Xi's signature slogans – was "an imperative for humanity" and one of the reasons for China's willingness to host the meeting.

The term appeared in an article penned by President Xi in a state-owned magazine earlier this year, in which he set out his vision for China to "deeply participate in global environmental governance, enhance China's

voice and influence in the global environmental governance system, [and] actively guide the direction of international order change."

China is pushing for this concept of "ecological civilisation" to be adopted at the international level, Sam Geall, executive director of China Dialogue and an associate fellow at Chatham House, told CHN.

"Putting [its] mark on the international system is a goal in itself and goes with the idea of Chinese rejuvenation," he added. "China wants a commensurate voice to go alongside its economic power but it has a long way to go in that respect."

Beijing's increasing clout in UN spaces largely seeks to legitimise its BRI, an umbrella phrase for its diplomatic, trade and investments push abroad.

It includes carbon-intensive infrastructure projects, such as coal-fired power plants, which are coming under increasing scrutiny for their environmental impact.

On the whole, it is "not very green", said Scott Morris, senior fellow at the Washington-based Centre for Global Development. "Chinese officials have not yet confronted that reality."

The UN provides an important forum for China to discuss what the greening of the BRI means, said Alvin Lin, climate and energy policy director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's China Programme.

The BRI has been "one the key areas of focus for that cooperation between China and the UN", he said, ensuring the initiative is in line with both the Paris Agreement on climate change and the SDGs.

That "is a positive thing," he added, "because more attention is being paid to this issue".

Beijing is "particularly keen to get positive references to the BRI into UN resolutions and meetings", said Richard Gowan, UN director at the International Crisis Group and an expert on UN governance. So far, its efforts have been countered by the US and India, he added.

But the UN machine has thrown its support behind China's development strategy.

In 2016, the UN Development Programme signed an agreement with China for the BRI to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. Last year, China signed a strategic cooperation agreement with UN Environment to strengthen South-South cooperation and build the

capacities of developing countries to address environmental issues.

This collaboration "makes it seem as though the BRI is about multilateralism and only about development", said Jonathan Hillman, director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies' Reconnecting Asia Project. In his view, it is more about lucrative bilateral deals.

"This is part of the political campaign to define the BRI on China's own terms."

How China's influence and leadership in the UN arena will play out remains to be seen. Gowan warned that UN senior Chinese appointees must "demonstrate they are impartial international civil servants, and not primarily loyal to Beijing as many diplomats suspect".

For Hillman, Chinese officials "are saying all the right things" about green development, but "the jury is very much out" on whether they will put them into practice.

Qu's election at the top of the FAO was "a wake-up call" for the US, he said. "These multilateral institutions are going to be run in a different way for someone else's interests if we are not paying attention."

## The world in the panda's lap

thestatesman.com August 5, 2019,  
Major-General (retd.) Vinod Saigal

China's white paper on defence 2019 has said that it is striving to promote security and stability along the India-China border and has created what it termed 'favourable conditions' to resolve the Doklam standoff in 2017. The reference to Doklam in the white paper was more tongue-in-cheek seeing that China has continued to reinforce its infrastructure and troops not far from the standoff site. The standoff began when Indian troops objected to the PLA building a road close to the narrow chicken's neck corridor.

The question that arises is whether India should take China's pronouncements at face value. First, relating to the back down at Doklam in 2017. After the 74-day standoff the Chinese realised that this time around they had bitten off far more than they could chew as opposed to incursions elsewhere over the decades, notably Depsang.

The attempt to build the road to the Jampheri Ridge which would allow them to overlook the Siliguri Corridor would not have been allowed

by Indian commanders at any cost. A confrontation would have been disastrous for the Chinese as the Indian positions on the East Sikkim watershed overlooking Dokalam were so formidable that the Chinese troops would not have stood a chance. The pullback was a military necessity and not a conciliatory attempt that is being made out in the white paper

In addition, the statement that 'Beijing was striving to promote security and stability along the IndiaChina border (emphasis added) is a travesty of facts, adding insult to injury. What are the facts as they obtained on the ground as the white paper went into print?

China continues to claim Arunachal Pradesh as part of China, calling it South Tibet. It objected to the visit of the Dalai Lama sanctioned by the government of India. It even objected to a former prime minister of India's visit to the province. All this happened after 2005. Before that no such claim had been made. On a visit to Vietnam at a South China Sea Conclave in Hanoi a few years ago, during a meeting of the author with the Vice Minister, the latter mentioned that China had added to its claims in the Spratly Islands and the Paracels in the same year.

For all practical purposes, China has taken over the Northern Areas of Jammu & Kashmir - Gilgit and Skardu - sending in thousands of armed troops, reckoned at a division plus, under the guise of securing the infrastructure for CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) in addition to thousands of Chinese labourers and engineers. The area as China knows is disputed and claimed by India. Additionally, it is reportedly paying for a Pakistan army division in Baluchistan to kill Baluchs - citizens of Pakistan - in order to protect its corridor to Gwadar. The Baluch people have accused China of outright grabbing as a large settlement for 150,000 Chinese settlers - virtually a Chinese colony - is coming up.

The inroads into Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal are not being considered in this paper. The government of India is being given to understand that China is likely to settle the border question that has been lingering for decades as priority. The assurance to this effect is buttressed in the white paper. A settlement that the Indian government can accept seems unlikely, unless China makes major concessions in return for unacceptable quid pro quo. The military asymmetry between the two is such that only the stronger side can

make concessions. The weaker side has no such options. Assuming for a moment that a settlement does take place what intrinsic value would it hold for the Indian military on the border whose threat perception would not be diminished an iota unless China were to simultaneously renounce all claims to Arunachal Pradesh. It would be naïve for any military set up to do so.

There is a yet bigger threat that looms far larger across the Himalayas that is unlikely to diminish any time in the foreseeable future. Attention is drawn to the phenomenal military build-up and construction of airfields, rail and road lines right up to the Indian border at a frenetic pace. Enough logistics is being positioned to wage war that could be sustained for years, if required. The contradiction does not seem to have been highlighted in New Delhi or Moscow (more on it later) in spite of the enormity of the threat.

China's occupation of Tibet is complete. No nation in the world questions it. The situation in that benighted country is so hopeless that over 150 Tibetan monks and nuns have self-immolated - something that has never happened before in history. The Chinese have not eased up any of the controls on the captive nation. Their memory has been dulled under the communist dispensation to the fact that Tibet for over a millennium had blown nectar on diaphanous wings of gossamer to the Chinese people after the Nalanda masters first introduced Buddhism into Tibet.

What has China done in return? It has not honoured the 17-Point Agreement entered into with the designated Tibetan representative of the Dalai Lama for granting autonomy to the rump TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region). Up to that time Chinese troops had not arrived in Lhasa. It has killed and incarcerated over a million Tibetans, many of whom still languish in concentration camps exposed to inhuman torture. In return for the nectar that rolled down from on high over the ages it has spewed millions of gallons of poison on the Tibetan plateau. The defoliation and desecration of the Third Pole that plays a very big role in the climate balance of the world has seriously undermined the livability of people on the Indian subcontinent.

The surprising part in all this has been the pusillanimity of Indian leaders from the time of the first leader Jawaharlal Nehru who handed over Tibet to China on a platter up to the present day. No Indian leader at the top has

ever protested at the carnage on the Tibetan Plateau that will increasingly affect the future of South Asian populations and even those of the riparian states of Southeast Asia. No Indian leader has ever remonstrated with the Nepal government at the treatment meted out to the hapless Tibetans who have had to flee their mother country.

And now China has come out with the most outlandish claim to the effect that China will decide on the next Dalai Lama; this while the 14th Dalai Lama is alive. He claims that he will live to at least a hundred years. It is to be wondered as to which of the Chinese leaders taking this decision will be at the helm at the time to see it through. It does not matter they do not care that not a single Tibetan in Tibet or elsewhere will ever accept a Dalai Lama imposed by the hated Chinese government. The Indian government has remained silent. At some stage it has to realise that it cannot be business as usual in the coming years. After the Dalai Lama if anyone has a locus standi on his future incarnation it is the government of India for reasons that are historical, spiritual and emotional for the people of India.

India has a new prime minister, hopefully in a different mould from his predecessors as far as Tibet, the Tibetans in exile and the Chinese activities in Tibet are concerned. While no Indian leader can even remotely think of challenging China militarily now or in the future they have to remain mindful of the gigantic Chinese military presence and continuing build up of military infrastructure in Tibet when no nation or a combination of nations has the will or the remotest capability to attack the Chinese mainland. The writing on the wall has been read by military leaders in Moscow, notwithstanding the present geo-strategic embrace between China and Russia.

The latest Economist (July 27th August 2nd 2019) on its cover shows the mighty Russian bear pitifully shrunk in size sitting in the lap of an overblown panda. At present Russia retains the ability to prevent China from pushing in troops to bolster BRI activities in Kazakhstan and westwards as in the case of CPEC in Pakistan. However, the outsized military deployment overlooking the Central Asian Republics can only have one purpose; roll westwards into Kazakhstan and beyond or southwards into India, whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Mr. Modi has emerged as a strong leader for India. The strongest in decades with a

staggering popular mandate that has been taken note of across the globe. It is a force multiplier by any reckoning. Wuhan led to a thaw in relations. However, the asymmetry was noticeable. The next summit with Mr. Xi Jinping is scheduled for October 2019 in Varanasi in India. Mr. Modi will have to raise questions that he did not raise at Wuhan for real peace and tranquility to obtain on both sides of the Himalayas, even a start to the demilitarisation of the Himalayas as an existential imperative. In less than twenty years it will not matter one bit as to which power holds sway across the Himalayas.

## Will China's Next Crisis Be in Tibet?

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JAMES FLYNN

How the question of the Dalai Lama's successor could create another hot zone of instability along China's periphery.

In April of this year, the Dalai Lama was admitted to a hospital in New Delhi for a chest infection. He was discharged three days later, reassuring the world that he felt "normal" again. But the words of the Tibetan spiritual leader did little to quell the anxieties of those who have tracked Tibet's plight over the years. It's not an exaggeration to say that the future of Tibet hinges on the question of who will succeed the Dalai Lama, and on the reaction to his death by Tibetans in exile, by Tibetans in Tibet—and most of all by the Chinese government. We could soon see another hot zone of instability erupt along China's periphery.

This year the 84-year-old spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism celebrated the 60th anniversary of his exile from his homeland of Tibet, occupied by the People's Republic of China, to Dharamshala, India. For most of its history, Tibet was an obscure and inward-looking country. But for the past sixty years, the Dalai Lama has worked assiduously to bring the cause of Tibet to international attention, gaining, as a side effect, global celebrity status. He has managed to unite a disparate group of refugees under a common banner and to establish the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) as a means both of governing the roughly 100,000 exiled Tibetans

in India and of serving as a voice for the six million Tibetans still living in Tibet, who have been silenced by China's crackdown on dissent. As the final phase of his leadership approaches, the Dalai Lama's legacy is in jeopardy.

The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach has frustrated those Tibetans who have advocated for a harder line on China. Some of these people may be inclined to adopt more extreme approaches—even violent ones—after his passing. Disenchanted Tibetans living in Tibet under Chinese rule may start to question the legitimacy of the India-based CTA to speak on their behalf. For its part, China will undoubtedly assert itself and seek to muddy these waters by pushing for international support for its own hand-picked 15th Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama has served as the universal figurehead and a moderating force for Tibetans. If his passing is followed by political fracturing and/or violence in the absence of clear leadership, the resulting confusion will lead the West to pay even less attention, opening the way for China to take a freer hand in bringing Tibet's population to heel. It probably will not be pretty.

One of the biggest contributing factors to the uncertainty is the fact that the Dalai Lama has yet to make a decision about his succession. This is a decision that carries not only theological but also political ramifications. In Tibetan Buddhist theology, the Dalai Lama is considered an incarnation of a Bodhisattva of Compassion, who is able to attain enlightenment but delays doing so in order to remain on earth and help suffering beings. Traditionally there is a ritualistic process of identifying a Tibetan youth and then training him from a young age, but the Dalai Lama can also choose to emanate into one or multiple bodies of those already living. He may even decide not to reincarnate at all, thus putting an end to the 600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama. Indeed, he has raised this possibility, though he has also suggested that he might be reborn in India. He plans not to consult the high lamas on the matter of succession until he is 90 (he predicts that he will live to the ripe age of 113).

The Central Tibetan Administration vows to maintain the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach to diplomacy. Since the 1980s, after realizing the impossibility of full Tibetan independence, the Dalai Lama switched to

advocating a solution that lay between full independence and the current state of disenfranchisement and oppression. This solution would entail genuine Tibetan autonomy under a Chinese constitution, whereby Tibetans could govern the region democratically and preserve their cultural identity while still under the People's Republic of China, which would maintain a military presence in the region and handle international relations and defense. The conception of this approach, or at least the naming of it, seems to have a religious dimension to it, as Buddhism styles itself as the religion of the "middle-way" between extreme asceticism and sensual indulgence. And indeed, the Dalai Lama has done a remarkable job of drawing on the Buddhist value of pacifism to restrain discontented Tibetans from nearly all forms of violent resistance. He has guided the Tibetans instead to wait for Chinese authorities to accept the Central Tibetan Administration's offer for peaceful negotiations. As Ngodup Tsering, the Dalai Lama's official representative of North America, told me, "We [the CTA] are ready every time, but it is up to the Chinese government. As we say, you cannot clap with one hand."

China has clearly signaled its unwillingness to reciprocate the clap—to accept Tibetan overtures for dialogue. The most recent negotiations, which occurred in eight rounds between 2002 and 2008, accomplished nothing substantial; they turned out to be merely a Chinese ploy to win international favour before the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The ninth and last round of negotiations occurred in 2010.

Since 2010, China has ignored all Tibetan overtures, and the conditions in Tibet have remained virtually static. Policy analysts now broadly agree that China will refuse negotiations indefinitely. Todd Stein, a former Senior State Department official with the Tibet brief, was blunt: "Anyone who follows [the Tibetan cause] even remotely is uniformly dismissive of the Chinese having any interest in accommodating on anything—I mean on *anything!*" Instead, China's strategy is to wait eagerly for the death of the Dalai Lama, in the meantime stoking Tibetan disunity by making the situation seem hopeless. Tencho Gyatso, a former MP in the CTA's parliament who also happens to be the niece of the Dalai Lama, assured me that for now at least the

majority of Tibetans remain fully committed to the Middle-Way Approach.

