

China Is Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

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"China's 70-Years Development and the Construction of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind". This is the title of an International Conference, organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) which I was privileged to attend from 5-7 November 2019 in Shanghai. It is a reflection on China's Anniversary of 70 years Revolution, her most remarkable achievements, with a joint look into the future – the future of China, linking up with the rest of the world. The "link" was clearly presented and seen as the New Silk Road, President Xi Jinping's "bridge-building" Belt and Road Initiative. Representatives from over 140 countries and international organizations presented their vision on how they might cooperate with China for a shared future. The result is a rich palette of ideas and potential opportunities for cooperation.

Members of the Chinese Leadership had these words to open the International Forum:

"The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The achievements of China's development over the past 70 years show that we must remain committed to the path of peaceful development and pursue a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has made positive contributions to promoting global openness, connectivity, mutual benefit and common development, and has played an important role for the world peace and stability. At present, in order to cope with the uncertainty in globalization, we should positively explore ways to construct an open world economy, elaborate measures to build consensus among international community, and provide intellectual support for building of the community with a shared future for mankind."

The conference was extremely constructive by all contributions, presenting ideas in pursuit of harmonious "win-win" situations in cooperation with China. This is precisely the concept behind China's drive for building bridges between countries and designing joint ventures; no coercion, no subjugation – they have to be equally beneficial for all partners. This is the secret to harmony and to a peaceful coexistence. This concept follows the thousands of years old teachings of Tao – which are still, and will remain – China's philosophy in directing her foreign policy.

In that sense, one may have observed that the often-brutal challenges that China is facing from the United States in particular and the west in general, got a bit short-changed in the discussions. Participants did not want to harp on the negative "encounters" that China is confronting – almost permanent aggressions, a smear campaign, false accusations, conflict provocations, sanctions in the form of trade and tariffs; in short, an emerging ever-growing

economic war. While not to focus on adversity is a positive omen, yet, it presents the myriad of good ideas under a veil of a dreamlike reality.

Clearly though, China's ever-peaceful search for harmony instead of hostility, will give her the upper hand, eventually, avoiding violent confrontation. What the west does not understand, does not want to understand, is that China follows a non-aggression policy – and yes, I'm repeating myself – emanating from the ancient, thousands of year-old Tao philosophy of harmony and peace.

The “Shared Future for Mankind” Forum run in parallel with the giant 2019 Chinese International Import Expo (CIIE), also in Shanghai, where about 67 countries were exhibiting their key export goods. In total, 180 countries and regional, as well as international organizations, 3,800 enterprises and 250 corporations of the Forbe's 500 list were participating. The Expo had a wide range of products and gadgets to offer, from watches to drones, to smart kitchens and self-driving cars and Artificial Intelligent (AI) in the form of smart robots, so smart, one was compelled to ask, who is in charge me or the robot.

What resonated throughout the conference is the remarkable progress China has made in her 70 years of revolutionary existence, progress, physical and sociological, no other countries have achieved in recent history. China started on 1 October 1949 at ground zero – miserable poverty, famine, epidemic diseases, education and health services were few and far in between and of low quality, essential medication was largely absent – all the result of centuries of western and Japanese colonization, exploitation and enslavement.

From that abysmal level, thanks to Chairman Mao's two-pronged Revolution, starting with what he called The Great Leap Forward (1958 – 1962), a Communist Party of China (CPC) led social and economic campaign converting rural agrarian areas into a socialist industrialized economy through communal farming and agricultural cooperatives. As was to be expected, this 4-year effort was constantly attacked by infiltrated anticommunist saboteurs at a high social and economic cost for China. “The Great Leap” was followed by the ten-year Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), aiming at cleansing China from infiltrated, foreign paid capitalist elements and influences.

These capitalist assets had only one goal: Breaking the revolution and its spirit at an early stage and returning China to the western usurpers. They definitely did not want China to flourish under her own political, communist values and beliefs. Lest China might become an example for the rest of the world to the detriment of western oligarchs and colonialists.

Foreign meddling in China's early stages of Chairman Mao's Revolution, as well as now, bears a huge cost for China. Therefore, portraying China's Revolution as a failure, was a typical western lie-propaganda campaign. It also served to hide the west's own disastrous economic and geopolitical failures around the globe. Propaganda converts lies to the truth in complacent societies. This is what's happening today more than ever in the west.

From the perspective of the Chinese reality, Mao's Revolution and the subsequent evolution have improved life in China like no other movements or reforms in China's recent history. It created a public education and health system, eradicating analphabetism, as well as deadly endemic diseases. Alleviation of poverty being a prime-focus of Mao's Revolution, it has lifted about 800 million people out of poverty, thereby generating a better equilibrium in the nation's wellbeing. It laid the groundwork for Chinese scholars to advance China towards

food self-sufficiency – which she attained in 2018.

