



CCAS CHINA NEWS
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**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING CONGRATULATES
NEW FINNISH PRESIDENT**

According to CCTV news, on February 16, President Xi Jinping called Alexander Stubb to congratulate him on his election as President of the Republic of Finland.

**CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING AND PENG LIYUAN
SEND NEW YEAR GREETINGS CARD TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF
LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL IN U.S.**

CCTV (February 11) telecast news that on February 11, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan sent New Year greeting cards to teachers and students of Lincoln Middle School in the United States, extending their New Year blessings for the Lunar Year of the Dragon and welcoming teachers and students to visit China more, including participating in the "50,000 American Youth Exchange and Study in China in Five Years" project, which will contribute to enhancing the friendship between the people of China and the United States, especially the youth. It said teachers and students of Lincoln Middle School in Washington State, USA, previously presented New Year greeting cards to "President Xi Jinping, Professor Peng Liyuan and the entire Chinese people", extending New Year blessings to the Chinese people and wishing the Chinese people a happy New Year and good health! More than 100 teachers and classmates signed the greeting cards.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI TO ATTEND 60TH MUNICH CONFERENCE AND VISIT SPAIN AND FRANCE FROM FEBRUARY 16-21

Chinese Politburo member and Foreign Minister Wang Yi will attend the 60th Munich Security Conference where he will deliver a speech at the event on China and elaborate on China's position on major international issues in light of the conference's theme. He will later visit Spain and France, and hold the China-France Strategic Dialogue in France from February 16 to 21.

CHINA-NPC: NPC STANDING COMMITTEE TO MEET ON FEBRUARY 26-27 TO PREPARE FOR NPC PLENARY SESSION ON MARCH 5

The NPC official Weixin website announced that the NPC Standing Committee will next meet on February 26–27. It will mostly prepare for the upcoming NPC session (to begin on Mar. 5), but will also review and likely pass a draft revision to the Law on Guarding State Secrets.

CHINA-PERSONALITIES: FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL QU DONGYU ALLEGED TO HAVE FILLED SENIOR POSITIONS IN FAO WITH CHINESE OFFICIALS

A video uploaded on Youtube on February 10 showed how China has restructured the UN FAO's personnel. It said Qu Dongyu, from China who has been Director-General of the FAO since 2019, has restructured the organization. He appointed Chinese directors to central departments. Before Qu Dongyu's election, two director positions were occupied by Chinese nationals. Now, that number is six. One of these directors is responsible for crop protection - which includes the handling of pesticides. Citing "insider" information it claimed the Chinese leadership was instrumentalizing the UN organization for geopolitical purposes. These Chinese nationals are employed by the FAO -- but their salaries are paid by China. Other countries also pay officers from their home countries. According to these documents, the officers must regularly report on their work at the FAO to the Chinese embassy in Rome. In July 2023, Qu Dongyu was re-elected as Director-General for another four years.

(Comment: The FAO is the UN's largest specialised agency.)

CHINA-CCP: LATEST ISSUE OF 'QIU SHI' INCLUDES COMMENTARY BY XI JINPING ON IMPROVING SYSTEM OF PEOPLE'S CONGRESSES

The latest issue of the CCP theoretical fortnightly journal Qiu Shi (Seeking Truth; 2024/04 dated February 15) includes a Commentary by Chinese President Xi Jinping on upholding, improving people's congress system. The Commentary, titled 'A great creation in the history of human political systems' includes excerpts from 20 speeches delivered by Xi Jinping between December 2012 to June 2023.

