

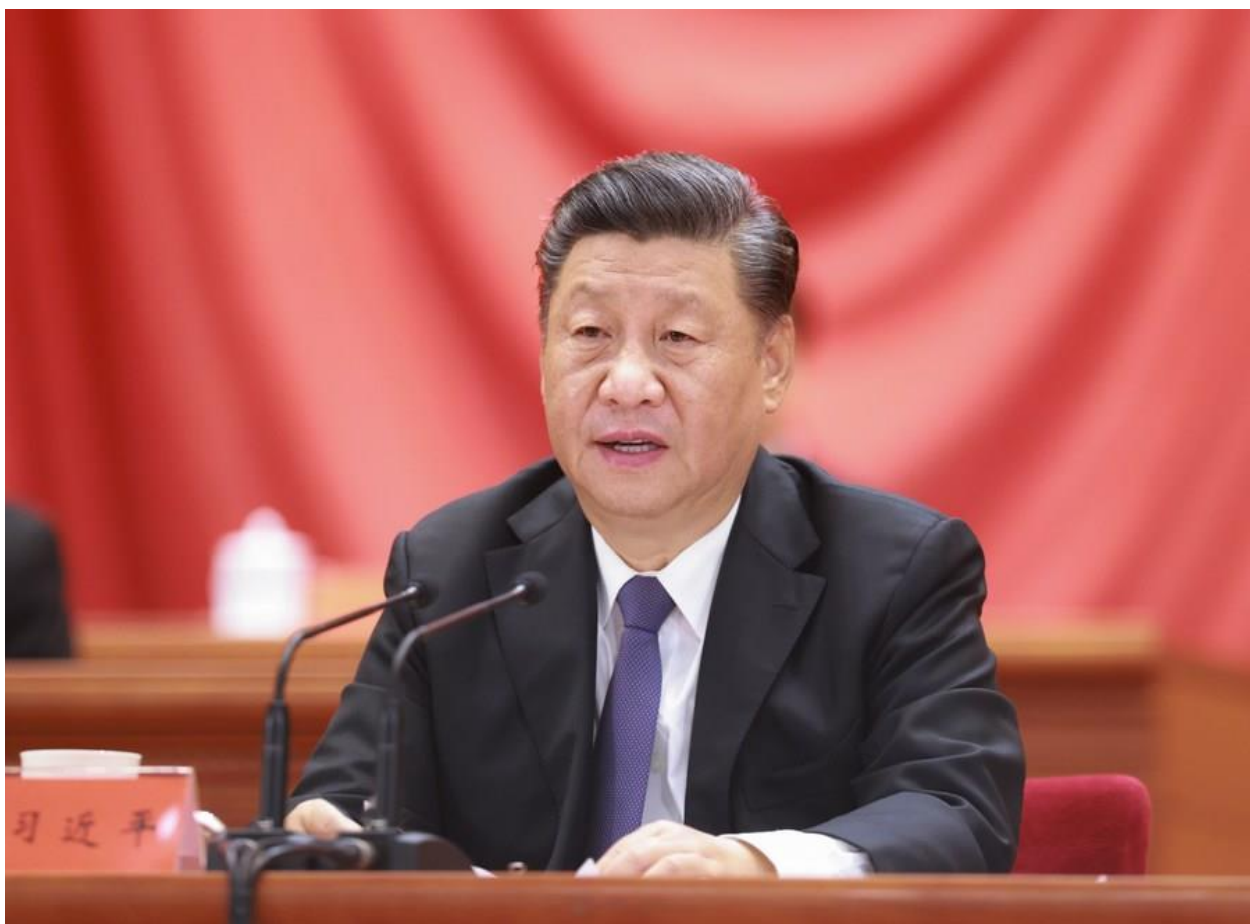


Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

DPG China Monitor

OCTOBER 2020



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ABOUT US

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DPG China Monitor

DPG China Monitor is compiled by our research team from open source Chinese media. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Libni Garg at libni@dpg.org.in

Cover Photograph:

On Oct. 23, 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed a meeting marking the 70th Anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers entering the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fight in the Korean War. Source: Xinhua

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Contents

Abstract	i
Foreign and Security Policy	1
China-India Relations.....	1
China-Southeast and South Asia Relations.....	4
China-U.S. Relations	5
Economy	14
Chinese Communist Party.....	15

Abstract

The overall tone of the India-China relationship remained strained during the month as China responded strongly to various developments, including the 3rd India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, India's inclusion of Australia in the Malabar naval exercise, and the speculated possibility of a India-Taiwan trade deal (which was denied by the Indian Government).

U.S.-China competition persisted, with acrimonious diplomatic statements and a continuing rhetorical battle at multilateral meetings. The high-profile Indo-Pacific and Quad meetings and the U.S. sale of weapons to Taiwan emerged as key issues of contention during the month.

Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi stepped up engagement with Southeast Asia, as he toured Cambodia, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand and Singapore and held talks with the Indonesian President's special envoy and the Philippines's Foreign Secretary. A Chinese delegation led by CCP member Yang Jiechi visited Sri Lanka and extended a USD 90 million grant from Beijing to Colombo, further cementing relations with the South Asian nation.

Economic data released during the month showed that China's GDP grew 4.9 percent in the third quarter. The first positive indicator of cumulative GDP growth since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus generated much enthusiasm and confidence in China. However, experts cautioned that the international environment remains complex and advocated more efforts to boost domestic demand and employment.

The fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held from October 26 to 29, at which China's 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP) (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035 was unveiled. The key subjects of discussion during the Plenum included China's self-sufficiency in the technological field, strengthening of the internal market, development of Hong Kong as an international technological hub, promotion of Chinese soft-power and the superiority of China's political system as evidenced by its "victory against Covid-19 and the recovery of the economy", and China's plan for the transformation of its Armed Forces into a "modern war machine" by 2027.

Foreign and Security Policy

China-India Relations

The turmoil in the India-China relationship persisted, despite efforts to seek a resolution of the five month long border impasse in Ladakh, preferably before the onset of winter. On October 13, the two sides [held](#) the 7th round of military commander-level talks which were hailed as “positive and constructive.”¹ It was “[agreed](#) to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, not to turn differences into disputes, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas.”² Amidst the surcharged scenario, India [released](#) a Chinese soldier who had been apprehended after he mistakenly crossed the LAC on October 19.³ This move was received as a “goodwill gesture ahead of the eighth round of talks” by Beijing.⁴

Chinese media appropriated the Lowy Institute’s Asia Power Index to denigrate India’s position in the region, attributing this to its lack lustre economic performance. Wielding the Index’s [categorisation](#) of India as a middle power and China as a superpower, Chinese media claimed that in the border dispute, India has “little chance to win, since any realistic sand table exercise would present the Indian army merely as a stepping stone for the Chinese army to verify its fighting capacity and combat effectiveness after years of development and modernisation.”⁵

Further acrimony was added by a strong China response to speculative reports suggesting the possibility of India concluding a trade pact with Taiwan,⁶ after the Indian government “gave [approval](#) to firms including Taiwan’s [Foxconn Technology Group](#), Wistron Corp and Pegatron Corp” for smartphone

¹ “China, India hold 7th round of corps commander-level meeting”, Xinhua, October 13, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/13/c_139437892.htm

² “Joint Press Release of the 7th Round of India-China Military Commander-Level Meeting”, Ministry of External Affairs of India, October 13, 2020, <https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33116/joint+press+release+of+the+7th+round+of+indiachina+military+commanderlevel+meeting>

³ Chinese Military Online, “Indian side returns missing PLA soldier on Wednesday”, PLA Daily, October 21, 2020, http://english.pladaily.com.cn/view/2020-10/21/content_9922234.htm

⁴ Wang Qi, “Update: Return of PLA soldier bodes well for talks between China, India”, Global Times, October 20, 2020, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1204109.shtml>

⁵ Xie Chao, “Lowy Institute report reflects India’s overconfidence in confronting China”, Global Times, October 21, 2020, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1204265.shtml>

⁶ Archana Chaudhary & Chris Horton, “India Considers Taiwan Trade Talks as Both Spar With China”, Bloomberg, October 20, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-20/india-considers-trade-talks-with-taiwan-as-both-spar-with-china>

production in India over the next five years”⁷, in a bid “to attract investment worth more than 10.5 trillion rupees” (\$143 billion). The Chinese Foreign Ministry [expressed](#) its opposition to any official trade interaction between Taipei and New Delhi and asked India to “earnestly abide by the one-China principle and handle the Taiwan question prudently and properly.”⁸ These reports were, however, labelled “speculative and baseless” by the Indian media which [claimed](#) that the “the Modi government is currently considering no proposal to launch a dialogue on a trade deal with Taiwan.”⁹

The month also saw India’s [inclusion](#) of Australia in the Malabar naval exercise along with the United States and Japan, in a move that will append a military component to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad).¹⁰ In the past, New Delhi had hesitated from inviting Canberra to Malabar in order to avoid antagonising China. However, as India-China relations have plummeted to a new low this year, New Delhi shed its apprehensions to reinforce [support](#) for a “free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific” along with its Quad partners.¹¹ This development elicited no official protest from Beijing which [acknowledged](#) the exercise and maintained that “military cooperation between countries should be conducive to regional peace and stability.”¹²

On the diplomatic front, the Chinese Ambassador to India, speaking at a virtual event celebrating China’s 71st National Day, stated that “China-India relations go far beyond the bilateral scope and have great regional and global

⁷ Archana Chaudhary & Chris Horton, “India Considers Taiwan Trade Talks as Both Spar With China”, Bloomberg, October 20, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-20/india-considers-trade-talks-with-taiwan-as-both-spar-with-china>

