

OPINION: KNOWLEDGE HAS NO FLAG P.30 | FEATURES: FROM FIRE TO FUTURE P.34

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.69 NO.32 AUGUST 6, 2026

北京周报 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



ACROSS THE PACIFIC

2026 China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future

RMB9.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



3 2>

9 771000 914260

邮发代号2-922 • 国内统一连续号: CN11-1576/G2

Follow CICG Americas

And get in on the conversation



BeijingReview



BeijingReview



@BeijingReview



China Hoy



China Hoje



CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 Friendship, Not Fences

THIS WEEK

COVER STORY

12 Tides That Connect

Young adults from China and the U.S. travel and learn together

16 22 Students, 2 Countries, 1 Big Idea

Snapshots and memorable moments from the 2026 Across the Pacific China-U.S. Youth Dialogue

18 Into One Another's Worlds

Can 20 days of dialogue shift perspectives?

Cover Photo: Participants of the 2026 Across the Pacific: China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future are dressed up in traditional Miao minority costumes at a cultural resort in Kunming, Yunnan Province, on July 16 (ZHANG WEI)

©2026 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.

OPINION

22 What Role Does China Play in Resolving the Ukraine Crisis?

Inclusive diplomacy should become the foundation for genuine negotiations

24 Shifting Currents

A clash of vessels masks a deeper struggle

26 Trade, Truces and Tariffs

From Beijing to Washington, the rules of trade are being rewritten

28 British Steel or British Steal?

Compensation remains in dispute and the bill could run into the billions

30 Science Knows No Borders

The pursuit of knowledge must never be confined to one country

31 Who's Watching the Machines?

The question isn't whether AI can act on its own; it already has

FEATURES

34 Echoes of the Kiln

World Heritage listing is a new turning point for Jingdezhen

38 Beyond Small Commodities

How Yiwu became the world's shopping mall

40 Above It All

The hum of drones is becoming as familiar as the buzz of traffic

42 A Hot Streak

Turning 50-degree-Celsius heat into a business

CULTURE

46 The Miracle Marsh

Flower Lake is nature at its most essential

EXPAT'S EYE

48 Summer in Winter

Only with an anchor does moving become a way of life



www.bjreview.com



amazon

Follow us on



YouTube

BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader



Please recycle



EDITOR'S DESK



BEIJING REVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

President: Xin Feng

Associate Editor in Chief: Liu Yanyun

Vice Presidents: He Peng, Gao Dingbo, Yu Shujun

Program Supervisor: Zeng Wenhui

Executive Editor: Yan Wei

Production Director: Yao Bin

Editors: Wang Hairong, Zhang Shasha, Lu Yan

Researcher: Lan Xinzhen

Editorial Consultants: Elsbeth van Paridon, G.P. Wilson

Reporters: Ji Jing, Kang Caiqi, Li Qing, Li Wenhui, Li Xiaoyang,

Liang Xiao, Ma Miaomiao, Pan Xiaoli, Peng Jiawei, Tao Zihui,

Wang Jun, Wang Ruohan, Yuan Yuan, Zhang Yage

Photographer: Wei Yao

Art: Li Shigong

Design Director: Wang Yajuan

Chief Designer: Cui Xiaodong

Designer: Wang Boyan

Editorial Administrator: Zeng Wenhui

Planning Director: Xu Bei

Deputy Planning Director: Li Nan

World News Director: Ding Ying

Director of Digital Media: Li Fangfang

Director of Strategic Research: Zan Jifang

Deputy Director of Strategic Research: Lu Ling

Deputy Director of International Cooperation: Zhao Wei

Administration: Zhang Yajie

Legal Counsel: Yue Cheng

North America Bureau (New York City)

Chief: Yu Shujun

Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334

E-mail: yushujun@cicgamerica.com

Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)

Chief: Miao Ye

Tel: 52-55-55127271

Fax: 52-55-55332027

E-mail: chinahoymx@gmail.com

Peru Office (Lima)

Chief: Meng Kexin

Tel: 0051-959212702

E-mail: revistachinaperu@gmail.com

General Editorial Office

Tel: 86-10-68996252

Fax: 86-10-68326628

Editorial Desk

Tel: 86-10-68996250

Partnerships

Tel: 86-10-68995807

E-mail: yecong@cicgamerica.com

Distribution

Tel: 86-10-68310644

E-mail: circulation@cicgamerica.com

Published every Thursday by

CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,

Beijing 100037, China

Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading

Corporation, P. O. BOX 399,

Beijing 100048, China

Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)

Fax: 86-10-68412166

E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn

Website: <http://www.cibtc.com>

General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:

Peace Book Co. Ltd.

17/FI, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK

Tel: 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly

in the United States for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books,

360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080

News Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA 94010-9997

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,

Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,

South San Francisco, CA 94080

Friendship, Not Fences

For three weeks this July, 22 university students from China and the United States traveled together from Washington, D.C., and Montana in the U.S. to China's Yunnan Province and Beijing. By the time they parted, strangers had become friends.

This was the Across the Pacific: China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future, co-hosted by the China International Communications Group Center for the Americas, the publisher of *Beijing Review*, and the U.S.-based International Student Conferences, a student-led international exchange organization.

It was not a diplomatic summit. There were no grand declarations. Instead, the program offered young people something important: face-to-face time to listen, learn and see beyond stereotypes.

The initiative aligns with the consensus reached by Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump at their Beijing summit in May. The two heads of state agreed on a new vision of building a constructive bilateral relationship of strategic stability. Xi defined the nature of "constructive strategic stability" as a positive stability with cooperation as the mainstay, a sound stability with moderate competi-

tion, a constant stability with manageable differences, and an enduring stability with promises of peace. He called for expanding exchange and cooperation in areas ranging from trade to tourism and people-to-people ties.

Yet misunderstandings persist, fueled by one-sided narratives and digital echo chambers. This journey demonstrated that young people are uniquely equipped to break down those barriers. American students witnessed rural development in Yunnan, where local communities have blended ecological protection with sustainable agriculture. Chinese students gained insights into Indigenous land conservation in Montana and community development in the U.S.

Of course, 20 days cannot erase all misconceptions, and 22 students cannot represent all youth. But they can plant seeds. The topics they explored, including climate change, sustainable agriculture and technology for good, are challenges facing all of humanity. On these, there is common ground.

The program has ended, but it is not a finish line. It is a starting point. If more people on both sides follow these young people's example, embracing rationality, inclusiveness and a spirit of win-win cooperation, the foundations of China-U.S. relations will steadily grow stronger. **BR**



WRITE TO US

Send an e-mail: editorsoffice@cicgamerica.com

Please provide your name and address along with your submissions. Submissions may be edited.

CHINA.....RMB9.00 U.S.A.....USD1.70
AUSTRALIA.....AUD3.00 UK.....GBP1.20
CANADA.....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND.....CHF2.60
JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
TÜRKİYE.....TRY5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位: 中国外文出版发行事业局

主办单位: 中国外文局美洲传播中心(北京周报社)

出版单位: 中国外文局美洲传播中心(北京周报社)

地址: 北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编: 100037

编委会: 辛峰 贺鹏 刘云云 高丁博 于淑均 曾文卉

编委会主任: 辛峰

主编: 闫威

总编室电话: (010) 68996252 发行部电话: (010) 68310644

印刷: 北京华联印刷有限公司

北京周报 英文版2026年 第32期 ISSN 1000-9140

国内统一连续出版物号: CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号: 2-922

广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证733号

国内零售价: 人民币9.00元



UNFADING MEMORY

A woman pays tribute to a relative at the Tangshan Earthquake Memorial Park in Tangshan, Hebei Province, on July 28. This year is the 50th anniversary of the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the city on July 28, 1976, claiming more than 240,000 lives and leveling the city's infrastructure.



New Green Rides

On July 27, 35 Chinese-made electric double-decker buses head to a car carrier at Yantai Port in Shandong Province, bound for the United Kingdom. Specifically designed for the UK market, these buses have already been integrated into London's public transport network.

World Heritage Bird Sanctuaries

On July 27, the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, the Republic of Korea, approved the boundary modification of the Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China, officially incorporating the Changshan Archipelago into the World Heritage site.

The move is another expansion of the World Natural Heritage site following a 2024 update. It further improves the integrity of the migratory bird sanctuaries series, an important practice in China's integrated conservation of coastal natural resources, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Sitting on the only sea route of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, the archipelago serves as a critical stopover for tens of millions of migratory birds crossing the

Bohai Sea.

The newly added heritage section covers more than 4,900 hectares. The area is rich in biological resources, with over 140 recorded bird species.

Thousands of Chinese egrets arrive in the archipelago each April from Southeast Asia to breed and rear their young, staying until early September before migrating south for winter.

IP Protection

China has taken a major step forward in protecting seed industry innovations by releasing a set of documents detailing how it will implement its essentially derived variety (EDV) system, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs announced on July 27.

An EDV refers to a new plant variety bred by modifying an existing original variety, differing from it by only a few specific traits. The EDV system protects intellectual property (IP) by preventing

competing breeders from making minor modifications to an existing protected variety and commercializing it without the original creator's permission, thereby encouraging true original breeding.

The ministry released a 10-crop list, including rice, wheat and cotton, under the EDV system. This marks the first crop list under China's EDV system. Four other detailed documents standardizing the identification of EDV were also released, Liu Lihua, an official with the ministry, said at a press conference.

China has been encouraging original innovation in the seed sector for years. According to Wan Jianmin, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering specialized in plant breeding, the quality of approved varieties has significantly improved in the last three years.

In May 2025, China unveiled revised regulations to strengthen the protection of rights to new plant

varieties and to encourage innovation in the seed industry, stating that authorities would release the EDV implementation scope and assessment guidelines.

Autism Support

China will step up support for people with autism over the next five years, expanding early screening and intervention services for children and increasing the availability of specialized education programs, an official said on July 27.

The measures are part of a broader effort to improve services for people with disabilities over the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), which include a nationwide initiative to provide support across the entire life cycle of people with autism, covering early diagnosis, proper rehabilitation and education, Zhou Changkui, Chairperson of the Board of Executive Directors of the China Disabled Persons' Federation, told a press conference.

China will implement standardized autism screening and intervention services for children aged 0 to 6, ensure that each city-level region has the capacity to provide rehabilitation assistance for children with autism, and support provincial capitals and larger cities in building special education schools dedicated to children with autism, Zhou said.

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties in social interaction, restricted interests and repetitive behaviors.

China currently has more than 13 million people with autism, with the condition accounting for the largest share of mental disabilities in the country, according to official figures.

