



**CCAS CHINA NEWS**  
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**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING INSPECTS TIANJIN ON FEBRUARY 1**

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited and inspected Tianjin city ahead of the Spring Festival. On February 1, he first visited a village in Xiqing District to learn about the recovery of farming activities after last year's floods. He also visited people affected by the floods there. The same afternoon he went to a historical street in the urban area of the city to check the supply of goods for the holiday season, as well as the protection and utilization of historical and cultural blocks. Beijing Daily (February 2)

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING PRESIDES OVER POLITBURO MEETING ON JANUARY 30**

Chinese President Xi Jinping chaired the meeting of the Politburo held in Beijing on January 30. The meeting reviewed a report from the Politburo Standing Committee after it heard and discussed the work reports of the leading Party members groups of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the State Council, the National Committee of the CPPCC the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, as well as the work report of the CCP CC Secretariat. It also reviewed a summary report about the Party's theoretical study programme concerning Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, a guideline for building on the gains in the theoretical study program, and CCP regulations on disciplinary inspection.

ii) The state-owned CCTV (January 31) said 'the meeting pointed out that since the launch of the theme education on studying and implementing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the whole party has closely adhered to the general

requirements of “learning ideas, strengthening party spirit, emphasizing practice, and building new achievements”, focusing on the main theme, clarifying goals and tasks, and highlighting learning to create Soul, learning to increase wisdom, learning to rectify the style, and learning to promote work are closely integrated with the work in the first year, and strive to solve the problems that restrict high-quality development, the people's urgent, difficult and anxious issues, and outstanding issues in party building to achieve the expected goals , achieved significant results. The meeting emphasized that it is necessary to continue to strengthen theoretical arming, educate and guide party members and cadres to persist in studying the party's innovative theories, understand laws, clarify directions, learn methods, increase wisdom, strengthen their roots, cultivate their talents, and condense their hearts and souls...'. It said the Central Secretariat should strengthen its political responsibility, fulfil its duties solidly, enhance its self-construction, and continue to complete the various tasks assigned by the CCP CC. The meeting stressed 'It is necessary to adhere to the positioning of political inspections, take "two safeguards" as the fundamental task, keep a close eye on power and responsibility, keep a close eye on the "top leaders" and the leadership team, keep a close eye on the issues that the masses have strongly expressed, and promote the concreteness, precision and normalization of political supervision.' CCTV said the meeting also studied other matters.

iii) In his speech Chinese President Xi Jinping highlighted "the effectiveness of innovation-driven development is increasingly evident, coordination and balance of urban and rural regional development have improved, ...acceleration of the shift in development mode has been achieved" and regarding New productive forces said it is necessary to "break away from traditional economic growth patterns and development paths" - "core hallmark [of this] is an increase in total-factor productivity".

iv) Xinhua (February 1) revealed that the Politburo this time also held a collective study session where its members studied on their own and exchanged work experiences. Ma Xingrui, He Lifeng, Zhang Guoqing, and Yuan Jiajun made speeches based on their respective fields and local work. Liu Guozhong and Chen Miner submitted written speeches.

(Comment: Xi Jinping's speech appeared to give a big indicator of a break with past models of economic growth. The emphasis remains on tightening political control and supervision; high-quality development; and balancing high-quality development and high-level security. There seems to be no stimulus in the offing or deviation from the broader economic policy agenda

that was outlined at the CEWC. It also seems that this year will be a tough one for China's bureaucrats, particularly those at lower levels. The emphasis on improving work style at the grassroots level and strengthening grassroots Party building will likely mean more investigations linked to anti-corruption. It seems to emphasise conformity and compliance with central directives.)

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING ATTENDS NEW YEARS PERFORMANCE FOR VETERAN CADRES ORGANISED BY CMC AND CMC VICE CHAIRMAN ZHANG YOUXIA WAS PRESENT**

On January 29, Chinese President Xi Jinping watched a performance organised by the Central Military Commission in Beijing for veteran cadres of the troops stationed in Beijing to welcome the Spring Festival. Xi Jinping watched the performance and extended holiday greetings and New Year blessings to the veteran comrades of the army and retired veteran cadres of the entire army present. Zhang Youxia, He Weidong, Liu Zhenli, Miao Hua and Zhang Shengmin watched together. Also watching the performance were leaders from various departments of the Central Military Commission, relevant military units stationed in Beijing, and representatives of military officers and soldiers.

(Comment: Senior Vice Chairman of the CMC General Zhang Youxia surfaced after at the CMC's Spring Festival gathering in Beijing on January 29. The Xinhua photograph showed Xi Jinping, Zhang Youxia and He Weidong greeting the gathered PLA officers.)

