

# Article

## **A Critical Gloss on Xi Jinping, 齐心开创共建“一带一路”美好未来 [Working Together to Deliver a Brighter Future For Belt and Road Cooperation] In the Shadow of the US-China Trade Talks**

**CPE-Working Group on Empire (Larry Catá Backer)**

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白日依山尽，  
黄河入海流。  
欲穷千里目，  
更上一层楼

### **On the Stork Tower**

*By Wang Zhihuan*

The sun beyond the mountains glows;  
The Yellow River seawards flows.  
You can enjoy a grander sight,  
By climbing to a greater height.

In this article the WGE considers the utility of Xi Jinping's remarks at the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation as a source for an understanding of the Chinese conceptualization of its global trade regime, and specifically the principles and objectives and shape and drive it. The analysis is relevant to a consideration of the role of Chinese - US bilateral trade talks, by putting them in a broader and more appropriate context. With these considerations in mind, the WGE presents a critical reading of Xi Jinping's Remarks — 齐心开创共建“一带一路”美好未来; [Working Together to Deliver a Brighter Future For Belt and Road Cooperation], as interlinear annotations to the official English translation of the speech.

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1 XU YUANZHONG, 54 SONG OF THE IMMORTALS: AN ANTHOLOGY OF CLASSICAL CHINESE POETRY (BILINGUAL EDITION) (1994).

## ***“Working Together to Deliver a Brighter Future For Belt and Road Cooperation”***

Keynote Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People’s Republic of China At the  
Opening Ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Beijing, 26 April 2019

“Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,  
Your Excellencies High-level Representatives,  
Your Excellencies Heads of International Organizations,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,”

“Good morning! As a line of a classical Chinese poem goes, “Spring and autumn are lovely seasons in which friends get together to climb up mountains and write poems.” On this beautiful spring day, it gives me great pleasure to have you with us here at the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF). On behalf of the Chinese government and people and in my own name, I extend a very warm welcome to you all!”

***Commentary: The opening of the address sets the tone in the style that has become a defining element of the writing and speaking style of Xi. Central to that style is the invocation of the past — not just any past but the most cultivated and meaningful literary past — now deployed in the service of a present objective. These invocations are of the highest importance; they signal the underlying message that Xi means to convey in a concise and literary way that reinforces his core position within social, cultural, political, and economic life. In this case Xi cites to the very well known poetry of Tao Yuanming (352?-427):***

春秋多佳日，登高賦新詩。  
過門更相呼，有酒斟酌之。  
農務各自歸，閑暇輒相思。  
相思則披衣，言笑無厭時。  
此理將不勝？無為忽去茲。  
衣食當須紀，力耕不吾欺。<sup>2</sup>

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2 春秋多佳日，登高賦新詩[pring and autumn are lovely seasons in which friends get together to climb up mountains and write poems], 古詩文網 [Gushi Wenwang], available at <https://www.gushimi.org/shiju/17016.html>

*The poem is meant to speak the propitious seasons for coming together among good neighbors who join together briefly to enjoy each other's company and returning to work miss each other's company. It is meant to invoke images of the assembled leaders as members of the same village enjoying each other's company (solidarity) amid their own work that contributes both to their camaraderie and to the knowledge that it would be unreasonable to abandon this communal life together. This greeting with substantial thematic meaning is then invoked in the name of three distinct centers of authority — the Chinese government, the people (two layers of collective organization in China), and in Xi's own name (an emphasis on the core in the core-collective binary at the heart of Chinese new era Leninism). These three distinct layers ought to be borne quite clearly in mind for what follows. We at the WGE also invoke that style and its layers of meaning in this essay, which the reader is invited to reconsider.*

“Two years ago, it was here that we met for the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, where we drew a blueprint of cooperation to enhance policy, infrastructure, trade, financial and people-to-people connectivity. Today, we are once again meeting here with you, friends from across the world. I look forward to scaling new heights with you and enhancing our partnership. Together, we will create an even brighter future for Belt and Road cooperation.”