Among U.S. government officials as well as some activists, a common complaint is that the CTA is bereft of any long-term strategic thinking. Stein observed that when CTA diplomats visit Washington, they stand out from other foreign diplomats in that they show less interest in an iterative discussion for devising strategy than they do in a photo-op for social media. It is hard to pinpoint exactly why the CTA has made so few attempts to think creatively about its predicament, but one possible explanation is the Dalai Lama himself. He abdicated all political power in 2011 to the democratically elected leadership of the CTA; yet, in Stein's words, "there is still a lot of influence being exerted through various channels, so that elected officials on paper who he's turned over power to don't actually have a lot of freedom of movement." The CTA's elected leadership has no say in the selection of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, even though it will define the future of the Tibetan cause. Given the influence that, in his nominally apolitical role, the Dalai Lama still exerts on policy, Tibetans will undoubtedly commit unwaveringly to his Middle-Way Approach while he is alive. Once his top-down influence is gone, however, perhaps some may feel inclined to other approaches.

And violence is a real possibility. Ellen Bork, a human rights activist and policy analyst, said that his charismatic leadership has played a key role in restraining violence. Without the Dalai Lama's nonviolent message, Tibetans may succumb to the frustration that he has been holding in check for decades. Even Gyatso fretted over whether, in the post-Dalai Lama period, his message will no longer be able to guide Tibetans: "There will be a lot of frustrated people." In Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama's presence in Tibet is considered a fundamental part of his death journey, easing his transition into the next life. Once Tibetans realise that the Dalai Lama will never return home—that for the past six decades their unwavering faith in his optimism has been misplaced—their discontent could be profound. If it manifests in wide-scale demonstrations throughout Tibet, the Chinese crackdown on them could well be vicious—certainly far more deadly than it has been in the past.

The Obama Administration, a few months before leaving office, warned China to adopt policies to avoid the almost inevitable

"instability" that will follow if the Dalai Lama dies before a resolution. What is meant by this euphemism "instability"? Spurred by desperation and anger, certain Tibetans both in Tibet and in exile believe that focused efforts of violence are now necessary—what Tibet scholar Melvyn Goldstein fears could be "a Tibetan-style intifada." In *Blessings from Beijing*, journalist Greg Bruno recounts his conversations with a monk living in a meditation cave near the Dalai Lama's residence at Dharamshala. The monk went into years of silent retreat in order to overcome his rage against the Chinese, but his rage was only inflamed: "I'm not totally devoted to Buddhism. War? I [am] ready to [go to] war. . . . younger generation of Tibetan people . . . they all want war."

This younger generation of Tibetans is restless. The Central Tibetan Administration may serve as a sounding board for the Tibetans in exile, but, in Stein's analysis, it does not accurately represent their desires. More so than the older generations, these young Tibetans thirst for identity. They are enraged that Tibet has made no progress toward freedom. They form radical groups such as the Tibetan Youth Conference, which instructs its members to be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the struggle of Tibet. If such groups came to power in Dharamshala through the vacuum created by the death of the Dalai Lama, then they would, as Chinese activist Wang Lixiong writes, "sharply increase the violence and destruction, [and therefore] put Tibet in danger of becoming a Palestine or even a Chechnya."

Sectarianism, moreover, may pose a threat to the goals of the exile community. The Dalai Lama saw the need for a unified community of Tibetans in Dharamshala and was able to construct a full parliament out of disparate groups of refugees. One of its purposes was to maintain the unity of the Tibetans in exile into the future, even after his death. This unity was especially fragile because it was ahistorical: throughout a lot of Tibetan history, the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism have vied for dominance. But the Dalai Lama has made a priority of uniting them in common cause. Gyatso assured me that since each has representation in parliament and close ties to the others, sectarianism will not be an issue. But she also acknowledged that, though there are many candidates among the Tibetans in exile, no leader has yet emerged to take on the Dalai Lama's role. Other experts to whom

I spoke were not so optimistic. They fear that the religious leaders might see the power vacuum created by the Dalai Lama's death as an opportunity to promote themselves and their particular sects. Another division that may grow in the coming years is between those Tibetans in exile who stand by the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach—the official approach of the CTA—and those who think that it does not go far enough, instead advocating the full independence of Tibet. The latter of those two groups may become emboldened in the Dalai Lama's absence, further fracturing the unity of the Tibetan cause.

It is also uncertain whether the Tibetans living in Tibet will continue to feel a connection to the CTA in India. The Central Tibetan Administration claims to speak on behalf of those six million Tibetans, but it has virtually no contact with them (journalists have called Tibet more difficult to access than North Korea). Those Tibetans have had to maintain their identity through China's extreme policies of cultural assimilation, which compel them to practice a "Sinicized" version of their religion and to speak Mandarin a lot of the time; monks are forced to denounce the Dalai Lama's "separatism," and poorer Tibetans must replace private images of His Holiness for worship with images of Xi Jinping and other party leaders. Through all this, an anchor for Tibetan identity has been a deeply embedded cultural connection to the person of the Dalai Lama—a connection that, in the words of Gyatso, "is almost deeper than one has with a family member." This connection was evident in the statements of many of the self-immolating protestors, who cried for the Dalai Lama's return home before setting themselves ablaze. Without the Dalai Lama, and under immense pressure to assimilate, it is difficult to imagine that they will maintain the same zeal for the Tibetans outside of Tibet into the future.

China has already announced its intention to appoint its own 15th Dalai Lama. In 1991, a directive from Beijing authorised the Chinese Communist Party to select tulkus—reincarnated lamas with high spiritual authority—and to control the number of reincarnations. Included in this category is the Dalai Lama. In his 2011 statement on reincarnation, the Dalai Lama warned against "the obvious risk of vested political interests misusing the reincarnation system to fulfil their own political agenda." Indeed, we can expect to see two Dalai Lamas in competition with each other: one selected

by the Tibetan Buddhist leaders in India, and one by the CCP, who will serve the Party's agenda by asserting that Tibet is historically a part of China. Tibetans can be expected not to accept China's Dalai Lama, except those who are forced by China to show outward support. They will probably reject him as they reject China's Tenth Panchen Lama (the second highest spiritual authority in Tibetan Buddhism); the Panchen Lama selected directly by the Dalai Lama has not been seen since 1995, when, at the age of six, he was kidnapped by Chinese authorities.

But China does not need Tibetan acceptance of its own Dalai Lama. It just needs international acceptance, which will help to legitimise its claim to Tibet. Rinzin Dorjee, a research fellow at the Tibet Policy Institute in Dharamshala, told me his prediction that China's Dalai Lama will be acknowledged only by countries economically dependent on China, and will be rejected by all free countries. Yet China has been increasingly getting its way. It has taken punitive economic measures against countries that acknowledge the Dalai Lama, and nowadays no European heads of state will meet with him. Still, it is important to remember that, for the appearance of authenticity, China has committed itself to the traditional process of selecting a Dalai Lama, which entails identifying and training a very young child. It could be a decade and a half before he is old enough to play any sort of useful political role. China's selection of a Dalai Lama, therefore, is not as worrisome as it might seem, at least for the immediate future.

Still, the spectacle of atheistic China's leveraging Buddhism for its own political purposes is breathtaking. Beijing officially describes the religion founded in India as an "ancient Chinese religion," thereby justifying its meddling in all aspects of religious life in Tibet. Through Orwellian surveillance of monasteries, China identifies monks who dissent from the Party or express outward support of the Dalai Lama to abduct them for imprisonment and torture. It has taken over Buddhist institutes of higher education, making loyalty to the Party an integral part of Buddhist training. The State Administration of Religious Affairs publishes a "living Buddha database," which identifies the fake reincarnations from the authentic—that is, high ranking Buddhists who are loyal to the Party: One who wishes to

identify an authentic reincarnation must enter the “living-Buddha registration number.”

And China’s efforts abroad to portray itself as the home of Buddhism enhance its soft power. It hosts the International Buddhist Confederation, run by its own Panchen Lama. For its Belt and Road initiative—a global development strategy for economic dominance of Asia, the Middle East, and beyond—it is dumping money into Buddhist countries, in efforts such as the Lumbini project, a \$3 billion development plan in Nepal to turn the birthplace of the Buddha into a massive tourist destination and pilgrimage site. China has also been discovered to be behind the protests against the Dalai Lama by Western practitioners of the New Kadampa Tradition. The New Kadampa Tradition is a religious movement that embraces Shugden—a deity in Tibetan lore whose worship the Dalai Lama has banned—and therefore instills in its members an animosity toward the Dalai Lama. This movement is extremely useful to China, which promotes and funds Shugden worshipers around the world in an attempt to divide Tibetans and to undermine the Dalai Lama’s message of unity.

As always, U.S. policy on Tibet will be driven by a maddening and often contradictory mix of pragmatism and idealism. President Trump signed the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act into law on December 20, 2018. This act addresses the fact that China bars almost all international media from entry into Tibet, though liberal democracies such as the United States allow Chinese state media unfettered access. By identifying the top CCP officials who are responsible for restrictions on Tibet and barring them from entry into the United States, the law seeks to rectify this asymmetry and to compel China to ease its restrictions. In July 2019, similar bills for reciprocal access were introduced in the parliaments of the United Kingdom and Canada, and the International Campaign for Tibet is pushing legislation in other countries as well. Time will tell whether this unified front will be successful in effecting change in Chinese policy. And the Tibetan cause has picked up steam in other ways. On May 30, Members of Congress under the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission signed a letter to Secretary of State Pompeo, urging him to implement current legislation on Tibet. And more recently, Congressmen Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Tom Suozzi (D-NY) of the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China

have led discussion on updating the 2002 Tibet Policy Act, which shapes all U.S. policy on Tibet, to include provisions for elevating CTA’s status and for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.

More pragmatically, as the United States seeks to find allies in its ongoing tussles with China, it could find common cause with India on the issue of Tibet. In Indian politics, support for Tibetan exiles is a nonpartisan issue: Indian politicians have a mistrust of China; they see the Dalai Lama as a strategic asset; and they have an affinity for Buddhism, which they see as a subset of Hinduism. Indeed, India’s Narendra Modi has engaged in a kind of Great Game with China over Buddhism, hosting rival Buddhist conferences and developing pilgrimage sites. Its efforts, however, have not been nearly as successful as China’s, and Chinese investment in Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh is starting to worry India. China is also engaged in disputes with India over the border settlement in Arunachal Pradesh, which China is now calling “South Tibet,” and its military presence there is menacing. Broadly put, Indian strategic interests—promoting Buddhism and fending off the encroachments of China—align with those of the Tibetans. The enduring goal of U.S. policy should be to avert bloodshed and to improve the situation of Tibetans. In doing so, it will likely find India a partner in these efforts.

Tibet, then, is an issue to watch. Morally, the picture is grim. China remains a force to be reckoned with in international relations—deep-pocketed, nuclear-armed, and with increasingly sharp elbows. And Tibet is, comparatively, a tiny issue. Like it or not, its fate could easily get subsumed in the greater geopolitical contests of the 21st century—especially if the situation inside Tibet gets messy.

But seen with a wider lens, Tibet takes on a different look. As with both Hong Kong and Xinjiang, Tibet’s potential for instability is emblematic of a periphery that is posing a serious challenge to Beijing’s ability to enforce its writ inside its claimed borders. As our era of Great Power competition dawns, this reality cannot be lost on analysts: China is neither as coherent nor as stable as Beijing would like the outside world to believe.

Though divided into Leh and Kargil district in July 1979, Ladakh, the "Land of the Passes", has the particularity of being one of the largest administrative units of the country, with only one Member of Parliament (the 36-year-old BJP member, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal). It has another distinctness: It is India's most strategic region, facing two not-too-friendly neighbours (Pakistan and China) and it is one of the most beautiful places on earth. It is also a place of spirituality, with a number of gompas (monasteries) perched on the hills in the valleys of the Indus and the Nubra.

To visit Ladakh is to experience the celebrated peace of the place, the grandeur of the landscapes and the hospitality of the Ladakhis. Over the last two decades (since I visited Leh for the first time), the region has completely changed: Alongside the majestic gompas, a myriad cement shops, symbolising daily faster development, have appeared – all due to the craze of Indian and foreign tourists for the mountainous region, and, perhaps, the publicity given by the success of the Hindi film, *3 Idiots*.

During the last several decades, the Kashmir Valley, though geographically a very small portion of the Jammu & Kashmir State, has constantly drawn the attention of the world media (and the chancelleries in Delhi) for negative reasons. It is unfortunate that Ladakh was clubbed to Kashmir at the time of Kashmir's accession to India in October 1947 but there was probably no other choice. Successive Governments in Srinagar have regularly deprived Leh of any say on its development. Hopefully, this is finally and slowly changing.

When in 1948, Karachi decided to also liberate its Buddhist "brothers" in Ladakh, two young Buddhist officers from Lahaul, Captains Kushal Chand and his cousin, Prithvi Chand, offered their services to the nation to stop the raiders. The duo managed the incredible feat of crossing on foot in winter the snow-bound Zoji-la between Kashmir and Ladakh; they were accompanied by a small caravan of men and mules carrying arms and ammunition. The young captains reached Leh safely to prepare a surprise for the raiders. Both were awarded the Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), the second-highest decoration in war time.

It was the first daring act by young Army officers, who since then, have bravely defended the Indian territory. It is worth visiting the Hall of Fame near the Leh airport, where their exploits as well as those of other local heroes, are portrayed. One should mention Col Chewang Rinchen, who was twice awarded the MVC – first for having stopped the advance of raiders in the Nubra Valley in June 1948 and the second for the bravery he displayed in the Turtuk sector in December 1971.

More recently, Major (later Colonel) Sonam Wangchuk (another Buddhist soldier to be awarded the MVC) and his Ladakh scouts recaptured some of the crucial peaks occupied by Pakistan during the Kargil war in 1999. I still have the image of Wangchuk, praying to the Dalai Lama, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, to give him the strength to defend India, his nation.

Ladakh is also the land of spirituality. A large number of Tibetan and Ladakhi Lamas visit the gompas and Buddhist institutions in summer. Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, the former Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-exile, recently visited the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS) near Leh. He stressed the seriousness of the global climate crisis: "We are moving into a dangerous period where the entire planet earth is posed with the risk of complete disintegration, of becoming unliveable. The scientists are now accepting it and have clearly accepted that science and technology may not have any remedy to these challenges," he asserted. He further observed: "Unless the entire humanity alters or changes their way of life, the destruction of eco-balance is going to destroy the entire planet."

