Note from Head CS3

Dear All,

We are happy to publish the eighth issue of the *Sinometer: The China Strategic Monitor*, a monthly magazine by the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3), USI.

Today, the world is reeling under two threats, first, the Russia-Ukraine war and second, the Coronavirus Pandemic. Many are saying the world at present is also opening itself into a neo-Cold War situation where global powers are playing into the hands of smaller powers. Therefore, these issues have shaken the global scenario to an all-new high and have left the other countries what would be their path ahead.

The first section of this issue includes an analysis of the “Report on the Work of the Government” at the Fifth Session of the 13th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. The present issue covers news feeds on China and its attempts to stop sanctions on itself and make China condemn Russia for the Ukraine war and put sanctions on them. China has been interacting with Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Cambodia and other countries like Greece and Uganda for stronger bilateral relations among them.

We hope that the Sinometer inspires more students and researchers to look at China with a closer eye.

Maj Gen RPS Bhaduria, VSM(Retd)
Head, Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3), USI
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On 5th March 2022, Li Keqiang, the Premier of the State Council delivered the “Report on the Work of the Government” at the Fifth Session of the 13th National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. Li Keqiang, the Premier of the State Council emphasised that “the year 2022 has great significance in the cause of the Party and the country as the Communist Party of China will hold its 20th National Congress”. He highlighted that in order for the Government to deliver, there was a need to follow certain core ideas, which are:

- “follow the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era;
- implement the guiding principles of the Party’s 19th National Congress and all plenary sessions of the 19th Party Central Committee;
- carry forward the great founding spirit of the Party;
- act on the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability;
- apply the new development philosophy in full, in the right way, and in all fields of endeavour and move faster to create a new pattern of development;
- deepen reform and opening up in all respects;
- pursue innovation-driven development;
- promote high-quality development;
- advance supply-side structural reform as the main task;
- respond to Covid-19 and pursue economic and social development in a well-coordinated way;
- ensure both development and security;
- continue to ensure stability on six key fronts and maintain security in six key areas;
- keep working to improve people’s lives;
- strive to maintain stable macroeconomic performance;
- keep major economic indicators within an appropriate range; and
- maintain overall social stability”.

Further, Li Keqiang, the Premier of the State Council highlighted the major tasks for 2022 in the “Report on the Work of the Government” at the Fifth Session of the 13th National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China.

The focus is to develop a new pattern of development along with promoting high-quality development which would ultimately help deliver solid outcomes. The following points discuss the major tasks of 2022.

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Achieving stable macroeconomic performance and keeping major economic indicators within the appropriate range

Figure 1: Stable macroeconomic performance. Source: Author’s annotated.

The primary focus was a stable economic performance which needs to be proactive fiscal policy and China is aiming to set the deficit to GDP ratio for the year 2022 to around 2.8 per cent which is slightly lower than last year and would boost the fiscal sustainability.\textsuperscript{2} The report highlighted that there were surplus profits of state-owned financial institutions and state monopoly business operations which were transferred from the Central Budget Stabilisation Fund. They also discussed the use of the government investment fund so as to stimulate and expand effective investment and these investments would be made in new types of infrastructure and renovations of outdated public facilities.\textsuperscript{3}

According to the report, the Government aims to step up the implementation of the prudent monetary policy which helped adjust both the monetary aggregate as well as the monetary structure and overall, support the real economy. The report suggests that China would be focusing on strengthening employment along with promoting employment stability like business start-ups. China emphasised ensuring food and energy security where they want to ensure the supply of grain and other major agricultural products. China also wants to supply the price of energy and important raw materials so as to guarantee sufficient electricity for their citizens.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
Keeping the operations of market entities stable and maintaining job security by strengthening macro policies

Figure 2: Operations of market entities and maintaining job security. Source: Author's annotated.

China would like to improve their policies which would easily deal with the burdens and difficulties of market entities and further, creating a stronger foundation would help achieve a stable and sounder economic performance.\(^5\) China plans to implement a new package of tax and fee policies to support enterprises and also continue to take temporary steps and institutional measures and apply policies for both tax reductions and refunds.\(^6\)

**Steadfastly deepening reform to strengthen market vitality and internal momentum for development**

China aims to build a high-standard market system which would help carry out a comprehensive pilot reform for the market-based allocation of production factors and aim for a unified domestic market.\(^7\) They plan to strengthen the regulatory responsibilities of the government. Fair competition and take stronger action against monopolies and curb unfair competition. Promote the common development of enterprises under all the forms of ownership.