*Commentary: Here the importations of the poem and its meaning are brought home. Of course, those in assembly would hardly have been expected to understand a thing about these subtleties. To whom then would they be directed? First, of course, Chinese internal elites. Then (if listening states are astute enough) they might be directed to the security services of friendly and rival states whose services ought to have been considering the implied or buried message, but who likely would dismiss poetry as of little interest (and thus gain for China a discursive advantage). Now Xi can get down to business.*

“Dear Colleagues and Friends,”

“The joint pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to enhance connectivity and practical cooperation. It is about jointly meeting various challenges and risks confronting mankind and delivering win-win outcomes and common development. Thanks to the joint efforts of all of us involved in this initiative, a general connectivity framework consisting of six corridors, six connectivity routes and multiple countries and ports has been put in place. A large number of cooperation projects have been launched, and the decisions of the first BRF have been smoothly implemented. More than 150 countries and international organizations have signed agreements on Belt and Road

cooperation with China. The complementarity between the BRI and the development plans or cooperation initiatives of international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union and between the BRI and the development strategies of the participating countries has been enhanced. From the Eurasian continent to Africa, the Americas and Oceania, Belt and Road cooperation has opened up new space for global economic growth, produced new platforms for international trade and investment and offered new ways for improving global economic governance. Indeed, this initiative has helped improve people's lives in countries involved and created more opportunities for common prosperity. What we have achieved amply demonstrates that Belt and Road cooperation has both generated new opportunities for the development of all participating countries and opened up new horizon for China's development and opening-up."

*Commentary: At first blush the long paragraph appears to be the typical opening set of remarks that highlight accomplishments. And so it is. But that is hardly the interesting point of the paragraph. Notice, instead the repeating words. Those serve as drum beats, as points of emphasis, and as the percussive biorhythm cadence that serves to underline the fundamental premise of the Belt and Road Initiative that they mean to convey. First there is the cadences of joinder: "joint pursuit," "joint efforts," "jointly meeting". Then there are the cadences of cooperation: "practical cooperation", "cooperation projects", "cooperation with China", "cooperation initiatives," and twice "Belt and Road cooperation". And lastly (for our purposes here, the cadences of development: "common development", "development plans", "development strategies", "opportunities for development". Joinder, cooperation and development are connected by principles of complementarity. Notable by its absence are notions of markets, of private activity, of integration, of the key words and phrases that sometimes are said to mark the traditional contours of the contemporary rules of engagement of economic globalization. Already the gaze is lifted from the market, and the private sector, to the state and to public macro-economic policy directed instrumentality by the entities at the center of this new world of cooperation. joinder, and complementarity — the state.*

"An ancient Chinese philosopher observed that "plants with strong roots grow well, and efforts with the right focus will ensure success." The Belt and Road cooperation embraces the historical trend of economic globalization, responds to the call for improving the global governance system and meets people's longing for a better life. Going ahead, we should focus on priorities and project execution, move forward with results-oriented implementation, just like an architect refining the blueprint, and jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation."

***Commentary: Here the remarks move from notions of bringing together among the community of states, to notions of connection with the past. This follows a deeply embedded pattern of thinking that inevitably links the past to the current to the future in a dynamic state of (forward) movement inevitably toward a goal (something better and inevitable). At the core of the allusions here are the central notions first thoroughly and officially articulated in the 19th Communist Party Congress — of the inevitable movement to a new era.<sup>3</sup> That new era might be marked first within China — and necessarily so because of the vanguard role played by the Chinese Communist Party in national (and now global) historical development. Thus the strong roots of the emerging era are those put down over the last 40 years by the global vanguard—the CPC, which is now at a stage where it might also serve the global community. This necessarily puts China at the center of historical development as the new era shifts focus from the old era focus on markets based globalization to the Belt and Road formulation for the construction of a new era trading order, "just like an architect refining the blueprint, and jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation." The structures of that architecture are then summarized in the succeeding paragraphs.***

“— We need to be guided by the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We need to act in the spirit of multilateralism, pursue cooperation through consultation and keep all participants motivated. We may, by engaging in bilateral, trilateral and multilateral cooperation, fully tap into the strengths of all participants. Just as a Chinese proverb says, “A tower is built when soil on earth accumulates, and a river is formed when streams come together.”

