

China Plenum Charts Course for New Scientific Breakthroughs

by William Jones

Aug. 1—On July 18, the Chinese Communist Party concluded the Third Plenary session, or Third Plenum, of the party's Central Committee, which will play a key role in determining which direction China will take over the coming years. In this plenum, China has launched a science and technology program of an intensity not usually seen except for a country facing major threats from abroad, or in the face of the threat of imminent war.

The Third Plenary Session, which occurs every five years, deals specifically with the economic direction of the country. It was the Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress in 1978 in which Deng Xiaoping announced China's reform and opening up, and it was the Third Plenum of the 18th Party Congress in 2013 that determined that the market would be playing a decisive role in the Chinese economy. This year's Third Plenum will prove to be as decisive, if not more so, than those previous plenums.

The plenum is happening at a pivotal—and disruptive—period in world history. NATO's ongoing war in Ukraine, a possible war in the Middle East stemming from Israel's total suppression of Palestinian nationhood, and the ongoing campaign in the West to slow down the pace of China's development—and even to "contain" China—has created a situation which is, as China's President Xi Jinping has repeatedly said, "unseen in a century." It represents cataclysmic shifts in the system of international relations and in the structure of global governance.

The plenum issued a communiqué on July 18 covering all the issues that had been discussed and decided upon. The drafting of the communiqué was con-

ducted by a group personally headed by Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping over a period of six months. As Xi himself indicated in an unusual introductory preface to the communiqué, it represented an intense process in which comments were solicited from experts in a variety of fields in the party, in the government, and in society generally.

There were over 300 new reform measures recommended in the communiqué, covering all the areas of



The Central Committee's Third Plenum has issued a communiqué, developed over months, that directs China towards an economy based on the cultivation of creativity for continuous breakthroughs in all fields of science.

social and political life, which the authors felt were necessary in order to deepen the ongoing process of reform and moving forward to the goal of full modernization of China in all respects by the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 2049. The reforms included, of course, a greater degree of opening up to foreign investment and to international cooperation in all areas of the economy.

The Western media, not known for its rigor or its honesty, has not gotten the message from the plenum, with many commentators foolishly drawing the conclusion that not much was changed by it.

Pushing the Envelope on Science and Technology

While there are a myriad of issues touched upon in the communiqué, the section devoted to science and innovation was unusually extensive and absolutely crucial. With the increased sanctions and threat of sanctions from the U.S. and its “allies,” as well as the imposition of the Trump-era trade tariffs which have been largely maintained by the Biden-Harris crowd, China knows that it must depend even more on its own resources to continue its growth and prosperity. There will be a major effort to maintain and develop key supply chains. In addition, the thrust toward scientific innovation, which has been a top priority since China’s reform and opening up period, has now been placed on steroids. The issue now is not simply expanding investment in science and technology, but rather of creating the capability to systematically make breakthroughs in all the important sectors of science.

There was therefore an extensive discussion at the plenum about how to cultivate creativity in scientists and engineers, and how to educate a future science cadre focused on making new breakthroughs in their particular field. China has learned a lesson that economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche, had tried to teach a recalcitrant political class in the United States for over a half-century until his death in 2019.

In 1989, LaRouche, who was serving a prison sentence as the result of a “bad faith” operation by the Federal government aimed at sabotaging the relationship he had developed with President Reagan, and silencing him and his organization, wrote a little book entitled *In Defense of Common Sense*. In it, he described the nature of economic development as a “continuous function,” but one that was characterized by abrupt “leaps” and “discontinuities” caused by new scientific discoveries. Such fundamental discoveries not only introduce “new” elements in the economy, but often require a revision of everything that went before. This was the case with Einstein’s discovery of “relativity,” which showed that

the prevailing belief in Euclidean geometry, with all its laws and axioms, was fundamentally false.

Looking for More International Partners on a Win-Win Basis

China has taken heed of this phenomenon. The Third Plenum communiqué clearly indicates that China feels that it will be able to foster a “continuum” of scientific discovery, which will allow it to survive and prosper in spite of Western obstacles.

That does not mean that China will become closed to the world. On the contrary, even if the West contin-



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China’s focus on new scientific principles has already put it in a leading position in thermonuclear fusion research for cheap, abundant energy. Here, the Huanliu-3 tokamak in Chengdu, where an advanced magnetic field structure for achieving fusion was created in 2023, in an experiment involving 17 international institutes and universities.

ues to attempt to sabotage China’s development, the Global South will ally with China even more closely. The recent visit by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, in relaunching a cooperative relationship with China after her mistaken moves to leave the Belt and Road Initiative, indicates that not everybody in the West is prepared to follow the Anglo-American dictates.

As the U.S. National Academy of Science president, Marcia McNutt, underlined in her “State of the Science” speech on June 26, China is far ahead of the United States in most of the parameters that indicate scientific advance, and it will be with some difficulty if the U.S. is to catch up. The conditions for support of

science in the United States, especially at the Federal level, is abysmal, and changing the popular culture to encourage young people to engage in science will not be easy after so many years of neglect and the ever-more debased “pop culture.” In many respects, success in this requires more, rather than less cooperation, with China in the field of science and science education. The thousands of diligent and hard-working Chinese students who once graced U.S. campuses provided a certain richness in the educational system. With fewer Chinese students coming to the U.S. as a result of the present aversive climate, our universities are not only losing money, but also valuable talent, which had enriched the study environment as well as our scientific and engineering capabilities.

Will Chinese Advances in Fusion Be a New ‘Sputnik Moment’ for America?

One field in which China is definitely ahead, and which is causing some unnecessary concern, is China’s extensive efforts to develop thermonuclear

fusion energy which, at the beginning of the year, was officially made a part of China’s future energy mix. China is both playing a key role in the international ITER project on fusion in France, but is also intensely working “in house” on a variety of fusion experiments, which, when developed, will provide a potentially infinite source of energy for mankind. The U.S. was on the verge of making similar breakthroughs in 1980 with legislation that called for a 20-year Apollo-style program for developing fusion energy. The legislation was passed in Congress and signed into law by Jimmy Carter, but neither the Congress nor the Executive Branch was willing to finance such an initiative. The government campaign to “stop LaRouche,” which began in the early 1980s, ultimately led, in 1987, to the closing by the Federal government of the LaRouche-affiliated Fusion Energy Foundation. Without the support of this important group and the 100,000 subscribers to its magazine, *Fusion*, there was no substantial political force available to give support to the scientists in the field or to help push further legislation through Congress. America dropped the ball then, and China has picked it up.

While there has been something of a “Sputnik shock” in America with regard to China’s rise, which no doubt threatens the vision of those geopolitical “geniuses” in Washington and London who choreographed this suicidal war in Ukraine, it would be well that the “shock” serve as a wake-up call to America to do better than we have over the last few decades. While some may foolishly beat the drums of war and try to foment conflict with China, what the U.S. really needs is not the production of more bombs, guns and rockets to fight more wars, but more functioning roads, highways, bridges, schools, and hospitals.

Let the rise of China be a challenge, but a challenge to reach the greatness that this nation had once exhibited under the enlightened leadership of a Franklin Roosevelt or a John F. Kennedy. This would be welcomed both by our friends and our alleged “rivals.” If we can renew that spirit, we, like China, can also talk about “rejuvenation” in America. But if we continue in the direction we’re now moving, viewing China and Russia as “rivals” or even “enemies” who must be defeated, we will soon find ourselves on the path to utter perdition, and possible nuclear extinction.



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