

United States And China Compete And Collaborate

Both the United States and China are looking at GDP growth of over 6 percent for year 2021. They cannot do this alone; they need each other, and they need the rest of the world.

U.S.-China relations should not be a zero-sum game, they can be competitors and partners. While strategic competition between the world's two great powers acutely exists, there are also many areas for cooperation between them – government and non-government activities.

Improving the environment is one of the main targets in China's 14th Five-Year Plan. On this front, researchers in both countries are working together on mitigating air pollution in China.

We need more collaboration and exchanges to build a better world for all of us.

Anita Tang, Managing Director



Premier Li Keqiang Reports 2021 Goals And Tasks To Achieve 14th Five-Year Plan

Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council, speaking to the People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in Beijing on March 5, reviewed government work for 2020, laid out goals for 2021 and presented the draft report for the 14th 5-Year Plan which runs to 2025.

"Our development goals and tasks for the year were accomplished and major headway has been made in China's reform, opening up, and socialist modernization drive." He noted the nation's success "in our response to Covid-19 and China was the world's only major economy to achieve growth. We attained a complete victory in the fight against poverty."

China will continue to face many development risks and challenges, Li said, but the economic fundamentals that will sustain long-term growth remain unchanged. "We should stay confident, meet challenges head-on, and consolidate the foundation for economic recovery to ensure

sustained and healthy economic and social development."

Li named these the main targets for development in 2021: GDP growth of over 6 percent; over 11 million new urban jobs; a surveyed urban unemployment rate of around 5.5 percent; CPI increase of around 3 percent; steady increases in both the volume and quality of imports and exports; a basic equilibrium in the balance of payment; steady growth in personal income; a further improvement in the environment; a drop of around 3 percent in energy consumption per unit of GDP; a continued reduction in the discharge of major pollutants; grain output of over 650 million metric tons.

"A target of over 6 percent GDP growth will enable all of us to devote full energy to promoting reform, innovation, and high-quality development. The projected targets for growth, employment, and CPI should keep the economy performing within the appropriate range."



Premier Li Outlines 14th Five-Year Plan

After summing up the accomplishments of the 13th Five-Year Plan, such as 60 million jobs added, Premier Li outlined the tasks leading to 2025.

“The period covered by the 14th Five-Year Plan will be the first five years in which we embark on a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects. China remains in an important period of strategic opportunity for development.”

Highlights of the draft Outline:

- Improving the quality and effectiveness of development and maintaining sustained and healthy economic growth.
- Pursuing innovation-driven development and accelerating modernization of the industrial system. China’s R&D spending will increase by more than seven percent per year.

- Creating a robust domestic market and fostering a new development pattern.
- Advancing rural revitalization across the board and improving the new urbanization strategy.
- Improving regional economic structures and promoting coordinated regional development.
- Advancing reform and opening up across the board and bolstering the momentum and vitality of development.
- Promoting green development and ensuring harmony between humanity and nature.
- Improving people’s well-being and striving for common prosperity.
- Ensuring both development and security and ushering in a new stage of building a Peaceful China.

American Companies Optimistic In China

The American Chamber of Commerce in South China on February 26 released two reports on business in South China – 94 percent of U.S. companies are optimistic towards 2021 business outlook in China.

The Guangzhou-based Chamber represents more than 2,300 corporate and individual members and is accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC.

Its *2021 White Paper on the Business Environment in China* and *2021 Special Report on the State of Business in South China* are based on surveys of members and independent research and analysis.

Other Key takeaways for 2021:

None of the companies surveyed showed a willingness to leave China completely; China remains the top destination by more than half of the Studied companies despite its decreasing attraction as a manufacturing base; 73% of American and 70% of Chinese

companies plan to reinvest in China in 2021, while only 57% of participants from EU and elsewhere have reinvestment plans.

The vast majority of companies still have expansion plans in China for the following three years. Guangzhou is selected as the number one preferred investment destination in China, which remains unchanged for four consecutive years, followed by Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing. Other cities, including Dongguan, Chengdu, and Zhuhai, also attract investors’ interest; 2020 has witnessed a steady upswing in business environment in South China. However, companies report that rising operation and labor costs as well as lack of qualified personnel are three serious challenges for development in South China.

An overwhelming majority of companies state that visa and travel restrictions have an adverse impact on their operation.

Northwestern University, University Of Chicago Study The Mitigation Of Air Pollution In China

Each year an estimated 1.2 million Chinese citizens die prematurely due to poor air quality, a situation that has engaged studies that can lead to mitigation by two Chicago universities – Northwestern University (in suburban Evanston) and the University of Chicago.