— We need to pursue open, green and clean cooperation. The Belt and Road is not an exclusive club; it aims to promote green development. We may launch green infrastructure projects, make green investment and provide green financing to protect the Earth which we all call home. In pursuing Belt and Road cooperation, everything should be done in a transparent way, and we should have zero tolerance for corruption. The Beijing Initiative for Clean Silk Road has been launched, which represents our strong commitment to transparency and clean governance in pursuing Belt and Road cooperation.

— We need to pursue high standard cooperation to improve people’s lives and promote sustainable development. We will adopt widely accepted rules and standards and encourage participating companies to follow general international rules and standards in project development, operation, procurement and tendering and bidding. The laws and regulations of

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3 Larry Catá Backer, *Reflections on Jiang Shigong on ‘Philosophy and History: Interpreting the “Xi Jinping Era” through Xi’s Report to the Nineteenth National Congress of the CCP’* [强世功, 哲学与历史 —从党的十九大报告解读“习近平时代”], LAW AT THE END OF THE DAY, June 3, 2018, available at <https://lbackerblog.blogspot.com/2018/06/reflections-on-jiang-shigong-on.html>

participating countries should also be respected. We need to take a people-centered approach, give priority to poverty alleviation and job creation to see that the joint pursuit of Belt and Road cooperation will deliver true benefits to the people of participating countries and contribute to their social and economic development. We also need to ensure the commercial and fiscal sustainability of all projects so that they will achieve the intended goals as planned."

***Commentary: Here Xi summarizes the three principal elements of the Belt and Road Initiative. The first touches on state to state cooperation grounded in the Chinese foreign policy principle of mutually beneficial cooperation. This principle has already been embraced by the UN Human Rights Council — a great coup for Chinese diplomacy.<sup>4</sup> And it is now to be transposed into the area of economic activity. The second touches on environmental cooperation. Here Chinese CPC Basic Line objectives and global consensus align in ways that draw the United States out (at least as a matter of official policy). But that is the problem. The Belt and Road Initiative shifts the gaze to the state sector as the only possible place from which policy can be sourced, and action taken. It consequently undervalues (and rejects) the ordering potential of markets (as do many Western intellectuals). But in the process, it knocks a critical supporting principle out from under current economic globalization — the centrality of markets (and private ordering) for efficiently ordering the world. China offers the alternative, state based and formal, undertaken through markets of course, but only under direction of the state. And there is no better place to slip that fundamental change in than where policy aligns. The third touches on the societal aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative as an ordering principle for trade — by extending trade well beyond the economic to the societal as well. Here one encounters the all-around nature of BRI and the consequences of substituting state management for market control. This aligns significantly with the CPC's own new era basic contradiction (a critical concept ignored in the West, especially with respect to its centrality as an ordering concept of internal and external policy). "As socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved. What we now face is the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life".<sup>5</sup> It is not for nothing, then, that the Belt and Road Initiative is meant to align the basic structures of global trade with the CPC's understanding of the fundamental contradiction (now global) of society, and then to fashion trade relation according to the logic of that contradiction: away from markets and wealth creation toward "a people-centered approach, give priority to poverty alleviation and job creation."***

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- 4 Larry Catá Backer, *On the Internationalization of China's "New Era" Theory: Brief Thoughts on the UN Human Rights Council Resolution: "On promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights"* (A/HRC/37/L.36), LAW AT THE END OF THE DAY, March 24, 2018, available at <http://lcbackerblog.blogspot.com/2018/03/on-internationalization-of-chinas-new.html>
- 5 Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress, XINHUA, November 4, 2017, available at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpconationalcongress/2017-11/04/content\\_34115212.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpconationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm)