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\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
Further implementing the innovation-driven development strategy and strengthening the foundation of the real economy

China will promote scientific and technological innovation to upgrade industries, and supply chains and realise high-quality development through innovation. The report highlighted that the Government would like to approve procedures in science and technology, management and reform the assessment and incentive systems for scientific research. Need to increase people’s scientific knowledge. Engage in international scientific and technological innovation and step the need to build talent centers and innovation hubs of global immense. Aim for promotion of the development of venture capital, development of new financial products and services to support scientific and technological development and also upgrade the intermediary services for science and technology.

Boosting core competitiveness in the manufacturing sector. “Encourage the development of the digital economy and strengthen the Digital China initiative and also work on building digital information infrastructure, developing an integrated national system of big data centers and applying 5G technology”.

Expanding domestic demand and promoting coordinated regional development and new urbanization

Support facilities for the community elderly and child care. Strengthen commercial systems and develop e-commerce systems. Improve new urbanisation initiatives. Aim in advancement in the people-centred type of urbanisation.

Boosting agricultural production and promoting all-around rural revitalization

“Refine and strengthen policies in support of agriculture, continue promoting development in

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
areas lifted out of poverty, ensure good harvests, and promote growth in rural incomes”.

**Pursuing higher-standard opening up and promoting stable growth of foreign trade and investment**

![Diagram of Foreign Trade and Investment](image)

Figure 4: Foreign Trade and Investment. Source: Author’s annotated.

China aims to make full use of international and domestic markets and resources. Further, aim for international economic cooperation and trade and work towards the development of high-standard opening up. Adopt a package of steps to stabilise foreign trade. Aim to promote high-quality cooperation for the Belt and Road Initiative.

**Continuing to Improve the Environment and Promoting Green and Low-Carbon Development**

![Diagram of Improve Environment](image)

Figure 5: Improve Environment, Promoting Green and Low-Carbon Development. Source:

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Author’s annotated.

China would focus on working on addressing pollution and also aim to protect and restore ecosystems. There is a need to reduce emissions and also ensure greater harmony between humanity and nature. Aim for a more region-specific approach to environmental management and also launch greening programs. China also wants to work on an energy revolution and ensure energy supply and this would also help in resource endowment and move towards a transformation of low-carbon development. The report highlighted China wants to develop energy-intensive projects with high emissions and backward production capacity.

Ensuring and improving the people's wellbeing and promoting better and new ways of conducting social governance

The aim of this section is to make sure enhancement of public service and resolve issues related to the common concern of the people. China feels that there is a need to improve the fairness and quality of education. There is a need for the development of world-class universities and academic disciplines and also to train professionals. Further, improve medical and health services. There is a need to look at the basic medical insurance for rural and non-working urban residents. There should be supervision over the quality and safety of drugs and vaccines. Reform is needed in medical insurance payments and medical insurance funds. There is a need to strengthen health education and management along with advancing the Healthy China Initiative. Work on prevention and treatment of chronic illnesses and work on disease prevention and control network. There is a need for improvement in social security and social services are needed. A backup support system needs to be created for the ageing population. Supporting measures need to take for the three-child policy along with work on the child expenses, individual income tax and developing public-interest childcare services.

Conclusion

The efforts to develop this report clearly show that China is on the path of development and it can pave the way forward for Xi Jinping’s ‘Dream of a New Era’. Further, the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic has reshaped the internal strategy adopted by China and now, they have become more inward-looking. The report covers all aspects of Chinese society and a major section has been dedicated to the well-being of its citizen.

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

Chinese Foreign Minister says it Would Take Countermeasures Against the US for Sanctions

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian opined that “it will not work for the US when it seeks China’s support and cooperation while brandishing the big stick of sanctions against China, urging the US not to undermine China’s legitimate rights. If the US insists on going its own way, China will take strong countermeasures.” Further, the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao emphasised that “sanctions are never an effective way to solve problems and China opposes any form of unilateral sanctions or long-arm jurisdiction by the US and will firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies and individuals”.18

China also spoke about the provocative comments that are coming from the US. One of the most recent provocative comments was when White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said: “that China would face significant consequences if it raids Russia”.19 Further according to Zhao Lijian, these remarks by the US are a sense of outright bullying and coercion and this behaviour is resulting in a Cold War-like situation which is focusing on a zero-sum game mentality in the US.20

Due to the Ukraine crisis, one has to understand that China has become partial and judgemental and is now trying to get back at the West, especially the US, with its new strategies like having Russia as an excellent ally to counter the US and its hegemony.

