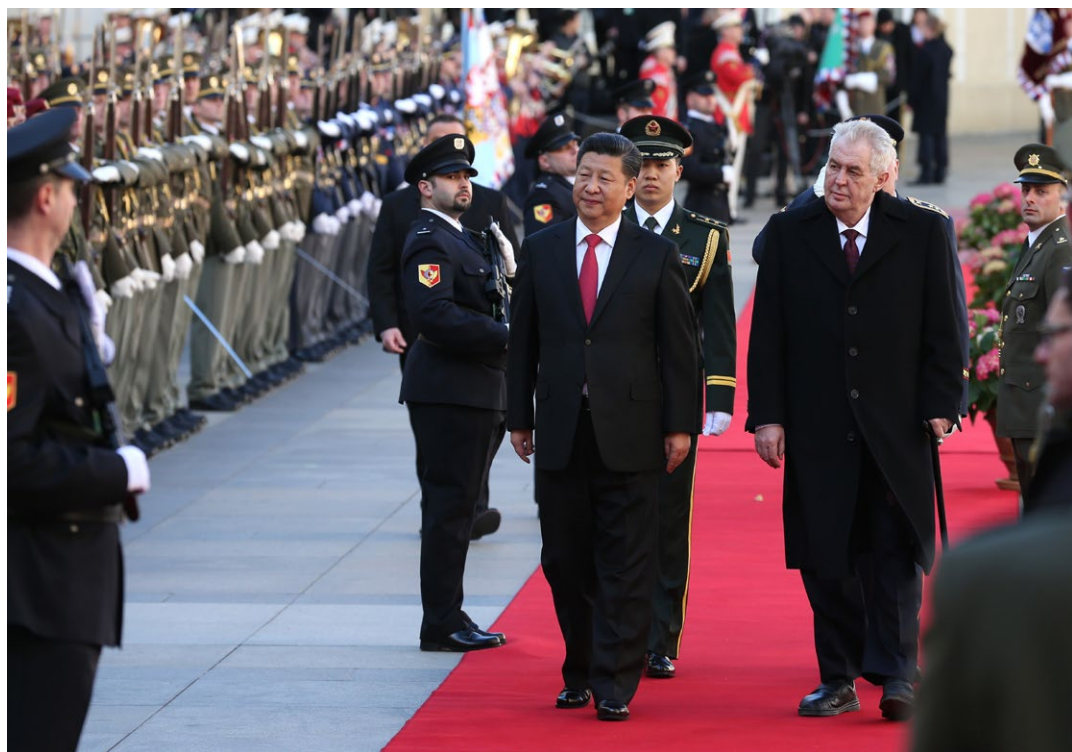


Xi visits Czech Republic, attends nuclear security summit



Chinese President Xi Jinping (L, front) attends a welcoming ceremony held by Czech President Milos Zeman in Prague, the Czech Republic, March 29, 2016.

President Xi Jinping's recent state visit to the Czech Republic and attendance of the fourth Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in Washington have highlighted China's continued efforts to promote mutually beneficial cooperation and reaffirmed China's firm commitment to safeguarding global nuclear security.

3-day historic visit to the Czech Republic

The visit to the Czech Republic from March 28 to March 30, by General Secretary Xi Jinping of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), also Chinese president, is the first state visit by a Chinese president since the two countries established diplomatic ties 67 years ago, and also Xi's first state visit to a Central and Eastern European country (CEE country) since he took office in 2013.

During his visit, Xi met with his Czech counterpart Milos Zeman and both sides agreed to lift their ties to a strategic partnership as the two countries inked a host of intergovernmental agreements to promote ties in various areas.

The two presidents agreed to enhance productivity cooperation in manufacturing industry such as machinery, automobile and aviation, deepen cooperation in such fields as finance, nuclear energy, traditional Chinese medicine, air transportation and industrial park to establish all-dimensional connectivity, and push forward innovation cooperation in emerging fields such as e-commerce, communication, artificial intelligence industry, nanotechnology and environment protection, in order to forge new development points for bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

The two sides also agreed to broaden people-to-people and cultural exchange in various fields.

A ministerial or vice-ministerial level cooperation committee will be set up, and meetings of the committee will be held in China and the Czech Republic in turns to map out the future development of the bilateral ties.

The Czech Republic was the first CEE country to sign a memorandum of understanding

with China concerning the "Belt and Road" initiative.

Jan Kohout, an adviser to President Zeman, said the initiative will bring about prosperity along the routes. It is not only about business but also about bringing people closer.