“Dear Colleagues and Friends,”

“Connectivity is vital to advancing Belt and Road cooperation. We need to promote a global partnership of connectivity to achieve common development and prosperity. I am confident that as we work closely together, we will transcend geographical distance and embark on a path of win-win cooperation. Infrastructure is the bedrock of connectivity, while the lack of infrastructure has held up the development of many countries. High-quality, sustainable, resilient, affordable, inclusive and accessible infrastructure projects can help countries fully leverage their resource endowment, better integrate into the global supply, industrial and value chains, and realize inter-connected development. To this end, China will continue to work with other parties to build a connectivity network centering on economic corridors such as the New Eurasian Land Bridge, supplemented by major transportation routes like the China-Europe Railway Express and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor and information expressway, and reinforced by major railway, port and pipeline projects. We will continue to make good use of the Belt and Road Special Lending Scheme, the Silk Road Fund, and various special investment funds, develop Silk Road theme bonds, and support the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance in its operation. We welcome the participation of multilateral and national financial institutions in BRI investment and financing and encourage third-market cooperation. With the involvement of multiple stakeholders, we can surely deliver benefits to all.

***Commentary: Xi moves now from general principles to specific elements that will serve to implement the greater vision. The first of this is connectivity. Connectivity becomes both a program of action and a metaphor. It serves as the concrete manifestation of linkages between the world and China — as the central node for global activity. But it also serves to underline the critical role of China as the driver of that connectivity. That central role is necessary because at the heart of the Belt and Road Initiative is the principle that China is the core of the collective manifestation of economic activity whose pieces can only be sensibly arranged through the guidance of China, and within China, of its vanguard. Notions of core and collective, now native to the basic organization of Chinese political life, are transposed to the relations between China and its partners. I should emphasize, of course, that none of this is meant as judgment, just observation. Whether those principles and activities accord or fail to accord with the vision of other actors is for them to determine. But that should be done without illusion, or self-delusion.***

“The flow of goods, capital, technology and people will power economic growth and create broad space for it. As a Chinese saying goes, “The ceaseless inflow of rivers makes the ocean deep.” However, were such inflow to be cut,

the ocean, however big, would eventually dry up. We need to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, say no to protectionism, and make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all. To this end, we will enter into negotiation with more countries to conclude high-standard free trade agreements, and strengthen cooperation in customs, taxation and audit oversight by setting up the Belt and Road Initiative Tax Administration Cooperation Mechanism and accelerating international collaboration on the mutual recognition of Authorized Economic Operators. We have also formulated the Guiding Principles on Financing the Development of the Belt and Road and published the Debt Sustainability Framework for Participating Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative to provide guidance for BRI financing cooperation. In addition, the Second China International Import Expo will be held this year to build an even bigger platform for other parties to access the Chinese market.”

***Commentary: Xi Speaks of the Chinese saying of "the ceaseless inflow of rivers makes the ocean deep." It caused me to think of an almost forgotten poem of Rod McKuen:***

***The sea gets hungry every August, tired of eating only rivers<sup>6</sup>***

***Here Xi moves from the organization of trade to the organization of finance. And here one sees nicely tied together the notion of Belt and Road Initiative as the core of global trade, with the Yuan as the core of global finance. That necessary union is critical to the displacement of older markets oriented and private flows (without much of a core (the central object of pre-new era and mostly American, global trade and investment principles at least formally) with a comprehensive approach in which trade and finance are again aligned (as they were 1945-2016) but now under new principles of operation. Xi emphasizes the concrete steps even as he is more discrete about its structural implications. At the same time Xi is correct to note the necessary identity between trade and finance policy — between being the center of global trading and having one's currency serve as the means through which that centering can be effectively operationalized and disciplined.***