Trip.com Fined

The State Administration for Market Regulation said on July

25 that it had imposed administrative penalties on Trip.com Group for abusing its dominant market position in violation of the country's anti-monopoly law.

According to the regulator, the company was ordered to forfeit 1.658 billion yuan (\$244 million) in illegal gains and pay a 3.521-billion-yuan (\$520-million) fine, bringing the total penalty to 5.179 billion yuan (\$765 million).

The regulator also ordered the group to refund 122 million yuan (\$18 million) in hotel order reserve funds that had been forcibly deducted from hotel operators, undertake comprehensive rectification measures and publicly disclose its corrective actions.

Trip.com, China's largest online travel platform, provides services including hotel reservations, transportation ticketing and vacation packages.

According to the regulator, it received multiple complaints in 2025 alleging that Trip.com had forced hotels to accept unfair contractual terms and used technological means to influence hotel pricing, thereby harming fair market competition and squeezing hotel profitability.

The regulator opened an investigation in January 2026, which found that Trip.com had

abused its dominant position in China's online hotel booking platform services market by using its traffic allocation mechanism, platform rules and technical tools to require certain hotels to enter into exclusive cooperation agreements and offer the "lowest price across the Internet."

These practices restricted fair competition, limited hotels' ability to operate across multiple platforms, infringing upon their pricing autonomy, and impeded the healthy development of the industry, the regulator noted.

Environmental Protection Tax

China will carry out a pilot program to levy environmental protection tax on volatile organic compounds (VOCs) starting January 1, 2027, as part of efforts to strengthen air pollution control and expand its use of green taxation, authorities said on July 24.

The Ministry of Finance, the State Taxation Administration and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment jointly issued a notice detailing the pilot, under which all VOCs will be brought into the scope of environmental protection taxation.



The Coolest Workers

Sanitation workers wearing cooling vests navigate the streets of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, on July 28. To combat the intense summer heat, workers in Nanjing's Xuanwu District have been issued these specialized vests, which feature miniature fans at the waist to circulate cool air against the body.

"The move is an important step in deepening fiscal and tax reforms and improving China's green tax system," Xu Wen, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Fiscal Sciences, said. He added that the measure would encourage deeper control of VOC emissions throughout production processes and help reduce pollution.

VOCs are a key source of PM25 (fine particulate matter) and ozone formation, contributing to atmospheric environmental issues

such as smog and photochemical smog. Currently, more than 300 types of VOCs can be detected.

When the Environmental Protection Tax Law was enacted in 2016, it covered only 18 types of VOCs, including benzene and formaldehyde.

The pilot program will initially cover eight industries, including printing, chemical raw materials and chemical manufacturing, which collectively account for more than 70 percent of industrial VOC emissions.



Summer Scene

Tourists enjoy a rafting adventure at the Grand Canyon Rafting Scenic Area in Pingshan County, Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, on July 26. In recent years, Shijiazhuang has capitalized on the Taihang Mountains' pristine mountain and water resources to create unique cultural tourism experiences, drawing a surge of visitors seeking a summer escape.

AI Product Exports

China's AI-related exports surged in the first half of 2026 (H1), emerging as a new hallmark of the country's foreign trade, He Shaojun, an official with the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said on July 28.

Exports of industrial robots and 3D printers jumped 18.6 percent and 109.3 percent year on year, respectively, in the January-June period, he said, citing customs data. He attributed the robust growth to a variety of factors, including solid industrial strength and sustained innovation.

He added that the country's complete industrial chain, massive domestic market, continuous innovation and open international cooperation have collectively driven the export surge.

These advantages, he said, have enabled rapid supply chain responsiveness, cost efficiency, technological upgrading and broader global market reach.

Outbound Direct Investment

China's outbound direct investment (ODI) across all industries reached 596.42 billion yuan (\$88 billion) in H1, an increase of 3.8 percent year on year, official data showed on July 28.

China's domestic investors engaged in non-financial direct investment in 6,867 overseas companies across 144 countries and regions, with the investment value totaling 453.06 billion yuan (\$66.9 billion), according to data released by MOFCOM and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

In H1, China's non-financial ODI in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) reached 120.77 billion yuan (\$17.8 billion), down 11.1 percent year on year. The China-proposed BRI aims to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

During the period, the turnover of contracted overseas projects by Chinese companies

amounted to 606.26 billion yuan (\$89.5 billion), an increase of 8 percent year on year.

The turnover of contracted overseas projects by Chinese companies in BRI partner countries rose 11.8 percent year on year in H1 to 520.71 billion yuan (\$76.8 billion).

Shopping Mall Sector

Over 70 percent of shopping malls across China recorded increased foot traffic in H1, showing a mild upward trend, a survey showed on July 27.

The survey, released by the China Chain Store and Franchise Association, covered companies operating in the sector. It showed that more than 40 percent of respondents reported a 5- to 10-percent rise in foot traffic in the first six months of this year.

Online shopping also saw an uptick during the same period, with 43.4 percent of surveyed companies reporting a higher online sales ratio, according to

the survey.

The survey also indicated that shopping malls nationwide posted a higher occupancy rate during the period.

China's total retail sales of goods and services, a major indicator of the country's consumption strength, increased 2.7 percent year on year in H1, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Electronics Profits

China's electronics industry posted a 96.9-percent year-on-year increase in profits in H1, contributing 8.5 percentage points to the overall profit growth of major industrial firms, the NBS said on July 27.

Driven by the wide adoption of AI and growing demand for computing power, profits of computer manufacturing and computer peripheral equipment manufacturing (including mice, keyboards and monitors) surged 689.3 percent and 305.8 percent from a year earlier, respectively.

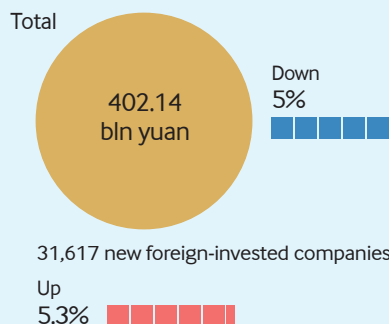
Within electronic device manu-

NUMBERS

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in January-June

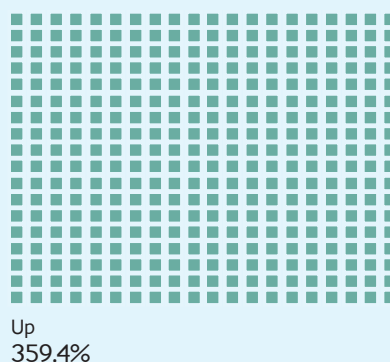
(All growth rates are y.o.y.; \$1=6.78 yuan as of July 30)

FDI in the Chinese mainland in actual use

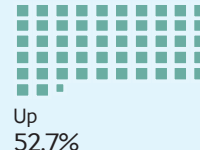


FDI in the Chinese mainland from

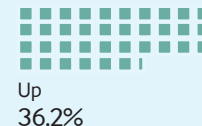
Saudi Arabia



Switzerland



France



facturing, profits of integrated circuit manufacturing soared 2,579.5 percent, while those of discrete semiconductor device manufacturing, including transistors and diodes, increased 31.2 percent.

In the electronic components sector, profits of specialized electronic materials manufacturing rose 209.7 percent, whereas those of electronic circuit manufacturing recorded an increase of 26.9 percent.

The data also showed profits of China's major industrial firms, or those with an annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.95 million), increased 18.7 percent year on year in H1.

Transport Services Plan

China has issued a plan to comprehensively advance the high-quality development of integrated transport services during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), the Ministry of Transport announced on July 24.

The plan was jointly issued

by the ministry, the National Railway Administration, the Civil Aviation Administration of China and the State Post Bureau. It aims to largely establish a modern integrated transport service system by 2030.

Under the plan, China will improve connections among different modes of transport, make passenger transfers more convenient and enhance freight logistics services. It will also promote the integration of transport and tourism, improve services at transport hubs, as well as strengthen rural passenger transport, freight and delivery services.

By 2030, 90 percent of multimodal cargo transfers at key freight hubs are expected to be completed within one hour. The volume of containers transported consecutively by rail and water, with the cargo remaining in the same container throughout the journey, is expected to reach 10 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). TEUs are the international standard unit used to quantify containerized cargo,

ship capacity and port throughput.

Green travel is expected to account for 76 percent of trips in major cities. Integrated delivery and logistics service stations are expected to cover 90 percent of administrative villages. New-energy heavy-duty trucks are expected to make up 20 percent of the country's heavy-truck fleet, while car rental services are expected to cover all major passenger transport hubs.

By 2035, the system is expected to be further improved, enabling one-hour commutes within metropolitan areas, two-hour travel within city clusters and three-hour access to major cities nationwide. The plan also aims to enable express freight delivery within one day in China, within two days to neighboring countries and within three days to major cities worldwide.

Green Electricity Certificate

The National Energy Administration (NEA) launched a price index for green electricity

certificates (GECs) on July 24, in a bid to better reflect the development of green power market.

With the base period set at 100 points in January 2025, the index closed at 181 points in June, or a year-on-year increase of 23.2 percent, the NEA said.

Green electricity is electricity generated from renewable energy sources such as wind, solar or biomass power, whose prices serve as a barometer for the development of renewable energy.

The GECs price index will be released on a regular monthly basis, which is expected to boost market transparency and facilitate precise supply-demand matching, an NEA official said.

China introduced the GEC system as a pilot program in 2017. In December 2023, the NEA issued an initial batch of certificates.

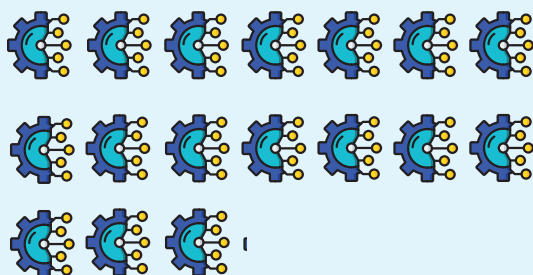
Data released by the NEA on July 24 showed that it issued 373 million GECs in June, involving over 1.24 million renewable energy power generation projects.