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER INSPECTS SHAANXI PROVINCE**

Chinese Premier and Politburo Standing Committee member Li Qiang visited Shaanxi province from January 29th to 30th. CCTV (January 30) reported that he emphasized that it is necessary to thoroughly implement the important instructions of General Secretary Xi Jinping and the decisions and arrangements of the Party Central Committee, closely focus on the primary task of high-quality development, completely, accurately and comprehensively implement the new development concept, promote industrial innovation with scientific and technological innovation, and accelerate the cultivation and development of new technologies. quality productivity to better drive and promote economic transformation and upgrading. On January 29, Li Qiang visited the Xianyang Caihong Co., Ltd. to learn more about the research

and development of new substrate glass products and later went to Shaanxi Fast to inspect the product display and the operation of the digital production line. Li Qiang also inspected the Xi'an Western Superconductivity, where he praised and encouraged them to rely on the advantages of the system and mechanism to strive to build a technological highland and continuously improve the level of transformation and industrialization of scientific and technological achievements. On January 30, Li Qiang went to Xi'an Yisiwei to learn about the R&D and manufacturing of silicon wafers, visited the production line. At the Xi'an Aisheng Technology Group, Li Qiang inspected the display of finished drones and inquired in detail about performance, application, etc. He pointed out that the UAV industry has broad prospects for development, and it is necessary to adhere to multi-party collaboration and joint research, accelerate the research and development of new technologies and new products based on application scenarios, and better promote the development of low-altitude economy. He visited the new campus of Xi'an Jiaotong University located in the Western Science and Technology Innovation Port. During the investigation, Li Qiang chaired a symposium with the main responsible comrades of some provincial, municipal, county and township governments to listen to their opinions and suggestions on the "Government Work Report (Draft for Comments)" and government work. PRC State Councillor Wu Zhenglong accompanied Premier Li Qiang.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE POLITBURO STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER CAI QI ADDRESSES MEETING TO RECTIFY FORMALISM AT GRASSROOTS**

The Guangming Daily (January 30) reported that Politburo Standing Committee member Cai Qi had addressed a meeting on the special working mechanism to rectify formalism at the central level and

reduce the burden on the grassroots in Beijing. He emphasized that rectifying formalism to reduce the burden at the grassroots is an important political task. Members of the special work mechanism, relevant departments, leading officials from various provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the central government, and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps attended the meeting.

ii) Separately, the Guangming Daily (January 30) published an article asserting that 'Practice has repeatedly proven that going to the grassroots is the key to resolving conflicts,

addressing issues, promoting development, and serving the people'. Calling it an effective working method, it said going to the grassroots is not a casual arrangement; it is not as simple as arriving at a village or alley with a few steps. It is a discipline in itself and must be done according to rules and regulations.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHEN WENQING, HEAD OF PLAC AND POLITBURO MEMBER CALLS FOR RESOLUTELY SAFEGUARDING SOCIAL STABILITY**

Politburo member and head of the CCP CC Commission for Political and Legal Affairs, Chen Wenqing on January 31, called for resolutely safeguarding social stability in a bid to create a safe and stable social environment for the people to celebrate the Spring Festival. He made the remarks at a meeting on social stability and safe production. He called on judicial, procuratorial and public security organs to proactively perform their duties in accordance with the law and effectively prevent and defuse hidden risks. Asking judicial, procuratorial and public security organs to maintain a high degree of vigilance, he called for efforts to maintain overall social stability and implement the safety production responsibility system, curb the frequent occurrence of various accidents, and ensure the safety of people's lives and property.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: XINHUA PUBLICISES TRANSLATION OF XI JINPING'S BOOK ON GOVERNANCE BY 20 FOREIGN PUBLISHING HOUSES; PD PROFILES XI JINPING**

Xinhua (January 30) publicised that 20 foreign publishing houses on January 30 signed a memorandum in Beijing with the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration on jointly translating and publishing the fourth volume of 'Xi Jinping: The Governance of China' in multiple languages. These publishing houses are from Afghanistan, Albania, Greece, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Mongolia, Poland, Tajikistan and Vietnam. It said the fourth volume has already been officially published in multiple languages such as French, Russian, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, German and Japanese.

ii) The People's Daily published a profile of Chinese President Xi Jinping under the caption 'Profile: Xi Jinping, man of culture'.

### **CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: PROMINENT ROCKET SCIENTIST REMOVED FROM CPPCC FOR CORRUPTION**

The South China Morning Post (January 30) reported that prominent Chinese rocket scientist Wang Xiaojun would be removed from the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) on February 5 as part of a broader investigation into corruption within the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force. Wang Xiaojun, known for leading the development of Long March 7 rockets, crucial for China's space endeavours, will no longer be a CPPCC representative. The CPPCC will announce the decision at its plenary session in March.