“Innovation boosts productivity; it makes companies competitive and countries strong. We need to keep up with the trend of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, jointly seize opportunities created by digital, networked and smart development, explore new technologies and new forms and models of business, foster new growth drivers and explore new development pathways, and build the digital Silk Road and the Silk Road of innovation. China will continue to carry out the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, and will work with our partners to pursue four major

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6 August 6, in 42 IN SOMEONE'S SHADOW, ROD MCKUEN (1964).

initiatives, namely the Science and Technology People-to-People Exchange Initiative, the Joint Laboratory Initiative, the Science Park Cooperation Initiative, and the Technology Transfer Initiative. We will actively implement the Belt and Road Initiative Talents Exchange Program, and will, in the coming five years, offer 5,000 opportunities for exchange, training and cooperative research for talents from China and other BRI participating countries. We will also support companies of various countries in jointly advancing ICT infrastructure building to upgrade cyber connectivity.”

***Commentary: The state that controls innovation controls development. And control of technology can drive the Belt and Road Initiative as much as it drive power relations in every age that came before. But what makes this paragraph particularly interesting is the identity between societal, capacity building and technological advances now all bent to the benefit of the Belt and Road states. The Belt and Road Initiative continues, in this way, the time honored tradition among leading states, of organizing and directing the flows of innovation in ways that aid the group but are managed at the center. At its heart, of course, is to displace the powerful network of innovation that now flows through the West with an alternative system that flows elsewhere. Multiple networks of knowledge production are always useful. But in this context the most important element of the project passes almost undetected — the use of BRI to implement a strong unified cyber infrastructure along Chinese models. Again, the focus moves from the economic to the political, and from production to the proper organization of society. Now the references to classical philosophy becomes clearer. “The ceaseless inflow of rivers makes the ocean deep” but those flows must be managed, and the rivers must be directed toward the proper ocean. And again, “A tower is built when soil on earth accumulates, and a river is formed when streams come together.” And again, “plants with strong roots grow well, and efforts with the right focus will ensure success.” Towers and plants growing strong on solid foundations; streams to rivers to oceans. The visuals are worth careful contemplation.***

“Imbalance in development is the greatest imbalance confronting today’s world. In the joint pursuit of the BRI, we must always take a development-oriented approach and see that the vision of sustainable development underpins project selection, implementation and management. We need to strengthen international development cooperation so as to create more opportunities for developing countries, help them eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. In this connection, China and its partners have set up the Belt and Road Sustainable Cities Alliance and the BRI International Green Development Coalition, formulated the Green Investment Principles for the Belt and Road Development, and launched the Declaration on Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals for Children through Shared Development. We have set up the BRI Environmental Big Data Platform.

We will continue to implement the Green Silk Road Envoys Program and work with relevant countries to jointly implement the Belt and Road South-South Cooperation Initiative on Climate Change. We will also deepen cooperation in agriculture, health, disaster mitigation and water resources; and we will enhance development cooperation with the United Nations to narrow the gap in development.”

***Commentary: Here again are allusions to the great new era fundamental contradiction described above. But here, as well a more overt effort to describe the manner of its internationalization. The concept of fundamental contradiction is then universalized, and once universalized (no longer merely a condition with Chinese characteristics) it can serve to drive (concurrently) Chinese international and global policy. That identity between Chinese dynamic political theory and its international ramification is then woven into much of the rest of the remarks).***

“We need to build bridges for exchanges and mutual learning among different cultures, deepen cooperation in education, science, culture, sports, tourism, health and archaeology, strengthen exchanges between parliaments, political parties and non-governmental organizations and exchanges between women, young people and people with disabilities in order to facilitate multi-faceted people-to-people exchanges. To this end, we will, in the coming five years, invite 10,000 representatives of political parties, think tanks and non-governmental organizations from Belt and Road participating countries to visit China. We will encourage and support extensive cooperation on livelihood projects among social organizations of participating countries, conduct a number of environmental protection and anti-corruption training courses and deepen human resources development cooperation in various areas. We will continue to run the Chinese government scholarship Silk Road Program, host the International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads and the “Chinese Bridge” summer camps. We will also put in place new mechanisms such as the Belt and Road Studies Network and the Belt and Road News Alliance to draw inspiration and pool our strength for greater synergy.”

