

China Briefs

Xi Jinping to Central Asian Nations: ‘Joining Hands for a Shared Future’

On Jan. 25, Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over and addressed the virtual summit of five Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—which had gathered to celebrate thirty years of diplomatic relations with China. Following the violent color revolution attempt in Kazakhstan in early January, which was successfully repulsed with the help of Russian-led military forces from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), China launched a concerted effort to come to the assistance of the Kazakh government with economic assistance.

In his speech to the group, “Joining Hands for a Shared Future,” Xi focused on their “common pursuit of development,” pointing to several key infrastructure projects built throughout the region—pipelines, highways, and railroads—which have dramatically increased growth across Central Asia. He noted that Belt and Road Initiative cooperation “between China and Central Asian countries is burgeoning and bearing fruits.” Policy and cooperation among all is based on mutual respect, good-neighborly friendship, and solidarity, he said, and China will work with these nations to “step up high-level exchanges and strategic communication to make the ‘China plus Central Asia’ foreign ministers meeting and other dialogue and cooperation mechanisms a continued success.”

Xi put special emphasis on the need for “high-quality development”

as well as cooperation on security. He lauded joint efforts to combat “terrorism, separatism and extremism, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking,” and particularly pointed to a commitment to “resolutely reject external interference or attempts to instigate color revolutions” such as that in Kazakhstan. Later he repeated that the group rejects “any attempts by external forces to foment color revolutions,” and firmly opposes “interference in other countries’ internal affairs under the pretext of human rights.”

In addition, Xi stressed that “a peaceful and stable Afghanistan that enjoys development and prosperity is in the common interests of our six countries.” He announced that in the next three years, in the context of his proposed Global Development Initiative, China will grant \$500 million in assistance to Central Asian countries to support a number of development initiatives.

China Releases Space Plan: Moving Forward at Warp Speed

China’s State Council released a White Paper, “China’s Space Program: A 2021 Perspective,” on Jan. 28. Since the last White Paper in 2016, China has achieved major accomplishments in space: the completion of the first phase of the lunar exploration program; the start of the construction of a space station; and the first interplanetary mission to Mars. China has also announced plans for an International Lunar Research Station (ILRS).

For the next five years the focus will be on consolidating those accomplishments and developing China’s

space industry. The Preamble to the White Paper says:

“The space industry is a critical element of the overall national strategy [and will] contribute more to China’s growth as a whole. [The space industry is] innovation-driven... China puts innovation at the core of the space industry.”

Space exploration has now become an integral and necessary part of China’s economic development perspective and the area from which it feels it will draw the major innovations and discoveries for propelling the Chinese economy. As the White Paper states:

“In the next five years, China will integrate space science, technology and applications while pursuing the new development philosophy, building a new development model, and meeting the requirements for high-quality development. It will start a new journey towards [becoming] a space power. The space industry will contribute more to China’s growth as a whole, to global consensus and common effort with regard to outer space exploration and utilization, and to human progress.”

China has a two-pronged approach to international cooperation. First, it seeks partners for the space station and the ILRS, which it is constructing in collaboration with Russia. Second, China has taken responsibility for bringing developing countries into the space arena. Through programs affiliated with the United Nations and its own regional organizations, China has trained almost 1,000 space industry professionals from other countries, with a special focus on increasing access to space technology for citizens from the 140 countries which have joined the Belt and Road Initiative. The

White Paper states, “China will press ahead with the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative Space Information Corridor.”

Space technology has already become integral to China’s programs here on Earth, whether it be high-speed rail (with its satellite links), poverty reduction (facilitating a communications grid which allows local farmers to sell their products to the entire country), urbanization, rural revitalization (remote satellite imaging), and computerized planting and harvesting.

As the program proceeds to plant a research station on the Moon, there are even more gains to be made. Farming the resources of the Moon has always been a long-term goal of the Chinese lunar program since the notion was formulated in China by Ouyang Ziyuan at the end of the last century. As late as August 2021, Ouyang was lecturing on how the world could build solar power plants on the Moon and transport the energy to Earth. In addition, he noted, the large quantity of Helium-3 on the Moon can be utilized for fueling future fusion reactors here on Earth—or on the Moon.

China has also become a major force for discovery in its deep space experiments, whether it be its solar system exploration, its recently landed Mars rover, its investigation of electromagnetism in the solar system, or in the study of gravitational waves. China has learned the lessons of NASA’s Apollo program and is gearing up to take a further leap for mankind in space exploration.

Winter Olympics ‘Covenant of Ice and Snow’ Becomes a Symbol of Human Unity

The Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics began with a gala opening. As the American athletes are participating, it couldn’t be ignored entirely, so NBC

aired it with a running commentary regarding China’s alleged human rights abuses: the imagined oppression of the Uyghurs and China’s (now-abandoned) one-child policy.

While the Olympics are supposed to be non-political, the Biden Administration, by declaring a diplomatic boycott, imposed its anti-China hysteria onto the games. In contrast to the attempt to divide the world between the Western so-called democracies and the rest of the world, China intended to use the occasion to bring the world together. This year’s Olympic theme, “Together for a Shared Future,” fully reflects what the Chinese President hopes to accomplish in this much-divided world.

The idea of mankind’s shared future was present in the opening ceremony in the National Stadium, known as the Bird’s Nest. The last two Chinese athletes, a man and a woman, she of Uyghur ethnicity, born in Xinjiang, placed the Olympic torch into an opening in a giant illuminated snowflake (replacing the traditional Olympic cauldron) composed of smaller snowflakes bearing the names of every participating country.

The day before the opening, President Xi told the organizers in a video announcement:

“The world today, under the combined impact of changes unseen in a hundred years and a once-in-a-century pandemic, is entering a new period of turbulence and transformation, and facing multiple challenges to humanity. The IOC [International Olympic Committee] has led the Olympic Movement in forging ahead with courage and fortitude, playing an important and unique role in galvanizing global solidarity and cooperation to tide over this difficult time.”

These sentiments were also echoed by IOC Chairman Thomas Bach in his statements at the Opening Ceremony.

While a number of countries fol-

lowed the lead of the U.S. by declaring a diplomatic boycott of the Olympics, other countries did not attend, either because of COVID-19 restrictions, or simply in order to avoid a conflict with the U.S. Nevertheless, more than 20 world leaders did attend, including from Russia, Serbia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Argentina, Ecuador, and Egypt. Also in attendance were UN Secretary General António Guterres and WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus.

China Establishes Strategic Relationship with Argentina

On Feb. 6, President Xi met with Argentina’s President Alberto Fernández, who was attending the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics. The two leaders pledged to deepen strategic cooperation on trade, currency and the infrastructure-focused Belt and Road Initiative, while also agreeing on a five-year plan of agricultural cooperation. The government of Argentina reported that the agreements will provide financing “for investments and works for more than \$23.7 billion.”

While in Beijing, Fernández visited the new museum dedicated to the history of the Communist Party of China. Xi said that they had built the museum so that people would not forget the process which has led to China becoming a great nation. Fernández said that the governing philosophy of the Communist Party of China and the governing philosophy of his own party were the same, namely taking the people’s well-being as the starting point of governance. Xi said that these agreements would usher in “another 50 brilliant years” under the comprehensive strategic partnership with Argentina.