Today, China's progress in research, science and technology keeps advancing at an incredible speed. Advancements include transport infrastructure, public transportation systems, like high-speed Maglev (magnetic levitation) trains that have largely surpassed European and even Japanese systems in speed, punctuality and comfort. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being promoted and advanced through a newly developed US\$ 2.1 billion AI industrial park. AI is already today used in manufacturing, in ports' loading facilities, as well as in medicine, even in surgery. AI is also used in 3D printing. It is expected that within 15 – 20 years the vast majority of Chinese will have access to 3D printing. In other words, they will have the possibility to invent and produce new tools and products, as well as building, modifying and repairing their own homes home-based infrastructure – and, of course, much more.

To summarize China's progress, the observations of a high-ranking Beijing University Professor may be indicative. When he first experienced London's 'tube' (subway) system in the early sixties, he thought this was a dream for China. Fifty years on China's underground transport system in urban agglomerations has largely surpassed the one of major western cities, in speed ease of access, cleanliness and discipline.

The focus of a "Shared Future for Mankind" Forum was, of course President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), potentially the bridge that spans the world. The BRI has become essentially China's Foreign Policy guiding vehicle. And rightly so. Because it could indeed propel the world towards more harmony, more peaceful cooperation – cooperation with socioeconomic benefits for all. BRI has currently some 160 members-countries and international organizations and is steadily growing, including in what might well be considered 'adversary' countries, like many in Europe.

While for some strange reasons, Europe, the EU, still seems to be obliged to follow Washington's dictate, there is an increasing awakening, namely that the most logical and most beneficial way for all to do business is across the huge transcontinental area of Eurasia – which also includes the Middle East, where BRI, through joint ventures, could become an instrument for conflict resolution. After all, hundreds of years before the British Empire moved across the Atlantic to North America, gigantic Eurasia was the normal trading ground for adjacent as well as more distant countries. Russia and the Far East were linked up with Western Europe. Today, going back to this principle, would be a giant step forward – away from ever-belligerent and coercive relations with an aggressive and destructive Anglo-American empire. We may eventually get there.

Indeed, in the context of BRI, economic growth was also on the table. China's rapid decline from years of 11% and 12% growth to now 5% to 7% was a concern. Is China's economy going into a slump, is it failing – what happens? – Was a worrying question, if not spoken then inferred by innuendo. The response is rather simple. China's rapid and enormous growth was mostly accumulating along the eastern, highly urbanized shores, creating a development gap with the Chinese eastern countryside.

A planned reduction of growth allows for a more even distribution, a more horizontal than vertical growth, meaning addressing more social and locally focused development, something China can do, because her public banking system works for the benefit of the people not for some far-away shareholders – and it is less bound to the use of natural

resources. Mind you, a 5% or even 4% growth is still a multiple of the west's average. Besides, growth is a linear western capitalist indicator, focused on ever-more capital accumulations for ever-fewer people and corporations.

China today is the world's second largest economy in absolute GDP terms (US\$ 14.3 trillion, 2019 est.), projected to bypass the US (US\$ 21.3 trillion, 2019 est.) by 2025, or earlier. But measured by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), China is already today the world's number one economy. Indeed, PPP is the only meaningful indicator. What counts in the end is how much can you buy in your country with your economic output. Everything else is (almost) irrelevant.

In addition, China is practicing a stable and secure monetary policy. Unlike western currencies, the Yuan is backed by a solid economy and by gold. In 2017 the Yuan was officially admitted into the basket of the IMF's SDR (Special Drawing Right) which contains the US-dollar (41.73%), Euro (30.93%), Chinese Yuan (10.92%), Japanese Yen (8.33%) and the British pound (8.09%). By having been admitted into the SDR basket, China has become officially a reserve currency and is actually rapidly replacing the dollar as a world reserve currency. The world increasingly recognizes that the dollar is, like its younger cousin, the euro, is but fiat money, meaning based on nothing, other than debt, because it is indiscriminately printed or computer generated as needed, amounting to a colossal pyramid or Ponzi scheme.

The current US debt to GDP ratio is about 105%. However, what the US General Accounting Office calls "unmet obligations" amounts to more than 700% of GDP (net present value of total outstanding obligations discounted to today's value). According to former Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan, responding to a journalist's question, "we will never pay back our debt; we will just print new money".

The gigantic amount of US-dollars flooding the world, estimated at more than 50% of total convertible money, compares to less than 3% of the Chinese Yuan. No matter, treasurers around the globe increasingly realize that a Yuan-based reserve is worth more than one based on fiat US-dollar nominated assets.

In conclusion, this first of its kind CASS-organized Conference provided for an excellent stock-taking and for a vision ahead. It presented many ideas and offered myriad opportunities for networking among think-alikes and potential partners. What is, however, key to success is that this effort does not stand alone, that there will be a follow-up to monitor and register what may have emerged of the ideas and proposals put forward at the Forum and how new initiatives may be solidified.

While the west remains stagnant, self-centered and self-concerned, China, and with her, her eastern allies, Russia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), open up to new ideas, to the world in general. They offer to connect — the west could learn a tremendous amount of wisdom from China. But, of course, this may not be written or said aloud. The dominant west would never admit such truth, for it would require the west to abandon a never-ending war economy and to also seek peace and harmonious relations in a multi-polar world – to attain a Shared Future for Mankind.

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