Only in Ladakh is there this blend of spirituality and strategic presence. Today, it faces one the most intense moments of its history – not only because of its belligerent neighbours but also because fast development, triggered by tourism, is becoming a bane, after being a boon.

More and more tourists literarily descend on Leh. They provide employment but also created the first water crisis of the region. While the population is far better-off economically, environment is clearly in peril. How to sort out the dilemma?

Sonam Wangchuk, a Magsaysay awardee and the inspiration for *3 Idiots*, believes that the solution lies in changing the pattern of tourism in space and time. He advocates

bringing tourism to the villages (space) and all-year long (time). Let us hope that it will work, though there is no easy solution.

Ladakh has an advantage over other Indian regions – it has a more responsive administration, ie, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and with the division status recently granted by the Central Government, the region should get a better capacity to solve such problems.

Perhaps to give a “pause” to the local population, this year tourism inflow declined by over 50 per cent due to several reasons – the Lok Sabha elections, the bankruptcy of Jet Airways, the late opening of Leh-Manali road and the law and order situation in the State.

Leh district is said to house hundreds of hotels and guest houses to cater to foreign and domestic tourists, bikers and trekkers. Hotelier Amrit Badam, told The Kashmir Times: “There is a drastic fall in the arrival of tourists to Ladakh this year. There is nearly 50 per cent fall in tourist footfall in these months as compared to last year during the same period.”

He explained: “As compared to 80 to 95 per cent of occupancy of hotels in May last year, there was only 40 per cent occupancy in May this year.” The overall tourist arrivals in Leh district in 2018 crossed three lakh for the first time. A senior official of the State tourism department announced: “A total of 3,27,366 tourists, including 49,477 foreigners, visited Leh in 2018, marking an increase of over 50,000 compared to the previous year.”

This article was written just a few hours before the long-cherished dream of the Ladakhis to be granted a Union Territory status was realised. This will, of course, open new avenues for the development of the strategic border area. Now the responsibility to make it a success or a failure will lie with the people of Ladakh. Let us hope that they will adopt an economically and environmentally responsible model.

## **China Goes on the Offensive After Dalai Lama’s 84th Birthday**

<https://www.thequint.com>, August 3, 2019,  
Palden Sonam

This year, China went on a psychological offensive on the 84th birthday of the Dalai Lama regarding the future of latter’s reincarnation.

By exploiting the opportune time of the Nobel peace laureate’s birthday – which draws some degree of media attention, China tried to push its claims on the unique Tibetan tradition of reincarnation to control the selection of the next Dalai Lama in order to consolidate its grip over Tibet.

The focus of the latest Chinese offensive has been in Nepal and in India, which are not only bordering Tibet but also have a significant number of Tibetan refugees as well as followers of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan-origin ethnic groups.

In the name of honouring its one China policy, Nepal denied permission to Tibetan refugees as well as its Buddhist population to observe the birthday of the Dalai Lama.

All main areas frequented by Buddhist populace like Boudha in Kathmandu are filled with security forces and Tibetans appearing in traditional Tibetan dress (Chupa) have been stopped and questioned. This is the first time for Nepal to impose a complete restriction against the commemoration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday.

### **Exerting Influence Over India & Nepal**

In India, China cannot push its will the way it does in Nepal. So, it devised a different strategy. However, by using its political and economic influences in Nepal, China had been successful in banning public celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday, however this really does not make any significant difference to Nepal’s one China policy. Even in the past, Nepal provided limited space for the Tibetan refugees and its Buddhist population to celebrate the Dalai Lama’s birthday without having any principle of the policy being violated. However, for the present Communist Party-led government taking orders from China to suppress Tibetan activities related or not to the Dalai Lama’s birthday is contingent to Beijing’s favourable response to many projects agreed on between the two nations, including the railway project to Kathmandu which Nepal is desperate to start.

China invited a small group of Indian journalists to Beijing and Lhasa on a carefully choreographed tour, right after the Dalai Lama’s birthday. The timing could not have been coincidental. The journalists came back with the host’s message that they will not accept a Dalai Lama born in a free country and selected according to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and that India should stay away from

the selection process for it will affect the countries' bilateral relations.

In another event, some Chinese Army personnel reportedly crossed India's border on the Damchok side in Ladakh where Tibetan and local Buddhist people celebrated the Dalai Lama's birthday. While there are different versions to whether the PLA has actually intruded into Indian territory, multiple sources confirmed that China was there to imply its objection to the birthday.

However, given the disputed nature of the border at Damchok, the target of the Chinese move is likely to be New Delhi rather than the locals at the frontier. This was a first for China to connect the border with the Dalai Lama.

Here, Chinese strategists appeared to be connecting the future of the border issue with the selection of the next Dalai Lama – signalling that India's support for the Dalai Lama will complicate the border dispute and vice versa. This seems to be a classic case of the Chinese's deceptive strategy to keep New Delhi away from an important development in which it has a lot at stake, given the centrality of Tibet to the territorial disputes and strategic contestation between the two Asian giants along the Himalayan belt stretching from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal in the east of India.

Interestingly, this Himalayan frontier is largely populated by a Buddhist population which regards the Dalai Lama as its spiritual leader. Taking into account the imperatives of the geopolitics of the region and religion at the border, it is in the interest of India that the next Dalai Lama is not controlled by Beijing.

**China Wants to Hijack the Reincarnation of the Next Dalai Lama**

China has made its intention clear that it wants to hijack the reincarnation of next Dalai Lama purely for its colonial politics in Tibet, like it did with the Panchen Lama.

Nevertheless, it is an inconvenient fact that despite Beijing forcing the imposition of a fake Panchen Lama on Tibetans, its appointee enjoys very little respect among the people. Their longing for the real Panchen Lama, who was kidnapped by China in 1995, remains unwavering. It is through the use of sheer brute force and intimidation that the authoritarian regime can carry out this kind of political gambit inside Tibet, disregarding genuine wishes or religious sentiments of Tibetan and Buddhist people.

Thus, to make sense of China's latest propaganda offensive against the Dalai Lama, it can be seen to be inspired by Sun Tzu's strategy of appearing 'strong when you are weak'. In this context, it is largely psychological warfare in which Beijing makes lots of noise about its right to select the next Dalai Lama, in a language and a manner such that the whole tradition of Tibetan reincarnation system was invented by the nation. The Chinese attempt is to substitute substance with superficial claims and intimidations. However, the absurdity and intensity of Beijing's blare reflects, its lack of legitimacy, historical or legal, to interfere in the selection of the Tibetan Buddhist lamas in general and particularly that of the Dalai Lama.

## **Bangladesh, China and India Could Have Conflicts Over the Brahmaputra River**

[nextbigfuture.com](http://nextbigfuture.com)

Brian Wang

The Brahmaputra River starts in China and runs through India and Bangladesh and there are serious concerns for regional stability in conflicts over the water of the Brahmaputra River. China and India are actively constructing dams and considering water diversion plans. Bangladesh faces human security pressures that will be magnified by upstream river practices.

China completed the Zangmu dam in October 2015.

The Indus and Ganges basins have dominated the current study of river systems. For the Indus, the India-Pakistan conflict has elevated the importance of understanding the full spectrum of threats in the region, including water insecurity. The Ganges basin also has been a critical area of importance, given the hundreds of millions of people who depend on that river.

The Brahmaputra basin has been comparatively underexamined, despite the complex geopolitics involved and potential threats to regional stability. The Brahmaputra basin covers 580,000 square kilometers across four countries. 33.6 percent of it lies within India; 50.5 percent in China; 8.1 percent in Bangladesh; and 7.8 percent in Bhutan. The river is the fifth-largest in the world by flow but

there is no water-sharing agreement or management accord in the basin.

In September 2016, China announced that it would temporarily divert the Xiabuqu, a tributary of the Brahmaputra located on the Tibetan Plateau, to begin the construction of two major hydroelectric dams. They want to increase electricity production and to contribute to a rising standard of living in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

India has plans to build hundreds of dams in the Northeast region but most think only a fraction of these dams will be built.

China may seek to divert the Brahmaputra river to meet domestic needs, especially for irrigation.

In 2017, there were reports in Indian media that Chinese engineers were testing techniques that could be used to build a 1,000km long tunnel to divert water from the Brahmaputra river to the Xinjiang region. China denied those plans.

Diverting the Brahmaputra river to the Yellow river would be very challenging. The Yangtze riverbed lies between 80 and 500 meters lower than that of the Yellow River. A series of dams would be necessary on the Tongtian, Jinsha, Yalong and Dadu rivers, as well as many tributaries, to raise the water to a point where it could flow naturally to the Yellow River. Most of these dams would need to be 150 meters or more in height, with the highest 292 meters. It would also be necessary to build a series of tunnels across watersheds – the longest of which would be 164 kilometers.

China had the details of the tough engineering challenges for the diversion. This means that China went to the trouble of scoping out the diversion project before abandoning it for now. China could make local diversions of the river for other water needs.

China does have plans to build three more dams along the Brahmaputra in Tibet. There are plans to construct hydroelectric dams along the river at the nearby towns of Jiacha, Jiexu, and Dagu.

Water shortages in northern China are not as severe as some claim. Some parts of northern China are semi-humid, and even in some arid and semi-arid areas glacier melt creates fertile zones, such as the Hexi corridor and Xinjiang. Many water shortages are due to environmental damage, often arising from inappropriate human activity or misuse of water resources.

## **‘Bad enemies’ and ‘good enemies’: the slow march of political dissent in China**

aspistrategist.org.au August 2, 2019

Richard McGregor

The backlash abroad against Xi Jinping’s China, at least in developed nations, has spread rapidly in the last year. Some smaller countries, like Australia and Canada, feel patronised and bullied. Neighbours worry they are being marginalised.

Advanced industrial nations, especially Germany and South Korea, see China coming at them like an unstoppable train. The US, for decades the world’s lone superpower, is confronted by a once-in-a-lifetime challenge from Beijing. All of these phenomena, once bubbling under the surface, have burst into clear view during Xi’s time in office.

Beijing’s opaque internal politics makes judgements about domestic Chinese politics more difficult, but there can be little doubt that a backlash is underway at home as well. That’s not to say that Xi’s position is in any way threatened. But an effort to track Xi’s fortunes at home is crucial to weighing his options abroad.

As a leader, Xi is unique in post-revolutionary party politics in not having any identifiable rival or successor domestically, largely because he has ensured that none have been allowed to emerge. But Xi has earned himself an array of what we might call ‘bad enemies’ and ‘good enemies’ since taking office in late 2012. They range from the once rich and powerful families he destroyed in his anti-corruption campaign, all the way to the small-r reformers angered by his illiberal rollback of the incremental institutional advances of the reform period.

Forced to lay low initially because of the dangers of challenging him outright, Xi’s critics at home have begun to find their voice over the past 12 months. They have been outspoken mainly on economic policy, but the deeper undercurrents of their criticisms are unmistakable. The sons of former top leaders, revered scholars who had guided China’s economic miracle, frustrated private entrepreneurs and academics furious about Xi’s unrelenting hard line—all have complained in multiple public forums, in speeches, in online postings, and in widely circulated essays at

home and offshore, about Xi's policies and style.

'Something strange is happening in Xi Jinping's China', wrote Ian Johnson in the *New York Review of Books*. In what was supposed to be the 'perfect dictatorship', the country was witnessing 'the most serious critique of the system in more than a decade, led by people inside China who are choosing to speak out now, during the most sensitive season of the most sensitive year in decades'.

The exact number of 'tigers' toppled by Xi's anti-corruption campaign—in other words, officials who were once part of the designated elite whose jobs had to be cleared through the party's central personnel system—isn't easy to calculate. The best estimates put it around 300 to 400, including scores of generals. The officials who have been prosecuted and jailed include members of the politburo, ministers, vice-ministers, the heads of state-owned enterprises, provincial party leaders and governors, and mayors.

In each of those cases, the investigations don't just hit the individual official who has been targeted and detained. Literally, hundreds of thousands of people who are tied into and rely on that single person for their income are effectively swept up with them. Their livelihoods, and all that they have invested in clawing their way through the system, can evaporate with the stroke of a pen. Some members of the patronage networks are often arrested themselves.

Xi has made enemies of them all. As one prominent foreign businessman in Beijing told me: 'Xi has destroyed millions of people in the elite who now all hold a personal grudge against him. These people are not a bunch of uneducated peasants from the sticks in Henan. They had skin in the game.'

Victor Shih, a US China specialist, was doubtless right when he said that the threshold for some kind of 'intra-party uprising' against Xi remains very high. 'He would need to commit a catastrophic mistake that jeopardizes the continual rule of the Party for his potential enemies within the Party to rise up against him', Shih told the *New Yorker*.

But the idea that Xi is 'president for life', as he is often referred to in the wake of the 2018 abolition of term limits, will in all likelihood be proved wrong.

From mid-2018, Xi was already facing a public backlash on economic policy, the area in which it has always been safest for Chinese to

speak out. Xi has a legion of critics on foreign policy as well, who believe he has overreached and left the way open for the US and others to bind together on issues ranging from trade and technology to military and strategic influence in East Asia.

Most scholars have delivered their critiques in private, or in carefully coded language. Deng Xiaoping's son, Deng Pufang, though, was explicit in a speech late last year to a disabilities forum which was leaked to the Hong Kong media. He urged China's leadership to 'know its place' in the world and concentrate on its problems at home.

Finally, the abolition of term limits summed up the rage that many influential officials and scholars felt about their country's leader. In one decision, Xi confirmed his critics' view that he was an unrepentant autocrat willing to take China backwards in the service of his agenda.

Just as it's difficult to anticipate where any challenge will come from, it's equally hard to see how Xi's supremacy in domestic politics can be sustained. Factors which remain out of Xi's control will weigh against him. China's slowing economy and rapidly declining demographics can obviously be leveraged to argue in favour of maintaining tight authoritarian controls. But they are much more likely to work against Xi in future. The same goes for China's tightening fiscal situation.

Beijing's ability to throw money at every problem, like bailing out cash-strapped local governments, will only get harder. In other words, by the time of the next party congress, due in late 2022, the issue of succession should return with a vengeance.

## What China's defence paper tells us about Beijing's regional ambition

lowyinstitute.org August 2, 2019,  
Pooja Bhatt

Beijing, over the years, has become more focussed and explicit in recognising and explaining its security threat perceptions. China last week released its 11th national defence paper, and such white papers have come a long way since 1995, when US activity in Asia wasn't presented as an immediate security concern.

