

Xi's tour lifts ties with Vietnam, Singapore



General Secretary Xi Jinping (R) of the CPC Central Committee attends a welcoming ceremony held by General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong before their talks in Hanoi, Vietnam, Nov. 5, 2015.

China has always attached great importance to its relations with nations in Southeast Asia, as demonstrated most recently by two high-profile visits of President Xi Jinping to Vietnam and Singapore on November 5-7. His mission was to deepen political and economic ties and strengthen relations between China and these important partners.

Traditional friendship consolidated

Xi's state visit to Vietnam coincided with the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Based on the long-standing friendship between former Chinese and Vietnamese leaders – Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai and President Ho Chi Minh – the two countries have cultivated a kind of “comradely and brotherly” relationship throughout history.

In his contributing article published in Vietnamese newspaper Nhan Dan (meaning the People) a few days before his plane touched down, Xi described his upcoming visit to Hanoi as “dropping by a neighbor's or visiting a brother.”

Vietnam gave a rare high-profile welcome to Xi's visit, the first of its kind since Xi taking office.

Upon his arrival, Xi received a red-carpet welcome with a 21-gun salute, a ceremony Vietnam has suspended for years. Throughout Xi's visit, the Vietnam's top leaders held meetings with him, and invited the distinguished guest to banquet, luncheon and breakfast as well as to deliver a speech at the country's parliament.

China and Vietnam have organized a series of activities to commemorate the 65th anniversary of their diplomatic ties. General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong and Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang respectively visited China in April and September this year.

As both are socialist countries, China and Vietnam share a profound traditional friendship, said Pan Jin'e, a researcher on socialist country studies at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Xi's visit has consolidated the friendship and promoted a more pragmatic comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership, said Pan.

Pragmatic cooperation furthered

Xi's 27-hour stay in Hanoi seems to be very brief but yielded landmark achievements.

The two parties signed a number of cooperation documents covering such fields as transportation, tourism, culture, energy and finance. They have agreed to expand cooperation within the framework of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and Vietnam's Two Corridors and One Economic Circle plan.

The connection between the Chinese initiative and the Vietnamese plan will definitely generate favorable outcomes, such as promoting cooperation in border areas and boosting infrastructure development for Vietnam, among others, said Nguyen Ngoc Truong, former Vietnamese ambassador to five countries and now head of a private think-tank. A joint study on the feasibility of a railway connecting Hanoi, Lao Cai and Hai Phong in northern Vietnam is the latest progress in the alignment of strategies.

Dong Manyuan, vice president of China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), said the two development blueprints have the potential to create a closer connectivity of infrastructure and capacity cooperation, which is in the interests of both countries.

Vietnam is in a unique position in regards to the Chinese initiative as it lies at the intersection of the land and maritime Silk Road, so the successful cooperation with Vietnam will serve as a model for China to advance the Belt and Road Initiative with other partners, noted Dong.

China has been Vietnam's largest trading partner for 11 consecutive years, while Vietnam became China's second-largest trading partner in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) last year.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (1st L) delivers a speech at the National University of Singapore in Singapore, Nov. 7, 2015.

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Despite disputes over the sovereignty of some South China Sea islands, the two neighbors demonstrate their will and ability to properly manage their differences by launching a joint survey mission on the waters outside the mouth of the Beibu Gulf in December, which is seen as the start for further maritime cooperation between the two countries.

Customized partnership pledged

In the years to come, China and Singapore will strive to build a partnership of all-round cooperation keeping with the times, and gear up for negotiations on upgrading a seven-year-old free trade agreement (FTA).

The consensus was reached by Xi and his Singaporean counterpart Tony Tan Keng Yam, only a couple of hours after his arrival in the garden state of Singapore on November 6.

It was Xi's first visit to Singapore as Chinese president. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

The two leaders announced at the conclusion of their meetings that they will expand cooperation in economy, trade and investment, and actively explore modes of cooperation between the two countries' enterprises in a third market within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (L) meets with Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in Singapore, Nov. 7, 2015.

The leaders highlighted plans to build the third government-to-government (G2G) project in Chongqing, a sprawling metropolis in southwestern China. The previous two G2G projects include the Suzhou Industrial Park established in 1994 and Tianjin Eco-City inaugurated in 2008. Based on connectivity and services, Chongqing will be a high-level innovation zone utilizing the city's geographical position as a juncture of China's western regions and the Yangtze River economic belt.