⁸ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on October 20, 2020”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, October 20, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1825401.shtml

⁹ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhary, “For now, India has no plans to launch trade talks with Taiwan”, The Economic Times, October 22, 2020, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-has-no-plans-to-launch-dialogue-on-trade-deal-with-taiwan/articleshow/78795382.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

¹⁰ Ministry of Defence, “Malabar 2020 Naval Exercise”, Press Information Bureau, October 19, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1665830>

¹¹ Ministry of Defence, “Malabar 2020 Naval Exercise”, Press Information Bureau, October 19, 2020, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1665830>

¹² Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on October 20, 2020”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, October 20, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1825401.shtml

significance" as they are important for maintaining "world stability."¹³ Despite the turbulence in ties, the Ambassador emphasised that the neighbours share a "history of friendly exchanges between the two peoples, which has lasted more than two thousand years" and it "won't be hampered by the pandemic or temporary difficulties in bilateral relations."¹⁴ This upbeat assessment was clearly not in keeping with the current reality of bilateral ties.



Chinese Ambassador to India at the Virtual Meeting to Celebrate the 71st National Day of the People's Republic of China on September 29, 2020.

Source: Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of India

On October 27, India and the U.S. held the 3rd 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue resulting in the conclusion of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) which will facilitate the exchange of military information and enhance the defence relationship between the two countries.¹⁵ The Chinese Embassy in New Delhi reacted to the 2+2 dialogue by issuing a [statement](#) criticising the US leadership for making "allegations against China", violating "the norms of

¹³ "China-India relations go far beyond bilateral ties: Chinese ambassador", Xinhua, October 1, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/01/c_139412189.htm

¹⁴ "China-India relations go far beyond bilateral ties: Chinese ambassador", Xinhua, October 1, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/01/c_139412189.htm

¹⁵ "Documents announced during the 3rd India - US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, October 27, 2020, <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/33143/Documents+announced+during+the+3rd+India++US+2432+Ministerial+Dialogue>

international relations and basic principles of diplomacy” and instigating “China’s relations with other countries in the region, which once again exposed their Cold War mentality and ideological bias.”¹⁶ The statement also [chastised](#) the U.S.’s “Indo-Pacific strategy” as Washington’s “bid to maintain the dominance of the US, by organising closed and exclusive ideological cliques.”¹⁷

China-Southeast and South Asia Relations

During the month, Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi stepped up engagement with Southeast Asia as he toured Cambodia, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand and Singapore and held talks with the Indonesian President’s special envoy, and the Philippines’s Foreign Secretary. During the visits, Minister Wang [emphasised](#) health and economic cooperation in the context of COVID-19, and claimed that “all parties” believe that “China will continue to be the main engine driving global economic recovery.”¹⁸ The visit also saw discussions around regional [stability](#) as the State Councillor accused “foreign forces” of “stirring up trouble and creating tension in the South China Sea”, maintaining that it should “not become a sea for great powers to play games.”¹⁹

Furthermore, a Chinese delegation led by CCP member Yang Jiechi [visited](#) Sri Lanka and met with Colombo’s leadership. The visit resulted in the extension of a USD 90 million grant from Beijing to Colombo.²⁰ With this move, China continued its push for influence in Sri Lanka, which it considers a crucial partner of the Belt and Road Initiative.²¹

¹⁶ “Statement of the Chinese Embassy in India solemnly refuting China-related false allegations of US senior officials during their visit to India”, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the People’s Republic of India, October 27, 2020, http://in.china-embassy.org/eng/embassy_news/t1827144.htm

¹⁷ http://in.china-embassy.org/eng/embassy_news/t1827144.htm

¹⁸ “Roundup: Tour to Southeast Asian countries enhanced China-ASEAN unity, says Chinese FM”, Xinhua, October 17, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/17/c_139445903.htm

¹⁹ “Roundup: Tour to Southeast Asian countries enhanced China-ASEAN unity, says Chinese FM”, Xinhua, October 17, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/17/c_139445903.htm

²⁰ “China grants \$90 mn to Sri Lanka after visit by top official”, The Hindu, October 11, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-grants-90-mn-to-sri-lanka-after-visit-by-top-official/article32828535.ece>

²¹ “China grants \$90 mn to Sri Lanka after visit by top official”, The Hindu, October 11, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-grants-90-mn-to-sri-lanka-after-visit-by-top-official/article32828535.ece>

China-U.S. Relations

U.S.-China competition continued through the month, with acrimonious diplomatic statements and combative rhetoric at various multilateral meetings. On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo [condemned](#) China's "campaign against Uyghurs" under which "women are reportedly subjected to forced abortion, forced sterilisation, and involuntary implantation of birth control devices."²² A spokesperson from the Chinese Foreign Ministry rebutted the statement calling it "another lie fabricated" by Pompeo and citing population statistics from Xinjiang.²³ Beijing also branded the U.S. as the biggest threat to the "nuclear disarmament process, the peace and well-being of the United Nations (UN) member states, and global strategic balance and stability."²⁴



Chief Executive Carrie Lam, at the 71st anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on October 1, 2020.