### **CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: FORMER HEAD OF SUPERVISORY TEAM OF CHINA EXIM BANK EXPELLED FROM CCP**

Zhu Canzhang, the former head of the supervisory team for risk resolution at the China Export-Import Bank, was expelled from the CCP on February 1, 2024, for among other things, for "engaging in superstitious activities", "playing golf" and "granting loans with exceptionally large amounts".

### **CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF CHINA DEVELOPMENT BANK SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR CORRUPTION**

He Xingxiang, a former Vice President of the China Development Bank (CDB), was sentenced to 20 years in prison for four crimes on January 26. A Beijing court found him guilty of taking bribes, providing bank guarantees illegally, issuing loans illegally, and concealing his offshore bank deposits.

### **CHINA-ECONOMY: GDP OF 31 PROVINCES RELEASED ON JANUARY 31; GUANGDONG IS HIGHEST PERFORMER**

China's Jingwei (Economic Observer - February 1) reported that with Xinjiang releasing its national economic performance in 2023 on January 31, the 2023 gross regional product (GDP) data of 31 provinces has been released. In terms of total volume, Guangdong has ranked first in the country for 35 consecutive years. In terms of growth rate, 17 provinces have

outperformed the "national line", and Tibet has the highest growth rate, reaching 9.5%. In terms of total GDP, the top three economies of Guangdong, Jiangsu and Shandong remain unchanged, while Zhejiang, Sichuan, Henan, Hubei, Fujian, Hunan and Shanghai rank fourth to ten respectively. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics show that according to preliminary calculations, China's GDP in 2023 will be 126,058.2 billion yuan, an increase of 5.2% over the previous year at constant prices. Comparing this data, the GDP growth rate of 17 provinces outperformed the "national line". The 17 provinces are Tibet, Hainan, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, Jilin, Chongqing, Shandong, Zhejiang, Sichuan, Hubei, Jiangsu, Anhui, Hebei, Liaoning, and Qinghai.

### **CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA RAISES POL PRICES**

Xinhua (January 31) quoted the National Development and Reform Commission as announcing that China will raise its retail prices of gasoline and diesel from February 1, based on recent changes in international oil prices. Gasoline and diesel prices will increase by 200 yuan (about 28.15 U.S. dollars) per tonne. Under China's current pricing mechanism, the prices of refined oil products are adjusted following changes in international crude oil prices. It said China's three biggest oil companies -- the China National Petroleum Corporation, the China Petrochemical Corporation, and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation -- and oil refineries have been directed to maintain oil production and facilitate transportation to ensure stable supplies.

### **CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA'S REAL ESTATE SECTOR RECORDED DEEP SLUMP IN JANUARY**

The Wall Street Journal (January 31) said that China's 100 largest developers recorded a deep slump in new-home sales in January, according to data from China Real Estate Information. It said this was the worst month of sales since at least July 2020. They sold homes valued at \$32.83 billion, down 34% from a year earlier. It said dozens of Chinese property developers have already defaulted on their overseas debt, leaving millions of homes unfinished and buyers in limbo, and it could be years before the sector recovers. Meanwhile, regulators of the housing and financial sectors on January 12, ordered the creation of a white list of real-estate projects

which would be eligible for bank lending. The first loan under the initiative was issued to a project in Nanning, in southern Guangxi region, on January 30.

### **CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR REPORTS CONTRACTION IN JANUARY**

The Wall Street Journal (January 31) said that a contraction in Chinese manufacturing activity for the fourth straight month, an alarming sign for China, had been reported in January.

### **CHINA-PLA: LARGE CIVILIAN HELICOPTER DEVELOPED BY AVICS UNDERGOES HIGH COLD TEST FLIGHT AT MOHE**

The state-owned CCTV (January 31) quoted the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) as reporting the successful completion of the first high cold test flight of the AC313A, a large civilian helicopter developed independently by China. The high cold test flight, which is crucial to assess the helicopter's performance under extreme cold conditions, was conducted in Mohe, where temperatures can reach about minus 40 degrees Celsius.