Now, China's obvious focus is the perceived unilateralism of US defence policies, with NATO expansion towards Eastern Europe also presented as a security threat. Alongside terrorism and extremism, increasing dangers in the field of cybersecurity, nuclear capabilities and outer space have also each been highlighted as major security concerns in this latest white paper.

It might be expected that such a document would detail threats first and foremost, but how those threats are presented is telling. A big focus of the 2019 paper is domestic threat perceptions, with Taiwan and Tibet's demand for independence as well as the creation of "East Turkmenistan" considered acts of separatism. Even though the paper reiterates China's military strategy as one of self-defence, it "makes no promise to renounce the use of force and reserve(s) all options of taking all necessary measures" against any external interference when it comes to its claims over Taiwan and Tibet.

Additionally, this latest white paper again stressed China's territorial sovereignty and maritime delimitation issues as a part of a range of security risks. Beijing claims to have developed the necessary defensive capabilities to safeguard its claims in the waters of the East China Sea, South China Sea and the Yellow Sea.

The paper points out that achieving full situational awareness of these seas is necessary to defend "important waters, islands, and reefs in the region". The paper doesn't clarify what meant by the term "important" (as it is not a term under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), mention the name of islands, nor name any particular country as a threat to these claims, resorting instead to an ambiguous statement.

And the paper also notably ignores that China is but one of six claimants among the Spratly and Paracel group of islands in the South China Sea, and that Japan has claims in the East China Sea. Moreover, the US as other countries naval ships have been a constant presence in these waters challenging China's excessive maritime claims.

A shift in military structure and missions

A white paper of this kind would also be expected to outline a specific role and mission for the People's Liberation Army across both tactical and strategic levels. On the one hand, looking towards its Central Asian neighbours,

Chinese forces are directed to be focussed on combating border encroachment and transnational crime. The mission is to stop infiltration by terrorists across the Afghanistan border, and further south to ensure management of the Myanmar border. It is only along China's unresolved border with India that the task set for the PLA forces is more obviously directed at an opposing state actor.

China is seeking to make its military leaner and meaner with technological advancements. This modernisation extends from equipment to military theories and organisational structure, with the aim to turn out a world-class military by the middle of the century. Bigger is not necessarily seen as better. Over recent years, the active number of PLA personnel has reduced, although remaining steady in the PLA Air Force. With a focus on maritime and nuclear forces development, the PLA Navy and rocket forces have reportedly increased, while the PLA's combat forces are being prepared to conduct special operations, amphibious assaults, and strategic power projection.

The fact that the White paper insists China's national defence is a responsibility of all Chinese people can be seen as a step towards legitimatising its concept of "All People's War" and militia. Another crucial development in this latest white paper is the establishment of inspection, supervision and auditing committees to reduce corruption within the PLA. President Xi Jinping himself will head these committees.

Revising regional security architecture

China's vision for regional security architecture has been developed and sharpened under Xi. Since 2013, Xi has repeatedly called on other nations to shun Western-led, exclusivist, "Cold war-era thinking" about security, instead arguing via several PRC papers and statements to broaden the concept of security to be "common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable". China has been participating actively in regional and global security governance (including in military and economic forums), such as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, ASEAN and its associated organisations. This vision is a major focus of the 2019 white paper.

Beijing is actively seeking to deepen its bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with several countries. This paper tells us about China's desire to contribute to regional and sub-regional architecture by introducing the

elements of equality, mutual trust, fairness, justice, joint contribution, and shared benefits. Over the past few years, China has conducted bilateral and multilateral joint military exercises and also participated in anti-piracy and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercises. The Chinese military also declares an interest in increasingly participating in international responsibilities and obligations as “public security goods” under the aegis of UN peacekeeping operations. These statements and activities point to Beijing’s eagerness to take a leadership role in such arrangements, and also revise them.

Still, for all the professed good intention, the white paper’s unilateral declaration that Asia-Pacific countries are “increasingly aware that they are members of a community with shared destiny” is problematic. For all the frequent use of the phrase, China hasn’t ever explained just what is meant, and nor has any Asian country endorsed it. This hints at a deeper contradiction. The paper describes the security condition in the region as generally stable, yet nonetheless points to “major country competition” as fostering uncertainties in regional security.

Of course, inconsistency doesn’t really matter. The content of China’s 2019 defence white paper is targeted for external consumption rather than as an internal directive for its own system. The paper paints a picture for the international community about China’s domestic and regional security vision as well as its threat perceptions, current security objectives, missions, and the structural and technological development within its PLA forces.

The paper leaves the impression that the focus of Chinese military strategy is to reshape the regional security framework. The paper confesses that its forces are no match for the US, with its military ambition to ensure a stealthy force to protect its territorial and maritime claims, rather than fighting big wars anytime soon.

## **China’s Evolving Arctic Policy: Two Geopolitical Threats**

Geopolitical Monitor, August 2, 2019  
Qiyang Niu

On July 19, Russian natural gas company Novatek delivered the first ever liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargo to China via the

Northern Sea Route in the Arctic. The route from Russia’s Sabetta port through the Bering Strait cuts delivery time to China’s east coast by over 20 days compared with the traditional Suez Canal-Strait of Malacca route. The shipment demonstrates China’s growing utilization of the Arctic.

Unlike its science-focused activities in the Arctic in the 1990s and early 2000s, since China started to push forward its observer status to the Arctic Council in 2008, China has increased its efforts in the economic field. After becoming an official observer to the Council in 2013, China has continued this shift of focus, introducing the concept of Polar Silk Road in 2017, and issuing its first Arctic Policy in 2018.

In the Arctic Policy, shipping routes are listed as a major field of engagement. Other fields of engagement include scientific research, climate change, Arctic resources (with the most emphasis), and international governance. All of these engagements, however, require investment from China. Therefore, though not stressed in the text, investment is the hidden key element of China’s Arctic Policy.

Looking at these fields of engagement, it is noticeable that they are perfectly in line with China’s foreign policy initiatives, including the Belt and Road Initiative, BRICS, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, “16+1” China-Central Eastern Europe Cooperation, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which also tend to focus on shipping routes, resources, investment, and multilateral governance. If these initiatives and institutes, as many observers argue, are indeed China’s tools of reshaping the current world order, then the Polar Silk Road, or China’s Arctic Policy, is likely a part of the toolset.

Against this backdrop, geopolitically, China’s efforts in the Arctic could represent two major threats to Arctic countries.

First, China’s increasing economic engagement with the region could threaten the political stability of Arctic countries. In mid-July, the new minister for foreign affairs of Greenland, an autonomous region of Denmark with an inclination toward independence, announced Greenland’s plan to open a representative office in Beijing to boost trade ties with China. Together with China’s potential investment in three airports on Greenland and expected participation in the territory’s largest mining projects, the plan raises worries from Denmark that Greenland’s increasing economic dependence on China will give

China increased political influence in Arctic Council affairs. This concern is not groundless. China is skilled at and has a proven record of converting its financial investment to certain countries into political influence on multilateral institutions. In Europe, for instance, China's close partnership with Greece and Hungary has succeeded in weakening the EU statement for the 2016 South China Sea arbitration result to the extent that it did not directly mention China. A similar influence has been exerted over Laos and Cambodia to give China a strong voice within ASEAN.

Second, the increasing presence of China in strategic locations of the Arctic could threaten the NATO-Russia balance in the region. The Russian navy has three fleets in Europe: the Baltic Fleet, the Black Sea Fleet, and the Northern Fleet. The former two's access to the Atlantic Ocean can be easily blocked by NATO forces in the region. However, based in Murmansk, Russia's aircraft carrier-equipped Northern Fleet can break into the Atlantic via the GIUK gap—the choke point between Greenland, Iceland, and the U.K. Last year, *Foreign Policy* reported that new Russian submarines have been making frequent trips through the gap, and in July this year Chatham House also noted that the gap is often overlooked in NATO planning.

In recent years, however, China has been trying to purchase several pieces of land around the GIUK gap. In 2016, Chinese mining company General Nice Group attempted to buy an abandoned naval base in Greenland. In 2014, Huang Nubo, the 90th richest entrepreneur in China who has previously worked for the Communist Party, tried to buy a rare piece of land on Svalbard. Although he failed, he later successfully purchased a parcel of land in Lyngen, Norway, also in the Arctic circle. In 2011, Huang tried to buy 0.3% of Iceland's total land.

With China's ever-growing geopolitical ambitions, purchasing capacity, and political-economic influence, it is possible that Beijing will establish a stronger presence in the region. By marking the accomplished and attempted purchases on the map, it seems that China, if it aligns itself with Russia, would impose a critical impact to the region's military balance by assisting Russia in and around the GIUK gap. Even if such a military alliance is not to be shaped given Russia's vigilance of Chinese influence, China alone, given some time, could

drastically change the balance in the region. Currently, China is growing its icebreaker fleet by building the Snow Dragon 2 and bidding for a nuclear-powered icebreaker. This would allow China to become the second country to own a nuclear icebreaker. Some observers believe that the nuclear vessel will pave the way for China to build a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in the near future, which would not only be a game changer in the Asia-Pacific but also in the Arctic when the summer ice melts by the 2030s or the 2050s.

## The Thawing Himalayas Are Leaking Chemicals That Were Frozen for Decades

inverse.com August 2, 2019 Yasmin Tayag

In 1978, the United States finally banned the dangerous pesticide DDT. Other nations soon followed, but after three decades of use, the damage had been done. The molecules didn't just vanish into the air: Many traveled and were trapped in glaciers, but they're now being set free as the climate crisis melts polar ice.

As scientists report in *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres*, a similar situation is happening in the Himalayas, Earth's "third pole," endangering the organisms that live downstream.

The team, led by Mengke Chen, Ph.D., from the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, measured another class of chemicals used in pesticides known as perfluoroalkyl acids (PFAAs). These chemicals, they found, aren't only in the glaciers of the central Himalayas but in the meltwater flowing from them into lakes below. Perfluoroalkylated substances like PFAAs are linked with negative health effects like increased cancer risk, low infant birth weight, and immune system disruption.

The team, working in the Nam Co Basin in the center of the Tibetan plateau, discovered that the melting glaciers were releasing about 1,342 milligrams of PFAAs per day into Lake Nam Co. Concentrations reached up to 2,171 picograms per liter in Lake Nam Co, and the team estimates that a total of approximately 1.81 kilograms of PFAAs enter the lake from melting glaciers each year.

### The “Arctic Paradox”

It might seem surprising that there’s so much pollution frozen in polar ice, since glaciers are often thought of as pristine reservoirs of water. But researchers are aware of the “Arctic paradox”: the fact that Arctic ice – and Himalayan ice – is very vulnerable to pollutants, especially those that can travel long distances in the air, despite being so far away from the source of the pollution.

For example, in 2018, scientists pulled up ice cores in Greenland that contained lead from Roman metallurgy that took place in 1,100 BCE. These, like the PFAAs, may eventually be released as the climate crisis worsens. (In the month of July alone, the Greenland ice sheet lost the equivalent of 80 million Olympic swimming pools, according to the Danish Meteorological Institute.)

The manufacturing of PFAAs, the authors note, has “shifted from western countries to Asian countries” over the years, suggesting that the levels found in the Himalayan glaciers are particularly “enhanced.” This makes it all the more problematic when they melt.

#### Dangers Downstream

And they are melting: This year, researchers reported in Science Advances that Himalayan glacier melt has doubled since the year 2000 because of the climate crisis.

“Due to climate warming, POPs [persistent organic pollutants] can be released into lakes and even accumulate in lake sediments,” the authors write. PFAAs winding up in the water downstream of the Himalayan glaciers are a major concern because they take a long time to biodegrade. That makes them prone to bioaccumulation: the process of building up in the organisms that eat them and in animals higher up the food chain. Humans who are downstream of the melting glaciers are at the top of it.

Already, the climate crisis has made drinkable water scarce for people living around the Himalayas because water sources have dried up and precipitation isn’t what it used to be. Glacier melt releasing pollutants into the available water isn’t making the situation any better.

“Mountain people are really getting hit hard,” David Molden, director general of the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, told the *New York Times*. The group published a report in February showing that the climate crisis could melt most of the Himalayan glaciers by 2100. “Given the

continuity of glacial melt and high concentrations of water-soluble emerging pollutants in glacier,” the authors write, “the melting process will increase the risks of emerging pollutants to freshwater sources and should be of great concern.”

#### Abstract:

The Tibetan Plateau (TP) has encountered rapid warming, with more than 50% of lakes expanding and 80% of glaciers retreating. Melting glaciers are known as a secondary source of pollutants, but the dynamics and release features of water-soluble emerging chemicals have not been studied in the TP. Glacial ice and snow, meltwater runoff, rain, and lake water were collected in Nam Co basin, in the central TP. The total concentrations of perfluoroalkyl acids (PFAAs) were 1,413 pg/L for glacial ice, followed by 1,277 pg/L for meltwater runoff, 980 pg/L for lake water, and 616 pg/L for rain. Perfluorobutanoic acid is dominant in runoff and glacial ice, while lake water contained high proportions of perfluorobutane sulfonate and perfluorooctane sulfonate. During the melting season, meltwater runoff generally had greater PFAAs concentrations, and the PFAAs release fluxes were strongly related to the glacial melt intensity. Due to the direct input of PFAAs by melted glaciers, south shore of Lake Nam Co contained higher PFAAs concentrations. The estimated input fluxes of PFAAs to the lake by rain and glacial and non-glacial runoff were 1,425, 1,342, and 2,192 mg/day, respectively. Taken together, these evidences suggest that melting glaciers are sources of PFAAs, while the lake is the receptor. Given the continuity of glacial melt and high concentrations of water-soluble emerging pollutants in glacier, the melting process will increase the risks of emerging pollutants to freshwater sources and should be of great concern.

### Bumps in ties with China

tribuneindia.com August 1 2019,  
Jayadeva Ranade

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s scheduled visit to India this October, as a follow-up to the first informal working meeting with PM Modi at Wuhan in April last year, comes at a time when he is under growing domestic and international pressure. Domestically, dissatisfaction is spreading inside China

because of the rise in the cost of living, an almost 23% slowdown of the economy in dollar terms, closure of factories, retrenchments and unemployment and the imposition of stringent controls on academia and society.

Jinping's decision in 2017 to ignore the retirement age limits for elevation of cadres to the top echelons of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), consensus on which was reached over two decades ago, has angered many party members and others who say they do not want a return to Mao's era of 'one-man rule'.