Source: The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

²² Michael R. Pompeo, "25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women", U.S. Department of State, October 1, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/25th-anniversary-of-the-fourth-world-conference-on-women/>

²³ "Pompeo's remarks on Uyghur women 'another lie,' says Chinese FM spokesperson", Xinhua, October 7, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/02/c_139414666.htm

²⁴ "U.S. threatening nuclear disarmament process: Chinese envoy", Xinhua, October 3, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/03/c_139416082.htm

As China celebrated its 71st National Day on October 1, more than 80 protestors were arrested in Hong Kong as Chief Executive Carrie Lam [declared](#) that the territory had returned to peace.²⁵ She also [chastised](#) foreign governments for “aggressively imposing further sanctions against HKSAR officials” and maintained that these officials would “safeguard national security in accordance with the law without fear or anxiety.”²⁶ The U.S. Department of State released a [statement](#) expressing outrage over the arrests and held that “by repressing peaceful public opinion, the Hong Kong government once again shows its complicity with the Chinese Communist Party’s evisceration of Hong Kong’s autonomy and freedoms of its people.”²⁷

Further, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) became a platform for U.S.-China tensions, as both countries hurled accusations at one another. The Chinese envoy rebuffed U.S. allegations against Beijing regarding human rights abuses in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, calling them “wrongful acts of interfering in China’s internal affairs with the excuse of human rights.” In an aggressive [speech](#), the representative told the U.S. that “your political scheme will never succeed” and “blaming others won’t solve your problems, nor hide your failures.”²⁸ At the same committee meeting, the Chinese representative also made a [statement](#) on behalf of 26 countries including Pakistan and Russia “criticising the United States and Western countries for violating human rights, calling for the complete and immediate lifting of unilateral sanctions, and expressing grave concern on systematic racial discrimination.”²⁹ Maintaining that COVID-19 has been especially hard on developing countries, the [statement](#) accused the U.S. and other Western countries of using coercive measures that “have an undeniable impact on human rights” and “undermine the right to health of these countries.”³⁰ Following this development, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson [held](#) that Beijing would never accept “an instructor” on

²⁵ “Dozens arrested as Hong Kong marks China’s National Day”, Al Jazeera, October 1, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/1/police-deployed-as-restive-hong-kong-marks-chinas-national-day>

²⁶ “CE’s speech at National Day reception”, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, October 1, 2020, <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202010/01/P2020100100277.htm>

²⁷ Morgan Ortagus, “On the Arrests of Hong Kong Protestors”, U.S. Department of State, October 3, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/on-the-arrests-of-hong-kong-protestors/>

²⁸ “Chinese envoy refutes accusations by U.S., other countries”, Xinhua, October 7, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/07/c_139422799.htm

²⁹ “China, on behalf of 26 countries, criticizes U.S., other Western countries for violating human rights”, Xinhua, October 6, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/06/c_139420907.htm

³⁰ “China, on behalf of 26 countries, criticizes U.S., other Western countries for violating human rights”, Xinhua, October 6, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/06/c_139420907.htm

human rights issues and lashed out at Western countries with “notorious records on the refugee issue, humanitarian crisis, racial problem” for accusing China of human rights violations in Hong Kong and Xinjiang.³¹



Foreign Ministers of India, U.S.A, Australia and Japan along with Japanese PM while in Tokyo for the 2nd Quad Ministerial Meet on October 6, 2020.

Source: Flickr/ @MEAphotogallery

On the other hand, the American envoy [accused](#) the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for “systemic repression of freedom” that “transformed a local epidemic into a global pandemic which threatens to set back decades of developmental and economic gains.”³² The [speech](#) criticised China for “accusing the United States of lying, when the world sees Beijing’s cruelty on display.”³³ In response, the Chinese envoy [branded](#) these allegations as “groundless”, claiming it “wrong, futile and irresponsible to discredit and blame China for the COVID-19 pandemic.”³⁴ The envoy [stated](#) that having received a 90% approval rating in

³¹“ On human rights, Western countries not eligible to judge others, says China”, Xinhua, October 7, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/07/c_139423973.htm

³²“ Statement on Human Rights during the General Debate of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly”, United States Mission to United Nations, October 7, 2020, <https://usun.usmission.gov/statement-on-human-rights-during-the-general-debate-of-the-third-committee-of-the-un-general-assembly/>

³³“ Statement on Human Rights during the General Debate of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly”, United States Mission to United Nations, October 7, 2020, <https://usun.usmission.gov/statement-on-human-rights-during-the-general-debate-of-the-third-committee-of-the-un-general-assembly/>

³⁴“ Ambassador Dai Bing Solemnly Refuted the Groundless Accusations by the US at the Third Committee of UN General Assembly”, Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN, October 7, 2020, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/hyyfy/t1822379.htm>

the country, the CCP is leading the Chinese nation “towards national rejuvenation.”³⁵