Additionally, the two vowed for closer financial cooperation, including promoting the use of RMB in bilateral trade and investment and working toward the early establishment and operation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

To honor the relationship between China and Singapore, Singapore named a new variety of the national flower orchid, or Papillonanda, after Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan. The naming has been regarded as the highest level of welcome for a foreign leader in Singapore.

Singapore takes turn as a coordinator country of China-ASEAN relations this year, and China is willing to join hands with the Southeast Asian country to build a community of shared future between China and the 10-member ASEAN, Xi told his counterpart in a meeting.

Describing bilateral relations with the wording of “keeping with the times” is “rare but appropriate,” said Zheng Yongnian, director of East Asia Institute of National University of Singapore (NUS).

Few, if any, countries could compare with Singapore in the depth and width of cooperation with China, as the two countries, though in a sharp contrast in size and population, share many cultural similarities. Su Ge, president of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), said China-Singapore ties are a paragon of friendly cooperation between big and small countries.

Dong stated that China drew from the experience of Singapore in terms of business management and attraction of foreign capital, especially when China began to adopt the reform and opening-up policy more than three decades ago. Now, as Singapore is a leading member of ASEAN, it will again serve as an important partner of China's as the latter endeavors to promote the Belt and Road Initiative in the region. For Singapore, a city state, the Chinese initiative also presents huge opportunities.

China's ties with both Vietnam and Singapore can be seen as a miniature version of China-ASEAN relations. The progress in the development of relations with the two countries will serve as a model to strengthen China-ASEAN relations in the years to come, he added.

Xi voices China's solution for global growth

General Secretary Xi Jinping of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), also Chinese president, expounded on his views and proposals for global economic and Asia-Pacific development during his presence at the Group of Twenty (G20) summit in Antalya and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Manila in November 2015.

Xi's attendance at the two multilateral summits demonstrated China's sincerity in and constructive attitude towards promoting global growth and advancing Asia-Pacific cooperation, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

China's solution for sluggish world economic recovery

Current world economic growth, hampered by weak demands and structural problems, is falling short of expectations.

"The current crisis is far more complex than any of the previous crises, and it cannot be fixed overnight," said Xi in a speech delivered at the first session of the G20 Summit, noting that a multi-pronged approach is required to overcome the crisis.

Xi pointed out the focus of weak global economic recovery: waning momentum generated by the last round of the scientific and industrial revolution, the diminishing potential of the traditional economic system and development model, uneven development, and the surfacing deficiencies of the existing economic governance mechanism.

To deal with these challenges, Xi urged all G20 countries pay particular attention to communication and the coordination of their policies to "avoid negative spillovers".

"For major countries that carry significant weight in the world economy, it is all the more necessary for them to take into full consideration the impact of their macroeconomic policies on others and to increase the transparency of their policymaking," Xi said.

He added that China will continue to make its own efforts toward this goal.

Xi also called on all G20 members to promote reform and innovation, build an open world economy and implement

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Voicing China's confidence in maintaining its economic growth

As China's influence on the world economy grows, its economic performance has always been in the limelight.

Xi expounded China's current economic situation and future development outlook both in Antalya and in Manila, giving a boost to the world's confidence in the Chinese economy.

"With global growth slowing down, China is working vigorously to overcome difficulties and meet challenges by strengthening macro regulation and effectively advancing reforms," said the Chinese president.

China has "the confidence and ability to sustain a medium high growth rate and continue to create development opportunities for other countries," said Xi.

China registered a 6.9-percent economic growth in the third quarter of 2015, the weakest expansion since the first quarter of 2009 which raised concerns in the international community.

According to Xi, the Chinese economy is predicted to grow about 7 percent this year, which will continue to contribute as much as one third to global growth.

China has shouldered the responsibility of driving economic growth during the times of world economic hardship, he said, noting that China had contributed up to 50 percent of world economic growth from 2009 to 2011.

Despite a recent slowdown, China still contributes 30 percent to global economic growth, which means that China still acts as a major world economic powerhouse, said Xi.

China's confidence comes from its determination and actions to comprehensively deepen reform and build an open economic system, as well as the strong endogenous dynamic of China's economy and the policy guidance of the Chinese government, he added.

Highlighting China's role in Asia-Pacific cooperation and development

Against the backdrop of potential challenges facing Asia-Pacific



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) is welcomed by his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the 10th summit of the Group of Twenty (G20) major economies in Antalya, Turkey, Nov. 15, 2015.

development, Chinese President Xi Jinping urged all APEC members to make use of the regional platform and step up their win-win cooperation to continue to lead global growth.