Leaders of China and Indonesia Hold Talks

Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indonesian President Joko Widodo held telephonic conversations. President Xi Jinping opined “that the two countries have moved forward hand in hand and risen to challenges, established a new pattern of bilateral cooperation on the "four-wheel-drive" of political, economic, cultural and maritime affairs, and carried forward the main theme of solidarity against the pandemic and common development”.21

Further, he said that “the two countries have set the general direction for jointly building a China-Indonesia community with a shared future, and set up a model of sincere cooperation between major developing countries”.22 “Both sides should ensure that the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway can start to operate on schedule, well implement such key projects as the regional comprehensive economic corridor and the “Two Countries, Twin Parks,” and jointly build the Belt and Road with high quality, so as to help accelerate Indonesia's development and bilateral cooperation”.23

President Joko Widodo highlighted “the bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries are growing rapidly and Indonesia is looking forward to carrying out tripartite cooperation with China to help build the new capital city of Indonesia and hopes that China will continue to support Indonesia in building the regional comprehensive economic corridor and green

17 https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255013.shtml
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255013.shtml
21 https://english.news.cn/20220316/85615f5a3735465c85758b038a2823f5/c.html
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Further, he opined that “Indonesia fully supports the Global Development Initiative proposed by Xi, which is conducive to the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and stressed that Indonesia is ready to maintain close communication with China to push forward the implementation of the initiative and contribute to the common development of the world”.\(^\text{25}\)

It has to be understood that China has been trying to create a greater presence in the region of Southeast Asia and Indonesia has very close communication and cooperation with China which makes it easier for China to tackle issues in ASEAN. This year Cambodia has got the Chairmanship of ASEAN and China would like to have more like-minded countries supporting it in the South China Sea and so, China is not only trying to get Indonesia as a strong ally partner but also trying to create a support group for itself with regard to Western powers.

**NATO to Push China to Condemn Russia**

According to Jens Stoltenburg, the NATO Secretary-General opined “that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law so we call on [China] to clearly condemn the invasion and of course not support Russia. And we are closely monitoring any signs of support from China to Russia”.\(^\text{26}\)

This above statement was countered by Shen Yi, a professor at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs of Fudan University, where he opined “NATO is the most serious war machine that violates international law and endangers the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries since the end of the Cold War. Since when has the group become a defender of international law? If it is a defender of international law, could you please first apologize for their bombing of Yugoslavia? Could you first compensate for bombing the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia in 1999, which left three journalists dead, and more than 20 people injured? Stoltenberg is not qualified and has no right or moral basis to make such remarks.”\(^\text{27}\)

Qin Gang, the Chinese Ambassador to the US opined “that rumours like “Russia was seeking military assistance from China” are “purely disinformation”.\(^\text{28}\) Zhang Tengjun, Deputy Director of the Department for Asia-Pacific Studies at the China Institute of International Studies opined “that the NATO is trying to distort the focus of the international community from criticizing its eastward expansion to China’s so-called coordination with Russia.”\(^\text{29}\)

One needs to understand that China does feel the pressure from NATO but having said that China doesn’t want to sour its relations with Russia, especially in the present time of the Ukraine crisis.

**China’s Foreign Ministry Warns Japan to Refrain From Military Expansion**

Zhao Lijian, the Foreign Ministry spokesman on 17 March 2022, opined “China has warned Japan and requested them to respect and uphold the victorious outcomes of the World Anti-Fascist War

\(^{24}\) [https://english.news.cn/20220316/85615f5a3735465c85758b038a2823f5/c.html](https://english.news.cn/20220316/85615f5a3735465c85758b038a2823f5/c.html)

\(^{25}\) [https://english.news.cn/20220316/85615f5a3735465c85758b038a2823f5/c.html](https://english.news.cn/20220316/85615f5a3735465c85758b038a2823f5/c.html)

\(^{26}\) [https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255067.shtml](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255067.shtml)

\(^{27}\) Ibid.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.