While speaking about the COVID-19 pandemic at the Quad Ministerial meeting on October 6, Secretary Pompeo [maintained](#) that the crisis was made “infinitely worse by the Chinese Communist Party’s coverup” and implored the Quad countries to “collaborate to protect our people and partners from the CCP’s exploitation, corruption, and coercion.”³⁶ The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson [rejected](#) these allegations and asked “certain U.S. politicians” to “stop blaming other countries” since “blaming others will not drive COVID-19 away or save the sick.”³⁷ The spokesperson also [accused](#) the U.S. of coercing countries into choosing sides in the U.S.-China strife and claimed that the tussle between the two countries was not “a fight for power, status or social system, but about upholding justice or spreading evil, championing multilateralism or unilateralism, advocating win-win cooperation or zero-sum game”, with Beijing standing for the former values.³⁸



Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi with Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato 'Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein in Kuala Lumpur on October 13, 2020. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China

³⁵ Ambassador Dai Bing Solemnly Refuted the Groundless Accusations by the US at the Third Committee of UN General Assembly”, Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN, October 7, 2020, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/hyyfy/t1822379.htm>

³⁶ Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Opening Remarks at Quad Ministerial”, U.S. Department of State, October 6, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-opening-remarks-at-quad-ministerial/>

³⁷ China urges U.S. politicians to stop blaming other countries over COVID-19 response: spokesperson”, Xinhua, October 9, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/09/c_139428905.htm

³⁸ China slams U.S. coercion accusations”, Xinhua, October 10, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/10/c_139429035.htm

In a press conference with Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, Foreign Minister Wang Yi also [branded](#) the Indo-Pacific as a “new-NATO” underpinned by the quadrilateral mechanism involving the United States, Japan, India and Australia.”³⁹ Expressing the view that the concept would disrupt peace in East Asia, Minister Wang [implored](#) countries to “stay vigilant against it.”⁴⁰ He also [portrayed](#) it as a strategy aimed to “trumpet the old-fashioned Cold War mentality” and “stir up confrontation among different groups and blocs and to stoke geopolitical competition, in a bid to maintain the dominance and hegemonic system of the United States.”⁴¹

On October 14, the U.S. Department of State released the Hong Kong Autonomy Act Report [against](#) the National Security Law in Hong Kong and the “increasing number of problematic actions taken by Beijing and Hong Kong authorities to stifle dissent and eviscerate Hong Kong’s autonomy.”⁴² Under the [report](#), the U.S. [sanctioned](#) 10 Chinese and Hong Kong officials who “undermined freedoms of assembly, speech, press, or the rule of law, or whose actions have reduced the high degree of autonomy of Hong Kong.”⁴³ Beijing [protested](#) this report and “lodged a stern representation with the U.S. side.”⁴⁴ The Chinese Foreign Ministry reacting to the report said that the “U.S. has grossly [violated](#) international law and basic norms governing international relations, interfered

³⁹“ U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy undermines peace, development prospect in East Asia: Wang Yi”, Xinhua, October 13, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/13/c_139437326.htm

⁴⁰ “U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy undermines peace, development prospect in East Asia: Wang Yi”, Xinhua, October 13, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/13/c_139437326.htm

⁴¹ “U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy undermines peace, development prospect in East Asia: Wang Yi”, Xinhua, October 13, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/13/c_139437326.htm

⁴² Morgan Ortagus, “Release of the Hong Kong Autonomy Act Report”, U.S. Department of State, October 14, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/release-of-the-hong-kong-autonomy-act-report/>

⁴³ Morgan Ortagus, “Release of the Hong Kong Autonomy Act Report”, U.S. Department of State, October 14, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/release-of-the-hong-kong-autonomy-act-report/>

Also see: Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “Identification of Foreign Persons Involved in the Erosion of the Obligations of China Under the Joint Declaration or the Basic Law”, U.S. Department of State, October 14, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/identification-of-foreign-persons-involved-in-the-erosion-of-the-obligations-of-china-under-the-joint-declaration-or-the-basic-law/>

⁴⁴ “China strikes back at U.S. threat of sanctions on int’l financial institutions over Hong Kong”, Xinhua, October 15, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/15/c_139443185.htm

in China's internal affairs, and further exposed its sinister motive to undermine Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and contain China's development."⁴⁵

The Chinese Foreign Ministry released its own [report](#) against Washington titled "US Damage to Global Environmental Governance", in an attempt to showcase the U.S.'s "poor track record in its engagement and compliance with multilateral environmental treaties, which has greatly damaged the fairness, efficiency, and effectiveness of global environmental governance."⁴⁶ [Claiming](#) that the U.S. approach goes "against the aspirations of the American people and harms the common interests of people around world and future generations", the report urged the U.S. to return to the "right track."⁴⁷ Expounding on the report, the Chinese Foreign Ministry [called](#) the U.S. "stained all over" in terms of environment protection."⁴⁸