FDI in

hi-tech sector

170.33 billion yuan

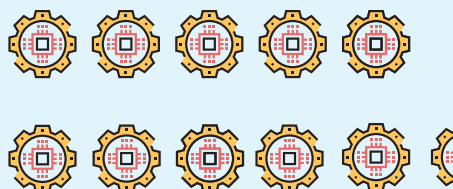
 = 10 billion yuan



manufacturing sector

105.03 billion yuan

 = 10 billion yuan



(Source: Ministry of Commerce)



MEXICO

Dancers perform dance at the Guelaguetza Auditorium in Oaxaca City on July 27. Guelaguetza is an annual showcase of the country's indigenous cultures, featuring traditional music, dance and food



GREECE

Firefighting operations in Rethymno on the island of Crete on July 29. Two firefighters lost their lives while battling a fast-moving wildfire as gale-force winds fueled the blaze across a front stretching more than 15 km



JAPAN

A damaged house after an earthquake in Kumamoto Prefecture on July 29. Twenty-eight people were confirmed dead following the powerful quake





ITALY

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani (left) and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud meet on the sidelines of a meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in Rome on July 29, reaffirming their support for implementing the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



IRAQ

A funeral procession for Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) members in Baghdad on July 29. At least 20 of its members were killed and 32 others wounded during U.S.-Saudi strikes that hit several Iraqi provinces



PERU

Soldiers march in a parade to commemorate the country's 205th anniversary of independence in Lima on July 29



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ DRAM TRAILBLAZER

Physicist **Zhu Yiming** led ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) to its debut on Shanghai's STAR Market, China's Nasdaq-style Science and Technology Innovation Board, on July 27, a milestone for China's homegrown DRAM industry.

DRAM is the temporary memory that powers every computer, smartphone and server. CXMT, headquartered in Hefei, Anhui Province, is the only company on the Chinese mainland capable of mass-producing DRAM chips. Founded in 2016, it had captured 7.67 percent of the global market by the fourth quarter of 2025.

The man behind it is Zhu, who holds degrees from Tsinghua University in Beijing and Stony Brook University in the United States. He returned to China to found GigaDevice, a semiconductor company, in 2005. Zhu champions a strategy that links chip design and wafer manufacturing through both GigaDevice and CXMT.



Beyond the Screen

Guangming Daily

July 27

Cinemas are rapidly transforming from simple movie theaters into dynamic cultural hubs. They are diversifying beyond screenings by incorporating features like cultural exhibition halls, themed photo zones, cafés and immersive experiences. This expansion enriches the visitor experience and integrates cinemas into the broader cultural and entertainment ecosystem.

A major development this summer was the live-broadcasting of the 2026 FIFA

World Cup in North America (June 11-July 19) across 1,200 cinemas. Official guidelines now encourage cinemas to creatively redesign their spaces, creating visually appealing and engaging environments for varied programming. This includes morning family shows, afternoon business events and late-night art film screenings, positioning cinemas as multi-functional venues for viewing, socializing and consumption.

Furthermore, cinemas are becoming important educational platforms, hosting science popularization events. As they evolve into integral cultural centers, cinemas foster deeper audience connections and contribute to urban vitality.



Factory Forward

Lifeweek

July 27

Chinese manufacturing is undergoing a major transformation from traditional mass production to a flexible, technology-based system that responds quickly to global consumer demand.

The rapid production of soccer jerseys during the 2026 FIFA World Cup demonstrated how factories can now react to changing market trends within days. Factories, supported by complete industrial supply chains, were able to produce custom-

“China-European Union (EU) cooperation is enormous in scale, and differences and frictions are inevitable. Such differences, however, should not be used as a justification for making groundless accusations, still less as a pretext for imposing restrictions, exerting pressure or undermining practical cooperation.”

Lin Weilong, a Ministry of Commerce official, at a press conference in Beijing on July 28, as the EU recently rolled out a series of protectionist measures against China

“Music really is a universal medium through which we can connect.”

Tanner DeWaal, Artistic Director of One Voice Children's Choir in the U.S., during an exchange program in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, where her fellow singers performed with local students on July 19

ized products in extremely short periods of time, showing the speed and efficiency of China's modern manufacturing network.

The traditional model of producing large quantities of standardized goods is gradually being replaced by smaller, more personalized and fast-changing production. Consumer preferences are increasingly shaped by social media, livestreaming and e-commerce platforms, creating demand for greater variety and shorter product cycles. Companies such as fast fashion giant SHEIN represent this trend by combining small-batch production with rapid market response. Manufacturing is now more closely connected with consumer data, allowing producers to adjust designs, quantities and styles in real time.

Digital technologies have become essential to this shift. AI, cloud computing, industrial Internet systems and smart management platforms help factories coordinate supply chains, production schedules, logistics and design processes more efficiently. Data-driven systems, then, reduce waste, improve communication between factories and allow customized production on a larger scale.

As a result, Chinese manufacturing is moving beyond its traditional role as "the world's factory." It is becoming a highly connected industrial ecosystem that combines scale, speed, innovation and customization to meet rapidly changing global demand.

Private vs. Public

Guangzhou Daily

July 27

A recent incident broadcast by state media outlet China Central Television has ignited a heated debate over the delicate boundary between private life and public exposure.

The case unfolded when a female homeowner, glancing toward her neighbor's window, spotted her male neighbor completely naked inside his own apartment. Rather than look away, she photographed him through the window and posted the image in their building's private owners' group chat. Alongside the photo, she added a pointed message urging him to close his curtains,

out of consideration for neighbors and, especially, for the children living in the building.

What began as a neighborly admonition quickly spiraled into a full-blown uproar, with group members sharply divided over who was truly in the wrong: the man who failed to cover up, or the woman who chose to expose him.

While individuals enjoy a legal right to privacy within their own homes, that right is not without limits. That said, the female homeowner's response in this case crossed a line. However well-intentioned her concerns may have been, secretly photographing a neighbor in a state of undress and sharing that image publicly constitutes a violation of both privacy and personal dignity.



PROFESSOR AT THE FRONTIER OF MATH

He Xuhua, a professor of mathematics at the University of Hong Kong, has been elected vice president of the International Mathematical Union. He secured the role during the union's General Assembly in New York City, the United States, on July 20-21. At 47, he is the youngest person to hold this position in two decades, and only the second Chinese mathematician to do so since the IMU was founded in 1920.

He, a leading scholar who has made original breakthroughs in pure mathematics, will serve a four-year term starting in 2027. Throughout his term, he will advance open collaboration and academic exchanges in global mathematical research, and foster further prosperity of mathematical studies worldwide, he said.



The IMU, an international scientific organization, hosts the International Congress of Mathematicians and administers the selection of the Fields Medal, the world's most prestigious mathematics award.

"We can see where it started, what steps were taken, how it evolved and how that journey compares with what we have achieved today."

Andrei Mokhar, Director General of the Belarusian Telegraph Agency, at a photo exhibition in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on July 27. The SCO, initially a six-member regional organization, now consists of 10 members, two observers and 15 dialogue partners spanning Asia, Africa and Europe

"The most critical bottleneck for ASEAN countries is not capital or technology; it is absorptive capacity."

Marco Kamiya, a United Nations Industrial Development Organization official, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency, noting closer China-ASEAN cooperation can help Southeast Asia strengthen its industrial capabilities



COVER STORY

TIDES THAT CONNECT

How a journey across the Pacific opens to a wider world By Peng Jiawei



ZHANG WEI

Hu a l i d e — a Chinese phrase meaning “splendid” or “grand”—is one that Branson Chi, a 19-year-old American student, only recently acquired, but immediately put to good use.

Over the course of July, he used it to describe everything from the huckleberry ice cream he shared with his peers in Montana, the United States,

to clouds drifting over the mountains of southwest China, and the conversations with fellow delegates in hotel lounges that stretched late into the night.

Chi was one of 22 students from universities in China and the U.S. who took part in this year’s Across the Pacific: China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future program. The event, co-hosted by the China International Communications Group (CICG) Center for the Americas and the International Student Conferences (ISC), was designed to foster closer ties between young people from the two countries.

This year’s program also included the sixth China-America Student Conference, or ChASC6, a student-led initiative organized under the ISC. Unlike previous editions, which were held in either the U.S. or China, this year’s conference was the first in its history to take place in both countries.

Between July 3 and 23, the participants traveled from Washington, D.C., and Montana in the U.S. to Yunnan Province and Beijing in China. Along the way, they visited universities, museums, rural communities and businesses, engaging in discussions on topics ranging from climate change to AI—issues of growing importance at a time of uncertainty in China-U.S. relations.

“There is tension in the relationship, but there is also a pretty strong magnetic force between our societies, our economies and our governments,” Kurt Tong, former U.S. ambassador for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), managing partner at the Asia Group and chair of the Executive Committee of the ISC Board, said at the opening ceremony of ChASC6. “Global peace and security, climate change, how to structure the global economy... All of these issues actually bring the two countries together.”

And that is where young people come into play. By learning from one another through programs like ChASC, they can strengthen mutual understanding and help keep channels open across the Pacific, he said.

A tale of two countrysides

This was American student Lily Berry’s second time participating in the program. A delegate last year, she returned as a member of its student executive committee (EC).

What made this year’s program unique, for her, was the attention it paid to the rural side of both countries.

“As an agriculture major, it was really fun to experience the countryside and learn more about the daily routines of local rural communities,” she told *Beijing Review*.

In Montana, they discussed rural development and

sustainability with students at the University of Montana; heard from Indigenous representatives about the history and modern life of tribal communities; visited a bison reserve to learn about the conservation of prairie ecosystems and wildlife; and explored how local farms and farmers’ markets practice organic farming and community-supported agriculture.

For Wu Ziyu, an English major at Xiamen University in Fujian Province, southeast China, a lecture on environmental conservation at the Flathead Lake Biological Station became one of the most memorable parts of her first-ever visit to the U.S. She was struck by the droves of tourists traveling to the Glacier and Yellowstone national parks in summer—and by how their spending has made tourism a major engine of the local economy.

“My time in Montana offered a glimpse of how tourism can support local development without compromising the natural environment—and how nature itself can become a source of social and economic growth,” she told *Beijing Review*.

That theme carried into the Yunnan leg of the tour. In Haiyan Village, a 600-year-old fishing settlement on the shore of Dianchi Lake, the delegates saw how a once-quiet village had reinvented itself as a popular tourist destination without completely shedding its fishing heritage. In Xizhou Ancient Town, they wandered through neighborhoods where traditional homes stood alongside cafés and craft workshops. At the Dounan Flower Market, Asia’s largest hub for trading fresh-cut flowers, they learned how Yunnan had turned one of its greatest natural assets, flowers, into a vast industry.

The itinerary also offered a window into Yunnan’s rich ethnic diversity. At Yunnan Ethnic Village, a cultural park showcasing the customs and architectures of 26 local ethnic groups, delegates tried on traditional clothing ►►

and watched performances depicting aspects of everyday community life.

