
China Briefs

President Xi Discusses Afghanistan with Iranian President Raisi

President Xi Jinping spoke by telephone with Iran's new President, Ebrahim Raisi, on August 18. According to the China Ministry of Foreign Affairs [readout](#), "Xi Jinping pointed out [that] in the face of a complicated situation that combines profound global changes and a pandemic unseen in a century, China and Iran have stood together and helped each other.... China supports Iran's legitimate concerns on the comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue, and stands ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Iran on regional affairs, so as to jointly safeguard common interests and promote regional security and stability."

The Iranian [readout](#) was more explicit on the topic of Afghanistan. As the Taliban took power in Kabul after 20 years of conflict, the new Iranian President said his country shared with China "common interests and demands" regarding Afghanistan, and was "ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation," according to a statement released by the President's office. "[T]he President stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate with China in establishing security, stability and peace in Afghanistan and contributing to development, progress and prosperity for the people of the country...."

Xi's call reflects the Chinese interest in greater involvement in resolving

some of the problems in Southwest Asia.

Terrorist Bombing in Pakistani Port City: China Nationals Again Targeted

A suicide bombing attack wounded three people, including two Chinese nationals, in Pakistan's port city of Gwadar, August 20. The attack also killed two children who were playing nearby. According to news reports, the separatist Balochistan Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack. "BLA carried out a 'self-sacrificing' attack against a convoy of Chinese engineers," the group said in a statement. This follows an attack on a bus in July that killed thirteen people in the northwestern province of Khyber-Paktunkhwa, nine of whom were Chinese on their way to work on the Dasu hydropower project, part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The Chinese embassy in Islamabad condemned the attack and asked Pakistani authorities to upgrade security for Chinese workers in Pakistan.

Building Gwadar Port—the terminus of the rail and road connections from China through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea—and the business parks around the port, is a major part of the CPEC project. "The attack in Gwadar is just another expression of a game of sabotage against the economic vision of the great leadership of China and Pakistan; our enemy cannot undermine our resolve, we will spare no effort to bring the culprits to justice," Fawad Hussain Chaudhry, Federal

Minister for Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan, said on Twitter on Saturday.

Wang Yi Sends a Clear Message to UK: No More Geopolitics in Afghanistan

Foreign Minister Wang Yi was on the phone this week, speaking to many of the countries involved in Afghanistan. To his British counterpart, British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab, Wang said that the developments in Afghanistan proved that the externally imposed governance model has not received the support of the Afghan people and lacks a social foundation, noting that there is no way for military intervention to resolve regional hotspot issues.

Wang told Raab that there were now several aspects to be considered: first, whether the Taliban can create a political structure that can unite the country and avoid civil war; second, whether the Taliban can separate itself completely from terrorism, resolutely crack down on various terrorist organizations, and avoid becoming a gathering place for terrorists again; and third, whether the international community can play a role in this process. In order to do that, he said, the international community should fully respect the independence and sovereignty of Afghanistan and the will of the people, engage in more dialogue and guidance, don't go in with preconceived notions, don't take matters into your own hands, and particularly don't use Afghanistan as an arena for geopolitics.

After the absolute failure of the

U.S. and NATO attempt to transform Afghanistan into a Western outpost aimed at Russia and China, Wang Yi was intent on having the geopolitical crowd learn their lesson. Raab tweeted after the call with Wang Yi that, “We noted the importance of addressing security concerns, regional stability and addressing the humanitarian crisis.”

China Building Test Track for Low-Vacuum, 1,000 km/h Maglev

Construction will soon start on a test line in Datong in North China’s Shanxi Province, for what will be the world’s fastest overland vehicle—a low-vacuum-tube, magnetically levitated (maglev) train with speeds up to 1,000 km/h. Preparatory work has been completed, the local government said at the beginning of August.

This latest development marks China’s rapid rise as a global leader in high-speed transport technology and manufacturing. A 600 km/h maglev train came off the assembly line last month in Qingdao, Shandong Province.

The test line is part of the laboratory work for the low-vacuum-tube, maglev high-speed train project. It will provide a platform for these ultra-fast vehicles that can travel faster than airplanes. The first phase of the project will involve a 2 km line scheduled to be completed by June 2022, followed by equipment installation and tests beginning in July 2022. A 15 km test line will be built within two years. The plan calls for a “railway” line of 60 km, according to project information posted on the website of Datong’s municipal government August 14.

Low-vacuum-tube or tunnel high-speed trains will use superconducting magnetic levitation technology to

eliminate ground contact and hence its friction. The low vacuum in the tube reduces air resistance. These measures can enable speeds of more than 1,000 km/h.

“Maglev and hyperloop systems are only part of the new era of transportation. A route of at least 50 km is necessary to test various aspects, including the vehicle itself, as well as signals, command systems and routines,” railway transport engineer Wang Dashui told *Global Times*. In research and development, China holds 43.5% of the world’s maglev patents, ranking first, and well above Japan’s 20.6%, according to a report sent to *Global Times* by intelligent property data service provider PatSnap.

China To Build Solar Panel Above Earth’s Atmosphere

Chinese engineers have taken up an idea for a solar panel above Earth’s atmosphere that was popularized during the 1960s by leading space scientists including Krafft Ehrlicke. The problem with solar power as proposed by the Green Agenda crowd, is the low energy density and low daily collecting period.

To get one kilowatt of power out of a solar panel located on Earth’s surface, the land area requirements and construction costs are high, primarily because the solar energy has largely been dissipated in the atmosphere. A solar panel located above Earth’s atmosphere, however, can capture a tremendous amount of energy. The problem is to transfer that energy to receptors on Earth without losing much in the transmission. High-frequency microwaves are generally thought to be the solution.

Engineers at Chongqing University are intent on creating the infrastructure in space needed to beam such solar energy to receptors on Earth. The Chinese government, in fact, has plans

to put a one-megawatt solar power station in Earth orbit by 2030 that would convert sunlight to microwaves. Construction of a ground testing facility is scheduled to be finished by the end of this year.

Many problems have still to be overcome. Radiation damage is one problem for a space energy station above Earth’s atmosphere. Another is keeping the transmitter focussed on the Earth target while keeping the receptor facing the Sun. Also, the intensity of these microwaves coming to a specific spot on Earth may cause disruptions in WiFi and other wireless equipment in the immediate area. Experiments are now underway to test the ability to send a microwave beam over long distances.

China Conducts Second Spacewalk at Its Space Station

Chinese astronauts on August 19 conducted their second extravehicular activity (EVA) on the Tianhe space module, the central module for the Chinese space station, Tiangong. They completed some construction to ready the station for the next set of astronauts and to prepare for the next two modules, scheduled to be brought up before the end of the year.

Another panoramic camera was set up to get a better picture of the station and the new space arm. A second heat pump was installed to deal with the build-up of heat in the capsule in the intense sunlight, and foot restraints and a platform were installed in the robotic arm for astronauts to work from. While the EVA was scheduled to last 8 hours, the taikonauts completed their mission in only 6 hours, which is very unusual for such a spacewalk. They also had the benefit of newly-designed extravehicular mobility suits, which are far more flexible than those used on previous missions.