CHINA-EDUCATION: PRESIDENT OF SHANGHAI UNIVERSITY PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN GUANGMING DAILY CALLING FOR INTEGRATING SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

The Guangming Daily (February 13) published an article by Liu Changsheng, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and President of Shanghai University, captioned 'Universities must play a leading role in building a powerful country in education'. Stating that it is necessary to 'deepen the integration of science and education to help high-level science and technology become independent and self-reliant', it 'the integration of science and education is the only way for universities to promote the integrated development of education, technology and talents. It is also an urgent need to cultivate top innovative talents' adding that 'higher education must aim at the world's technological frontiers, strengthen forward-looking layout, condense key scientific issues, be good at grasping scientific laws, play the main role of high-level research universities, and carry out original and leading scientific research'. It said 'colleges and universities must rely on their superior disciplines to build an innovation consortium led by leading enterprises, supported by colleges and universities, and in which various innovation entities collaborate with each other'. It said in conclusion that 'Building a strong country requires first-class higher education. Colleges and universities face many challenges in the process of building world-class universities with distinctive characteristics. Colleges and universities must persist in serving the needs of national and regional development, seek innovation through inheritance, seek development through integration, cultivate talents that promote social development, and become the most dynamic source of innovation, the place where the most effective solutions are proposed, and the most influential The place where ideas arise.'

CHINA-EDUCATION: CHINA'S TSINGHUA AND PEKING UNIVERSITIES RANK 9TH AND 11TH IN WORLD RANKING IN 2023 ACCORDING TO TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

China News Service (February 13) quoted the Times Higher Education website on February 13 that the results of the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Reputation Ranking showed that while Harvard University topped the ranking for the 13th consecutive year, the reputation of universities in mainland China continued to rise, with a total of 15 universities on the list, 8 of which are among the top 100 in the world. According to the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Reputation Ranking, Harvard University has topped the list for the 13th consecutive year, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has ranked second for the eighth consecutive year. Stanford University ranks third for the second consecutive year. It said with a total of 15 Chinese universities on the list, 8 of which are among the top 100 in the world, Tsinghua University rose one place from 10th in the world in 2021 to 9th in the world in 2022 to 8th in the world in 2023. Peking University rose two places, from 15th in the world in 2021 and 13th in the world in 2022 to 11th in 2023.

CHINA-ECONOMY: MORE THAN HALF CHINESE PROVINCES MISS 2023 GDP GOALS

Caixin (February 15) disclosed that 17 Chinese provincial-level regions missed their 2023 GDP goals. Chinese local governments are pivoting from a reliance on property investment to developing hubs for cutting-edge industries after more than half of the Chinese mainland's provincial-level regions missed their GDP targets for 2023. Caixin said Heilongjiang province was the worst performer with GDP expanding just 2.6%, 3.4 percentage points off its target for the year. Jiangxi, a landlocked eastern province, recorded a 4.1% growth rate, 2.9 percentage points lower than its forecast for the year and also lower than in 2022 when the national economy was curbed by "zero-Covid" controls. Meanwhile, Hunan, Henan and Yunnan missed their 2023 targets by more than 1.5 percentage points. Based on targets disclosed by all 31 regions, the weighted average GDP growth goal for 2024 is 5.41%, according to analysts at Citic Securities Co. Ltd. They estimated that China will set a GDP growth target of around 5% this year, as the national goal is usually around 0.5 percentage points lower than localities' weighted average.

CHINA-ECONOMY: SONGS ON ECONOMIC HARDSHIP ARE VIRAL ON CHINA'S SOCIAL MEDIA THIS YEAR

Radio Free Asia (February 1) reported that 8 songs about economic hardship have gone viral this year on China's social media.

CHINA-TERRORISM: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN SAYS ETIM IS CORE COUNTER-TERRORISM CONCERN FOR CHINA

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a press conference on February 8, that combating the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is China's core concern in counter-terrorism and shared responsibility of the international community. Calling the ETIM a terrorist organization that has planned and carried out a series of violent terrorist attacks both inside and outside of China, he said it has increased its connections with international and regional terrorist forces such as the Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda, posing a serious threat to China's overseas interests and the security and stability of relevant countries and regions. He noted that it is a UN Security Council-listed terrorist organization and is also listed as a terrorist organization by the Turkish government. Wang Wenbin made the remarks as Turkish authorities formally arrested 25 suspects in connection with the shooting of a man during a service at a church in Istanbul in January. One of the suspects was formerly a Chinese citizen but had obtained Turkish citizenship, with the suspect being identified as having links with ETIM and IS.