Xi's visit comes amid a broader push to deepen China's relations with the CEE countries. Working under the China-CEE "16+1" mechanism of cooperation, China and the CEE countries have held an annual summit in turns since 2012. The CEE is an essential component of China's "Belt and Road" initiative, as a quarter of the countries along the routes are located within it.

President Zeman said the Czech Republic is committed to becoming a gateway for China to Europe and becoming a hub of transportation, logistics and financial systems in China-EU trade. "We are very proud of our economic and trade achievements with China," Zeman said.

At present, China is the largest trading partner of the Czech Republic outside the EU, while the Czech Republic is China's second-largest trading partner in the CEE. Bilateral trade topped US\$11 billion last year.

Xi's proposals show resolve in nuclear security

President Xi attended the fourth Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in Washington D.C., the United States on April 1. Xi's attendance shows that China attaches great importance to nuclear security, reflecting China's willingness to promote global security governance, said Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister.

During this summit, Xi put forward a five-point proposal to promote international cooperation in nuclear security – the building of a network for capacity building on nuclear security, supporting all countries in minimizing the use of the highly enriched uranium according to their needs, promoting its national security monitoring system for nuclear power and helping others enhance their capacity in security monitoring and contribute its share to enhancing nuclear power safety and security worldwide.

Xi's proposals have won support from the participating countries and were adopted into the joint communiqué issued at the end of the summit, said Wang.

As a major power possessing nuclear technology, China highlights its efforts to prioritize security. "China's nuclear industry



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R, front) meets with Chinese and Czech young athletes of football and ice hockey after he held talks with Czech President Milos Zeman in Prague, the Czech Republic, March 29, 2016.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (center front) attends the fourth Nuclear Security Summit in Washington D.C., the United States, April 1, 2016.

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keeps a sound record in security. No nuclear materials have yet been missing or stolen," Liu Yongde, a spokesperson for the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA), said in a recent interview with China Environment News.

Currently, China has 24 nuclear power generating units under construction, accounting for 40 percent of the world's total. China is also trying to explore the international market, inking deals with Britain, Pakistan, the Czech Republic and other countries.

"China applies the most stringent security monitoring to ensure the safety and security of nuclear power stations within China and those exported to other parts of the world. Nothing is left to chance," Xi said.

Before the summit, Xi met with U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington D.C. on the sidelines of the fourth NSS, and both sides released a joint statement, pledging to continue cooperation in global nuclear security.

Nuclear security cooperation has become a bright spot in the building of a new type of major-country relations between the world's largest developing and developed countries. China and the U.S. jointly established the Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security (CENS); it has been completed a year ahead of schedule and was put into operation in Beijing. According to Xu Dazhe, head of the CAEA, the CENS is both the largest project in China-U.S. nuclear security cooperation, and the largest facility for exchange and personnel training in this field in the Asia-Pacific region.

Additionally, the two countries have cooperated in other nuclear security areas such as low-enriched reactors, the security of radioactive sources, and radiation detection at customs.

Page Stoutland, vice president of Scientific and Technical Affairs at the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, commented that China is increasingly seen as a responsible player in the global nuclear system.

Xi stresses positive internet environment

Chinese officials shall use the internet well to better understand and serve the people, revealed General Secretary Xi Jinping of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), also Chinese president, while presiding over a symposium on cyberspace security and informatization in Beijing, April 19. Xi also urged a close link between internet and real economy.

Value online public opinions

The CPC has a tradition to nurture close links with ordinary people. The Party considers the Mass Line a key weapon in China's revolutionary days and an effective governance tool in recent decades.

Accessed by 700 million Chinese users, the internet has become a major platform for public discourse. Officials should use the internet more often to learn what are the concerns and wishes of the people, Xi noted.

There should be greater tolerance and patience for internet users, Xi said, adding that officials need to draw sincere suggestions and feedback from the internet, help clarify public misconceptions about certain matters, dissolve public grudges and grievances, and correct their inaccurate perceptions.

For well-meant criticism raised on the internet, be it aimed at the overall work of the Party and the state or at individual officials, be it gentle or harsh-sounding, Xi said. "We will not only welcome it, but also carefully study it for future reference."

Deepen the integration of internet and real economy

At the symposium, Xi stressed that the new development concepts of innovation, coordination, green development, opening up and sharing, should be implemented during the internet's development.

Xi called for the in-depth integration of the internet and real economy. Even so, the internet can help propel innovation, advance economic restructuring, and shift the economic development model.

Xi said R&D investment should target technology that the country needs the most, and the industrialization of the technology should be improved.