"The Asia-Pacific region is still the locomotive driving the world economy," Xi said.

Stressing that Asia-Pacific economies should look ahead into the future and improve the framework for regional medium and long-term cooperation, Xi pointed out that reform and innovation are needed to find a new growth impetus.

He called for joint efforts to push forward a transition of the growth model and economic restructuring and deepen cooperation in areas that have great potential, such as urbanization, the Internet economy and the blue economy.

Meanwhile, "we need to advance regional integration and build an open Asia-Pacific economy," said Xi, urging APEC members to complete the construction of the FTAAP at an early date.

To enhance regional connectivity, Xi noted that the China-proposed

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is expected to be formally established by the end of this year and will act as an important platform supporting regional connectivity. The "Belt and Road" initiative is also making steady progress, Xi said.

Wilson Lee Flores, a columnist for the Philippine Star newspaper, said China should "promote the AIIB, FTAAP and other new ideas or concepts which will give Asia-Pacific economies more strategic and economic options."

Jointly fighting against terrorism

On the sidelines of the APEC meeting, Xi strongly condemned the Islamic State (IS) for killing a Chinese national.

China earlier confirmed the death of Chinese hostage Fan Jinghui who had been held by the IS, saying the criminal must be brought to justice.

"Terrorism is the common enemy of mankind," Xi said, adding that China firmly opposes terrorism in all forms and will resolutely crack down on any terrorist crime that challenges the bottom line of human civilization.

Xi's remarks came prior to the APEC joint declaration, in which the leaders asserted they "strongly condemn all acts, methods, and practices of terrorism in all their forms and manifestations."

"We will not allow terrorism to threaten the fundamental values that underpin our free and open economies," said the declaration, adding that economic growth, prosperity and opportunity are among the most powerful tools to address the root causes of terrorism and radicalization.

"We stress the urgent need for increased international cooperation and solidarity in the fight against terrorism," the APEC leaders said in the declaration.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (5th L, front) poses for a family photo with other leaders and their spouses before a welcome dinner of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Manila, the Philippines, Nov. 18, 2015.

Ramping-up regional integration



State leaders pose for group photos at the 10th East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on November 22.

During a four-day stay in Malaysia from November 20 to 23, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attended the 18th China-ASEAN (10+1) leaders' meeting, the 18th ASEAN-China, Japan and South Korea (10+3) leaders' meeting and the 10th East Asia Summit before paying his first official visit to the Southeast Asian country as the Chinese premier.

These meetings came at a time when China and other East Asian countries are increasing efforts to deepen economic integration.

Upgrade of cooperation

One of the highlights of the East Asian leaders' meeting is China and ASEAN sealing a deal in Kuala Lumpur on November 22 to upgrade their Free Trade Area (FTA).

Covering a wide range of areas including goods, services, investment, economic and technological cooperation, the upgrade will provide fresh momentum for economic development of both China and ASEAN.

Conducive to fostering a closer China-ASEAN community of common destiny, the move is also to help realize the target of scaling up two-way trade to US\$1 trillion by 2020 and promote the negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

Following what has been hailed as the "golden decade" of China-ASEAN relations since the two sides established a strategic partnership in 2003, Beijing proposed the China-ASEAN community of common destiny in 2013.

In the same year, Li called on the two sides to further create a "diamond decade" which has witnessed a good start.

China remains ASEAN's biggest trading partner while ASEAN is China's third largest trading partner. In 2014, trade volume between China and ASEAN surpassed US\$480 billion with an increase of 8.23 percent and 4.9 percentage points higher than China's overall foreign trade growth rate. Bilateral trade in the first 10 months of this year reached nearly US\$400 billion. Trade volume is forecasted to surge to US\$10 trillion by 2020.

Xu Liping, an expert on Southeast Asian affairs at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that the protocol between China and ASEAN on upgrading the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area signified that the relations between China and ASEAN have genuinely embarked on a "diamond decade" from the previous "golden decade," meaning that economic cooperation between the two powers will be lifted to a much higher level.

Assistance and initiatives

The premier squeezed several hours out of his tight schedule in Malaysia to visit Malacca, a port city about two hours' drive from Kuala Lumpur.

Malacca, located in the southern region of the Malay Peninsula, has not only played a critical role in China-Malaysia friendship since ancient times, but also stands at a key point along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which is part of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013.

The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, covering a population of 4.4 billion, will connect markets along its route and produce enormous economic potential.