Northwestern researchers published their study “Potential for electric vehicle adoption to mitigate extreme air quality events in China” February 16 in the journal *Earth’s Future*, They found that electrifying 40 percent of heavy-duty vehicles consistently improved air quality, and that the air quality “will improve more drastically as the power-generation sector moves away from fossil fuel-fired electricity.”

The study was supported by the Ubben Program for Climate and Carbon Science at the Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern and the U.S. National Science Foundation. Researchers included scientists from Northwestern, the Environmental Defense Fund, the U.S. EPA, Tsinghua University, UC Irvine, Fudan University and Boston University.

The University of Chicago’s Becker Friedman Institute on February 15 released working papers from its study of “China’s War on Pollution: Evidence from the First Five Years.” Financial support for this study is also provided by the Center for Industrial Development and Environmental Governance of Tsinghua University.

The papers’ introduction noted that “The decade from 2010 to 2019 marked a significant turning point in China’s history of environmental regulation and pollution.” This article describes the recent trends in air and water quality, with a focus on the five years since China declared a “war on pollution” in 2014. In March that year, at the opening of the annual meeting of the People’s Congress, Premier Li Keqiang denounced smog as “nature’s warning against inefficient and blind development,” and the government

then undertook regulatory changes on multiple fronts.

“(The study) summarizes the emerging literature that has taken advantage of accompanying improvements in data availability and accuracy to document sharp improvements in environmental quality, especially local air pollution, and understand their social, economic, and health consequences.”

During a January 2013 extreme pollution episode, poisonous haze hung over much of China, including the major population centers. Acute exposure to the record-high levels of fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide increased pollution-related respiratory diseases, heart disease and stroke, which the researchers estimated led to approximately 32,000 premature deaths and \$14.7 billion in health-care costs.

The Working Papers study may be accessed on the internet by its title.

The study carries such reports as “since 2014, China has been making significant progress in improving air quality. Local air pollutions levels have fallen significantly: five years after the peak in 2013, national level PM_{2.5} levels declined by about 40 percent and SO₂ and CO concentrations fell by 65 percent and 33 percent respectively. In comparison, the United States took at least a decade and two significant recessions to achieve comparable percentage reductions in air pollution following the Clean Air Act’s passage.

“That being said, the air pollution levels in China remain high, suggesting further efforts are necessary to bring the country’s environmental quality in line with international recommendations.”

The study “summarizes the emerging literature that has taken advantage of the improvements in data availability and accuracy to understand the economic, social, and health consequences of China’s ‘war on pollution.’”



Photo by Jacek Dylag on Unsplash



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73% of American and 70% of Chinese companies plan to reinvest in China in 2021, while only 57% of participants from EU and elsewhere have reinvestment plans.



Photo by Evie Shaffer from Pexels

Women Prominent At PRC Congress

Female lawmakers and political advisors, reports *Xinhua* news agency, had “record-high representation” at the 13th National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the two important annual meetings held in Beijing.

Women made up 24.9 percent of national legislators at the NPC and 20.4 percent of the CPPCC, China’s top political advisory body.

“The greater female presence offers a glimpse into the increasingly vital role that women are playing in

every aspect of Chinese society.” International Women’s Day, which fell during the meetings, called “two sessions,” was marked “with flowers, best wishes, and celebrations of the achievements of women.”

Chinese President Xi Jinping, during the “two sessions,” extended festive greetings to the country’s women of all ethnic groups and from all walks of life, reported *Xinhua*, “applauding their contributions to the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.



Sister Cities Honors Volunteer

Chicago Sister Cities International named Phyllis Mitzen, Co-chair of the Shanghai Social Services Committee, as its volunteer to be honored for the month of February, highlighting “her passion for Shanghai and citizen diplomacy.”

Phyllis Mitzen is a widely celebrated developer and consultant for care for older adults and conducts that effort, among other ways, as a member of three Illinois state government advisory boards.

She became interested in China after seeing Chicago’s Field Museum

exhibit of the newly discovered Xi’an warriors, in 2007. She later toured China to visit the Xi’an site and she and her husband “fell in love with Shanghai” and returned, “captivated by the culture of China and the beauty, size, energy, art, history and its people.”

Mitzen brings her knowledge of aging services to the Sister Cities program, sharing with colleagues in Shanghai their commitment to developing services that meet the needs of their community.

Phyllis Mitzen: “We were captivated by the culture of China and the beauty, size, energy, art, history and its people.”



Photo: Courtesy of Chicago Sister Cities



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