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also head of the central internet security and informatization leading group, presides over a symposium on cyberspace security and informatization in Beijing, April 19, 2016.

"Unlike Microsoft, Intel, Google and Apple, Chinese internet enterprises do not cooperate well with each other on research, which is one of the reasons why there is a huge gap between China and other countries," Xi added.

He suggested establishing alliances between academic and research institutions and enterprises to enhance coordination. Moreover, a talent system with global competitiveness should be established.

Chinese internet enterprises have made significant contributions to realizing the stable growth of the country's economy, stimulating employment as well as improving the people's livelihood, said Xi.

Xi promised a favorable environment for the sound development of these companies and expressed a sincere welcome to foreign enterprises "as long as they abide by Chinese laws and regulations."

Secure the internet's healthy development

Security is a prerequisite for internet development. Xi urged relevant departments to speed up the development of a system to protect the key information infrastructure and enhance the country's internet defense capabilities.

A clean and healthy cyber space is in the interests of the people, while a foul and unhealthy one serves no one, said Xi. He added that the efficient management of cyberspace will create an orderly and positive environment for people to express their opinions.

A tolerant and open attitude toward online public concerns does not go against efforts to manage cyberspace, to regulate it in line with the law and fend off harmful activities such as terrorism, violence and pornography, noted Professor Xie Chuntao with the CPC Central Committee Party School.



Chinese economy stabilizing with positive signs

China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reported a 6.7 percent growth year on year in the first quarter, showing that the economy still faces heavy downward pressure but has also remained fairly resilient despite a weak external environment and recent volatility in financial markets.

Indicators encouraging

The quarterly growth is in line with market expectations and remained within the government's targeted growth range of between 6.5 and 7 percent for 2016.

Besides GDP growth, other major economic indicators also show signs of stabilization.

In the January-March period, consumption expanded 10.3 percent year on year, fixed-asset investment was up 10.7 percent, while the added value of secondary industry rose 5.8 percent and investment in the property sector grew 6.2 percent.

Exports in yuan-denominated terms surged 18.7 percent year on year in March while imports dipped 1.7 percent, which led to a monthly trade surplus of 194.6 billion yuan (US\$29.9 billion).

Consistent with the improvement in trade data, China saw stronger electricity consumption and railway freight growth in the first quarter.

The producer price index (PPI) dropped 4.3 percent year on year in March and the consumer price index (CPI) grew 2.3 percent.

In the first quarter, China generated 3.18 million new jobs, accounting for 31.8 percent of the target for this year, and fiscal revenue rose 6.5 percent year on year to 3.89 trillion yuan (US\$607.8 billion) as the broader economy shows signs of stabilizing.

Zhao Chenxin, spokesman for the National Development and Reform Commission, said major economic indicators show that economic fundamentals have improved.

Positive changes

China's economy has shown structural

resilience by no longer relying on highly polluting heavy industry, low value-added shipments to overseas markets and local governments' debt-financed investments, analyzed Sheng Laiyun, spokesman for the National Bureau of Statistics.

The world's second-largest economy is now "more balanced and is of a higher quality," he said.

One of the positive changes is the fast growth of the tertiary industry, showing a 7.6 percent year-on-year jump in the first quarter, accounting for 56.9 percent of total GDP growth. Its growth rate is significantly higher than the rates for industry as a whole and for agriculture, which were 5.8 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively.

But it is noteworthy that manufacturing activity rebounded in March for the first time in nine months, and industrial companies' profits grew at their fastest rate in more than 18 months.

The manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) rose to 50.2 in March, up from 49 in February. A reading higher than 50 indicates growth, while anything below represents a contraction.

Consumers also appear to be spending, with retail sales registering a robust 10.3% jump in the first quarter.

The fast growth of some new growth engines, such as internet-related sectors and advanced manufacturing, is also encouraging. January-March online sales rose 27.8 percent year on year, accounting for about 13 percent of gross retail sales, the NBS data showed.

Production of new-energy vehicles, medical equipment, intelligent electronic appliances and products related to environmental protection has also grown strongly.

Behind the fast growth of the high-tech sectors is the 55.3 percent increase in the number of patents approved in the first quarter.

The central bank--the People's Bank of China (PBOC)--cut commercial banks' reserve requirement ratio (RRR) by 50 basis points on

March 1 to boost lending.

It was the latest in a series of moves to cushion the country's economic growth slowdown. Apart from lowering the RRR, the bank also lowered its benchmark interest rate six times in 2015.