CHINA-S&T: CASC CHAIRMAN NOT PRESENT AT CASC ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND IT HAS NOT YET RELEASED ITS ANNUAL 'BLUE BOOK'

China's main space contractor China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) usually gives an annual outline of plans in early January and releases a "blue book" with detailed objectives (launch targets, notable missions, areas of focus) later in January. There has been no release thus far and it is being speculated this may be related to the recent removal of top CASC officials. The only updates out of CASC related to 2024 stress the adherence to Xi Jinping thought and usual performative political statements, becoming a powerful aerospace country, contributing more to a strong country and military, etc. Xinhua (December 29) had

reported that the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) has revoked the seats of Wu Yansheng, Chairman of China's main space contractor CASC, and Wang Changqing, Deputy Manager of CASIC. One report observed that the CASC held its 2024 model work conference on January 2, and Wu Yansheng not present. The deputies playing leading roles. No space plans for 2024 were outlined, other than adhering to ideological precepts.

(Comment: The CASC carried out 48 launches across 2023, carrying more than 130 spacecraft.)

CHINA-S&T: NVIDIA CEO JENSEN HUNG VISITED NVIDIA OFFICES IN CHINA AFTER MANY YEARS THIS JANUARY

On the evening of January 20, media reports stated that Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, after many years returned to China and visited Nvidia's offices in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen that week and attended Nvidia China region's annual meeting. An Nvidia employee said Huang "spoke at the meeting and held a raffle for the employees." The same night, videos and photos of Jensen Huang dancing enthusiastically in a traditional northeastern Chinese padded vest at the annual meeting started leaking onto social media. Although his dance moves were somewhat clumsy, it was evident that "Old Huang" was in good spirits, with employees cheering him on like a celebrity. Indeed, 2023 was Nvidia's "dream year." Within one year, Nvidia's stock price surged by 234%, its market value topped one trillion dollars, and its annual revenue was expected to reach a record-breaking \$58.8 billion, surpassing both Intel and Samsung Electronics to claim the top spot among global semiconductor companies.

(Comment: Currently, the total size of the AI chip market in mainland China is about US\$7 billion, with Nvidia holding over 90% market share. In recent years, the US government has announced export control regulations targeting Nvidia's high-end AI chips, including products such as A100, A800, H100, H800, and L40S.)

CHINA-PLA: PLA TROOPS IN WESTERN THEATRE COMMAND CONDUCT COMBAT READINESS DRILLS

i) The PLA 149th Medium Combined Arms Brigade from the 76th Group Army in the Western Theater Command celebrated the Chinese New Year on February 13. Photographs of the

equipment (including FH-902 and FPV commercial UAVs) suggest these troops are part of a Reconnaissance unit.

ii) A PLA Ground Force Brigade of the Tibet Military Region organized a combat readiness drill to test the ability of officers and soldiers to perform diverse basic tasks during the Spring Festival.

iii) A report of February 12 showed PLA Ground Force troops with specialised high-altitude oxygen equipment practicing parachuting from a Y-20 military transport aircraft.

CHINA-TIBET: LHASA CUSTOMS CLAIMS NUMBER OF REGISTERED FOREIGN TRADE COMPANIES IN TIBET HAS REACHED 1,045 IN 2023

People's Daily (February 16) quoting the latest data from Lhasa Customs said the number of registered foreign trade companies in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region reached 1,045 in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 26.51 percent. It said in 2023, the total import and export of goods in Xizang surpassed 10 billion yuan (about 1.41 billion U.S. dollars). The region exported goods such as local tea, milk, honey and mushrooms to various countries including India, Singapore, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

CHINA-GUANGDONG: TWO-TIME OLYMPIC CHAMPION APPOINTED PARTY SECRETARY OF ERSHA SPORTS TRAINING CENTRE IN GUANGDONG

The Guangdong Provincial Sports Bureau website disclosed that two-time Olympic champion 1975-born Xian Dongmei has been appointed (February 9) as the Party Secretary of the Ersha Sports Training Center in Guangdong Province. The announcement said 'In 2005, Xian Dongmei retired from the army at the age of 30. She gave birth to her daughter in 2007. Less than two months after finishing her confinement, she chose to come back again and won the championship again at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, becoming the first "... Champion Mom"! This is a deputy department-level position.