### **CHINA-PLA: SHANNAN MILITARY DIVISION AND PAP UNITS FROM 12 COUNTIES COMPLETE 3-DAY TRAINING**

i) Huaxia (January 30) disclosed that the Shannan Military Division of Tibet and militiamen from the People's Armed Forces Department of 12 counties competed in a three-day military training and competition. The competition included various military skills such as parallel bar arm flexion and extension, horizontal bar pull up, 3000 mtrs of running, automatic rifle live ammunition shooting, and long distance grenade throwing. The intense competition aimed to enhance the core combat effectiveness and overall quality of militia training. Participants demonstrated high spirits, chasing each other on the 3000 mtr track, engaging in grenade throwing, and showcasing their shooting skills. The event not only served as a training ground but also highlighted the excellent military skills and positive mental outlook of the militiamen. Deputy political commissar praised the competition for improving work styles and testing the results of military training.



ii) Huaxia (January 30) showed officers and soldiers of the Silanta Border Defense Company of the Ali Military Division patrolling in the snow and taking oxygen and resting during patrol in early January.

### **CHINA-CCP: LATEST ISSUES OF RED FLAG AND QIU SHI RELEASED ON JANUARY 29 AND FEBRUARY 1; QIU SHI HAS NEW ARTICLE BY XI JINPING**

i) The latest issue of Red Flag (2024/2 dated January 29, 2024) was released on January 29. Highlights include commentaries on promoting Chinese-style modernization, promoting comprehensive rural revitalization, Grand Canal culture, and Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.

ii) The latest issue of Qiu Shi (Seeking Truth) (February 1, 2024) has a new article by Chinese President Xi Jinping on "Forging a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation and Promoting High-Quality Development in the Party's Ethnic Work in the New Era."

### **CHINA-CCP: PEOPLE'S DAILY PUBLISHES ARTICLE BY CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL ON 'SELF-REVOLUTION'**

The Central Party School (National School of Administration) Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era Research Center published an article captioned 'Learn deeply and thoroughly understand General Secretary Xi Jinping's important thoughts on the Party's self-revolution (In-depth study and implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era)' in the People's Daily (January 31). The article focussed on the need "To learn and thoroughly understand General Secretary Xi Jinping's important thought on the Party's self-revolution."

### **CHINA-CCP: PEOPLE'S DAILY COMMENTARY ON PROMOTING CULTURAL SELF-CONFIDENCE**

The People's Daily (January 30) published a Commentary captioned 'Promote cultural self-confidence and self-improvement (people's perspective) ——Adhere to the guidance of Xi Jinping's cultural thoughts and continuously create a new situation in publicity, ideological and cultural work'. It emphasised that 'Only by protecting cultural subjectivity can a nation with cultural self-confidence be able to stand firm, stand firm, and go far. Only by consolidating

cultural subjectivity can we maintain a high degree of identification with our own culture, persist in following our own path, and consciously draw nutrition and wisdom from the excellent traditional culture formed and accumulated by the Chinese nation from generation to generation'.

**CHINA-CCP: GUANGMING DAILY ARTICLE PUBLISHES ARTICLE JOINTLY AUTHORED BY PRESIDENT OF INSTITUTE OF FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND TWO OTHERS URGING BUILDING CHINA AS A FINANCIAL POWER**

The President of the Institute of Financial Strategy, Secretary of the Party Committee of the Institute of Finance, and a Researcher at the Institute of Finance jointly published an article captioned 'Solidly promote the construction of a financial power' in the Guangming Daily (January 31). Recalling that "the Central Financial Work Conference held in October 2023 emphasized that we should unwaveringly follow the path of financial development with Chinese characteristics and put forward the strategic goal of accelerating the construction of a financial power" and Xi Jinping's speech in January 2024, it said "Accelerating the construction of a financial power is an inherent requirement and inevitable choice for comprehensively building a modern socialist country."

**CHINA-CCP: PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE CLAIMS BASIC TREND OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY HAS NOT CHANGED**

Ning Jizhe, Vice Chairman of China International Economic Exchange Center, published an article captioned 'The basic trend of my country's economic recovery and long-term improvement has not changed (a rational view of the economic situation)' in the People's Daily (January 30). Saying that 'In 2023, my country's economy will rebound and improve, and high-quality development will be solidly advanced', it added 'The main expected goals of economic and social development in 2023 have been successfully achieved' and that 'The economic growth rate remains the leading among the world's major economies'.

## **CHINA-CCP: PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE EMPHASISES REFORM AND OPENING UP**

The People's Daily (January 31) published an article titled 'We must persist in relying on reform and opening up to enhance the endogenous driving force for development, which observed that the Central Economic Work Conference had emphasized that “we must persist in relying on reform and opening up to enhance the endogenous driving force of development, coordinate the promotion of deep reforms and high-level opening up, continuously liberate and develop social productive forces, and stimulate and enhance social vitality.” It said this "is a major strategic judgment made by the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core on the role of reform and opening up in the new era and new journey. It has important theoretical significance and far-reaching practical influence. We must conscientiously study and understand this important regularity and further comprehensively deepen reform and opening up in the new era and new journey".