***Commentary: Just as BRI merges trade and finance, so it collapses the distinctions between economic and social objectives. Capacity building as as much about political work as it is about economics. Indeed, the pretensions of the West to a hard distinction between politics, economics, social, and cultural elements of interactions fall away in the Belt and Road Initiative. Though the initial steps are tentative to be sure — the direction is quite clearly outlined.***

“Dear Colleagues and Friends,”

“This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Seven decades ago, through the arduous struggle carried out by several generations of Chinese people and under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, New China was founded. We Chinese have since stood up and held our future in our own hands.”

*Commentary: The next several paragraphs then serve to make the case for China's leadership as the vanguard of the new era international order. That case is grounded on the success of the Chinese model internally, and of the critical element of the role of the CPC and its leadership of the nation towards that success. The model, then, is not merely an economic and social model, but a political model as well. his model is classically Leninist with the remarkable advancements in Leninist organization theory undertaken by the CPC over the course of the last forty years. These paragraphs and the five point plan described below are worth a careful reading. They provide the roadmap for the Belt and Road Initiative, and provide as well a glimpse of the forms that such development ought to take. The model is clear, and clearly aligns Chinese interests with global interests. This is in a sense unremarkable, at least to the extent it reflects an effort to replicate a similar alignment between the United States and the world in the construction of the post WWII order. The remarkable thing is that China will seek to undertake this without the relative advantage of victory in war, though one wonders whether there is a suggestion here of a willingness to make the sacrifices necessary to support its role as the core of a global community. The problem, of course, is that "mutually beneficial cooperation" principle, quite appropriate to a state in development, might not suit a state that seeks to serve as the foundation of a global order. Still, it may be too early to tell. And wholly absent from the analysis are the likely reactions of those countries that will serve as waypoints on this new global highway. The critical insight, however, is clearly delivered by Mr. Xi — to understand the Belt and Road Initiative in its international dimensions, look to the totality of China in its new era. That is indeed wise.*

“Over the past seven decades, we in China have, based on its realities, constantly explored the way forward through practices, and have succeeded in following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Today, China has reached a new historical starting point. However, we are keenly aware that with all we have achieved, there are still many mountains to scale and many shoals to navigate. We will continue to advance along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, deepen sweeping reforms, pursue quality development, and expand opening-up. We remain committed to peaceful development and will endeavor to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Going forward, China will take a series of major reform and opening-

up measures and make stronger institutional and structural moves to boost higher quality opening-up.”

“First, we will expand market access for foreign investment in more areas. Fair competition boosts business performance and creates prosperity. China has already adopted a management model based on pre-establishment national treatment and negative list, and will continue to significantly shorten the negative list. We will work for the all-round opening-up of modern services, manufacturing and agriculture, and will allow the operation of foreign-controlled or wholly foreign-owned businesses in more sectors. We will plan new pilot free trade zones and explore at a faster pace the opening of a free trade port. We will accelerate the adoption of supporting regulations to ensure full implementation of the Foreign Investment Law. We will promote supply-side structural reform through fair competition and open cooperation, and will phase out backward and excessive production capacity in an effective way to improve the quality and efficiency of supply.”