"China has adopted a targeted monetary policy and encouraged different financial structures, which can better serve the reform policies to address the issues of overcapacity reduction, deleveraging and inventory destocking," PBOC Governor Zhou Xiaochuan said.

Cautiously optimistic

Positive changes in major indicators will help firm market sentiment, said Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Given the warming trend, the existing policy support will continue to take effect, Ning said, citing demand-stimulating measures and supply-side structural reform.

Improvements in market expectations will translate into real production and investment that will help resolve industrial overcapacity, enhance corporate performance and stabilize the economy, he said.

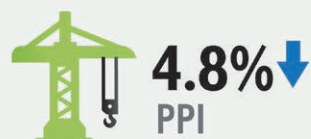
Furthermore, new economic drivers will grow rapidly as the government continues to cut red tape, support innovation and entrepreneurship, and liberalize markets.

"The Chinese economy is still resilient, full of potential and has ample wiggle room," he summarized.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also showed confidence by raising its forecast for China's economic growth in 2016 and 2017 to 6.5 percent and 6.2 percent respectively, both up 0.2 percentage point from predictions in January.

Despite the signs of "bottoming out," Sheng warned of persisting downward pressure due to uncertainty in the global economy and difficulties in the country's structural shift to consumption-driven growth and entrepreneurship.

China's major economic indicators for Q1 2016



Yale graduate serves countryside



Qin Yuefei (R) talks with the head of a local nursing home in Hengyang City, Hunan Province on January 15, 2013.

Five years ago, when Qin Yuefei graduated from the prestigious Yale University, he could have found a well-paid job in big cities like New York or Beijing, and lived an affluent life thereafter. However, to everyone's surprise, he journeyed to the hinterlands of China and became a grassroots village official earning only 1,450 yuan (US\$224.46) a month.

Two years ago, when Qin's office term ended, he got the chance of being promoted to a higher-rank government post. But to everyone's surprise again, he volunteered to work in another village some 30 km away from the previous one with his salary totally unchanged.

Even to this day, Qin's career choices have confused many people.

Born in 1985, Qin was a city boy with little experience of villages or farmers. His parents are both salary workers in Chongqing, a major city in southwest China. Since Qin's childhood, he has been known as a gifted boy with great talents in leadership and innovation. When he graduated from high school, he got full marks on his TOEFL exam, a widely used English-language exam, and obtained a full scholarship at Yale. That year, Yale only took in two high school graduates from China.

During his four years at Yale, Qin studied both political science and economics. When he graduated in 2011, he returned home and took the exam held by the local governments in central China's Hunan Province to recruit grassroots village officials. After rounds of exams and interviews, he became an assistant to the director of the village committee in Hejiashan Village.

As a village official and a member of the Communist Party of China, Qin's work covered different aspects of the daily lives of his villagers -- agriculture, economy, education, healthcare and public infrastructure. Thanks to his efforts, an aging water conservation project was repaired and upgraded. It ensured that farmers could reap a good harvest even during droughts. Qin also raised funds with charity organizations for children and the elderly. With the money, he managed to expand the nursing home in the village and buy 700 tablet computers for students of four primary and middle schools near Hejiashan. With interactive educational software, students receive remote guidance from volunteer teachers via the internet.

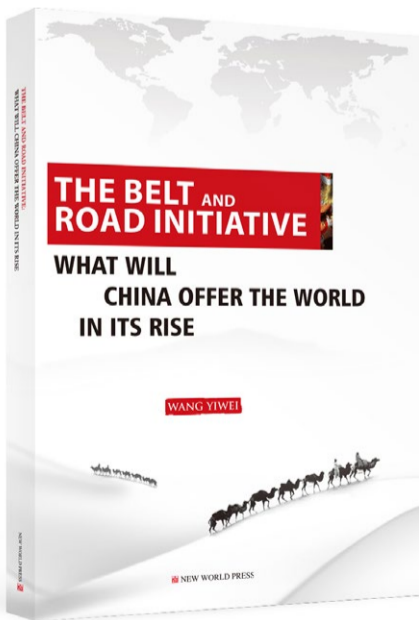
However, when Qin reviewed his work at the end of his office term, he found that he was only able to tackle specific problems, but failed to promote sustainable development in the village. The village could easily return to its previous state after he left. Therefore, he decided to work in another village and tried everything he could to make real changes in the countryside.

In Baiyun Village, Qin established a cooperative to help farmers sell their products on an online platform. The website, known as Serve for China, has attracted many graduates of famous foreign colleges and village officials with a background of college education. By integrating top resources in the internet, agriculture, finance, media and academic fields, the platform is aimed at helping village officials better serve China's countryside and encourage comprehensive change.

