
II. Community of Common Destiny

U.S. Will Cooperate with China on Belt and Road Initiative, Trump Says

by William Jones

June 23—U.S. President Donald Trump met with Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi on June 22. State Councillor Yang, who had served for many years as China's Ambassador to the United States, was in Washington, together with General Fang Fenghui, the chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army, for the first meeting of the Diplomatic and Security Dialogue. President Trump told Yang, "The United States is willing to cooperate with China on relevant projects under the Belt and Road Initiative"—the clearest statement he has yet made on the United States joining the Belt and Road.

Yang visited the White House the day after the first session of the Diplomatic and Security Dialogue, one of four dialogues set up by President Trump during his meeting with President Xi in April. The dialogues are intended to become high-level forums between China and the United States to create concrete outcomes for the relationship, as it moves forward. The other dialogues cover Economics, Law Enforcement and Cyber-Security, and Social and Cultural Exchanges.

Yang went to the White House for meetings with National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and Presidential Adviser and Trump son-in-law, Jared Kushner. But there he also met with President Trump himself. General Fang Fenghui was also present at that meeting. Trump told Yang that he and President Xi Jinping had had a successful meeting in Mar-a-Lago and reached important consensus. He said that it was gratifying to see that the cooperation between the United States and



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Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi met President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C. June 22, 2017. Yang Jiechi attended the first session of the China-U.S. Diplomatic and Security Dialogue, a new, high-level framework for negotiations that was launched by President Trump and China President Xi Jinping.

China has made positive progress since their meeting.

Yang told Trump that China greatly appreciated the U.S. attendance at the May 14-15 Belt and Road Forum, and would be willing to work with the United States on the initiative. Yang also said that President Xi was looking forward to meeting with the U.S. President next month at the G24 Meeting in Germany, and then, later in the year, on a state visit to China. Yang also extended an invitation to Ivanka Trump, the President's daughter, and to Kushner, to visit China before the state visit, to which the President agreed.

Trump's statement is the most explicit that the President has made regarding this project, although very much consistent with everything else he has done since the meeting with Xi in Florida April 6-7. At that meeting, President Trump had agreed to send a U.S. delegation to the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, which President Xi had taken the initiative to organize, in order to consolidate international support for this major infrastructure project.

China was invited to attend the June 18-20 SelectUSA Summit in Washington, a U.S. government investment promotion program which brings together people in government and industry in an attempt to spur economic growth. This year's event, attended by a record 1,200 foreign guests, also included an unprecedented 155-person delegation from China. State Councillor Yang, fully aware of the way Washington works, also spent time on Capitol Hill, meeting with House

Speaker Paul Ryan, among others. Yang proposed that there be more exchanges between the two legislatures to promote greater understanding. Yang also met with Senator Bob Corker, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Relations over the Next 40 Years

The growing ties between the two countries were also in evidence at the meeting of the Diplomatic and Security Dialogue. At its conclusion, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defense Secretary James Mattis met the press. “U.S. and China relations have undergone a profound transformation over the past 40 years,” Tillerson said, adding,

These dialogues provide an opportunity to consider how we’re going to engage and how we’re going to live with one another over the next 40 years. In furthering this relationship, we need to work to expand areas of cooperation, as we did today, on issues where we have shared security interest.

While the two had discussed issues on which there is a good deal of agreement, such as achieving a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, as well as issues on which they have significant differences, as on the South China Sea, the emphasis was on charting the way forward over the next 40 years. “An important part of our discussion about the next 40 years was increasing mutual trust and working toward a long-term risk reduction effort between our two militaries and our governments,” Tillerson said. He continued,



Xinhua/Chen Jianli

Matthew Pottinger, U.S. Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs, speaks at Thematic Session on Infrastructure Connectivity of the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) for International Cooperation in Beijing, China, May 14, 2017.

Building on what we’ve done in the air and maritime spaces, U.S. and Chinese civilian and military teams will start discussions in new areas of strategic concern like space, cyberspace, nuclear forces, and nonproliferation issues. We need to enhance stability and develop strong international standards in these areas, and we need China to play a major role.

In line with that, Secretary Mattis announced that the United States and China would—

explore new areas of military-to-military cooperation, including exchange of officers to improve transparency and mutual understanding.



U.S. Dept of State/youtube

After the Diplomatic and Security Dialog with China, Defense Secretary James Mattis (Left) and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson addressed the press.

The two sides agreed to arrange mutual visits by defense ministers at an early date, as well as a visit to China by the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

During the meeting, the U.S. side said that it understands that China is undergoing rapid development, and the U.S. does not have any intention to rein in or weaken China. Instead, it stands ready to develop a long-term and constructive relationship with China.

Trump's 100-Day Plan Is On Schedule

Meanwhile, what is happening at the highest levels of government has been followed up by a steady stream of delegations coming to the United States to build further on the new relationship between the two leaders. A recent delegation, headed by Zhao Qizheng, the former head of the Information Office of the State Council, visited Iowa, where the home in which President Xi stayed as a young official studying agriculture, is now a museum. President Xi had come to an agreement with President Trump at Mar-a-Lago that China would again begin to purchase U.S. beef, while the U.S. would import chickens from China. Many Chinese companies are now interested in creating a mechanism for such purposes.

Another delegation, including Zhao Qizheng and former Hong Kong Administrator Tung Chee-hwa, traveled to New York June 14 to discuss with business leaders, at a forum sponsored by the Asia Society, the possibility of increasing investment in each other's country. These were meetings in which Schiller Institute representatives also took an active part. Meetings between Chinese and U.S. scholars were also held the same week by the National Committee on U.S.-China

Relations, at which Chinese representatives also underlined the importance of the Belt and Road for such an important financial center like New York.

At the same time, members of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce were in Beijing for discussions with their Chinese counterparts. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, a Beijing-based think tank staffed by a number of retired senior government officials, said in a joint statement June 21 that the two nations can engage in full cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and through a number of other means, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, World Bank, and other multilateral investment and financing institutions. The conference consisted of CEOs from many American companies interested in investing in China.

This increased level of activity is also occurring with an eye toward the completion of the 100-day economic cooperation plan, initiated by the Trump Administration to significantly upgrade U.S.-China economic relations within that period. On July 16, all of the new agreements on trade and investment are scheduled to be in place for bringing the trade and investment relationship to a new level.

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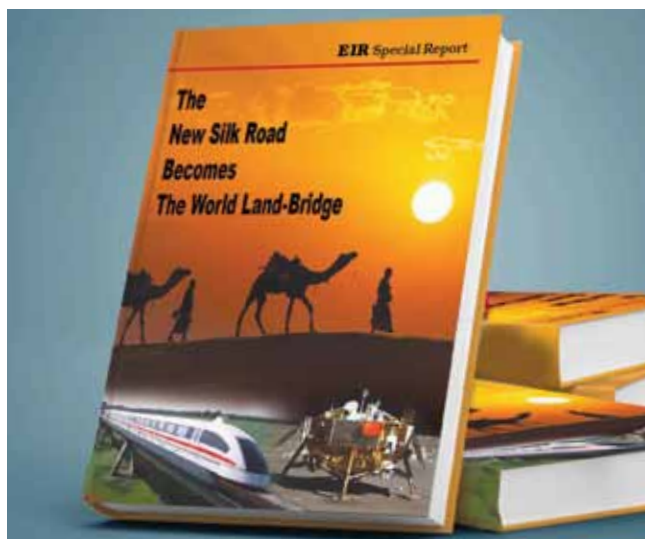
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