## **CHINA-CCP: GUANGMING DAILY ARTICLE ADVOCATES INTERNATIONALISATION OF RMB**

The Guangming Daily (January 30) published an article captioned 'Promote the internationalization of RMB in a prudent and solid manner to help build a financial power' by Qu Manxue, Professor at the University of International Business and Economics, and special researcher at the Beijing Research Center for Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

## **CHINA-CYL: COMMUNIST YOUTH LEAGUE (CYL) HOLDS 19TH STANDING COMMITTEE PLENUM ON FEBRUARY 1**

The Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (Communist Youth Daily - February 2) disclosed that the second (enlarged) meeting of the 19th Central Standing Committee of the Communist Youth League was held in Beijing on February 1. The meeting deeply studied and implemented Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Adong, the first secretary of the Secretariat of the League Central Committee, made a work report and made a concluding speech. Xu Xiao, executive secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, presided over the meeting. Wang Yi, Hu Baijing, Hu Sheng,

Shapakti Wushour, and Yu Jing, secretaries of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, attended the meeting. The meeting pointed out that 2024 is the 75th anniversary of the founding of New China and a critical year for achieving the goals and tasks of the "14th Five-Year Plan". The meeting emphasized that League cadres at all levels must conscientiously study and implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's important requirements for building a team of League cadres, strengthen political forging, improve theoretical literacy, practice their abilities and skills, be strict with integrity and self-discipline, and plan more for the youth and less for themselves. Be loyal, clean and responsible cadres of the new era. Members of the Standing Committee of the 19th CYL Central Committee, 'responsible comrades' of various departments of the CYL Central Committee who are not members of the Standing Committee of the Communist Youth League, principal responsible officials of directly affiliated units, and principal responsible officials of the provincial Youth League Committee and the Youth League Committee of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps attended the meeting.

### **CHINA-TIBET: CHINESE NGO ORGANISED AN EVENT IN GENEVA ON JANUARY 24 TO DOWNPLAY GLOBAL SCRUTINY OVER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN TIBET**

On January 24, a day after China's 4th Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, where delegates from 20 countries questioned China over incidences of blatant human rights violations in Tibet, Beijing's "China Society for Human Rights Studies" organized a side event entitled "Human Rights and Chinese Modernization" to downplay the significance of the global scrutiny over its human rights record. Highlighting the side event held by the Chinese NGO in Geneva, the Global Times and the Xinhua news agency stated that "Global experts applaud China's achievements in human rights protection." Bitter Winter said that "a close scrutiny would reveal that Peter Hediger, a former Swiss diplomat, was the only foreign "expert," and that the Chinese "experts" were all affiliated with Chinese government-funded institutes based in China".

ii) Tibet Daily (February 2) quoted Qu Ci, Party Secretary and Deputy Director of the Rural Revitalization Bureau of Ali Region, as stating that introduced that Ali Region has included the improvement of rural living environment as an important part of rural construction. In the past three years, a total of 31 projects have been implemented to build liveable, industrial and

beautiful villages. He said, "in accordance with the principles of "beautiful leisure villages, happy and liveable villages, clean and tidy villages", we will solidly carry out the application for the creation and certification of beautiful and liveable demonstration villages in 2023". He added that "So far, more than 880 cleaning operations have been carried out in the region, with 43,941 participants, 181.45 tons of rural white garbage, 85 ponds, 315.66 kilometres of ditches, 357.6 kilometres of rivers and lakes, and 154.2 tons of silt. 531.1 tons of livestock and poultry breeding manure and other waste were cleaned up, and 889 dead spots were cleaned up, giving the rural living environment in the Ali region a completely new look." The Tibet Daily added that the Ngari region has organized various counties to carry out the "clearance" campaign of problem toilets and a "competition" on the quality of newly renovated household toilets in accordance with the toilet renovation standards of "four presences, four absences, two clearings and one use". It urged people to "cooperate with the Biogas Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to carry out a pilot project of high-altitude sanitary household toilets in Napu Community, Geji County, effectively promote the improvement of quality and efficiency of new toilets, establish and improve long-term management and maintenance mechanisms, solid rectification of problem household toilets, and the renovation of household toilets in the entire region Take your work to a new level. In 2023, 562 toilets were renovated in the Ngari area". Among them, Kejia Village in Pulan County has basically achieved full coverage of sanitary household toilets, and the utilization rate of farmers' manure compost is high.