The US-China trade war has accentuated Jinping's difficulties. It has contributed to the economic slowdown and US and European curbs on the purchase of dual-use hi-tech products by Chinese companies will probably delay the 'Made in China-2025' programme announced by Jinping at the 19th Party Congress in 2017, by some years. The US and West are additionally pushing back on the BRI, a major Chinese geopolitical initiative backed by Jinping.

The US has prohibited 68 Chinese companies, and another 144 companies linked to China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), from purchasing dual-use hi-tech components from US companies, thereby adversely impacting China's fast-growing technology companies that have seen shares plummet. The market share, for example, of mobile phone handsets sold by China's Huawei has dropped 48%. Huawei is under pressure as the US has brought extradition proceedings against its founder Ren Zhengfei's daughter, who is the CFO. The US is persuading allies not to purchase Huawei's 5G technology as it would compromise their security. Higher tariffs on Chinese goods have also slowed exports to the US and products are piling up in warehouses. Some former ministers, senior party cadres, 'princelings' and strategic experts have advised that to counter and ease US pressure, it would be prudent at this juncture to revert to Deng Xiaoping's policy of 'lie low, bide your time'. They have recommended relaxing assertive policies on the South China Sea and with Taiwan, India, etc. Advice to strive for a compromise with the US has, however, been met with two stern articles by Xinhua in June, hitting out at 'those who choose to surrender to the United States' in the trade war.

The situation has become more complex since June 9, with the inordinately protracted

troubles in Hong Kong, which appear to have caught the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Beijing by surprise. News of the developments has been blocked inside China, but Hu Xijin, Chief Editor of Global Times, a subsidiary of People's Daily, commented that the Hong Kong protests were a malicious action by opposition groups in Hong Kong with Western support. More interesting, and reflecting the backroom power-play underway in Beijing, is the difference in coverage of developments by the Chinese language media. Some media outlets speculate that former Chinese President Jiang Zemin's faction is behind the trouble.

Meanwhile, preparing the ground for the Modi-Jinping summit, China's ambassador Sun Weidong on July 21, in carefully worded comments, indicated that Beijing was in no hurry to resolve the issue. He repeated it was 'a legacy left over from history', adding that 'before we finally come to a solution to this boundary dispute, we have to properly manage our differences so as to ensure peace and tranquillity in border areas'. He also appeared to exempt China's actions along the border by saying 'we should not allow some individual incidents to disrupt the long-term relationship'. The reference becomes pertinent in view of the incident involving Chinese personnel in civilian clothes intimidating villagers of Koyul in Ladakh on July 6, when they were celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday. Urgain Chodon, head of Koyul village, posted photographs on Facebook of 11 Chinese personnel standing next to their vehicle with the five-star flag and a banner emblazoned with the words 'All activities to separate Tibet are prohibited.' She said residents of Koyul have been celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday for years, but this is the first time such action has been taken. The Army Chief, however, clarified that the Chinese had not intruded.

This is the first time that China has combined the issues of the Dalai Lama and the China-India border issue in such a manner. The action was intended to convey an implicit warning to Tibetans in India. China, incidentally, lays claim to Ladakh. The incident has taken place just months before Jinping's proposed visit to India, and its location suggests the likely involvement of Chinese military authorities.

Separately, the official Global Times on July 30 picked up on US President Trump's offer to mediate on Kashmir and quoted China's

ministry of foreign affairs as 'expressing support to the international community, including the US, to play a constructive role in improving India-Pakistan relations'. Stating that many countries had tried to mediate between India and Pakistan but India had rejected the offers, it asked India not to ignore the international community. The developments clearly indicate there will be negligible forward movement on the border issue and no softening in China's stance on India, though trade, etc., will be discussed. But the issue of the Dalai Lama will be on Jinping's agenda. He will also emphasise that India must improve ties with Pakistan and, in this context, probably raise the Kashmir issue with an offer to mediate.

## China's international partnerships: Beyond One Belt, One Road

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Mathew Jhonson

China is redrawing the global security map beyond Asia-Pacific. This article, the first in a four-part series, examines the background of China's geopolitical restructuring efforts and how they have unfolded within the context of relations with a critical security partner, Bangladesh.

### Part One: China's Global Security Agenda Moves West

China's power in the Asia-Pacific is growing according to assessments of military strength. Independent analysts predict that the country is already close to becoming an Asian superpower on par with the United States. A new wave of involvement in overseas port acquisition and construction has pointed to the possibility of basing rights and power projection as far as Africa. These more recent developments raise crucial questions: has China's security concept already reached a post-Asia-Pacific stage?

If so, what are the consequences for other regions where Beijing's overseas ambitions come up against preexisting regional balance-of-power dynamics and security frameworks? This article looks at how and why China's strategic vision has shifted westward, and how traditional security and risk management concerns are driving efforts to link continental states beyond the immediate periphery - focusing first on Bangladesh - with an existing cluster of interests and influence in Southeast Asia.

## China's 'New Asian' Security Concept: Challenging a U.S. centric order

The immediate objectives of its Asia-Pacific security engagement are to outflank the U.S.-led alliance system in the Western Pacific and create an alternative concentration of power through the integration of Asian states. Beijing's actions reflect its growing potential for challenging the status quo and offer an alternative to the preexisting security realm in the region and beyond. Xi Jinping first proposed a 'new Asian security concept' in 2014 at the Fourth Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Shanghai. State media commentary, while not mentioning the U.S. directly, criticised the region's 'Cold War security structure' as an 'Achilles heel'.

Xi's announcement followed more than a decade of increasingly China-centered institution-building within the wider Asian region. This began with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (1999) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2001). The Beijing Xiangshan Forum (2006) further set a new stage for this agenda. China has moved from 'participant' and 'good neighbour' to multilateral coalition-builder in the security domain. It seeks to create exclusive new mechanisms for cooperation such as the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 adopted in 2018.

China's leaders have also repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with both the U.S.-led alliance system and more narrowly constructed frameworks tied to specific Asian sub-regions. Xi has remarked on the 'Asian community of common destiny' and China's central role in regional development, exemplified by the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) plan. He further describes Asia as a grouping of states with common interests, a formulation with broader implications for which countries belong, who makes the rules, and who ensures peace. China has since used the 'Asian community' concept as a guiding vision for participation in regional mechanisms. An example is the Lancang-Mekong River Cooperation Forum, whose goals include regional peace and stability.

A 2016 paper, China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation, signalled China's intent to gain wider international recognition for the cause of building a new model of international relations. This initiative would consist of

improving existing multilateral mechanisms, building new regional security structures, and providing more public security resources to the Asia-Pacific region. At the inaugural Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilisations 2019, Xi advanced an Asia-centered manifesto for civilisational equality. It was interpreted mainly as criticising the role of the U.S. as a legitimate partner for Asian countries.

**Marching West: From regional to global security actor**

The conventional analysis says that within Asia, China's resources are primarily deployed to safeguard frontiers while expanding control over the East China Sea, South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. During the 2019 Shangri-La Dialogue, defence minister Wei Fenghe devoted a significant portion of his speech to the Asia-Pacific, while engaging in pointed rebuttals of U.S. policy regarding the SCS and Taiwan. As a result, media coverage and other analysis honed in on U.S.-China tensions, rather than the scope of Wei's message, which also covered growing security ties with South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as international cooperation under OBOR.

While China's defence priority may be the Asia-Pacific, its security strategy is broader. The government's most recent military white paper, China's National Strategy (2015), listed a vital security task for the armed forces as 'participat[ing] in regional and international security cooperation and maintain[ing] regional and world peace'. References to maritime security, in particular the shift in defence capabilities from 'offshore waters defence' to 'open seas protection,' as well as to newer domains of outer space and cyberspace, signaled a global strategic orientation that reflected both technological change and new requirements associated with China's increasingly far-flung energy and commercial interests.

Shifting from a regional to a global orientation requires intermediate steps. The OBOR plan seems to extend into all regions and domains but is focused primarily on Eurasia and Africa. 'March West' (西进) – a phrase coined by Wang Jisi – describes the current stage in China's strategic evolution. The march West geostrategy argues that the CCP's 'Great Western Opening' (西部大开发计划) policy has already marked a shift. It moved from the stasis of great power rivalry in the Asia-Pacific

to a more dynamic strategy suited to a developmental stage. With this, China's core objectives were to secure reliable sources of energy and access to other economic resources. In subsequent talks and articles, Wang extended this policy exposition to describe central Eurasia as China's 'great frontier' connecting outward to South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

While these are not the authoritative words of a policymaker, evidence such as the OBOR plan suggests that China's 'March West' strategy is being carried out. Xi Jinping has sought to increase the closeness of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation by focusing on regional security and stabilisation of Afghanistan. Port projects in the Indo-Pacific suggest intentions to create political leverage, build military presence, and reshape the strategic environment. While officially eschewing alliances, China has also expressed willingness to 'work with all countries' in exploring a new security architecture – not just through institutions in which it already has a significant say, but also by creating new trans regional security arrangements that are embedding China's national interests in settings well beyond the immediate western periphery.

**Bangladesh: Integrating Southern Asia with Southwest China**

Bangladesh and the adjacent Bay of Bengal represent the next zone of expansion beyond China's existing sphere of influence on the Southeast Asia peninsula. Security is the backbone of China-Bangladesh relations. Since 2002, China is the only country with which Bangladesh has signed a defence agreement. China is Bangladesh's largest arms supplier while Bangladesh is China's second-largest military customer, with a list of purchases including submarines, frigates, missile boats, tanks, jets, and weapons systems. The two countries also engage in joint officer training. Economically, China is Bangladesh's biggest trading partner and a vital component of its bid to 'look East' and reduce dependence on India. Bangladesh also seeks to increase maritime security and protect its naval economy from threats posed by piracy and transnational criminal organisations.

For China, a closer relationship with Bangladesh represents an essential check on India's power in the Indo-Pacific. Greater control over the Bay of Bengal would allow China more easily project power into

strategically important South Asia and contiguous maritime spaces. In neighbouring Myanmar, joint China-Myanmar construction of a deepwater port at Kyaukphyu is already underway despite earlier stalled negotiations concerning scale and funding. China is likewise engaged in converting Bangladesh's port at Chittagong to a dual-use commercial-military facility that would potentially serve the navies of both countries – China has sent fleets to Chittagong in 2016 and 2017.

Through economic and transport deals, Beijing appears to be further seeking consolidation of a strategic position astride India's easternmost provinces, also bolstered by attempts to woo Bhutan and Nepal from New Delhi's orbit. The cross-border China-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline, which runs from Kyaukphyu to Kunming, highlights the added significance of the Bay of Bengal as a transport region for energy imports. Bypassing the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea, an overland connection between Malaysia and Yunnan would secure one source of energy and trade from potential bottlenecks, with the Bay of Bengal part of a principal maritime 'middle ring' buffer zone.

In a manner typical of other OBOR corridor initiatives, China also seeks to involve Bangladesh in broader connectivity efforts which could redraw the regional configuration of Southeast Asia and displace existing institutions, which previously included the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Integration. Both road and rail plans exist for connecting Bangladesh to China's southwestern city of Kunming via Myanmar. The China-South Asia Cooperation Forum, also launched in Kunming in September 2018, seeks to link countries in southern Asia through another regional initiative which complements the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Forum and China-ASEAN strategic partnership.

What Next?

In geospatial terms, cities in China like Kunming and Chongqing – promoted as a finance link to Singapore – serve as central nodes in a fast-growing regional trade connectivity network encompassing Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Malaysia, meaning that Bangladesh could thus ultimately represent the western edge of a broader cluster of China's commercial and investment interests. The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, currently

on the agenda of upcoming China-South Asia Cooperation Forum discussions, suggests Bangladesh itself could become an economic gateway for China into India.

Military and other security dimensions of this new configuration are taking shape as well. In addition to Chittagong and Kyaukpyu, China's ownership of a 99-year lease to Sri Lanka's Hambantota port has strategic implications for the balance of power in the Indian Ocean should these facilities become militarised. Myanmar is China's fourth-largest arms customer, while Thailand's military represents another long-term client. Persistent rumours continue to circle concerning China's efforts to build base(s) in Cambodia.

Informally, Beijing's militarisation of the South China Sea has been paralleled by strengthening of military patron-client networks in the heart of Southeast Asia while establishing a maritime presence through ports and naval operations in the eastern quadrant of the Indian Ocean – prompting India to open a third military facility in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Analysts in China describe the Bay of Bengal as the western boundary of the Southeast Asia region, and thus a significant component of acknowledged U.S.-China rivalry in the area. Connecting increasingly China-dependent western Southeast Asia with the Indo-Pacific arc, Bangladesh is key to its strategic efforts to reconfigure the 'global South' in the military as well as economic terms.

## **Reorganizing the United Front Work Department: New Structures for a New Era of Diaspora and Religious Affairs Work**

Jamestown Foundation, May 9, 2019,  
Alex Joske

Introduction—The Growing Role of the CCP's United Front Work

The structure and functions of organisations within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are often poorly documented. However, buried inside a January 2019 *Global Times* article was a reference to "a deputy head of the 12th bureau of the United Front Work Department" (*Global Times*, January 6), or UFD. This mention of a previously unknown bureau hinted that over the past four years the

UFWD has undergone one of the most substantial restructuring seen in any of the CCP's core civilian departments since the early 1950s.

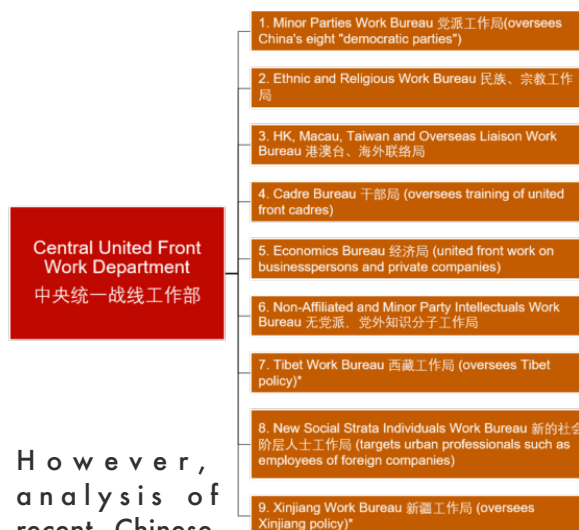
Western analysts have frequently downplayed the significance of united front work and the department coordinating it—the UFWD—or overlooked it altogether. [1] But in recent years, the global discussion about CCP interference has drawn greater attention to united front activities and the UFWD (Wilson Center, September 2017). Without question, united front activities have taken on renewed importance under General Secretary Xi Jinping, who has been working to ensure that all relevant parts of the CCP bureaucracy carry out united front work (Lowy Institute, November 2017; China Tibet Net, October 28, 2016). The past four years have seen united front work expand in scope, resourcing and top-level coordination (Central Institute of Socialism, May 7, 2017; China Brief, April 24, 2018).