CHINA-HUNAN: HUNAN PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS CARRY OUT UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION VISITS TO ENSURE PEOPLE'S SAFETY DURING SPRING FESTIVAL

Hunan Daily (February 9) reported that with the Spring Festival approaching, the Hunan Provincial Party Committee Secretary Shen Xiaoming, Provincial Party Committee Deputy Secretary and Governor Mao Weiming, Provincial Party Committee Deputy Secretary Li Dianxun and other provincial leaders led teams to conduct unannounced visits to various cities and states across the province to inspect production safety and implementation of various safety production measures to ensure that the people of the province and visitors from all over the world had a safe and peaceful holiday.

CHINA-ZHEJIANG: ZHEJIANG GOVERNMENT ISSUES NOTICE OF WORK BREAKDOWN AMONG ITS GOVERNOR AND VICE GOVERNORS

Describing 2024 as a critical year for the implementation of the "14th Five-Year Plan" and a new start year for Zhejiang to "bravely be a pioneer and write a new chapter," the General Office of the Zhejiang Provincial People's Government on February 9 issued a lengthy notice on the breakdown of key work responsibilities in the 2024 Government Work Report, announcing the key tasks led by the Governor and Deputy Governor and the breakdown of responsibilities for ten aspects of people's livelihood. The work was distributed among the Governor, Wang Hao, the Executive Vice Governor and the six Vice Governors.

CHINA-TAIWAN: CHINESE SEND BALLOONS AND AIRCRAFT OVER TAIWAN

i) On February 14, Zhu Fenglian, spokesperson of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council strongly condemned the Taiwan authorities for driving away a fishing boat from East China's Fujian Province in the waters near Kinmen, a group of islets in the Taiwan Straits, and resulting in two deaths when all four people onboard fell into the sea. She expressed deep condolences and sincere sympathy to the victims and their families after the incident. She said that the malignant incident severely harmed the feelings of compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Straits during the Spring Festival.

ii) Taiwan's Defense Ministry reported on February 14 that it observed 14 PLA Air Force aircraft conducting "joint combat readiness patrols" around the island, in collaboration with PLA warships. Nine of the aircraft crossed the Taiwan Strait's median line or nearby areas. In response, Taiwan dispatched its own forces to monitor the situation. These patrols occur after the DPP candidate won the Presidential elections and during the Spring Festival.

iii) Taiwan's Defence Ministry said (February 11) that eight Chinese balloons crossed the Taiwan Strait in the 24 hours leading to the morning of February 11. According to the ministry's daily report on the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) military activities, five of the eight balloons crossed over the main island of Taiwan.

CHINA-US: CHINA DETAINS CITIZEN ON CHARGES OF SPYING

China has detained Emily Chen, one of its citizens married to an American Mark Lent, on suspicion of spying after she did some administrative work for a US logistics company. Her husband said that she had done some administrative work for some months for an American logistics firm in Dalian, home to an important naval base. Emily Chen, 50, disappeared after flying into Nanjing Lukou international airport in December on a visit from Doha, where she lives. She did not emerge from the airport and four days later her son received a letter from the Dalian National Security Bureau informing him that she had been detained in Dalian. Emily Chen's son, a Chinese citizen from a previous relationship, was barred from leaving the country last week when he attempted to board a flight in Shanghai. Between January and April 2023, Chen worked on a freelance basis for Safe Ports, a US logistics company.