### **CHINA-INNER MONGOLIA: YANG WEIDONG ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN OF INNER MONGOLIA CPPCC**

The official WeChat account of Inner Mongolia Daily announced that on February 2, the third plenary session of the second session of the 13th CPPCC Autonomous Region elected 1964-born Yang Weidong as Vice Chairman of the 13th CPPCC Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Committee. He had previously served as deputy secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the CPPCC Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

### **CHINA-ZHEJIANG: ZHANG WENJIE ELECTED NEW MAYOR OF WENZHOU**

The Zhejiang Organizer disclosed that the fourth meeting of the 14th Wenzhou Municipal People's Congress elected Zhang Wenjie as the Mayor of Wenzhou on February 1.

(Comment: Born in January 1971, Zhang Wenjie is a graduate student at the Central Party School and a member of the CCP.

### **CHINA-SHANDONG: MENG QINGBIN ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF QINGDAO CPPCC**

The third meeting of the 14th CPPCC Qingdao Committee elected Meng Qingbin as Chairman of the CPPCC on January 31. Born in 1968, he had previously served as secretary of the Qingdao CPPCC Party Leadership Group. Meng Qingbin has served as Director of the United Front Work Department of the Municipal Party Committee; Director of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the Shandong Provincial Committee (Provincial Government Taiwan Affairs Office), Mayor of Linyi City in 2018, and Shandong Provincial Department of Transportation in 2021 Secretary of the Party Leadership Group and Director of the Department.

### **CHINA-NEPAL: CCP ILD VICE MINISTER SUN HAIYAN LEADS DELEGATION (JANUARY 26-29) TO NEPAL**

A CCP delegation led by Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the CCP CC International Liaison Department visited Nepal from Jan. 26-29 at the invitation of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre). The Chinese delegation met Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Chairman of the CPN (Maoist Centre) and Prime Minister of Nepal, and leaders of other main political parties in the country. The delegation also interacted with representatives from think tanks, media outlets and social organizations, and attended a joint consultation conference between the CCP and Nepali political parties. The Kathmandu Post (January 29) said that during a consultative conference in Kathmandu between the Chinese delegation and Nepali political leaders CCP CC ILD Vice Minister Sun Haiyan publicly claimed that certain countries are trying to destabilise the good relations between Nepal and China, while some elements are also defaming the Belt and Road Initiative by calling it a ‘debt trap’. He asked Nepali leaders to avoid being too close to Americans and Indians. A CPN (Maoist Centre) leader said, “Earlier they used to convey such concerns behind closed doors, but now they are saying it in public.” Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song, while highlighting the details and economic status of cooperation between Nepal and China, stated that China is ready to invest in game-changing projects. According to the Kathmandu Post, the Vice Chairman of the National Assembly

Urmila Aryal, UML's Pokhrel, Nepali Congress leader Shashank Koirala, Shishir Khanal of the Rastriya Swatantra Party, Sagun Sundar Lawoti of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party as well as Arjun Thapa of Janata Samajbadi Party reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to One China policy. All of them said Nepal was prepared to benefit from China's economic success and to seek more of its support in Nepal's development endeavours. Koirala said the Congress is willing to work with China in order to further Nepal's development initiatives.

### **CHINA-PAKISTAN: CHINESE AND PAKISTAN NAVIES SIGN MOU DURING MEETING AT ISLAMABAD**

The Chinese and Pakistani navies held the fifth round of naval expert-level talks at the Pakistani Navy Headquarters in Islamabad, Pakistan on January 31. The two sides discussed matters of common concern and further enhanced cooperation between the two navies. No details about the MoU signed between the navies have been revealed.

### **CHINA-THAILAND: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI CONCLUDES 3-DAY VISIT TO THAILAND WITH CALL TO ACCELERATE CONSTRUCTION OF CHINA-THAILAND RAILWAY**

Speaking to Thailand's Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on January 29, at the end of a three-day visit to Bangkok, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the two nations "should jointly advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, speed up the construction of the China-Thailand Railway, and open the central line of the Trans-Asian Railway." According to a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement Wang Yi added that the two nations should also "realize regional connectivity, and promote the early implementation of the vision of interconnected development of China, Laos and Thailand, to provide new impetus and open up new space for the long-term development of the two countries."

(Comment: The proposed 873-kilometer rail link will connect Bangkok to the Nong Khai on the border with Laos, where it will connect to the China-Laos Railway, a key project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which began operations in late 2021.)