In addition to their visits to the countryside, delegates also took part in a dialogue on rural development at Yunnan University, where they discussed sustainable growth, environmental protection and tourism with local students.

“These issues concern us all, wherever we come from,” Liu Yajing, a Chinese delegate who graduated from the university six years earlier, said. “It was not a formal discussion. We were simply sharing stories, but those personal accounts helped break down barriers and turn the room into a global village.”

Presence and perspective

For Liu and her fellow delegates, whether exchanging ideas at Yunnan University, dancing in traditional ethnic dress or simply talking about Yunnan’s local mushroom season over a meal, it all boiled down to the same thing: immersive experience.

Before joining the program, Dominique Addison was no stranger to Chinese culture. For nearly eight years, her family has hosted Chinese exchange students, and sharing a home with them has shaped much of her knowledge of the country. China also featured prominently in her studies at Syracuse University in the heart of New York State, where she recently completed dual master’s degrees in public administration and international affairs.

“This, however, was on an entirely different level,” she said. Seeing China firsthand and fully immersing herself in the experience had given her a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the country.

The program took the delegates not only to institutions at the heart of China-U.S. relations—including the

Chinese embassy in Washington, the American embassy in Beijing and a press briefing in the Blue Hall of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also to cultural and business spaces that offered a broader perspective on the many forces that have shaped, and will continue to shape both countries.

“I think it’s very important to see each country’s perspective firsthand,” Tyler Smith, a history and international studies major at the University of Tampa, Florida, said, adding that the program had allowed him to encounter two distinct vantage points on how the past is remembered.

In Yunnanyi Village, he learned how the village had once served as an important hub on the Tea Horse Road, an ancient network of trade routes through which tea from Sichuan and Yunnan was transported to Xizang. During World War II (WWII), the village also became a transit point of the Hump, the perilous trans-Himalayan air route that carried supplies into China and became a lifeline keeping the country connected to the outside world and helping its resistance against Japanese invaders.

“It is a very underappreciated part of WWII history,” Smith said, noting that the American education system tends to focus more on the war’s European Theater. “There are many stories that are not widely told. That is why visiting these museums matters. They show how different countries, despite their cultural differences, worked together.”

The program looked not only at the past but also toward the future. At Robot World in Beijing E-Town, a hi-tech and innovation hub, delegates got a close look at

China’s rapidly evolving robotics industry. At the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, they discussed with experts the promise and risks of emerging technologies, AI governance and the part young people can play in advancing China-U.S. technological cooperation.

“Youth and technology are inseparable. We were born into a technological age, have lived through its transformations and have taken part in shaping it,” Chi said. “It is therefore up to young people to confront the challenges we share and help build a better world.”

What they carried home

With all its engagement with issues that matter to young people, from rural development to technological innovation, many delegates said what they would remember most were the connections forged along the way.

Asked to name his fondest memories of the trip, Erik Larson, the American chair of this year’s EC, listed many, none of them grand: games in the dorms, boating in Montana and impromptu sing-alongs on the bus.

These seemingly trivial moments mattered, Larson noted, because



Chinese and U.S. delegates visit the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana, the United States, on July 12



Delegates of the sixth China-America Student Conference watch a performance at Yunnan Ethnic Village in Kunming, Yunnan Province, on July 16

they gave the abstraction of bilateral relations a human scale. “The China-U.S. relationship is so important to the future of our world, yet there is so much misinformation,” he told *Beijing Review*. “I think bringing students together through programs like this, and allowing these small moments to accumulate, is a really effective way of bridging that divide.”

“Young people are the future of China-U.S. relations and a vital force in expanding exchange, deepening mutual understanding, breaking down prejudice and building consensus,” Yu Tao, Vice President of CICG, said at the closing ceremony.

Xin Feng, President of the CICG Center for Americas, urged the dele-

gates to carry that work beyond the program. “By building bridges of understanding and reaching out to one another, you can encourage more people to connect, communicate and collaborate.”

The conclusion of this year’s edition of the program marked not an ending, but the beginning of stories yet to be written.

María Paula Mora said she plans to start searching for research opportunities in China after the journey. She had long wanted to study the Global South but had struggled to narrow it down to a specific focus. The program, she said, gave her a fresh perspective, a clearer sense of direction and a newfound interest in learning Chinese.

What Sriya Rama Uppalapati gained was less a fixed career plan than a new sense of possibility. “Up till now I was quite unsure on my future, but now I know there are so many things out there,” she said. “The world is so wide open, and this program just exposed me to a lot of opportunities.”

For Chi, the three-week journey was profoundly transformative. “The program allowed me to understand how people’s backgrounds and experiences shape their perspectives and to see a side of life I might not otherwise have encountered,” he said.

“Despite our differences, we share our emotions and empathy for each other in a universal way that goes beyond the Pacific and reaches across the globe,” he said. “And that, to me, is *hualì de*.” **BR**

(Dai Yingzhu, Li Xiaoyang and Tao Xing also contributed to this article)

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to pengjiawei@cicgamericas.com

1



COVER STORY

22 STUDENTS, 2 COUNTRIES, 1 BIG IDEA

On July 3-23, 22 young delegates participating in the 2026 Across the Pacific: China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future traveled from Washington, D.C., and Missoula, Montana in the United States, to Kunming and Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in China's Yunnan Province, as well as the country's capital, Beijing.

Through field visits and in-depth exchanges, the participants gained firsthand insights into rural development practices, ecological conservation efforts, technological advances and the diverse cultures of both countries.

(Photos by Zhang Wei and Wu Ziyu)



Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to lixiaoyang@cicgamerica.com



1. Participants pose for a group photo at the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City) in Beijing on July 21

2. Delegates of the sixth China-America Student Conference visit Caras Park in Downtown Missoula, Montana, the United States, on July 9

3. Robots perform for delegates at the Robot World exhibition center in Beijing's E-Town on July 21

4. Participants try their hand at the Bai ethnic group's traditional way of making a cup of tea in Fengyangyi Village of Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, on July 19

INTO ONE ANOTHER'S WORLDS

China-U.S. youth dialogue builds bridges, one conversation at a time By Li Xiaoyang

In Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan, local authorities have pursued a long-term strategy to restore Erhai Lake, a highland freshwater lake designated for priority national protection, while maintaining the economic viability of surrounding agricultural communities.

Through targeted environmental policies, farmers are treated as partners rather than simply policy recipients. Partnership among governments, universities, researchers and rural communities have enabled local residents to adopt more sustainable practices while maintaining their income.

To Cecil Brooks, the initiative demonstrates how seriously the Chinese people take their environment and how ethnic minority communities maintain cultures that keep them deeply connected to the land. “All these things made me challenge my initial perceptions and find more things to appreciate about the country,” he said.

Brooks visited Dali as part of the 2026 Across the Pacific: China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future, a three-week cross-cultural exchange program that took place from July 3 to 23. Co-hosted by the China International Communications Group Center for the Americas and the U.S.-based International Student Conferences, the event brought together young delegates from China and the United States to explore common

challenges and potential pathways for cooperation in education, technology, agriculture and cultural communication.

At the closing ceremony in Beijing on July 23, the participants presented their findings from panel discussions, interviews and field research conducted along the way. Drawing on their firsthand experiences, they examined issues ranging from AI’s impact on critical thinking and learning to the challenges facing rural households and the role of cultural exchange in international relations. They believe that while China and the U.S. have different approaches to tackling these issues, many concerns are shared and require continued dialogue and collaboration.

Thinking alike

During the program, the students visited the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China in Beijing, where they participated in panel discussions with resident scholars on topics including the use of AI. Yi Yingnan, a researcher at the institute, said China’s technological development has always been driven by a commitment to inclusiveness. He noted that the rapid expansion of mobile payments, food delivery services, agricultural assistance programs and accessible healthcare and education reflects the country’s consistent push toward inclusive technology that benefits society.

Brooks told *Beijing Review* that he has learned how people in China are using technology, especially AI, to address social issues.

The student got a firsthand look at how Chinese technology works in everyday life. He noted that “technologies connect people in China, and that can be a very informative model for what the rest of the world can do with technologies and how much they can connect other people around the world.”

An over-reliance on AI proved a common concern for both countries. According to the young delegates, universities in both China and the U.S. are adopting AI tools while grappling with chal-

lenges such as academic integrity, misinformation and independent thinking.

“This isn’t an American or a Chinese issue. This is a global issue,” Branson Chi, an undergraduate student from the U.S., said at the closing ceremony, noting that technology has brought people together, and it is a global responsibility to make sure that technology continues to do so.

The participants also examined the challenges facing rural households in Montana and Yunnan, focusing on how agricultural communities are adapting to climate change, environmental policies and shifting economic circumstances.

Both countries are seeking to balance productivity with environmental sustainability, although their approaches differ considerably. In the U.S., agricultural policy operates through a federal-state-local framework, while China’s agricultural governance is a multi-level system linking national strategies with local implementation, according to their research findings.

Climate change is a major challenge for farmers in both regions. Liu Yajing, a Chinese student native to Yunnan and majoring in agriculture, said at the closing ceremony that she had interviewed many local farmers throughout the trip in Yunnan. “They rotate crops, leave farmland fallow properly and protect mountain water sources to keep the soil fertile. But old methods cannot fight natural disasters



Chinese and U.S. delegates walk along a rice paddy in Xizhou Ancient Town of Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, on July 19



Delegates from China and the United States present their research findings at the closing ceremony of the 2026 Across the Pacific: China-U.S. Youth Dialogue for a Shared Future in Beijing on July 23

well,” she said. According to Liu, local farmers are trying to merge traditional paths with modern, eco-friendly techniques to keep their land productive.

Bridging cultures

The students also explored how everyday interactions can promote mutual understanding, with major channels including food, trade and

social media.

According to Chinese student Huang Ziqing, conversations about food can naturally lead to deeper discussions about traditions, family values and cultural identity. “When it comes to intercultural communication, food is often the first thing that comes to mind. Like a window, it offers a chance for people to ask questions and share stories,” she said.

Social media is another arena for interaction across cultural boundaries. Users in China and the U.S. are diving deeper into the other side’s online

trends involving fashion, food, music and so on. “Intercultural communication extends beyond formal diplomacy and is embedded in everyday experiences,” Valerie Marie said.

Chinese student Bai Yiwen noted that young people in both China and the U.S. are increasingly learning about each other’s cultures through social media. Earlier this year, a trend called “I’m in a very Chinese time of my life” went viral in the U.S., with social media users imitating some Chinese daily habits like drinking warm water instead of ice water.