CHINA-U.S.: BEIJING REVIEW ARTICLE CLAIMS CHINA AND U.S. CAN COOPERATE IN GREEN INITIATIVES

In an article captioned 'Green initiatives present partnership opportunities for Chinese and U.S. enterprises', the English-language weekly Beijing Review (February 15) said China and the U.S. assume critical roles in steering global efforts toward sustainable development. It said on January 19, the China International Youth Exchange Center and the American Chamber of Commerce in China (AmCham China) co-hosted the seminar, aiming to provide a platform for Chinese and U.S. enterprises like JA Solar to enhance mutual understanding, exchange green development ideas and discuss efforts to unleash cooperation potential. Zhang Hua, Director

of the China International Youth Exchange Center, said at the event "China and the U.S., as major greenhouse gas emitters, assume critical roles in steering global efforts toward sustainable development." Michael Hart, President of AmCham China, said "It is our hope that both parties will seize the new opportunities arising from the latest meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco and the Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis."

CHINA-US: SISTER OF FORMER U.S. LABOUR SECRETARY ELAINE CHAO WHO DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT WAS AN INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR OF THE BANK OF CHINA SINCE 2017

Beijing Daily (February 13) reported that the official Weibo of China Overseas Chinese Network quoted the US World Journal as saying that Angela Chao, Chairman and CEO of Foremost Group, passed away in a car accident in the early morning of February 12 at the age of 50. Angie Zhao (1973-2024), born in the United States, originally from Jiading, Shanghai, is the sister of former U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao and the former independent non-executive director of Bank of China. She has been an independent director of Bank of China since January 2017. The Zhao family's obituary mentioned that although Angie Zhao was born in the United States, she never forgot her roots and helped create a bridge of communication between the East and the West throughout her life. She also serves as Honorary President of the Jiao Tong University Alumni Association of the Americas, Co-Chair of the Advisory Board of the Asian American Foundation, and a member of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations Young Leaders Forum. The Zhao family said that Anji Zhao's sudden departure was also a major loss to the Asian community.

CHINA-US: U.S.-BASED FIRMS HAVE INVESTED US\$ 1 BILLION IN CHINA'S SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY SINCE 2001

Five U.S.-based firms have invested US\$ 1 billion in China's semiconductor industry since 2001, according to a congressional investigation on February 8. The report by the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party said that Qualcomm Ventures, GGV Capital, GSR Ventures, Walden International, and Sequoia Capital invested into more than 150 Chinese companies. At least US\$ 150 million went to firms that directly or indirectly supported the PLA's (People's Liberation Army) microchip research and weapon development. Some of the

firms, such as GGV Capital and GSR Ventures, released statements saying that they have ceased business with or are in the process of selling stakes in Chinese businesses.

CHINA-RUSSIA: RUSSIA AND CHINA IN TALKS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS REGARDING PAYMENTS BETWEEN CHINESE AND RUSSIAN BANKS

The South China Morning post (February 11) quoted the Russian news agency Tass reporting (February 9) that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko said problems regarding payments between China and Russia “will be solved”. China and Russia are in “close dialogue” over international payments processing after a Chinese bank was reported to have stopped transactions with Russia for fear it would be sanctioned. Rudenko said a number of Chinese banks had “refrained from banking activities” with Russia due to “fears of sanctions” but he did not think China would limit transactions through the Financial Messaging System, the Russian equivalent of the Swift transfer system. When asked to comment on reports of problems with payments between the two countries, including transactions through the Financial Messaging System, he told reporters: “No, we don’t have such an issue. A couple of Chinese banks refrain so far as precaution, over fears [of being] sanctioned. But we are confident that this problem will be solved.” Russia’s Vedomosti business daily reported last week that Zhejiang Chouzhou Commercial Bank had informed clients that it had suspended all transactions with Russia and Belarus. The Chouzhou Commercial Bank, based in the eastern Chinese city of Yiwu, has been one of the main banks for Russian exporters. The newspaper added that the Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and two Chinese-led development institutions – the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank – have all reportedly restricted Russia’s access to their financing.