## **CHINA-THAILAND: CHINESE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SECURITY MEETS THAI JUSTICE MINISTER IN BEIJING**

Chinese State Councillor and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong met Thawee Sodson, Thailand's Justice Minister and Member of the Narcotics Control Board of the Kingdom of Thailand, on January 31 in Beijing. Wang Xiaohong noted that China and Thailand are good neighbours, good friends, good relatives and good partners. He expressed the hope that China and Thailand will implement the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, deepen cooperation on drug control, optimize the cooperation mode of fugitives and asset recovery, carry out joint law-enforcement operations, crack down on crimes such as drug manufacturing and trafficking, telecommunications and internet fraud, and online gambling in accordance with the law, strengthen practical cooperation on law-enforcement and security, and promote the building of a China-Thailand community with a shared future. Thawee expressed the willingness of Thailand to maintain close exchanges with China and deepen law-enforcement cooperation on drug control and other areas.

## **CHINA-US: U.S. NSA SAYS "INTENSIVE INTERACTION" WITH CHINA WILL CONTINUE IN 2024**

Politico (January 31) reported that speaking at an event at the Council on Foreign Relations on January 30, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that “intensive interaction” with China will continue in 2024 with Biden playing a key role. He claimed that it has successfully reduced tensions and prodded Beijing to engage on issues critical to U.S. interests. He praised the US Administration’s “intensive outreach” to Beijing over the past year to lift bilateral ties from the “historic low” they hit following the Chinese spy balloon incident in February. He pointed to the creation of a U.S.-China Counternarcotics Working Group and resumption of bilateral military-to-military contacts, and an agreement to discuss safe development of artificial intelligence as evidence of the value of that approach. Sullivan added “Critics said at the time that this travel was one-sided — but our strategy was to use those meetings to open up a two-way flow of exchanges, and that’s exactly what happened.” Sullivan also said “We have not seen the provision of lethal aid but ... we have seen support from Chinese companies to help Russia reconstitute its defense industrial base.” That, he said, is a concern for the administration “because we believe that Russia’s defense industrial base is basically building up to continue to support an imperial war of conquest in Europe, and that’s a fundamental



national security interest of the United States”. Sullivan said that Beijing can also expect the administration to fine-tune China-targeted export restrictions on high technology semiconductors and “As the technology evolves, our controls have to evolve.”

(Comment: Sullivan’s speech was the third briefing in four days in which senior US Administration officials have lauded the positive impact of their China engagement. The messaging campaign is an explicit push-back on high profile GOP detractors of that approach.)

**CHINA-US: US OFFICIAL DESCRIBES 2-DAY TALKS WITH CHINESE ON STOPPING FENTANYL PRODUCTION AS "SUBSTANTIVE"**

The Strait Times (January 30), quoting the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor Jen Daskal, said the 2-day talks between the U.S. and Chinese officials on stemming the flow of chemicals used for the production of deadly fentanyl have been "substantive" but "much more" needs to be done. She said Washington hopes for deeper law enforcement cooperation, including on tackling illicit finance, and wants Beijing to put further controls on the chemicals that can be used to make fentanyl. Daskal told Reuters "There is a lot more action that's needed in a range of areas that we discussed, there's a renewed spirit of commitment to cooperate".

Following the talks, China said (January 30) they were "in-depth and pragmatic," and expressed the hope that the two sides could accommodate each other's concerns and "enhance and expand cooperation to provide more positive energy for stable, sound and sustainable China-U.S. relations”. She added "They've taken some enforcement actions against some particular companies that were engaging in particularly concerning illicit behaviour," and China has started to send information to the International Narcotics Control Board about particular incidents, "that then allow global law enforcement agencies around the world to follow up on that information."

## **CHINA-US: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN URGES U.S. TO CEASE HARASSING AND DEPORTING CHINESE STUDENTS AT U.S. AIRPORTS**

Xinhua (February 1) said that Wang Wenbin, China's foreign ministry spokesman at the routine weekly press conference said China urges the U.S. to immediately stop suppressing and restricting Chinese students traveling to the U.S. under the so-called national security reasons. He said the U.S. has frequently harassed, interrogated, and deported Chinese students arriving in the U.S. out of political purposes for some time now. Available information shows that at the Washington Dulles International Airport alone, at least eight Chinese students with lawful and valid travel permits were harassed, interrogated, and deported by the U.S. side for groundless reasons since the end of November 2023. He said the moves by the U.S. law enforcement authorities seriously violate the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of the students concerned, disrupt China-U.S. cultural exchanges and cross-border travel, and go against the common understanding between the two Presidents on enhancing and facilitating cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and China has made solemn démarches to the U.S.