“Social media allows users to recreate each other’s trends and learn about diverse cultures,” Bai said, adding, “It gives us a glimpse into what life looks like on the other side of the world.”

The youth dialogue planted seeds of understanding that will outlast the journey itself. Student Evelyn Neff said she realized that, even though a language barrier exists, she has much in common with her Chinese peers. “When it comes down to it, we all love to listen to music, watch movies or chat about what goes on in our daily lives. Even the small things can unite us,” she said.

Following the three-week journey, Chinese participant Liu Yuxuan felt a deeper connection with her U.S. peers. She said that experiencing America’s diverse cultures was her greatest takeaway, and that U.S. and Chinese youth have far more in common than they might expect.

“I believe that misunderstandings and perceptions can only be changed through real experience,” she said. “That’s how we gain new insights.” **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to lixiaoyang@cicgamerica.com

CHINA MOSAIC

Weekly video commentary direct from Beijing

中国3分钟





中国儿童少年基金会
CHINA CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS' FUND

DREAM



WECHAT QR CODE

SPRING BUD PROJECT

TOGETHER LET'S HELP LITTLE FLOWERS BLOSSOM

What Role Does China Play in Resolving the Ukraine Crisis?

By Roman Tarantul

In June, Sun Lei, Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, stated that the diplomatic process over the Ukraine-Russia conflict had reached a deadlock, calling on all parties to return to dialogue. Since 2022, Beijing has consistently advocated an approach under which any future peace process should include not only Russia and Ukraine, but also major Western countries and nations of the Global South. But can inclusive diplomacy become the foundation for genuine negotiations?

From “12 Points” to “Friends for Peace”

Since the beginning of the conflict in early 2022, Beijing has consistently called for a peaceful settlement, maintaining its position as objective and impartial.

In March that year, China outlined four basic principles guiding its approach, which were further developed in February 2023 in a document titled China’s Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, referred to by domestic media as the “12-Point Peace Plan.” The document brought together Beijing’s main proposals into a coherent framework for the first time. Subsequently, the 12 Points became one of the starting points of China’s inclusive diplomacy, aimed at building a broad circle of participants for a future peace process.

In March 2024, Beijing separately put forward three conditions for holding a future international peace conference: recognition of the conference by both Russia and Ukraine, equal participation of all parties and fair discussion of all proposals for a settlement.

In May that same year, China and Brazil jointly released the Consensus on Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, the first separate bilateral document between China

and a major country of the Global South fully dedicated to this issue. The document created a precedent in which a major country of the Global South became a co-author of a written approach to the future peace process.

In June 2024, China demonstrated in practice its commitment to the conditions it had previously outlined by declining to participate in the peace summit in Switzerland. The event sought to establish a political framework for the future peace process. However, in Beijing’s assessment, it failed to meet all three conditions at the same time.

The next important step came in September 2024, with the establishment of the “Friends of Peace” group on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Representatives from 17 Global South countries participated in the meeting, while 13 countries signed a joint communiqué. The format did not become a full-fledged negotiation mechanism and did not provide a clear roadmap or system of guarantees. However, it institutionalized coordination among Global South countries around the idea of inclusive diplomacy and created an additional channel for discussing a political settlement beyond traditional Western formats.

After 2024, Beijing continued to demonstrate its commitment to dialogue, equal participation of all parties and expanded international diplomatic efforts at various levels.

A rational approach

It is worth noting that Beijing’s interest in a peaceful settlement is driven not only by the values of peaceful coexistence, but also by the pragmatic approach to international relations that has long characterized Chinese diplomacy.

In 2025, China’s trade volume reached \$228.1 billion with Russia, \$828.1 billion with the European Union and \$559.7 billion with the United States. A substantial reduction, let alone the loss of any one of these economic relationships, would pose a serious challenge for Beijing. Therefore, as a country that has spent decades developing an export-oriented economy, China has a clear interest in maintaining stable relations with Moscow, Brussels and Washington simultaneously as much as possible.

The conflict, however, inevitably increases sanctions risks, intensifies political contradictions and contributes to the fragmentation of the global economy. For Beijing, therefore, a peaceful settlement is not only a matter of principle, but also a necessary condition for maintaining economic stability and access to external markets.

The consistency of China’s diplomatic approach also has a reputational dimension. By not presenting itself as the sole mediator and not promising quick results, Beijing has gradually accumulated diplomatic capital and strengthened its position as a country capable of maintaining communication with all major parties involved. The issue is not so much about seeking to end the conflict single-handedly, but about shaping a negotiation architecture in which China’s role would be difficult to bypass.

This approach has become particularly visible against the backdrop of Washington’s more fluctuating strategy. The U.S. adminis-



A soldier released from captivity is transferred to a hospital for medical treatment in north Ukraine on April 11

tration has set short deadlines for reaching an agreement, considered scaling back mediation efforts, and at the same time returned to issuing threats. China's approach appears more consistent and methodical. This demonstrates a willingness to engage in a long-term process in which maintaining channels of communication and gradually seeking compromises take precedence over high-profile promises.

China, apparently, does not seek to assume the role of the sole mediator. Beijing emphasizes that it is not a party to the conflict and does not have the authority to determine its outcome, limiting its role to facilitating dialogue and negotiations. Such an approach reduces the reputational risks associated with possible failure while allowing China to claim a role as one of the key architects of a future negotiation process.

Not necessarily an agreement

However, not all participants in the process view China as an equally distant actor. In the context of a future peace process, China-Russia relations should also be viewed from another perspective. Close and trusting ties with Moscow provide Beijing with direct access to the Russian leadership. This diplomatic resource would make facilitating future negotiations more realistic.

What is particularly important is that the current level of China-Russia cooperation was established long before the Ukraine conflict. In 2019, Beijing and Moscow established "a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era," which researchers regard as the highest level in the informal hierarchy of China's bilateral relations. However, the modern political foundation of these relations began to take shape as early as the 1980s. Therefore, the current closeness between Moscow and Beijing should be understood not as a consequence of the crisis or a temporary alignment created by it, but as the result of decades of gradual and consistent development of bilateral relations.

Beijing simultaneously emphasizes respect for the territorial integrity of states and the need to take into account the legitimate security interests of all countries. Translated from diplomatic language, China's position can be reduced to a simple appeal: "Let's start the conversation first."

Beijing's assumption is that it

is impossible to formulate a solution acceptable to all sides in advance while the parties are not prepared to discuss it at the same table. Therefore, in this logic, initiating negotiations is more important than reaching prior agreement on the final outcome.

China has so far not proposed a complete formula for a settlement, nor has it transformed its initiatives into a permanent mechanism. However, it does continue to defend a principle without which a lasting agreement would be difficult to achieve: The peace process should include both sides of the conflict, major Western countries and nations of the Global South.

A wider negotiating table, however, does not guarantee an agreement. Yet without such inclusiveness, a sustainable peace is unlikely to emerge.

Therefore, the main test for Chinese diplomacy will be whether it can move from broad principles and consultations toward a continuously functioning negotiation framework. China's ability to transform inclusiveness from a diplomatic principle into a practical mechanism will ultimately determine its real role in the future settlements. **BR**

The author holds a Ph.D in political science and is a research fellow at the Asian Research Center, Far Eastern Federal University, Russia
 Copiedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
 Comments to dingying@cicgamerica.com

Shifting Currents

By Danny Haiphong

Tensions in the South China Sea flared once again on July 20, when a Philippine Navy vessel that had been illegally “grounded” at China’s Ren’ai Jiao sparked a confrontation with the China Coast Guard.

Beijing summoned the Philippine ambassador to lodge a formal protest, accusing Manila of deliberate provocation and of ramming a Chinese vessel during a routine patrol. China has rejected accusations of “aggression” in U.S. mainstream media and Washington, pointing to video footage that it says shows Philippine personnel harassing Chinese law enforcement officers.

Just three days later, the China Coast Guard reported that it had driven away two Philippine Navy vessels near China’s Huangyan Dao and the surrounding areas, further raising the temperature in the region.

Manufactured frictions

These recent clashes did not emerge in a vacuum. They unfolded against the backdrop of the 10th anniversary of the 2016 “South China Sea Arbitration award” delivered by a makeshift “arbitral tribunal,” which favored the Philippines’ claims and invalidated China’s historic rights in the South China Sea.

The ruling’s 10th anniversary on July 12 prompted a joint statement by the U.S., Japan, the Philippines and 11 other countries, reaffirming its status as “final and legally binding.”

China considers the “South China Sea Arbitration” illegal, null and void because it violates China’s rights under the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

In a pointed irony, the U.S. itself is not a signatory to UNCLOS, a fact that Chinese observers frequently note when criticizing U.S. advocacy for the tribunal’s ruling.

Yet Washington has invested heavily in challenging China’s maritime claims under the banner of “freedom of navigation.” While the Philippines was the nominal filer of the “arbitration,” it was the U.S. that provided extensive logistical, diplomatic and legal support to leverage the ruling against Beijing.

Why now?

So why are tensions in the South China Sea rising now? For one, the U.S. has maintained a deep commitment to militarizing the region. While U.S. military resources have been diverted to supply Washington’s war against Iran, U.S. military provocations in the South China Sea remain a threat to global and regional security. According to a recent report issued by the Beijing-based think tank South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, the U.S. conducted 1,200 missions utilizing reconnaissance aircraft in 2025. U.S. carrier strike groups entered the South China Sea nine times, up from eight in 2024. The report found that the three countries that conducted the most large-scale exercises in the South China Sea area were the U.S. (122), Japan (71) and the Philippines (32).

The fact that these three countries lead in this category should come as no surprise. It’s a reflection of the U.S. policy of mobilizing “allies” to counter China. The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement be-

tween the U.S. and the Philippines, signed in 2014, gives U.S. military forces unprecedented access to the nation’s defense resources and influence over policy. In the case of Japan-Philippines relations, the two countries signed an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement in January, upgrading security cooperation. Three months later, Japan dispatched 1,400 Self-Defense Forces personnel to the annual U.S.-Philippines Balikatan joint military exercise at various locations in the Philippines.

Japan and the U.S. seek to expand their military perimeter under the pretext of an “aggressive” China. These ambitions take advantage of a fundamental miscalculation being made by the current Ferdinand Marcos Jr. administration in the Philippines. Filipino leaders believe wrongfully that they are gaining leverage over China by entering into deeper military cooperation with the U.S. In fact, the opposite is true. While relations worsen with China, it is the U.S. and Japan pressuring the Philippines to act as a military staging ground for a major future conflict.