The media, which has become a point of contention between the two countries, found itself involved in the row. Secretary Pompeo on October 21 labelled six Chinese media organisations as "foreign missions" in the U.S. since they are "substantially owned or effectively controlled by a foreign government." The categorisation aimed to identify the organisations as "propaganda distributed by the Chinese Communist Party itself" without placing restriction on their publications.⁴⁹ China disapproved of this categorisation and the Chinese Foreign Ministry [branded](#) this as the "latest step of political suppression and stigmatisation against Chinese media and journalists stationed in the United States."⁵⁰ After vowing to make "legitimate,

⁴⁵ "China strikes back at U.S. threat of sanctions on int'l financial institutions over Hong Kong", Xinhua, October 15, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/15/c_139443185.htm

⁴⁶ "Report on US Damage to Global Environmental Governance", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, October 19, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1824979.shtml#:~:text=The%20US%20has%20contributions%20arrear%20for%20multilateral%20environmental%20treaties.&text=According%20to%20the%202019%20report.4

⁴⁷ "Report on US Damage to Global Environmental Governance", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, October 19, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1824979.shtml#:~:text=The%20US%20has%20contributions%20arrear%20for%20multilateral%20environmental%20treaties.&text=According%20to%20the%202019%20report.4

⁴⁸ "U.S. "stained all over" in area of environmental protection: FM spokesperson", Xinhua, October 19, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/19/c_139452097.htm

⁴⁹ "Secretary Michael R. Pompeo at a Press Availability", U.S. Department of State, October 21, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-at-a-press-availability-15/>

⁵⁰ "China urges U.S. to stop oppression, restrictions against Chinese media outlets", Xinhua, October 22, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/22/c_139459785.htm

necessary reactions”⁵¹, Beijing demanded written information regarding “staff, finance, operation and real estate” from six American media houses functioning in China.⁵² These agencies include American Broadcasting Corporation, The Los Angeles Times, Minnesota Public Radio, Bureau of National Affairs, Newsweek and Feature Story News. The Foreign Ministry [deemed](#) this action as “necessary and reciprocal countermeasures” taken “in response to the unreasonable oppression the Chinese media organisations experience in the United States.”⁵³

On October 21, the U.S. State Department [approved](#) the sale of USD 1.8 billion worth of weapon systems to Taiwan in an attempt to strengthen “U.S. national, economic, and security interests by supporting” Taipei’s “efforts to modernise its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability” against “regional threats.”⁵⁴ This development augments Washington’s efforts to enhance relations with Taiwan, which Beijing has repeatedly described as its core interest. The Chinese Foreign Ministry [objected](#) to the sale, asking the U.S. to “recognise the highly detrimental nature of the arms sales to Taiwan, abide by the one-China principle and the three China-U.S. Joint Communiques.”⁵⁵ The Foreign Ministry [expressed](#) concern over the “deeply wrong signals” that the move had sent “to the ‘Taiwan independence’ secessionist forces.”⁵⁶ In response to this development, China [sanctioned](#) American firms including Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defence, Raytheon as well as “the U.S. individuals and

⁵¹ “China urges U.S. to stop oppression, restrictions against Chinese media outlets”, Xinhua, October 22, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/22/c_139459785.htm

⁵² “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Remarks on China Taking Reciprocal Countermeasures
In Response to U.S. Designation of Six More Chinese Media as “Foreign Missions””, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, October 26, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1826735.shtml

⁵³ “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Remarks on China Taking Reciprocal Countermeasures
In Response to U.S. Designation of Six More Chinese Media as “Foreign Missions””, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, October 26, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1826735.shtml

⁵⁴ “Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States (Tecro)- Himras, Support, and Equipment”, Defence Security Cooperation Agency of U.S., October 21, 2020, <https://www.dsca.mil/press-media/major-arms-sales/taipei-economic-and-cultural-representative-office-united-states-15>

⁵⁵ “China urges U.S. to stop arms sales to Taiwan: spokesperson”, Xinhua, October 22, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/22/c_139459612.htm

⁵⁶ “China urges U.S. to stop arms sales to Taiwan: spokesperson”, Xinhua, October 22, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/22/c_139459612.htm

entities who played an egregious role” in the arms sales to Taiwan.⁵⁷ The Chinese Foreign Ministry [asked](#) the U.S. to comply with the “one-China principle” and “stop selling weapons to Taiwan or having any military ties with it.”⁵⁸

During the [month](#), the U.S. [entered](#) into the “Guidance for Development of Alliances and Partnerships” in order to “strengthen alliances and build partnerships” which, among other things, will attempt to shift “focus to frontline and emerging partner nations to compete with China and Russia.”⁵⁹ This [initiative](#) digresses from the U.S.’s America First, isolationist stance of “regional priorities” to confront an “era of great power competition that is global in nature.”⁶⁰ This development invited a passive-aggressive reaction from Beijing, as it reassured the U.S. that it “does not intend to challenge, replace or confront the United States” while also maintaining that Washington is “overestimating their ability to counter China and underestimating China's determination to safeguard its core interests.” While accusing Secretary Pompeo of “traveling around the world, selling his anti-China ideas and denigrating China's normal cooperation with other countries”, Beijing sought