## **CHINA-US: FBI DIRECTOR CLAIMS TO HAVE DISMANTLED CHINESE NETWORK OF HACKERS KNOWN AS 'VOLT TYPHOON'**

FBI Director Christopher Wray disclosed (January 31) in testimony before a congressional committee on U.S.-China competition that the authorities had dismantled a network of hackers known as Volt Typhoon, which was targeting key American public sector infrastructure like water treatment plants and transportation systems at the behest of China. In May 2023, the United States and its allies had accused Volt Typhoon, described as a "state-sponsored hacking group" backed by China, of infiltrating critical U.S. infrastructure networks — claims rejected by Beijing. Accusing the hackers of readying to "wreak havoc and cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities", he said, "If and when China decides the time has come to strike, they're not focused just on political or military target" and "Low blows against civilians are part of China's plan."

## **CHINA-US: CHINESE CYBER-SECURITY FIRM 360 ACCUSES U.S. OF ATTACKS ON CHINA'S MICROCHIP AND 5G SECTS**

Chinese cybersecurity firm 360 has reported a significant rise in advanced persistent cyberattacks on China's microchip and 5G sectors, attributing them primarily to overseas organisations. The China Daily (January 31) said the research points to the United States, especially the Central Intelligence Agency, as being involved, citing political motivations to hinder China's technology advances. The attacks, numbering over 1,200 by 13 overseas Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) groups, highlight a deliberate effort to suppress China's development.

## **CHINA-RUSSIA: CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO RUSSIA PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY**

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia this year, the People's Daily (January 31) published an article by Zhang Hanhui, Chinese Ambassador to Russia, titled 'Leading China-Russia relations to move steadily in the right direction'. In the article, Zhang Hanhui said "In 2023, in the face of a century of changes and turbulent international and regional situations, China-Russia relations have always maintained healthy and stable development under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, moving steadily in the right direction, and taking on a new look in their pioneering and enterprising spirit. As 2024 approaches, President Xi Jinping and President Putin once again exchanged New Year congratulatory messages, expressing their confidence in the two countries to continue to enhance mutual trust, expand cooperation, and inherit friendship. The strategic guidance of the two heads of state and the close high-level exchanges between the two sides have injected strong impetus into the all-round development of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era". He added "In the face of the complicated international situation, China and Russia, as responsible world powers, have always maintained strategic focus and sobriety, and supported each other on issues involving each other's core interests. China supports the Russian people in taking the path of national rejuvenation of their own choice and safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests. " He said "On the international stage, China and Russia are committed to promoting an equal and orderly world multipolarization, and firmly stand on the trend of the times to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Russia speaks highly

of and actively participates in the global development initiative, global security initiative and global civilization initiative proposed by China. China and Russia support the expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS cooperation mechanism, promote in-depth and practical cooperation between the joint construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union." He also noted in the article that "Russia firmly adheres to the one-China policy, firmly supports China in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and has spoken uprightly on many issues involving Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong. The two countries have maintained close strategic coordination and cooperation, defended multilateralism, and contributed to maintaining global strategic stability."

### **CHINA-RUSSIA: CHINESE DEFENCE MINISTER DONG JUN SPEAKS TO RUSSIAN COUNTERPART FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER TAKING OVER**

Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu held a video call on January 31, where, according to Xinhua (January 31) they noted that high-level development has been maintained in the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era. Dong Jun called on the militaries of the two countries to implement the important consensus reached by their heads of state, respond firmly to global challenges, and work constantly to enhance strategic mutual trust. He also urged the two militaries to expand practical cooperation continuously, push their military-to-military relationship to a higher level, and play a greater role in deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic coordination and in maintaining global security and stability. He added that Beijing will continue to "provide support to Russia in the Ukrainian issue" despite the pressure from the US and West. Russian Defence Minister Shoigu said that Russia is willing to work with China to innovate in the fields and methods of bilateral military cooperation, and to push relations between the two countries and two militaries to new levels.

### **CHINA-RUSSIA: RAIL CARGO TRAFFIC BETWEEN RUSSIA, MONGOLIA AND CHINA INCREASED APPRECIABLY IN 2023**

A Mongolian news service quoting the East Siberian Railway branch of Russian Railways (January 31) said that Rail traffic between Russia, Mongolia and China via Naushki (the Russia border crossing point where the Mongolian central rail corridor crosses into Russia and then

connects to the Trans-Siberian Railway) increased 40% in 2023 to almost 8 million tonnes. It added that export cargo transferred last year by rail from Russia to Mongolia reached 2.7 million tonnes, or a 12.5% increase while cargo transiting Mongolia to China reached 3.6 million tonnes, an 80% increase. Over 1.5 million tonnes of cargo were transported from China to Russia via Mongolia (a 50% increase), while over 172,000 tonnes went from Mongolia to Russia (a 6% decrease).