In an early step to put the initiative into action, the Malacca State established a friendly partnership with South China's Guangdong Province in September, and an industrial park is a major project currently under construction by companies from both sides.

The Chinese premier hoped that what is going on in Malacca will serve as an example for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative among Southeast Asian countries.

Speaking at the 10th East Asia Summit (EAS), Li said China is willing to enhance the dovetailing of its development strategy with those of ASEAN in order to realize the vision of forging an East Asian economic community by 2020.

He pledged to offer loans totaling US\$10 billion for ASEAN infrastructure as well as free assistance worth 3.6 billion yuan (around US\$563 million) to underdeveloped ASEAN nations in 2016.

Commenting on regional connectivity, Li said that China will continue advancing the construction of the pan-Asia railway network and do its best to start construction of the railways linking China with Thailand and China with Laos by the end of this year.

Explaining Beijing's initiatives for East Asian development, he emphasized the "two wheels" strategy of economic development and political security to realize stable economic growth in the region.

So far, China-ASEAN development momentum remains strong. China's 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) and the "Belt and Road" initiative have opened up greater China-ASEAN pragmatic cooperation.

ASEAN supported China's "Belt and Road" initiative, which is aimed at bringing greater connectivity and opportunities to the region, said ASEAN Secretary-General Le Luong Minh.

"The China-ASEAN partnership is one of the most important strategic partnerships ASEAN has concluded with its partners. We have appreciated China's support for ASEAN very much. China's support for ASEAN has contributed to the ASEAN integration process," he added.

Message of peace

In a signed article published by major Malaysian newspapers ahead of his trip, Li dubbed China-ASEAN relations "a major cornerstone for peace, stability, development and prosperity in the region."

Although most of the nations in the region aspire for closer ties with China, a few countries have been hyping up the "China threat" theories and wrongfully accusing China of bullying its neighbors. The United States, with its high-profile strategy of rebalancing the Asia-Pacific region, is meddling in regional affairs and stoking tension.

In a five-pronged proposal for peace and stability in the South China Sea, Li suggested that sovereign and jurisdictional disputes in the region be settled through friendly consultation and negotiation and called on countries outside the region to refrain from taking actions that may cause tension.

"Only by expanding our common interests and seeking common ground can we narrow our differences," he told ASEAN nations.

ASEAN leaders agreed that differences should be properly handled through peaceful dialogue with China and they would not let some individual problems affect the bigger picture of China-ASEAN relations.

"A US-China conflict will have adverse consequences for Southeast Asia. If Southeast Asia is turned into a proxy battleground between these two powers, ASEAN will bear the most collateral damage," said Hoo Tiang Boon, assistant professor with the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Tang Qifang, an associate researcher with the China Institute of International Studies stated that Premier Li Keqiang's frank and sincere proposals on the South China Sea issue and clear interpretation of China's stance embodied the country's firm determination on safeguarding sovereignty over its islands in the South China Sea and its great resolution to maintain peace and stability in the region.



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (2nd L, front) interacts with old friends and representatives of local people at San Shu Gong specialty shop in Malacca, Malaysia, Nov. 22, 2015. Li, accompanied by his wife Cheng Hong, visited Malacca on the day.



Ji Jianjun: A pioneer in development

In the 2014 annual ranking of economic growth of all counties in Henan Province, Suixian County was placed sixth, overtaking more than 80 counties in two years. This was an outstanding achievement for a county inconveniently located in rural hinterland of central China.

Local people attribute the success to Ji Jianjun, chief of the county committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC). To them, Ji is a far-sighted man with a keen sense of timing. He is good at catching chances, and it was he who found the correct path for the county's development.

Suixian County is under the jurisdiction of Shangqiu City. Before Ji took office in 2012, it was always among the last in the assessments conducted by the city government. This frustrated local officials and made some of them lose their will to try and move forward.

However, Ji firmly believed "anyone is able to make progress on finding the correct path." After thorough study and careful consideration, he discovered great chances provided by the national relocation of labor-intensive manufacturing industries and the fast development of the adjacent Zhengzhou Comprehensive Experimental Zone for Airport-Based Economy. He proposed the county should develop a shoe-making industry and an electronics contract manufacturing industry to attract investors moving inland from coastal regions.

Easier said than done. When the county government first tried to attract investment, it was turned down by many investors. This greatly discouraged some local officials, but Ji persevered and Suixian County is now home to the production centers of six of China's top 10 sneaker brands. It has also become a production center of Apple's major supplier Foxconn, and provides contract manufacturing services to other electronics giants like Samsung, Xiaomi and Huawei.