⁵⁷ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on October 26, 2020”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, October 26, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1826657.shtml

⁵⁸ Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on October 26, 2020”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, October 26, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1826657.shtml

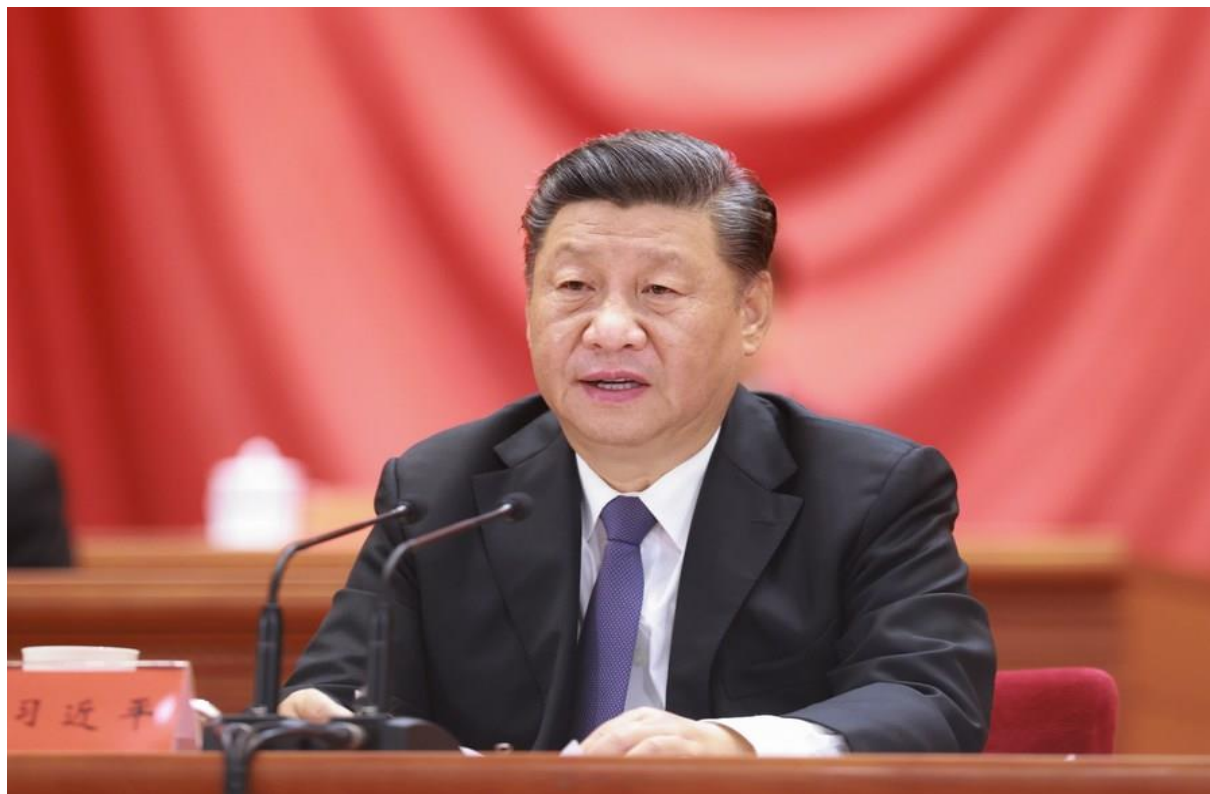
⁵⁹ C. Todd Lopez, “Esper Details Approach for Strengthening Alliances, Partnerships”, U.S. Department of Defence, October 20, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2387595/esper-details-approach-for-strengthening-alliances-partnerships/>

Also see: “Secretary of Defense Allies and Partners Remarks at Atlantic Council”, U.S. Department of Defence, October 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Speeches/Speech/Article/2388205/secretary-of-defense-allies-and-partners-remarks-at-atlantic-council/>

⁶⁰ C. Todd Lopez, “Esper Details Approach for Strengthening Alliances, Partnerships”, U.S. Department of Defence, October 20, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2387595/esper-details-approach-for-strengthening-alliances-partnerships/>

Also see: “Secretary of Defense Allies and Partners Remarks at Atlantic Council”, U.S. Department of Defence, October 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Speeches/Speech/Article/2388205/secretary-of-defense-allies-and-partners-remarks-at-atlantic-council/>

to remind the U.S. of its “victory” during the Korean War and held that “China today is much stronger than it was 70 years ago.”⁶¹



On Oct. 23, 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed a meeting marking the 70th Anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers entering the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fight in the Korean War.