United front work (*tongzhan gongzuo*, 统战工作) is the process of building a “united front” coalition around the CCP in order to serve the Party’s objectives, subordinating targeted groups both domestically and abroad. United front work is viewed by Party leaders as a crucial component of the CCP’s victory in the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), and is now central to controlling and utilising domestic groups that might threaten the CCP’s power, as well as projecting influence abroad. Building a greater understanding of united front work is essential to countering political influence and interference conducted by the CCP.

#### New Bureaus in the United Front Work Department

Prior to restructuring, the UFWD had nine bureaus (UFWD, May 3, 2017), as depicted in the graphic below:

Figure 1: The UFWD’s Former Organisational Structure



However, analysis of recent Chinese language

sources reveals that the department underwent a major reorganisation up to October 2018. Four new bureaus responsible for what the CCP terms “Overseas Chinese” and religious groups were created, while one existing bureau responsible for training united front members appears to have been downgraded. [2] The new bureaus reflect the UFWD’s absorption of two State Council agencies responsible for overseas Chinese and religious affairs—the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) and the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA)—as announced in March 2018 (*Xinhua*, March 21, 2018). A third agency, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, was formally placed under the leadership of the UFWD at the same time; but unlike the OCAO and SARA, it has not been dissolved (*Xinhua*, March 21, 2018; China Brief, October 10, 2018).

The UFWD now has a total of twelve professional bureaus (*yewuju*, 业务局) with responsibilities ranging from policy in Xinjiang and Tibet, to businesspeople and Chinese diaspora communities. This new organisational structure is as follows:

Figure 2: The New Organisational Structure of the UFWD

\*Asterisks denote bureaus where names are unofficial, and are based on the author's assessment of their designated responsibilities.



1. Minor Parties Work Bureau 党派工作局 (oversees China's eight "democratic parties")
2. Ethnic Work Bureau\*
3. HK, Macau and Taiwan United Front Work Bureau 港澳台统战工作局
4. Non-public Economy Work Bureau 非公有制经济工作局 (united front work on businesspersons and private companies)
5. Non-Affiliated and Minor Party Intellectuals Work Bureau 党外、无党派知识分子工作局
6. New Social Strata Individuals Work Bureau 新的社会阶层人士局 (targets urban professionals such as employees of foreign companies)
7. Tibet Work Bureau (oversees Tibet policy)\*
8. Xinjiang Work Bureau (oversees Xinjiang policy)\*
9. Overseas Chinese Affairs General Bureau 侨务综合局 (regional responsibilities)
10. Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau 侨务事务局 (media, educational and cultural work)
11. Religious Work Bureau (functional responsibilities, e.g. religious schools)\*
12. Religious Work Bureau (responsibilities for specific religions)\*

Zoom in to read

### Why Were the New Bureaus Created?

The recent creation of four new bureaus follows the establishment of two bureaus in 2016 and 2017: one responsible for Xinjiang, and another for efforts targeting members of "new social strata" (*xin de shehui jiecheng*, 新的社会阶层) such as new media professionals and managerial staff in foreign enterprises (China.com.cn, May 5, 2017; The Paper, July 4, 2016). This means that the UFWD has added six bureaus to its structure in the past three years. These renovations are significant because they increase the Party's power to directly influence religious groups and overseas Chinese—and may indicate a more controlling approach to the former, as well as a greater international focus on the latter. According to a UFWD article on the March restructuring, "These reforms of united front departments have only one objective: to strengthen the party's centralised and unified leadership of united front work. Under the setting of united front work, related work will be unified in deployment, planned together and coordinated" (qq.com, January 21). Twelve official categories of united front work targets exist, yet only three were singled out for overhaul in 2018: religion, ethnic affairs, and the ethnic Chinese diaspora. [3] This prioritisation likely reflects the Party's assessment of its own political vulnerabilities, and the policy areas of greatest strategic importance for the Party's ruling position. The tightening political control that has defined the

Xi years has been particularly pronounced in each of the subject areas of the new bureaus (SCMP, August 28, 2018).

Scholars have documented an extreme turn in the CCP's approach to religion, particularly in regards to Islam as practiced by the Uighur minority (China Brief, October 10, 2018). [4] This shift, exemplified by the concentration camps in Xinjiang (ASPI, November 2018), has coincided with criticisms levelled at SARA for being too soft: a 2016 CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) report on SARA identified failings in its leadership, implementation of policy, and control of religious groups. "The problems discovered by this inspection," the report stated, "were at their root caused by a weakening of party leadership and deficiencies in party building" (CCDI, June 8, 2016).

Similarly, the CCP's "Overseas Chinese work" has become an area of greater emphasis for the CCP—even as it has come under greater international scrutiny by democracies concerned about foreign political interference efforts. In 2015, Xi Jinping emphasised Chinese students abroad as a new focus of united front work, and the CCP continues to call on ethnic Chinese to support its growing international ambitions (Xinhua, March 20, 2015; SCIO, July 7, 2015). As with SARA, CCDI inspectors found weaknesses in the Party's leadership over the OCAO, suggesting that its work on diaspora communities may have been softer than that of the UFWD (CCDI, October 14, 2016).

Between March and October 2018, officials from the OCAO and SARA were in limbo. Rather than receiving new appointments, they were simply referred to as former OCAO or SARA officials. For example, Chen Zongrong (陈宗荣), now secretary-general of the UFWD, was previously deputy head of SARA. At an April 2018 event he spoke about the changes since March, saying: "My old position is gone, but my new position also hasn't been clarified, so now I'm attending this event as former deputy head of SARA" (Sina.com, November 12, 2018). By October 2018, OCAO and SARA officials had been moved into the four new UFWD bureaus incorporating the functions of their old agencies. Two former OCAO deputy directors became UFWD vice ministers in March 2018, but it is unclear how oversight of overseas Chinese work is divided between them.

## The Increasing Focus on “Overseas Chinese Work”

Much is still unknown about the bureaucracy behind united front work targeting diaspora communities, but the UFWD reorganisation shows an increased focus on these tasks. Three of the UFWD’s twelve bureaus (Bureaus 3, 9 and 10), and two of its eight vice ministers, are now tasked with overseas work. This appears to reflect the Party’s greater aspirations to influence Chinese diaspora communities, and a sense of dissatisfaction with the state organs (the OCAO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) that previously performed these primary liaison roles. Far more resources are now directly available to the UFWD to support overseas activities, and the absorption of the OCAO has brought dozens of officials with overseas experience into the department.

In matters of overseas Chinese policy, the March 2018 announcement effectively subordinated the state Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Party’s UFWD. This gives the UFWD greater control over attachés and consuls responsible for overseas Chinese work at China’s diplomatic missions, more of whom will now be drawn from the UFWD. Government conferences on overseas Chinese work were once hosted by senior foreign affairs officials like Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪) (OCAO, January 16, 2015; Xinhua, January 23, 2018); however, in February 2019, the UFWD ran the first-ever National Conference on United Front System Overseas Chinese Work (Fuzhou UFWD, February 26). Local governments quickly followed with meetings to implement the recommendations of the national conference, and to oversee the absorption of overseas Chinese affairs offices by UFWD branches at the local level (Zhongguo Qiaowang, April 12; Fujian UFWD, March 26; Hainan UFWD, March 18). The Ninth Bureau is the new Overseas Chinese Affairs General Bureau (*Qiaowu Zonghe Ju*, 侨务综合局) (Wencheng County Government, November 12, 2018). This new bureau is headed by the previous chief of the UFWD Third Bureau (which was responsible for Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and overseas united front work), although all its known senior staff come from the OCAO (Chinanews.com, January 4). Many cadres in the new bureau come from the OCAO’s Overseas Department, which had a wealth of overseas experience because many of its officials had been posted

overseas. For example, one of the Ninth Bureau’s most senior officials worked in the OCAO Overseas Department’s division for Europe and Africa, and may have been posted to Washington DC and Toronto (CTU Alumni Association, 2017; NewStarNet.com, April 29, 2011). The Ninth Bureau also has specific regional responsibilities, including an Americas and Pacific Division, which were probably carried over from the old OCAO Overseas Department (qizhiwang.org.cn, February 18; OCAO).[5]

The new Tenth Bureau, known as the Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau (*Qiaowu Shiwu Ju*, 侨务事务局), is headed by the previous head of the OCAO Propaganda Department (zh.gov.cn, November 19, 2018; SCIO, March 15, 2017; Zhongguo Qiao Wang, January 4). The backgrounds of Tenth Bureau personnel suggest that it has taken up the OCAO’s media, educational and cultural responsibilities. This includes managing the OCAO’s international media network, China News Service—which covertly runs overseas media organisations (ABC, March 29, 2018)—and efforts to influence and promote Chinese language education around the world (SIIC.it, November 28, 2018).

Greater responsibilities may now fall under the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (ACFROC), a key united front organisation active overseas. The March 2018 restructuring document stated that: “the OCAO’s responsibilities for friendship with overseas Chinese associations will now be exercised by ACFROC” (Xinhua, March 21, 2018). Numerous OCAO officials have also been reassigned to positions in ACFROC. They include the deputy head of ACFROC’s liaison department—who trained and worked as a military intelligence officer before being posted to Canada and the United States as an OCAO official (Prague Chinese Times, December 21, 2018; Sina.com.cn, October 30, 2010).

The Third Bureau was previously known as the Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Overseas Liaison Work Bureau (*Gang-Ao-Tai Haiwai Lianluo Ju*, 港澳台海外联络局). However, it has since been referred to as the “Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan United Front Work Bureau” (*Gang-Ao-Tai Tongzhan Gongzuo Ju*, 港澳台统战工作局), indicating that it no longer oversees united front work beyond greater China (Macao Government, January

25). Nearly all its recent media references have related to Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. [6]

It is important to recognise that while these three bureaus primarily target overseas groups, all areas of united front work and all bureaus of the UFWD have overseas functions. This is a consequence of the united front being a way for the CCP to control and influence social groups outside the Party—the key distinction is not between domestic and overseas activities, but rather between the Party and everyone else. Senior Xinjiang Bureau officials, for example, travelled to Finland in July 2018 where they met with a local united front group (FAPPRC, January 4). Similarly, the Non-Affiliated and Minor Party Intellectuals Work Bureau oversees the Western Returned Scholars Association, a platform for interacting with ethnic Chinese scientists and promoting technology transfer (*People's Daily*, January 23).

The UFWD's Growing Role in Religious Affairs Work

The reorganisation of the UFWD has occurred in parallel with a renewed drive by the CCP to “sinicize” (*zhongguohua*, 中国化) Islam and other religions even more tightly under state control (*Global Times*, January 6; *China Brief*, April 9). Religious affairs work is now to be carried out by Bureaus 11 and 12, which are almost entirely staffed by former SARA officials. Both bureaus interact with members of various religious groups, and the exact division of labor between these bureaus is unclear. However, the Twelfth Bureau has a Protestantism division (*Gospel Times.cn*, December 13, 2018), Daoism division (*China Net*, December 20, 2018) and a Buddhism division (*Dangdai Fojiao.cn*, December 26, 2018), as well as other divisions that may focus on Islam and Catholicism. No references exist to similar divisions in the Eleventh Bureau—which may indicate that the Twelfth Bureau has responsibilities for specific religions, while the Eleventh Bureau may instead have functional responsibilities (such as overseeing religious schools) in order to avoid duplication of work (*Central Institute of Socialism*, November 29, 2018).

Like all UFWD bureaus, these bureaus appear to have some international responsibilities, seeking to influence religious activities around the world. One Twelfth Bureau official spoke last year at the founding of the Australia China Buddhist Council (*qq.com*, April 14, 2018)—

which has as its honorary president Huang Xiangmo, a PRC billionaire who had his Australian visa revoked for being “amenable to conducting acts of foreign interference” (*Australia China Buddhist Council*, April 13, 2018; *Financial Review*, February 8). In January 2019, an Eleventh Bureau official led a Chinese Buddhist delegation to a forum in New York (*Renmin University*, March 1).

Conclusions

Much remains to be seen in regards to the consequences of this restructuring of the UFWD. However, it has brought more cadres and policy responsibilities directly under the UFWD's supervision. Overseas united front figures have already reported increases in the coordination and energy of united front work (*People's Daily*, October 19, 2018). This strengthens the Party's ability to carry out and integrate united front work across the bureaucracy as the CCP takes a radical turn, as demonstrated by the UFWD's central role in Xinjiang and Tibet. The restructuring has further coincided with efforts to deepen the CCP's control of religion and to eradicate independent Uighur culture. If the UFWD's hardening approach to religion is any indication, its interference in overseas Chinese communities is likely to grow in brazenness, intensity, and intolerance.

Just as many nations are beginning to grapple with PRC interference in politics and Chinese diaspora communities, the CCP has moved to strengthen the resourcing and management behind its interference activities. The UFWD now has far greater overseas experience among its cadres, and a stronger hand to coordinate united front work carried out by various parts of the government, including staff in PRC diplomatic missions. In the words of China's ambassador to Fiji, the restructuring means that “China's overseas Chinese work will only grow stronger” (*PRC Fiji Embassy*, December 4, 2018).

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Notes

[1] See, for example: Report of the Working Group on Chinese Influence Activities in the United States, *Chinese Influence and American Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance* (Hoover Institution, 2018), pp.

151-162, [https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/16\\_diamondschell-chinas-influence-and-american-interests\\_appendix-1-\\_chinese-influence-operations-bureaucracy.pdf](https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/16_diamondschell-chinas-influence-and-american-interests_appendix-1-_chinese-influence-operations-bureaucracy.pdf); and Richard McGregor, *The Party* (Penguin Books, 2010).

[2] The fourth bureau was previously the Cadre Bureau (*Ganbu Ju*, 干部局). While the cadre bureau has occasionally been referenced since October 2018, it appears to have been downgraded (Returned Scholars Association, October 11, 2018). This is likely because many of its functions for training united front members, such as religious leaders, were being carried out by other professional bureaus and the UFWD's Central Institute of Socialism (UFWD, July 6, 2018).