Ji believes the ultimate goal of boosting an economy is to make people rich and enable them to have a comfortable life. Following his advice, the Suixian county government launched 36 policies to help farmers find jobs in the county seat, and built nine primary and middle schools and three hospitals to cope with the influx of rural population.

"We are here to serve the people. We have to do our best to solve their problems and make life easier for them," Ji said.

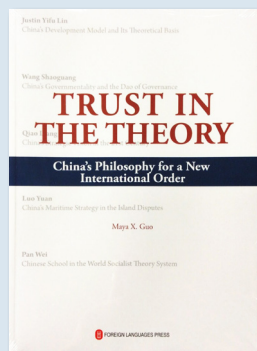
The morale of local officials is essential to development. Ji had held many grassroots posts and knew clearly the bad influence of idleness. After he became county Party chief, he established three mechanisms to boost efficiency in governance, enhance supervision of local officials and hold them accountable for their decisions. The measures greatly boosted the efficiency of local government departments.

In June 2015, Ji was selected as one of China's best county-level Party chiefs and honored by top Party leader Xi Jinping. Xi's speech at the ceremony in Beijing left Ji with a deep impression. "Someone has to have the courage to try new things during development, and I'd like to be that person in Suixian County. I will do my best to help people get rid of poverty and become better off. This is my duty."



Ji Jianjun (middle) visits local residents and listen to their opinion on county affairs in Suixian County, Henan Province.

Book reflects China's philosophy for a new int'l order



The book *Trust in the Theory: China's Philosophy for a New International Order* is a collection of opinions from 15 of China's most influential strategists and experts of the country's development road. Based on facts and theories, the book explains where the confidence in China's path, its theory and the country's political system comes from. It is a book full of "positive energy" that inspires and encourages people to pursue the Chinese Dream.

The author interviewed some of the most influential contemporary Chinese philosophers and experts both home and abroad, including Justin Yifu Lin, Qiao Liang, Luo Yuan, Wang Shaoguang and Cao Jinqing, and provided the most innovative and inspiring explanations about "China's development model." The book sums up China's development road and experiences over the past 60 years, analyzes China's current position in the world's political and economic arena, the opportunities and challenges China now faces, and looks at the future of mankind and China's potential contributions to the world.

The author Maya X. Guo was born in Nanjing and grew up in Beijing. She was a soldier and civil servant. She went to Australia to study English in 1990 and then to America in 1992. She got her PHD in politics in America. In 2002, she joined Hong Kong Phoenix Group and served as deputy chief editor of the Phoenix Weekly.

Getting to Know **CHINA** through **KEYWORDS**

Improving global economic governance:

The idea of global economic governance proposed by China aims at promoting the growth of economic globalization.

[More>>](#)

Spirit of the Silk Road:

For hundreds of years, the spirit of the Silk Road, namely, peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit, has been passed down through generations.

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Major events in November

Nov. 4: China's legislature ratifies AIIB agreement

Keywords: NPC, AIIB

China's top legislature ratified the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) agreement, which establishes the legal framework for the bank.

Nov. 7: Xi-Ma meeting, 'historic page' in cross-Straits relations

Keywords: Xi Jinping, Ma Ying-jeou, Cross-Straits relations

Xi Jinping meets with Ma Ying-jeou at the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore.

Nov. 10: Vice mayor of Shanghai under probe

Keywords: Shanghai, Ai Baojun, corruption

Ai Baojun, Shanghai's deputy mayor and director of the Shanghai free trade zone, has been placed under investigation on suspicion of violating Party discipline.

Nov. 11: Beijing deputy Party chief under probe

Keywords: Beijing, Lyu Xiwen, anti-corruption

Lyu Xiwen, deputy Party chief of Beijing, is being investigated for suspected "severe disciplinary violations."

Nov. 20: World Forum on China Studies opens in Shanghai

Keywords: World Forum on China Studies, Shanghai,

The sixth World Forum on China Studies kicked off in Shanghai.

Nov. 29: Xi arrives in Paris for climate change conference

Keywords: Xi Jinping, climate change conference

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Paris to attend the opening ceremony of an international conference on climate change.

Nov. 30: IMF approves inclusion of China's RMB in SDR basket

Keywords: IMF, SDR, RMB

The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s executive board approved the inclusion of China's currency renminbi (RMB) in its Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket as an international reserve currency.