Source: Xinhua

On the 70th anniversary of Chinese intervention in the Korean War, President Xi Jinping delivered a speech emphasising Chinese resistance of the U.S. during the war, with significant undertones regarding the current U.S.-China strategic competition. The speech, which [held](#) that “It is necessary to speak to invaders in the language they know: that is, use war to prevent war... and use a [military] victory to win peace and respect”⁶², was [touted](#) by the Chinese media as a “timely warning to anti-China paper tigers.”⁶³ The speech was however, [criticised](#) by Seoul for distorting the narrative of the war as the conflict was

⁶¹“ Commentary: U.S. politicians' attempt to build anti-China alliance faces dead end”, Xinhua, October 22, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/22/c_139459485.htm

⁶²“ Xinhua Headlines-Xi Focus: 70 years after milestone war, Xi urges pooling strength for national rejuvenation”, Xinhua, October 23, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/23/c_139462880.htm

⁶³ Commentary: War commemoration a timely warning to anti-China “paper tigers””, Xinhua, October 23, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/23/c_139462760.htm

“started by North Korea, an ally of the Soviet Union and China” when “North Korea invaded the South, under the instigation of Stalin and Mao Zedong.”⁶⁴

Consequently, U.S.-China ties further unravelled this month, with no effort from either side to repair relations. Both countries continued making a series of allegations against one another and rhetoric between the two became increasingly bitter.

Economy

Economic data released during the month showed that China's GDP has grown 4.9 percent in the third quarter, bringing the growth in the first three quarters to 0.7 percent compared with a year ago. Although the 4.9 percent is lower than the previously anticipated figure of 5.2 percent which had been forecast by some Chinese institutions, this was widely regarded as an outstanding achievement by the Chinese media. “China's economy is steadily developing while casting off the impact of the epidemic”, proclaimed an article in the Global Times.

China's state media, welcoming the economic data, boasted that “China is a country which does not buckle under pressure and can fulfill its promises” and that “China's economic recovery is a successful global case, and the world needs China more than ever.”. The overall conclusion drawn from these figures was that “the comprehensive suppression strategy implemented by the United States against China has begun to show signs of failure. One party has substantially controlled the epidemic and is thriving again, while the other party is deeply mired in the epidemic and the resulting chaos. Containing China can only be the crazy dream of a small number of elites in the United States.”

“The [reason](#) why China's economy can achieve such incredible results”, the state media added, “is due to the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core, the great advantages of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and the hard work and dedication of Chinese labour force”.⁶⁵ It is now expected that if the epidemic prevention and control can be continued in the autumn and winter seasons effectively, China's economic growth rate will return to about 5.5% in the fourth quarter.

⁶⁴“ Xi accused by Seoul of distorting history in his Korean War speech”, The Straits Times, October 27, 2020, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/xi-accused-by-seoul-of-distorting-history-in-his-korean-war-speech>

⁶⁵“中国经济向好态势来之不易”, China Economic Daily, October 20, 2020, http://views.ce.cn/view/ent/202010/20/t20201020_35908804.shtml

However, despite the growing enthusiasm and confidence, some experts cautioned that the international environment is still complex and severe, with more uncertainties and instability; the pressure from domestic epidemic prevention and control is far from over; and the Chinese economy is still in the process of recovery with much more work needed to be done on fronts like boosting domestic demand, creating employment among others⁶⁶.

Chinese Communist Party

The [fifth plenary](#) session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in Beijing from October 26 to 29⁶⁷. A total of 198 members and 166 alternate members of the CPC Central Committee attended the meeting. A communique was released after the session, which deliberated upon China's 14th Five-Year Plan (FYP) (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives through the Year 2035. The Communique highlighted the achievements made in the 13th Five Year period in areas like GDP growth, poverty reduction and grain output among others; chalked out a blueprint for the future in the backdrop of the major changes in the world that have not occurred in a century, particularly "the strategic containment" from the US; the public health challenge posed by the novel coronavirus pandemic; and suggested twelve steps through which China's future goals can be realised. The Plenum further discussed [issues](#) like self-sufficiency in the technological field, strengthening of the internal market, development of Hong Kong as an international technological hub, promotion of Chinese soft-power and the superiority of China's political system as was evident in its "victory against Covid-19 and the recovery of the economy", and China's plan for transformation of its Armed Forces into a "modern war machine" by 2027⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ "需求全面回暖拉动经济持续向好", China Economic Daily, October 20, 2020, http://views.ce.cn/view/ent/202010/20/t20201020_35908826.shtml

⁶⁷ "19th CPC Central Committee holds 5th plenary session in Beijing", Global Times, October 26, 2020, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1204634.shtml>

⁶⁸ "5th Plenum closes with Xi Jinping's call for a 'democratic' country under the Chinese Communist Party", AsiaNews.it, October 30, 2020, <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/5th-Plenum-closes-with-Xi-Jinpings-call-for-a-'democratic'-country-under-the-Chinese-Communist-Party-51456.html>



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