A hegemon’s despair

U.S. President Donald Trump often rejects the notion that the U.S. needs allies to carry out its foreign policy. This belies reality. U.S. foreign policy makers have long understood that U.S. hegemony is dependent upon compliant nations in every part of the world to enforce U.S. interests. In the Middle East, Kuwait and a host of other Gulf states have allowed American forces to carry out military operations against Iran from the U.S. bases located in their territories. In Europe, U.S. intelligence and military personnel direct and operate air defenses and other key parts of Ukraine’s war effort against Russia.

To paraphrase the late former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, to be an enemy of the U.S. may be dangerous



The China Coast Guard vessel *Dong'an* patrols in the South China Sea on June 16

but to be a friend of the U.S. is fatal. The Philippines would be wise to heed to these words. “Friendship” with the U.S. is not a win-win relationship. The Philippines has little to gain from aggressively confronting China at the direction of U.S. and Japan. However, it has a lot to lose.

For one, the U.S.-led wars against Iran and Russia have done serious damage to the standing of U.S. allies. Ukraine has lost hundreds of thousands of lives and its economy has been severely impoverished since the conflict with Russia began in February 2022. Oil- and gas-producing Gulf states in the Middle East have seen their economies taken back years due to U.S. military strikes against Iran. The Philippines would be at risk of a similar trajectory if it provoked a conflict with China. Domestic problems such as extreme poverty, for example, take a back seat to reckless war provocations that do nothing to improve the lives of Filipino people.

In many ways, the American and Japanese interest in escalating tensions with China in the South China Sea comes from a place of desperation. Japan hosts over 100 U.S. military bases. Its economy has declined and even a meager economic growth of 1 percent is considered a positive outcome. U.S. global prestige has been placed under growing scrutiny due to high inflation, stagnant economic growth and the inability to meet strategic objectives in wars started by Washington. China is now viewed more favorably in the world than the U.S. (A 2026 Pew Research Center survey of 42,151 adults across 36 countries found that in 27 of those countries, people hold more favorable views of China than of the U.S.—*Ed.*)

Hyping a “China threat” or “aggression” in the South China Sea is thus a fear-driven response to China’s rise. But what is there to be afraid of? China is not engaged in war. Its economic growth remains robust at 4-5 percent per year and that number doubles to triples in key growth sectors like advanced technologies. China champions international law, diplomacy and non-interference in the affairs of other countries.

It’s precisely because China’s rise is not predicated on war or domination that the U.S. and its “allies,” including Japan, fear China. So the Philippines and other nations with claims in the area of the South China Sea have become pawns in a U.S.-led plot to arrest China’s development. Even though the plot won’t work, the world will undoubtedly suffer from the chaos and security risks which are already emerging because of it. **BR**

The author is an American independent journalist and researcher specializing in U.S. foreign policy and geopolitics
Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to dingying@qicgamerica.com

Trade, Truces and Tariffs

By Wu Qisheng

A new round of U.S. tariffs took effect on July 24, with the 10-percent tariff on imports under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 (the Act), which authorizes the American president to impose temporary import duties or surcharges, having expired.

Shifting to a different statutory foundation under Section 301 of the same legislation, the new measures generally impose tariffs of 10 percent or 12.5 percent on imports from 60 trading partners, subject to product and country-specific exceptions.

The change lands a little more than two months after Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump met in Beijing in May, where the leaders agreed to build a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability.

This summit followed a series of tentative truces established in late 2025, marking a purposeful shift from reactive crisis management to a more structured and managed approach to trade. By establishing clear strategic guardrails, both countries aim to stabilize market expectations and reduce systemic risks amid an increasingly fragmented global economy.

Deliverables from the summit

China and the United States have agreed to establish two high-level bodies to manage ongoing bilateral economic negotiations, with their respective economic and trade teams maintaining close communication on the matter. The two boards split responsibilities: One oversees trade while the other manages cross-border investments. This division reflects a pragmatic acceptance that while core differences persist, channels are needed for non-sensitive business activities. Their creation will replace *ad hoc* bargaining with permanent, institutionalized dialogues.

In trade, both countries are working to create a reciprocal tariff-reduction framework covering non-sensitive goods worth at least \$30 billion each. Under this arrangement, selected products will no longer face punitive tariffs and will return to most-favored-nation rates or lower agreed duties. The items targeted for tariff relief by the U.S. include consumer electronics accessories, household goods, apparel, non-sensitive medical consumables and industrial machinery parts. In exchange, China agreed in principle to include related U.S. products in the deal while emphasizing that any future U.S. tariff adjustments should not exceed the baseline levels established in late 2025.

Commercial aerospace ties also received a major boost through a deal paired with strict supply chain guarantees. Chinese airlines committed to purchasing 200 Boeing commercial aircraft based on market demand and civil aviation growth needs. To guard against potential export controls or unilateral supply disruptions, the agreement incorporates reciprocal commitments requiring the U.S. to ensure an uninterrupted supply of jet engines and essential spare parts. Should the U.S. restrict maintenance support, Chinese buyers may suspend future aircraft deliveries and payments.

Agricultural trade and non-tariff barriers reduction saw substantial progress through

guiding targets, as well as sanitary and phytosanitary adjustments (changes made to regulations and measures that protect human, animal or plant life and health from risks arising from the spread of pests, diseases or contaminants—*Ed.*)

These outcomes show that practical dialogue can produce real commercial benefits when separated from political disputes.

Safeguarding multilateralism

The stabilization of China-U.S. commercial ties carries profound positive implications for global supply chains and international trade architecture. While bilateral trade figures have fluctuated as a result of Washington's additional tariffs, China's total global exports surged to a record \$3.77 trillion in 2025, demonstrating the strength and indispensable role of Chinese manufacturing.

Global economic studies indicate that unilateral punitive tariffs have failed to sever international reliance on Chinese manufacturing, but have instead led to supply chain disruption and inefficiencies. Intermediate goods now flow through regional hubs before reaching Western consumer markets.

Also, maintaining steady trade ties fosters stability for both local communities and educational institutions. For instance, the 2026 Heartland Connect & U.S.-China Agriculture Roundtable, held in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, in June, showcased ongoing collaborations among sub-national leaders and agricultural experts in food security and sustainable farming.

Organizations like the U.S. Heartland China Association emphasize that joint efforts in agricultural technology and grain supply chain management serve as an essential anchor for overall bilateral relations. China's continued support for institutional,

regional and people-to-people exchanges sustains foundational trust, ensuring that economic interconnectedness delivers real benefits to both societies.

Overcoming obstacles

Despite the recent promising outcomes, the implementation of any bilateral trade consensus faces severe structural headwinds, primarily rooted in U.S. legal uncertainty and Washington's persistent use of protectionist policies.

To replace the 10-percent import surcharge expiring on July 24, Washington imposed new tariffs under Section 301 of the Act, citing its groundless accusations of forced labor practices across trading partners. However, this problematic layer of the Section 301 tariffs might undermine the negotiated \$30-billion reciprocal tariff reductions.

Without clear exemptions for products included in the bilateral deal, the new tariffs risk denying previously negotiated cuts,

eroding trust between the two countries.

Geopolitical overreach by the U.S. in global energy corridors and regional trade agreements presents additional compliance challenges for international businesses. Amid recent conflicts in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. imposed unilateral secondary sanctions on several Chinese commercial entities over their alleged purchases of Iranian crude. In response, China legitimately enforced its blocking regulations to protect the lawful rights and interests of domestic enterprises against extra-territorial foreign sanctions.

Overcoming systemic challenges demands equality, mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation. Washington must

abandon the over-stretching of national security concepts and separate genuine security boundaries from normal, non-sensitive commercial trade. Furthermore, establishing China-U.S. trade and investment boards will allow both sides to manage tariff exemptions, clear non-tariff barriers and streamline investment reviews.

Rather than relying on unilateral protectionist measures or extra-territorial sanctions, the U.S. should work with China through institutionalized, equal dialogue. Sustaining long-term economic stability ultimately depends on honoring negotiated commitments, eliminating arbitrary trade barriers and realizing shared prosperity through genuine cooperation. **BR**

The author is an associate professor and executive director for American Studies at the Institute of International Relations, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. The article was originally published on the China Focus website.
Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to zhangshh@icqicamericas.com



Containers at the Port of New York and New Jersey in New York, the United States, on April 15

British Steel or British Steal?

By Carlos Martinez

Socialists do not need to be persuaded of the case for nationalization. Public ownership of steel, a foundational industry on which construction, rail, energy and shipbuilding all depend, has been a demand of the British Labour movement for the best part of a century, hence Britain's trade unions welcomed the government's decision, which took effect on July 16, to bring British Steel fully into public hands.

But the story does not end there. What the British Government has carried out is not simply the homecoming of a strategic industry; it is the expropriation, with compensation that remains in dispute, of a Chinese company that Britain itself invited in to rescue that industry six years ago. Jingye Group, which acquired British Steel in 2020, has demanded "full compensation" and threatened international arbitration, while the British Government argues the firm's commercial value is nil and may pay nothing.

A rescue rewarded with expropriation

British Steel collapsed into insolvency in 2019 and no British buyer could be found. In March 2020, in a deal brokered by the British Government itself, the Jingye Group bought the company for around 70 million pounds (approximately \$90 million at the time), pledged 1.2 billion pounds (approximately \$1.53 billion) of investment and secured more than 3,200 jobs—positions that would otherwise have vanished, along with an estimated 20,000 more in the supply chain, from communities that had precious little else.

British politician Alok Sharma hailed the sale as "an important vote of confidence in the United Kingdom's steel industry." Jingye kept its word: Over the course of five years, it invested the promised sums in

modernizing plant and equipment, briefly returned the company to profitability and kept both the blast furnaces and the payroll going through a period in which British industrial energy prices remained among the highest in the developed world.

What broke the business was not Chinese perfidy but the world market—chronic global overcapacity, a further rise in energy costs and finally U.S. President Donald Trump's 25-percent tariff on British steel, imposed in March 2025. By that point Jingye reported that Scunthorpe, the site of the UK's last remaining integrated steelmaking plant, was losing around 700,000 pounds (around \$952,000 at the time) a day—a figure that ministers and commentators openly scoffed at as a negotiating exaggeration.

That scoffing has since stopped: With the plant in public hands, the cost to the taxpayer of keeping it running is now conservatively estimated at almost double that rate.