[3] The targets, laid out in the 2015 Trial Regulations on United Front Work are: members of minor parties, individuals with no party affiliation; non-party intellectuals; ethnic minorities; religious figures; private businessmen; new social strata individuals; overseas and returned overseas students; people from Hong Kong and Macau, Taiwanese and their relatives in the mainland; overseas Chinese, returned overseas Chinese, and relatives of overseas Chinese; and "any others who need to be liaised with and united" (Peoples Daily, September 23, 2015).

[4] The controversial deal brokered last year between the CCP and the Vatican shows that concerns about Party control over religion are not confined to Islam. The agreement progressed the re-opening of official relations between the Party and the Holy See and gave the Party the ability to nominate bishops.

[5] Other divisions in the OCAO Overseas Department included an Asia Division and an Africa and Europe Division.

[6] One exception is a Third Bureau division head inspecting poverty alleviation (Hezhang County Government, March 15, 2019).

## Tibet Infrastructure: new panacea for the Middle Kingdom?

Indian Defence Review, May 30, 2019

Claude Arpi



A map of future railway lines

July 1, 2006 witnessed a tsunami of change on the Tibetan high plateau, the first train arrived in Lhasa.

It was perhaps the most radical transformation since the People's Liberation Army (PLA) crossed the upper reaches of the Yangtze river and entered eastern Tibet on October 7, 1950. On October 31, 2018, China Daily reported that the Qinghai-Tibet Railway had been a driving force of Tibet's growth. The Communist Party's mouthpiece explained: "Since its opening in 2006, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway has been serving as an important driving force for the economic development of Tibet. Linking Xining and Lhasa, capital cities of northwestern Qinghai province and southwestern Tibet autonomous region, the railway, 1,956 kilometers long, is the region's first railway in history."

According to the Qinghai-Tibet Railway Company, during the last 12 years, the railway has transported 182 million passengers and 552 million tons of goods.

China Daily run by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China affirmed: "The railway is known as a 'sky road', because it is built at the highest altitude and is the longest railway sited on a high plateau. As a result,

the geographic conditions brought many challenges, including the high altitude and lack of oxygen, to the operation of the railway.

As a result of the opening of the rail line, the TAR's GDP rose from 24.88 billion yuan (\$38 billion) in 2005 to 131.06 billion yuan in 2017. This growth is generally attributed to the railway. It brought a tremendous change in strategic terms too.

#### *Dual Use of Infrastructure*

To understand the importance of the infrastructure on the plateau, one has to look at the civil-military integration or dual-use of infrastructure. In 2015, Xinhua first mentioned that the joint civil-military development of airports would "strengthen aviation safety and combat support capabilities."

A joint statement from the People Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and General Administration of Civil Aviation (CAAC) explained that the integration would include joint maintenance of airport support facilities, joint flight safety support and joint airport management.

Interestingly, the Lhasa Gongkar Airport in Tibet and Sunan Shuofang International Airport in Wuxi in Jiangsu province were the first two pilot airports to implement the 'integration' in China.

It was done during the second half of 2015. The PLAAF/CAAC circular further affirms that "All the civil-military airports will conduct strengthened integration next year."

#### *Work Forum and Stability*

During the 6th Tibet Work Forum in 2015, the top Chinese leaders discussed economic and social development in Tibet, and how to ensure the autonomous region achieve prolonged stability." The statement of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) further noted: "Safeguarding national unity and strengthening ethnic unity should be highlighted in work involving Tibet." It added that: "Efforts should be made to unwaveringly carry out the anti-separatism battle, promote the region's economic and social development, safeguard and improve people's welfare, and enhance exchanges and integration of different ethnic groups."

The Politburo (or probably an extended Politburo) agreed that "strengthening Tibetan infrastructure, helping it foster competitive industries while ensuring environmental protection are the means to achieve marked improvement in living conditions and more

social cohesion," these were the priorities for the restive region.

The PLA/Civil integration pertains not only to the airports, but the entire infrastructure setup in Tibet should be seen in the perspective of consolidating China's presence on the plateau; in other words, 'to stabilise the borders'.

#### *New Railway on the Plateau*

In September 18, 2018, an article in Xinhua dealt at great length about the 'LaLin' section of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway. 'Lalin' is a short form for Lhasa-Linzhi railway .

The news agency reported that China Railway's 11th Bureau had successfully laid the first group of ballasts for the Gonggao station, a new station in the railway line: "thus created the traffic conditions for the passage of the Lalin Railway."

Liu Jun, the Secretary of the Lhasa-Nyingchi Project told the agency that the Sichuan-Tibet Railway was a key project of the National 13th Five-Year Plan: "Upon completion, it will become another railway artery connecting the plateau with the mainland."

The 'Lalin' section is an important section of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway; this part is relatively easier to build than the eastern part (Nyingchi-Chengdu).

It will have a total length of 435 kilometers with 34 new stations, out of which 17 already exist. It will start in Lhasa and the terminus will be at Nyingchi City and follow the Yarlung Tsangpo River .

The construction of this section started at the end of 2014; it will take some seven years to complete the entire project and the speed of the train will be 160 kms/hour; it will be the first electrified railway in Tibet.

The Railway line will cross the Yarlung Tsangpo 16 times. The railway bridges use large-span bridge structures: "The mountains are high in water depth, the rivers are rushing, the technology is special, and the construction is extremely difficult. There are 14 high-risk tunnels out of 47 tunnels, of which 7 are extremely high-risk tunnels," explained China Railway's 11th Bureau.

Shen Yubin, a project manager for the China Railways Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway Second Division affirmed: "The total length of bridges and tunnels on the Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway is 331 km, 75% of the total distance of the line. Of these, there are 120 bridges totaling 84 km, which accounts for 21 % of the length of the line. As a single-track railway, there have been difficulties in construction and logistics

transportation while building the Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway."

To show the difficulty of the project, Shen added: "We have also encountered unique geographical, climatic, and environmental situations, which have brought unique challenges to the beam-laying process."

At the end of July 2018, Li Keqiang, the Chinese Premier visited a construction site of the Lhasa-Nyingchi railway.

Li stressed the importance of the project for Tibet's development: "The railway project is beneficial for Tibet to cultivate new growth drivers, and it is the right thing that must be done. Full construction work should be accelerated," Li said.

He added that "at present, infrastructure development in the country's central and western regions is relatively weak, and promoting effective investments to improve weak links will not only narrow the gap in regional development but also be helpful for the country to cope with economic downturn." He further observed: "China should avoid strong stimulus and take targeted measures that are beneficial in both short and long terms."

Many more railway lines are planned on the plateau.

Interestingly, on a map found on a Pakistani website accompanying one of these articles, not only the 'Lalin' railway line is prominently displayed, but several new lines are shown reaching the plateau. They are worth noting:

- The Lhasa-Shigatse-Kyirong section which should be completed in a couple of years (it was delayed due to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake)
- The Lhasa-Yatung section reaching the Chumbi Valley and the Indian border in Sikkim. It has serious strategic implications for India, especially after the Doklam episode. Though it is rarely mentioned in the Chinese press, it is clearly on the cards (it is not in dotted lines)
- The projected Yunnan-Tibet railway line which has special strategic implications for India too, particularly for the border in Arunachal Pradesh (in a dotted line). It will join the Sichuan-Nyingchi line somewhere near Chamdo.
- Korla-Golmud is already under construction. It will be the second major railway line linking Qinghai province to Western Xinjiang.

- The Shigatse-Rutok-Kashgar line (in dotted line). It may follow the G219 Highway (known as the Aksai Chin road). Will India protest if China starts building a railway on its territory?
- A new Qiemo-Korla line across the Taklamatan desert. An extension of G216 Highway is under construction. It should be following the highway.
- The Khotan-Qiemo line in Xinjiang. It will link up with the Khotan-Kashgar line. It is probably important for the totally unstable Muslim province, in order to 'stabilize' southern Xinjiang and build new model villages/town along the line.
- The Khotan-Tashkurgan line, leading to the border with Afghanistan. Tashkurgan has historically been part of the Silk Road. "Major caravan routes converged leading to Kashgar in the north, Yecheng to the east, Badakhshan and Wakhan to the west, and Chitral and Hunza to the southwest" says Wikipedia.
- A never seen-before project to link Chengdu in Sichuan to Golmud in Qinghai. It will close the loop linking the two provinces on the West and North of the Tibetan plateau and link up Xinjiang through the above-mentioned Golmud-Korla line.

But the plans are not restricted to the railway. New Roads



In October 2017, the Lhasa-Nyingchi High Grade Highway was opened for trial operations. Quoting from the TAR's transportation department, Kangba TV reported: "except Songduo Tunnel and Milashan Tunnel, Lhasa-Nyingchi High Grade Highway has been well prepared and begins trial operation from October 1." The four-lane Lhasa-Nyingchi High Grade Highway is 398 km long; it is designed for a 80 km/h speed.

According to the Chinese media: "The operation of Lhasa-Nyingchi High Grade Highway shortens the travel time between Lhasa and Nyingchi from 10 hours to four hours, which can greatly improve the traffic condition of the golden tour line as well as boost local economy development."

The train on the same route should follow in some years from now.

Also part of the Lhasa-Nyingchi Highway, China has built a Lhasa-Lhoka (Shannan) Express Line (Highway).

On March 6, 2017, China Tibet News published some pictures of workers on the Lhasa-Lhoka Express Line driving an engineering vehicle. The news agency commented: "At present, the Lhasa-Shannan Express Line project goes well. This project started on August 26, 2016. The whole line is 48 kilometers with bidirectional four roadways. [It is] designed speed is 80 kilometers per hour. The project can not only bring the benefits of development to both Lhasa and Shannan, but also has a positive significance to improving people's livelihood and driving the accelerated development of the whole region's economy industry chain."

The highway will serve the Indian border, particularly north of the Tawang sector; it will run in parallel to the railway line and have dual use.

#### *The Rongme Ngatra tunnel*

Another tunnel project, termed as the world's highest highway tunnel, was opened to traffic in 2017; this time in Sichuan province on the Nyingchi-Chengdu section. The China Daily wrote: "The Que'ershan Tunnel, stretching 13 kilometers on National Highway No. 317, at Ganzi in Sichuan province, opened to traffic on September 26, 2017. It is said to be the world's highest tunnel on a highway. The tunnel, whose highest point is 4,378 meters above sea level, was completed 15 years after the launch of the project."

According to the press release: "With the opening of the tunnel, it takes only 10 minutes

to pass through the perilous and steep Que'ershan Mountain that stands 6,168 meters above the sea level. The project is projected to become a new impetus to help drive the economic and social development of the remote Tibetan region."

Each of the tunnels represents a remarkable technological feat.



*The Tibet-Nepal Road*

On August 29, 2017, the Kyirong-Nepal border post was reopened for foreign travelers. Located in the Kyirong County, Shigatse City, Kyirong border post is a vital landport between Tibet and Nepal. Kyirong border is located 85 km away from Nepal's capital Kathmandu; from China-Nepal highway section, Kyirong docking distance is only about 30 km.

According to the article, the National Highway No. 216 will end in the Kyirong county, near the Nepal border.

Incidentally, the G318 ends up in Zhangmu, the other landport between Nepal and Tibet which runs from Shanghai to Zhangmu. It is China's longest National Highway at 5,476 kilometres before reaching Tibet; a 115 km long Araniko Highway then connects Zhangmu to Kathmandu.

#### *The Mythic G216 Highway*

Will the extended G216 be a reality one day? The G216 would start in Northern Xinjiang, from Altay City to Baluntai (in Hejing County); the 857 kms highway would be extended to Southern Xinjiang (Keryia) and later Western Tibet; needless to speak of the immense technical challenge to cross the Kunlun range between Keryia and Rutok (joining the G219 or Aksai Chin road). Keryia in South Xinjiang is located at 1459 m above sea level (asl), while Lake Lighten on the plateau is at 5080 m asl (a 3,500 m climb in some 200 kms!).

The last section of the 'extended' G216 (towards Kyirong) would have a length of about 94 kilometers; the geological conditions are complex, said the website: "After experiencing the 'May 12 2015' earthquake in Nepal, the geological conditions are even

more inestimable. The original roads at the Kyirong Port have been seriously damaged, and the subgrade has subsided in some sections."

The main bridge in this section is said to have collapsed "and the road surface was broken and cracked."

The town of Kyirong is only about 24 kilometers away from the Nepal border; it is today the main channel for land trade between China and Nepal.

The point remains that if the terminal section of G216 towards Kyirong is 'difficult', it is nothing compared to the section which will try to cross the Kunlun range, north of Lake Lighten. Is it another mad dream of the Emperor in Beijing? Is Beijing dreaming of a New Silk Road linking Central to South Asia via Nepal? Difficult to say today ...the engineers have to cross the Kunlun first.

#### *Gongkar Airport in Lhasa*

We should not omit the airports.

This year, the Tibetan capital city received a record 4 million passengers according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China's Tibet office; the passenger volume at Gongkar Airport, the largest airport in the TAR, exceeded 2 million in 2013, and 3 million in 2016.

Tibet's civil aviation industry has witnessed a quick development thanks to the application of new technologies since the country's reform and opening-up four decades ago, noted the Chinese media.

Tibet now has 10 airlines operating a total of 81 routes, enabling convenient connections between Tibet and most of the major cities in China, according to CAAC. It is estimated that the airport will see 4.3 million passengers by the end of 2018.

#### *New terminal opens at Nyingchi airport*

In March 2017, Xinhua announced the second-largest airport terminal in Tibet has started its operations in Nyingchi: "The new terminal, the sixth to open in Tibet, is located at Nyingchi Mainling Airport. It covers an area of 10,300 square meters and will be able to handle 750,000 passengers and 3,000 tons of cargo annually by 2020."

Nyingchi is located at an average elevation of 2,950 meters above sea level.

Xinhua says: "The city has attracted more visitors in recent years thanks to tourist attractions such as its peach blossom festival." More than three millions according to Chinese statistics.

Incidentally, the Bayi Township, owned by the PLA and located nearby, is served by the same airport. The Indian border will be well-serviced ...in case!

#### *Three New Airports in Tibet*

On June 9, 2018, the CAAC and the TAR government announced that Tibet would soon have three new airports. The announcement came during a Conference held in Lhasa on June 8. A communique stated: "Construction of the three airports, all above the altitude of 3,900 meters, should begin in 2019." Xinhua gave the official rationale: "Tourist travel will be more convenient, and economic development in Tibet's agricultural and pastoral areas will also be assisted."