“Second, we will intensify efforts to enhance international cooperation in intellectual property protection. Without innovation, there will be no progress. Full intellectual property protection will not only ensure the lawful rights and interests of Chinese and foreign companies; it is also crucial to promoting China’s innovation-driven and quality development. China will spare no effort to foster a business environment that respects the value of knowledge. We will fully improve the legal framework for protecting intellectual property, step up law enforcement, enhance protection of the lawful rights and interests of foreign intellectual property owners, stop forced technology transfer, improve protection of trade secrets, and crack down hard on violations of intellectual property in accordance with law. China will strengthen cooperation with other countries in intellectual property protection, create an enabling environment for innovation and promote technological exchanges and cooperation with other countries on the basis of market principles and the rule of law.”

“Third, we will increase the import of goods and services on an even larger scale. China is both a global factory and a global market. With the world’s largest and fastest growing middle-income population, China has a vast potential for increasing consumption. To meet our people’s ever-growing material and cultural needs and give our consumers more choices and benefits, we will further lower tariffs and remove various non-tariff barriers. We will steadily open China’s market wider to quality products from across the world. China does not seek trade surplus; we want to import more competitive quality agricultural products, manufactured goods and services to promote balanced trade.”

“Fourth, we will more effectively engage in international macro-economic policy coordination. A globalized economy calls for global governance. China will strengthen macro policy coordination with other major economies to generate a positive spillover and jointly contribute to robust, sustainable, balanced and inclusive global growth. China will not resort to the beggar-thy-neighbor practice of RMB devaluation. On the contrary, we will continue to improve the exchange rate regime, see that the market plays a decisive role in resource allocation and keep the RMB exchange rate basically stable at an adaptive and equilibrium level. These steps will help ensure the steady growth of the global economy. Rules and credibility underpin the effective functioning of the international governance system; they are the prerequisite for growing international economic and trade relations. China is an active supporter and participant of WTO reform and will work with others to develop international economic and trade rules of higher standards.”

“Fifth, we will work harder to ensure the implementation of opening-up related policies. We Chinese have a saying that honoring a promise carries the weight of gold. We are committed to implementing multilateral and bilateral economic and trade agreements reached with other countries. We will strengthen the building of a government based on the rule of law and good faith. A binding mechanism for honoring international agreements will be put in place. Laws and regulations will be revised and improved in keeping with the need to expand opening-up. We will see that governments at all levels operate in a well-regulated way when it comes to issuing administrative licenses and conducting market oversight. We will overhaul and abolish unjustified regulations, subsidies and practices that impede fair competition and distort the market. We will treat all enterprises and business entities equally, and foster an enabling business environment based on market operation and governed by law.”

“These measures to expand opening-up are a choice China has made by itself to advance its reform and development. It will promote high-quality economic development, meet the people’s desire for a better life, and contribute to world peace, stability and development. We hope that other countries will also create an enabling environment of investment, treat Chinese enterprises, students and scholars as equals, and provide a fair and friendly environment for them to engage in international exchanges and cooperation. We are convinced that a more open China will further integrate itself into the world and deliver greater progress and prosperity for both China and the world at large.”

“Dear Colleagues and Friends,”

“Let us join hands to sow the seeds of cooperation, harvest the fruits of development, bring greater happiness to our people and make our world a better place for all!”

***Commentary: Xi ends where he began, with the recollection of the allusions to farming, agriculture and its related themes of cooperation, growth, fruitfulness and an increase in material and spiritual things. But this puts me in a mind of another set of pastoral themes, these form Virgil's famous Eclogue 4:***

***Muses of Sicily, essay we now  
A somewhat loftier task! Not all men love  
Coppice or lowly tamarisk: sing we woods,  
Woods worthy of a Consul let them be.  
Now the last age by Cumae's Sibyl sung  
Has come and gone, and the majestic roll  
Of circling centuries begins anew:  
Justice returns, returns old Saturn's reign,  
With a new breed of men sent down from heaven.<sup>7</sup>***

“In conclusion, I wish the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation a full success!”

“Thank you.”

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7 VIRGIL, 11 ECOGLUES AND GEORGICS, JAMES RHOADES TRANSL. (2005).