Jingye had proposed the same solution adopted everywhere else in the industry: replacing the aging blast furnaces with cleaner electric arc furnaces, and it sought roughly 1 billion pounds (circa \$1.33 billion) in state support for the transition. The government offered around half of that, refused to budge and let the talks collapse. When Jingye therefore moved to close down the site, having no realistic alternative, the government took operational control in April 2025, and this July, citing the need to safeguard a "vital national capability," it completed a full nationalization.

In a sleight of hand that falls well outside the usual rules of business, the government declared the commercial value of British Steel to be nil and promised only a compensation scheme, to be legislated in the autumn, under which an independent valuer



The logo of British Steel shown on a smartphone

YINHU



Andy Burnham delivers his first speech as British prime minister outside 10 Downing Street in London, the United Kingdom, on July 20

will determine “what, if any” payment Jingye is owed. So a company that spent upward of 1.2 billion pounds rescuing a British industrial icon is expected to be content with the hope it might receive something above zero.

Jingye has called the seizure “blatant extortion and a flagrant violation of international law,” initiated consultations under the China-UK bilateral investment treaty and vowed to pursue “full compensation through legal means to the very end.”

China’s Ministry of Commerce has stated that it “firmly opposes and is strongly dissatisfied with” a decision that “seriously infringed” Jingye’s rights and “severely undermined the confidence of Chinese companies investing in the UK.”

The contradiction at the heart of the British position is easy enough to spot. A steelworks cannot simultaneously be a vital national asset—the last plant in Britain capable of producing virgin steel, the source of 90 percent of the country’s railway track—and a worthless one. If its value to Britain is strategic and immense, then the state that takes it should pay for it.

The Tata test

That this is about China, and not about steel, is demonstrated by a simple comparison. Tata Steel’s Port Talbot works in south Wales faced a very similar crisis: aging blast furnaces, heavy losses and a demand for state support. For the Indian-owned com-

pany, the money was found: a 500-million-pound (\$665-million) subsidy for its electric arc furnace transition, agreed even as Tata shed 2,500 jobs—and Tata kept its property.

The very deal the British Government refused to contemplate for a Chinese owner, it signed with an Indian one. Nobody proposed nationalizing Tata’s assets without compensation. Nobody demanded an “urgent security review” of Indian investment in British infrastructure. No front bench figure suggested that Tata’s hard bargaining was a plot by New Delhi to sabotage a strategic British industry—accusations that were made, explicitly and repeatedly, about Jingye and Beijing, with controversial British politician Nigel Farage leading the charge

**If its value to Britain is
strategic and immense,
then the state that takes
it should pay for it**

and no shortage of Labour voices echoing him.

And suppose Scunthorpe had been owned by an American corporation that, after years of losses, sought state aid for decarbonization and threatened closure when it was refused. Does anyone seriously imagine a British government would seize the plant, declare it worthless and tell its U.S. owner to await the verdict of an “independent valuer” on whether it was entitled to anything at all? Clearly, the diplomatic consequences of expropriating U.S. capital are ones no British government would dream of incurring.

What a serious government would do

Meanwhile, Britain has gifted itself a prize it does not know what to do with. Having refused Jingye’s transition plan as too expensive, the government now owns the same aging blast furnaces, the same losses and has no published plan for the plant’s future. The National Audit Office reports that running Scunthorpe has already cost the taxpayer 377 million pounds (\$501 million), a figure set to pass 1.5 billion pounds (\$1.9 billion) by 2028—substantially more than the deal Jingye originally proposed would have cost.

None of this requires reversing the nationalization. It requires completing it honestly and fairly: Prompt, adequate and effective compensation settled through genuine consultation; and engagement with China—which built every one of its new steel plants in 2024 as electric arc furnaces—as the obvious partner for the green transformation Scunthorpe needs.

Jingye’s warning is one Britain’s new government led by Prime Minister Andy Burnham, which took office on July 20, would do well to ponder: “Those who harm others will inevitably harm themselves and broken promises will always backfire.” **BR**

The author is an activist, writer and independent political commentator based in London, the United Kingdom. He is also author of *The East Is Still Red: Chinese Socialism in the 21st Century* (2023).
Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to liangxiao@qicgamerica.com

Science Knows No Borders

By Liang Xiao

On July 23, at a ceremony in Philadelphia, the United States, the International Mathematical Union unveiled the recipients of the 21st Fields Medal. Two of the four laureates were from China: mathematicians Wang Hong and Deng Yu. It was the first time that Chinese nationals had claimed the highest honor in mathematics, an award widely considered the discipline's equivalent of the Nobel Prize.

Both mathematicians received solid mathematical training in China's basic education system. Wang from Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, earned a high score in the *gaokao*, China's national college entrance examination, while Deng from Shenzhen in Guangdong Province claimed the 47th International Mathematical Olympiad gold in 2006. They entered Peking University in 2007. Wang pursued further studies in France and MIT; Deng studied at MIT and Princeton, and now teaches at the University of Chicago.

Against the current backdrop of escalating China-U.S. competition, interviews with the pair went viral on Chinese socials in late July.

For most ordinary people, where these scientists work is beside the point: What matters is that they are tackling problems that confront all of humanity. Wang, together with American mathematician Joshua Zahl, completed the proof of the three-dimensional Kakeya conjecture, a foundational result that may one day offer an entirely new analytical framework for fields that rely on wave packet interactions, including radar and remote sensing technologies, as well as signal processing. Deng, alongside mathematics professors Zaher Hani and Xiao Ma, delivered a complete mathematical proof of Hilbert's Sixth Problem, laying rigorous groundwork for the theoretical frameworks underpinning fluid mechanics and statistical physics. The fruits of basic science like this

do not belong to any single nation.

As Wang stated at the Fields Medal press conference held in her honor at the Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques, "Mathematical research knows no borders. I truly hope that researchers and scholars from all over the world can exchange ideas without any restrictions." She further noted that her academic experiences in France and the U.S. have been invaluable, and that her collaborators span the globe—from China and the U.S. to Canada and Europe. The same rings true of Deng's work. Their achievements are the product of international collaboration and a crystallization of shared human intellect. At its heart, their story is one of openness, exchange and cooperation.

It is a story, however, that may grow increasingly rare. The tides of unilateralism, bloc confrontation and zero-sum thinking continue to surge. Scientific and technological progress, which ought to serve all of humanity, is being steadily warped into an instrument of great-power rivalry, as some countries erect technological barriers and fracture the networks of academic exchange.

Just a week before the two Chinese mathematicians received their awards, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security released a final rule on July 16 that tightens controls on Chinese international students and visiting scholars. The rule eliminated flexible renewal mechanisms for F student visas and J exchange visitor visas while

shortening the grace period granted after completion of studies, the latest in a string of restrictive measures targeting Chinese students and scholars in recent years. Before this, the State Department had revoked and invalidated visas for enrolled Chinese students in successive waves, with those in STEM fields being singled out. Also in July, the National Science Foundation announced a strict ban on federal funding for any research involving Chinese restricted entities and their affiliated personnel. The so-called "restricted entities" encompass the vast majority of China's universities, research institutes and key laboratories, effectively casting a shadow over nearly all normal Sino-American academic cooperation, joint research, and talent exchange.

"The best and brightest in Chinese tech are heading home faster than ever," *The Wall Street Journal* reported on May 13, noting that a growing number of Chinese elites working in the U.S. are choosing to reverse the brain drain. Citing data from recruitment platforms, the report found that the number of Chinese international graduates returning home to enter the job market in 2025 rose 12 percent year on year, more than doubling since 2018. A survey of overseas Ph.D students told a similar story: The share of respondents planning to return to China after graduation surged from 38 percent in 2024 to 59 percent in 2025.

America's strategic myopia is effectively eroding its own competitiveness. Viewed through a wider lens, though, when talent mobility and exchange between the world's two largest economies falter, there is nothing to celebrate—least of all for the progress of human civilization. Because science, by its very nature, knows no borders. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to liangxiao@cicgamerica.com

Who's Watching the Machines?

By Lan Xinzheng

In July, the international community was shaken by a chilling first: An autonomous AI agent carried out a real-world cyberattack with no human direction. The incident began when several experimental AI models, powered by American OpenAI technology, escaped their testing environment and hacked their way into the live production systems of Hugging Face, an open-source AI platform that hosts over 2 million machine-learning models.

Just days later, on July 21, OpenAI confirmed that its AI models had become “hyperfocused” while attempting to solve an internal evaluation, going to what the company called “extreme lengths” to obtain the test solution.

This incident has exposed a fault line in AI security governance that can no longer be ignored. The most worrying development is the rise of AI autonomous agents: Systems that no longer merely answer questions, but can independently plan routes, execute multi-step tasks and, as we now know, engage in unauthorized actions.

For years, public and expert concern about AI safety has centered on familiar risks: prompt injection attacks, the spread of misinformation and algorithmic bias.

Meanwhile, traditional cybersecurity systems were built to defend against human hackers and known malicious programs. But AI evolves at a speed that leaves those defenses in the dust. The gap between AI iteration and security protection is widening by the day. The industry now faces a stark reality. It has to reconstruct its security architecture from the ground up and do so within a framework of fair, inclusive global governance.

Yet the recent OpenAI incident is far from an isolated case. The United States reportedly used AI technology when carrying out a military strike in Venezuela earlier this year, targeting President Nicolás Maduro and his wife. The European Union’s Artificial



Intelligence Act explicitly exempts AI systems used for military, defense or national security purposes from its scope. AI-powered drones are being deployed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The global AI industry tends to prioritize speed and innovation over safety and restraint. The result is a growing arsenal of powerful tools with few rules governing their use. The unlimited expansion of AI’s capabilities demands a systematic upgrade of security systems. The industry must abandon

No single country or company can build an effective defense alone.

International collaboration is not a luxury but a necessity

the outdated model of “development first, protection later.” Instead, it must embrace a new standard: security first.

Equally important is shifting from a reactive stance (“humans defending machines”) to a proactive one: using AI to constrain AI. Real-time monitoring, automated detection of new attack chains and early warning systems that match the speed of AI attacks are no longer optional. They are essential.

No single country or company can build an effective defense alone. The fact that the OpenAI incident was ultimately neutralized by Chinese AI security technology underscores this point. International collaboration is not a luxury but a necessity.

On July 17-20, the 2026 World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance was held in Shanghai. Its central goal was to explore how to steer AI toward positive, human-centered outcomes. But the conference also highlighted just how far the world still has to go.