\(^{29}\) [https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255067.shtml](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1255067.shtml)
along with refraining from capitalising on the Ukraine Crisis to strengthen its military power”.

It has to be understood why this statement has come. The reason for this statement is that “Japan has joined the United States and other nations in slapping sanctions on Russia following the launch of Moscow's "special military operation" in Ukraine.

Japan has been expanding its defence budget gradually and seeing this, China has become worried. But the real reason for the worry is for Japan, especially the way, China has been increasing its defence expenditure and

**Ugandan President Praises China’s Style of Diplomacy**

On 17 March 2022, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni praised “China’s style of Diplomacy and opined that it was much better than the double standards held by the west.”

China has a large presence in Africa and most of the African nations benefit from the Chinese investment and infrastructural development. China is very cleverly drawing smaller economies into debt traps and Africa must remember that these debt traps are new versions of neo-colonialism where China is the coloniser. Yoweri Museveni’s comment signifies that chequebook diplomacy in Uganda is in place and China is also getting Uganda under its wings.

**China and Cambodia Agree to Advance Belt and Road Cooperation**

On 18 March 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping has a telephonic conversation with Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen where they agreed on promoting the Belt and Road Cooperation.

President Xi opined that “the two sides should engage in high-quality joint Belt and Road construction, speed up the construction of major projects such as highways, airports and special economic zones, and expand cooperation in emerging fields such as finance and digital economy”. He further opined that “with the joint efforts of both sides, China-Cambodia relations have withstood tests and grown even more unbreakable”. Xi stressed that “China firmly supports the central role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the regional cooperation architecture, and supports the bloc in playing a bigger role in regional and international affairs”. Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen opined that “Cambodia firmly adheres to the one-China policy and firmly supports China's position on issues related to Taiwan and Xinjiang”.

Cambodia has emerged as a satellite state for China and with Cambodia being the ASEAN Chairmanship for 2022, China would do everything to woo Cambodia to make sure that whatever China wants to be solved in ASEAN, Cambodia would get it done.
China and Greece Sign Deal to Boost Tourism Cooperation

China and Greece have signed a Joint Action Program where it aims to strengthen cooperation in the domain of tourism in the future. Vassilis Kikilias, the Greek Tourism Minister and Xiao Junzheng, the Chinese Ambassador to Greece signed the agreement in Greece.

Vassilis Kikilias, the Greek Tourism Minister opined “We welcome today’s political signature of this MOU concerning my field of expertise which is tourism ... and the possibility to strengthen the cooperation”. 37

Xiao Junzheng, the Chinese Ambassador to Greece opined “(It is) also a very important step for our two countries to celebrate the 50th anniversary (of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Greece) and to enrich our cooperation in the Year of China-Greece Culture and Tourism (2021-2022)” 38

Presently, the Greek economy is at its lowest now and the Greek Government would like to bring their economy back to normal the only way to do so is through the Chinese tourists. China would eventually also invest in Greece which would make things better for Greece as well.

Chinese FM Meets with The Secretary-General Of SCO

On 17 March 2022, Wang Yi, the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister met with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Secretary-General Zhang Ming in Beijing.

Wang Yi, the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister opined that “the "Shanghai Spirit" to be vigorously carried forward, along with a deepening of the solidarity and cooperation of member states, and the active practice of the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security”. 39 Further, Wang Yi also “called for resolute opposition to a return to the Cold War mentality, creating camp confrontation and illegal unilateral sanctions, adding that the purposes and principles of the UN Charter should be respected to safeguard international fairness and justice.” 40

Zhang Ming, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Secretary-General opined that by “pledging to make due contributions to the development of the SCO and the organization is paying close attention to the situation in Ukraine and hopes for restoring peace and shared security as soon as possible and achieving lasting peace and stability in the world”. 41

It has to be understood that the Beijing Winter Olympics wasn’t a success and so, now China would like to make the SCO a grand success.

37 https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202203/15/WS62300190a310cdd39bc8ca92.html
38 https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202203/15/WS62300190a310cdd39bc8ca92.html
39 https://english.news.cn/20220317/db104aed302844ddbb0695db605cc532/c.html
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
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