The Chinese-language press provided more information about the location of the three airports; one will be located in Lhuntse in Lhoka (called Shannan by the Chinese) area, north of the Upper Subansiri and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh, the second will be between Tingri and Lhatse counties of Shigatse City, north of Zangmu, the border post with Nepal, and the last in Purang, near the trijunction Nepal-Tibet-India, north of Pitoragarh district of Uttarakhand (on the yatri's route to Mt Kailash).

While Tingri airport is near the Nepali border, the two other (Lhuntse and Purang) are at a short distance from the Indian border.

The airports should be completed in 2021; by then, there will be eight airports in the TAR (plus three close to the Indian border in Xinjiang, i.e. Kashgar, Hotan and Yarkand).

The news agency added: "At present, the preparatory work for the three airports is underway. The preferred sites have been determined, and the construction of temporary weather stations at each site is completed."

The three airports will be high altitude airports; they will be operated by companies including Air China, China Eastern Airlines or Sichuan Airlines already involved in Tibet.

One has to understand Xi's plans for Tibet. The 'core' leader had declared: "Govern the nation by governing the borders; govern the borders by first stabilising Tibet; ensure social harmony and stability in Tibet and strengthen the development of border regions."

Over last few years, the authorities in Tibet have started implementing the emperor's theory, while the Party's propaganda is doing its best to entice the local Tibetan population to side with the Communist Party. This is a

serious development, unfortunately largely ignored in India.

The protectors of the sacred homeland and the builders of happy homes

It is necessary to say a few words about a related development on the border: The Xiaogang model villages.

This new development is often mentioned in the speech of the TAR's local satraps; it is said that the inhabitants of China's borders (with India) will be "the protectors of the sacred homeland and the builders of happy homes."

It has taken a concrete shape with the mushrooming of new 'model' villages and towns on the Tibetan side of the Indian border, mainly north of Arunachal Pradesh; officially, the scheme is linked with 'poverty alleviation', but also 'defence of the borders'. These model villages are called Xiaogang, moderately well-off.

It has another connotation. The 40th anniversary of "China's reform and opening up" celebrated across China in 2018 put a great emphasis on an event which took place in 1978, when 18 farmers in Xiaogang village, in Anhui Province, signed a secret agreement to divide collectively-owned farmland into individual pieces and drop the collectivisation of the Great Leap Forward (GLF), which between 1958 and 1960 resulted in some 40 million casualties; in Xiaogang itself, 67 villagers out of 120 had died of starvation between 1958 and 1960.

Forty years later, the name Xiaogang is been used for a different project, which should worry India: the building of a large number of 'model' villages along the border.

On October 19, China Tibet News reported that since the beginning of 2018, Tsona County, north of Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang District, has been "vigorously promoting the construction of border 'Xiaogang' villages".

Several senior Communist leaders have visited the new villages, either north of Kibithu in the Lohit valley; in Metok, north of Upper Siang district; in Yume, north of Takshing in Upper Subansari or in Lepo, Marmang and Tsona, north of Khenzimane and Tawang. As mentioned earlier, the Lhunte airport will serve the Tsona and Yume areas.

The new project was given publicity soon after the conclusion of the 19th Congress, when Xi Jinping sent a reply to two young Tibetan herders who had written to him introducing their village, Yume. According to Xinhua, Xi "encouraged a herding family in Lhunte

County to set down roots in the border area, safeguard the Chinese territory and develop their hometown." Xi acknowledged "the family's efforts to safeguard China's territory, and thanked them for the loyalty and contributions they have made in the border area. Without the peace in the territory, there will be no peaceful lives for the millions of families," he wrote.

The two Tibetan girls, Choekar and Yangzom had told the CCP's Secretary General about their "experiences in safeguarding the border area and the development of their township over the years."

The girls' village, Yume is located in Lhunte county, not far from the remote Indian village of Takshing, which incidentally has recently been linked by a motorable road. Xi further hoped that the girls' family could "motivate more herders to set down roots in the border area like kalsang flowers," blooming in hard conditions.

China is to invest 110 million yuan in the Yume Well-Off Rural Construction Project; to start with, 56 sets of light-steel prefabricated residential houses are being built, linked by two new municipal roads, a central park and six squares. Electricity and water have already reached the border village. And this is not the only example.

Implications for India

All this is worrisome for India, though Beijing is presently facing a serious problem: can it afford all these new infrastructure projects?

Who will finance these mega-developments, especially if the US President turns the screw on the Chinese economy and if Xi continues to 'invest' in Africa, Pakistan or elsewhere, outside the Walls of the Middle Kingdom?

It is a serious question, though difficult to answer.

Further, the US 'squeezing' of China is bound to create 'differences' within the Communist leadership about the investment 'priorities' and ...when the Emperor and his courtiers start fighting among themselves, the 'stability' of Kingdom is jeopardized.



## Backgrounder: A Brief History of China's United Front

Geopolitical Monitor March 22, 2019

### SUMMARY

Authoritarian governments are evolving new ways to navigate a US-dominated international system that has long been weighed against their interests. Russia is the most obvious recent case with its high-profile disinformation and hybrid warfare strategies. But there's another rising power on the forefront of these influencing operations: China.

In order to consolidate CCP legitimacy at home and abroad, President Xi has resurrected an idea that's as old as communism itself. The united front was famously credited by Chairman Mao as one of the 'magic weapons' that helped the CCP defeat a far more powerful opponent in the Chinese civil war. But this latest manifestation is anything but a direct transplant from a century ago. Rather it has been overhauled and refit for purpose in the modern age, playing to the CCP's strengths and exploiting the weaknesses of its more liberal adversaries.

And so far it seems to be working.

### BACKGROUND

United front tactics are as old as communism itself, dating back to the Russian Revolution. The concept is simple: assemble a coalition of likeminded or mutually interested parties to overcome a more powerful adversary, even if these allies are not otherwise perfectly aligned on ideology.

In Vladimir Lenin's own words:

From all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat... to resort to changes of tack, to conciliation and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a matter of knowing how to apply these tactics in order to raise – not lower – the general level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win.

"To fight and win" – that is the essence of united front strategy. The alliances it envisions are practical, calculated, and ultimately fluid; they are a means to an end, and that end is always defined by the party brass.

In the beginning the paramount adversary for Russia's communists was the Tsarist state, and

the earliest adoption of united front tactics sought to bring the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries into common opposition, alongside the Bolsheviks, against the forces of bourgeoisie oppression. Of course, these competing socialist parties would be banned and their members brutally repressed after Lenin seized power in 1917.

After the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was safely entrenched atop the summit of state power, the united front reoriented itself outward, adopting a global dimension focused on inciting international revolution (or at the very least the proliferation of USSR-friendly governments), which meant coordinating with individuals, organisations, and/or communist parties in far-off lands.

One fellow traveler was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which was both directed by Moscow early on and, in due time, developed its own take on the united front that survives to this day. United front strategy was a decisive factor in the CCP's road to power. Initiated in 1924 at the urging of the Soviets, the First United Front drew the CCP into an alliance with its bitter rival, the Nationalist Party of China (KMT), with the ostensible goal of defeating the northern warlords and consolidating state power over all of China. The venture came to an abrupt end in 1927, when the KMT's Chiang Kai-Shek began a wide-ranging purge of the communist rank-and-file. A violent split followed, with CCP members fleeing to the countryside only to be routed and pursued for thousands of kilometers in the now-legendary Long March. The two sides would remain in a state of open conflict for over a decade.

The Second United Front was announced in 1937, but only after Chiang Kai-Shek was kidnapped and held hostage by advisors until he promised to join with the communists in a war of national survival against the invading Japanese (the 'Xian Incident'). The Second United Front would nominally hold up until 1945, and its collapse marked the advent of the final phase of the Chinese civil war.

Both civil war-era united fronts involved a weaker Chinese Communist Party trying to ensure its own survival vis-à-vis a far more powerful Nationalist Party. The First United Front afforded new people-to-people opportunities: the CCP brought its message to vast tracts of the Chinese countryside and converted much of the KMT's left-wing membership to its cause. The Second United

Front brought a desperately needed reprieve after a decades-long KMT onslaught, allowing the CCP to reorganise its political and military structures in preparation for the final battle to come (for example, this is when the Eighth Route Army was formed). Both were key to the CCP's ultimate survival, causing Mao to remark in 1949 that united front work was one of the three "magic weapons" that helped his party defeat a numerically superior and far better equipped KMT.

Mao's praise helped entrench the mystique of the united front in official Party dogma, ensuring it a prominent place in future policy.

The united front promoted by the Communist leadership in 1948 was an entirely different affair. The CCP had already 'fought and won' and found itself in control of nearly all of China's territory. Now it shifted gears toward reconciliation and rebuilding efforts. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was emblematic of the process. Formed in 1949, the CPPCC brought together delegates from various political parties, regions, PLA units, and professions. Intellectuals, students, and even capitalists were invited to participate; their technical expertise was viewed as essential for keeping the country running smoothly during the transition to communist rule. Yet then as now, the CPPCC was merely a pantomime of parliamentary debate: all delegates attended at the pleasure of the CCP, and every decision was adopted by a unanimous vote.

The post-war reconciliation window slammed shut in 1956, when Mao adopted class struggle as a defining tenet of CCP rule. United front work fell out of favour as a result, only to be resurrected in the aftermath of disasters like the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, when the central leadership felt the need to shore up Party rule by bringing marginalised groups back in from the cold. After Mao's death in 1976, the united front bureaucracy assembled valuable expertise from overseas and domestic Chinese, spurring China's economic reforms. It was also called on to help insulate China's international image following the Tiananmen Square protests. Yet broadly speaking, united front work was mostly an afterthought in the post-Mao era. That is, until Xi Jinping became president.

#### United Front in the Xi Era

United front work is one of several Mao-era policies that President Xi has dusted off and refitted for contemporary use. The

president has even evoked Mao's language, describing the united front as a "magic weapon" that can be used to bring about "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." And unlike his recent predecessors, Xi's praise goes beyond lip service. The past five years have seen a significant expansion and institutionalisation of the united front bureaucracy, with some 40,000 new United Front Work Department (UFWD) cadres estimated to have been added since Xi became president. Over the same period, bureaucracies like the Religious Affairs Bureau, State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and State Council's Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs have been folded into the UFWD to expand the scope of its mandate. And a more direct line of control has been established between the CCP Politburo and the UFWD, allowing the president's inner circle a more active say in the department's day-to-day activities.

What's driving this renaissance of united front work?

An internal CCP memo leaked in 2013 might hold a clue. The memo – bearing the unabashedly bureaucratic title of 'Document Number Nine' – outlines a number of threats to CCP rule, including Western parliamentary democracy, universal values, civil society, neo-liberalism, and freedom of the press. The paranoid tone of the memo might have come as a surprise to international observers back in 2013, but now over five years later it is reflective of the new normal of Chinese politics, evident in the Xi administration's ongoing crackdown on any and all signs of dissent.

The memo also brings the motivations driving renewed united front work into sharper relief: the CCP is still very much in survival mode.

The Party faces an international system that harkens back its lopsided struggle against the KMT during the civil war: allies are in short supply, institutions are dominated by adversaries, and the global information commons remain broadly sympathetic toward Western values. On the home front, Chinese society is increasingly complex and it's getting harder to keep disparate economic, ethnic, religious interests in lock-step with Party directives.

This is where President Xi's newly empowered UFWD comes in. The department is tasked with eliminating these contradictions and removing incipient threats to CCP rule. More specifically, its activities have included influencing academic debate on 'sensitive' issues like the

status of Taiwan and Tibet; activating overseas Chinese communities to promote the interests of the Chinese Communist Party; monopolising Chinese-language media outlets overseas; purchasing and cooperating with foreign media outlets to control the narrative on how China and the CCP are portrayed; and cultivating influential and well-placed individuals with business interests or sympathetic views toward China.

United front work can be on the individual or institutional level, and it almost always takes place in a gray area of plausible deniability. It can take the form of person-to-person contacts whereby a targeted individual receives perks like investment opportunities or free trips from entities with indirect or direct links to the united front bureaucracy. These perks might be offered with a future quid pro quo in mind, or they could just be meant to produce a more general feeling of goodwill toward the Chinese government. But that's just the carrot side of the equation. The stick can also come out in the course of these operations; for example, when a foreign journalist or academic is threatened with legal action or even physical intimidation for advancing a view that's contrary to CCP interests.

The united front's top-level bureaucracy is constituted by the UFWD, a Party agency that reports directly to the central committee, and the CPPCC, which brings members of faux opposition parties together with luminaries like Jackie Chan, Mo Yan, Yao Ming, and billionaire Xu Jiayin for consultative sessions once a year. But underneath these entities there's a globe-straddling ecosystem of cultural and political organisations, one that would represent a genuine civil society if not for its ultimate subservience to the CCP leadership by way of the UFWD – in fact, these bodies are often mistaken for genuine grassroots movements by Western journalists who have never heard of the united front before. Just one of many possible examples is the China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification (CPRC), which trumpets the official party line on the dangers of Taiwanese independence from its 200 chapters in 90 countries. There's also the Chinese Students and Scholars Associations (CSSA) which are popping up on college campuses throughout the world. The CSSAs perform the service of helping Chinese students navigate the challenges of life in a strange land – admittedly a very useful service – but they also

seek to ensure that this new land doesn't change the way that students view the CCP or its policies, and if it does, that the Party is first to know about it. Herein lies the duality inherent to many overseas united front organs: outwardly grassroots, internally Party-controlled; half soft power, half sharp.

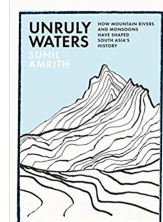
The goal of this article has been to trace the general arc of the united front as a historical concept, not to provide a full accounting of its current operations. The past five years have clearly shown that united front work is on the ascendance, having successfully made the jump from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping Thought. And given the potential consequences for intellectual freedom and influencing operations, Western policymakers can ignore these developments at their own peril.

## New Publications



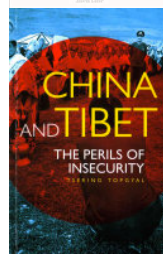
### The Third Revolution Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State

By Elizabeth C. Economy  
Council on Foreign Relations,  
Asia Program



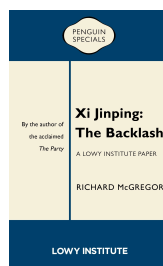
### Unruly Waters

By Sunil Amrith  
Penguin



### China and Tibet: The Perils of Insecurity

By Tsering Topgyal  
Hurst



### Xi Jinping: The Backlash

By Richard McGregor  
Lowy Institute