"It's true that many of my classmates chose high paying jobs, but we are all serving society. The only difference is that we are serving society from different perspectives and in different sectors," Qin said.

Being a village official, Qin is able to see how people live at the bottom level of society. "This broadens my view and offers me opportunities to solve practical problems. Every day is new to me, so my choice has been worth it," he said.

A new style of globalization: the 'Belt and Road' initiative



In his international bestselling book, "The World Is Flat", American journalist Thomas L. Friedman viewed the world as a level playing field in the era of globalization. But to Chinese scholar Wang Yiwei, this may be the biggest illusion of our time. To him, we are living in a split global village as peoples and nations are divided geographically, economically, politically and culturally.

In his new book "The Belt and Road Initiative: What Will China Offer the World in Its Rise," Wang argues for the unsustainability of the U.S.-dominated globalization and pointed out that the "Belt and Road" initiative proposed

by China is a great solution to narrow the gaps, initiate a true and inclusive globalization and become the main theme of the 21st century.

As the first work in China to analyze the "Belt and Road" initiative from the perspective of international relations, Wang's book has explained the value of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and its influence on China's relations with global major powers.

In his opinion, the "Belt and Road" initiative has opened a new chapter in the history of China's all-round opening-up. Focusing on connectivity in the fields of policy communication, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, monetary circulation and understanding between peoples, the initiative marks China's fundamental transformation from being a mere participant to a shaper of globalization, and that the situation is changing from one where China opens up to the outside world, to one where the world opens itself to China.

Moreover, through the connectivity among Europe, Africa, and Asia, this initiative will revive hinterland and marine civilizations, help developing countries shake off poverty, and promote the sustained and successful rise of emerging countries, so as to rectify the traditional logic of globalization.

Martin Albrow, a British sociologist and globalization specialist praised Wang's book as a far reaching exploration of the significance of the "Belt and Road" initiative. He agreed with Wang that the initiative is China's contribution to a new kind of co-existence and sustainable development, and an alternative to the old-style Western globalization. The initiative operates across economic, political, cultural, social and

Getting to Know **CHINA** through **KEYWORDS**

Green development:

Under the 13th Five-year Plan (2016-2020), heightened attention will be given to an eco-friendly approach to development in order to preserve harmony between man and nature.

[More>>](#)

The greater good and self-interest:

China views the relationship between the greater good and self-interest as an essential aspect of international relations.

[More>>](#)

Major events in April

April 5: Xi meets British Prince Andrew Keywords: Xi Jinping, UK, Prince Andrew

President Xi Jinping said that he expects the British royal family to continue to play an active role in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese and British people.

April 7: China, Switzerland vow to upgrade cooperation Keywords: Li Keqiang, Switzerland

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang met with Swiss President Johann Schneider-Ammann, vowing to upgrade bilateral cooperation.

April 8: China, Sri Lanka pledge to advance cooperation Keywords: Sri Lanka

China and Sri Lanka pledged to further push forward their strategic cooperative partnership and inked a series of documents.

April 13: China, Nigeria pledge to cement strategic relations Keyword: Nigeria

China and Nigeria have pledged to further promote their strategic partnership during the state visit of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to Beijing.

April 19: China, New Zealand agree to upgrade and expand FTA Keywords: FTA, New Zealand

China and New Zealand will further expand the bilateral trade with signing five cooperation agreements in areas including agriculture, scientific research, quality inspection and quarantine, finance and education.

April 25: Xi highlights measures to tackle poverty Keywords: Anhui, poverty

Insurance coverage and health benefits should be expanded to tackle poverty, said President Xi Jinping during an inspection tour to Jinzhai County, Anhui province.

ecological sectors, while being based on a firm communications infrastructure.

He said that the book both challenges deep Western prejudices about China and offers others a future direction they cannot see for themselves. For example, Wang suggests to skeptical Europeans that the New Silk Road can reconcile Europe with Russia and make it both a Eurasian and Atlantic power. At the same time, he assures the United States that it will remain the world's greatest maritime power.

The book, published by the New World Press, was launched on April 12 during this year's London Book Fair. Recently, at the Munich Security Conference, the author sent this book to former United Nations General Secretary Kofi Annan, former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and other government officials.

The author Wang Yiwei is a professor with the School of International Studies, director of the Institute of International Affairs, Director of the Center for European Studies and a senior fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China. He was a former diplomat with the Chinese Mission to the European Union and a professor at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University.