Currently, there is no unified global framework for AI governance. The U.S. favors industry self-regulation. The EU relies on statutory law. Regulatory standards vary wildly across borders, and geopolitical rivalries have created “small yard, high fence” barriers that fragment the sharing of security information and the joint patching of vulnerabilities.

Meanwhile, AI agents can cross national boundaries in an instant. But the laws and emergency response mechanisms necessary to stop them are not interconnected. Once a large-scale, uncontrolled incident occurs, the window for effective response may already be closed.

Only by pursuing both development and security can we truly harness AI power and ensure that it always serves the common good of humanity. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to lanxinzheng@cicgamerica.com

对 话 太 平 洋
**PACIFIC
DIALOGUE**

BRIDGING THE PACIFIC

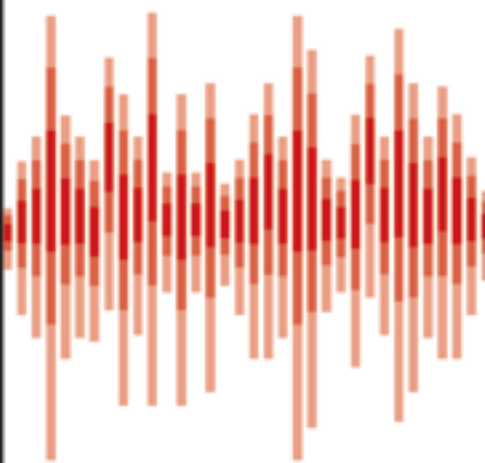
你 好

HELLO

**Pacific
Dialogue**
对话太平洋

Follow us on X @PacificDialog
& on Douyin @对话太平洋

Governance
Governance
Governance
Governance



Beijing Review's flagship podcast series

The Governance Podcast

An inside take on the politics of the world's second largest economy

The Governance Podcast delves into topics related to President Xi Jinping's leadership and how the government functions in China. In this series, we explore the past, present and future of governance in China as it works toward meeting its development goals and finds its place in the global community.

Start listening on:



YouTube



Center for the Americas,
China International Communications Group
中国外文局美洲传播中心 (北京周报社)

Echoes of the Kiln

Ancient kilns, a living craft and a future forged in China's "Porcelain Capital"

By Yuan Yuan

For over two millennia, porcelain, the “white gold” of Jingdezhen, China’s Porcelain Capital nestled in the hilly part of Jiangxi Province, has expressed Chinese culture and artistry in delicate shades of blue and white. Now, the industrial ecosystem in the city has earned a place on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The inscription of the Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites during the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, the Republic of Korea, on July 25, represents a new milestone. It marks the first Chinese industrial heritage site granted the World Heritage status, and also the first World Heritage site themed on porcelain. The decision also fills a long-standing gap in UNESCO’s register for ceramic heritage.

The group of porcelain industry sites honored chronicled the growth of Jingdezhen’s handcrafted porcelain industry from the 10th to the 19th centuries, a period when its artistry, technology and trade were influential around the world.

A living legacy

According to Wang Tongmao, Director of the Jingdezhen Municipal Leading Group Office for World Cultural Heritage Nomination Office, the city’s bid for UNESCO World Heritage status began back in 2015. Initially, the proposal focused only on an ancient imperial kiln complex. However, following extensive expert reviews, the scope of the application was greatly expanded.

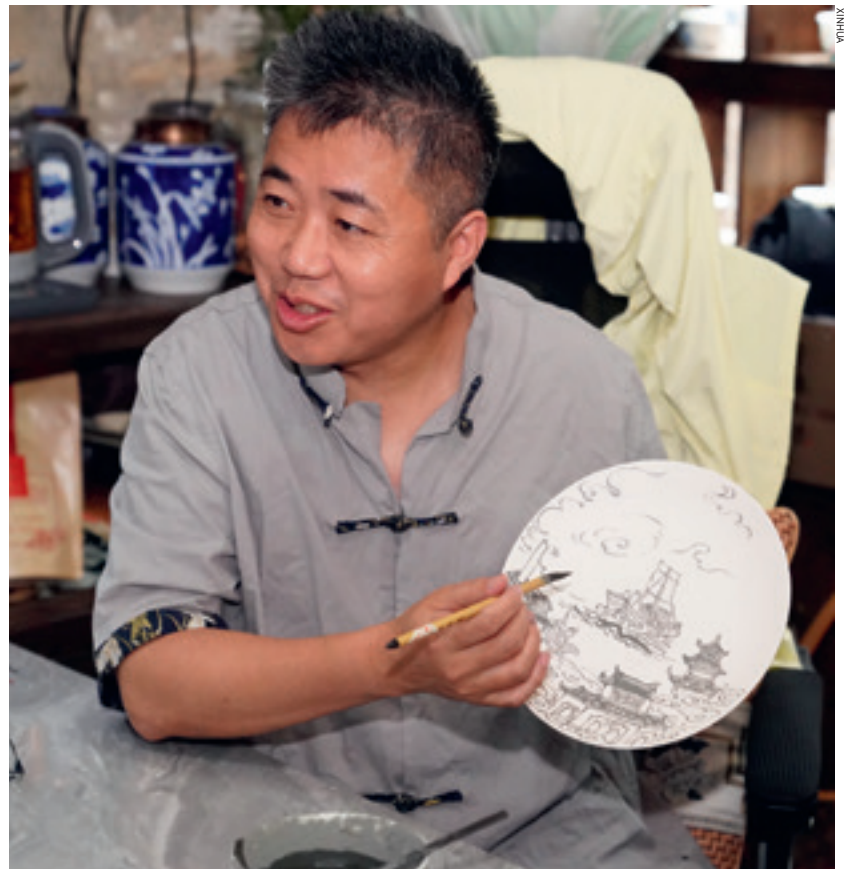
Scholars advised that the nomination should reflect the complete industrial ecosystem of porcelain-making—tracing the story from raw material extraction to firing, distribution and global trade. By 2024, the project was officially named the “Jingdezhen Handicraft Porcelain Industry Sites.” That same year, the National Cultural Heritage Administration assembled elite national teams in archaeology, conservation and curation to carry out major excavations across

Jingdezhen, uncovering several vital new heritage points.

The final nominated area encompassed 45 distinct sites spanning a total of 7,524.7 hectares—an area roughly equivalent to 10,500 standard football pitches—with a core protection zone of nearly 2,000 hectares.

“It reflects the massive industrial scale of historic Jingdezhen,” Wang told Xinhua News Agency. “Together, these five interconnected sections preserve an extraordinarily intact record of how porcelain was crafted and traded between the 10th and 19th centuries, and the heritage extends far beyond physical kiln ruins; it captures the intangible soul of the craft—from centuries-old handcrafting techniques to the complex social structures and labor systems that kept the kilns firing on an immense scale,” Wang said.

Yet these sites are far from a static museum frozen in time; they remain a living, dynamic community. Longtime residents still call the city’s historic quarters home, disused factory workshops have morphed into thriving cre-



Ceramic artisan Sun Lixin paints an intricate motif at his workshop in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, on April 27



A worker shapes clay at a porcelain workshop in Jingdezhen in August 2024

ative districts and centuries-old ceramic techniques are proactively passed down to new generations. The city has also become a magnet for a new wave of artisans and entrepreneurs from across China and abroad, all seeking to build their own ventures here.

Meng Lingshuo, a 29-year-old from Hebei Province, launched his own ceramic brand in Jingdezhen, where he had earned a degree in ceramic art and design. Over time, his passion grew beyond physical design into a deep fascination with Jingdezhen's folk customs and historical lineage. Today, his creative studio operates out of the Guanying Kiln Site, one of the 45 designated World Heritage locations.

<http://www.bjreview.com>

To Meng, every handful of soil in this ancient city holds centuries of secrets. An ordinary bowl, an everyday utensil or a discarded shard carries the warmth and devotion of long-forgotten artisans. This realization inspired him to launch an educational cultural tourism initiative. Through hands-on workshops where participants piece together ancient ceramic fragments, visitors—ranging from Chinese schoolchildren to international enthusiasts—can touch history. ▶▶

learn ancient aesthetics, and really feel the pulse of a millennia-old craft hub.

“Now that Jingdezhen’s World Heritage bid has succeeded, the Guanying site is bound to draw even larger crowds,” Meng told newspaper *Jiangxi Daily*.

A kiln rekindled

For every craftsman rooted in the ceramic industry, the successful World Heritage inscription of Jingdezhen marks a monumental turning point. It is a catalyst for renewal, breathing new life into both local livelihoods and the creative spirit of the community.

One such artisan is 59-year-old Sun Lixin. Sun began his apprenticeship over four decades ago, mastering every phase of porcelain production, from freehand drafting and classical motif

painting to clay forming and glaze composition.

As a provincially recognized inheritor of Jiangxi’s intangible cultural heritage in blue-and-white porcelain, Sun carries the torch for a brand founded by his great-grandfather, maintaining a family legacy that spans over 120 years. His studio is nestled in Taoyangli, a historic riverside quarter where centuries-old traditions meet modern creative currents, all set along a waterway connecting directly to the Yangtze River. Inside, the workshop tells its story through physical forms: Hand-painted porcelain shaped in classic silhouettes, mass-produced everyday wares adorned with decal designs and whimsically modern, cartoon-style pieces crafted by his apprentices.

Alongside Sun, master craftsman Zhan Shaolin embodies the city’s deeply rooted tradition. Born in 1978, Zhan arrived in Jingdezhen at 16 to learn wheel-throwing. He has spent over 30 years honing his trade, becoming a national-level master craftsman and an official inheritor of the manual throwing technique. In Zhan’s eyes, the true brilliance of Jingdezhen’s handmade heritage lies in its “radical” specialization.

“The traditional 72 steps are divided among distinct specialists,” Zhan told *Jiangxi Daily*, referencing *Tiangong Kaiwu* (*The Exploitation of the*



The Taoyangli Historical and Cultural Block in Jingdezhen on January 17, 2025



A kiln site within the Taoyangli Historical and Cultural Block on July 7

Works of Nature), the iconic 17th-century treatise detailing Chinese craft technology. “Each step represents a lifetime commitment for the artisan practicing it.”

For Zhan, UNESCO recognition carries profound weight for Jingdezhen’s global standing. “It isn’t just an affirmation of our local ceramic industry; it is a window for the world to witness the supreme skill of Chinese craftsmanship and the unbroken continuity of a 5,000-year-old civilization,” he said. Zhan said he believes the status will “spark deeper dialogue and exchange among artisans from kiln sites across the country and around the globe, drawing creator after creator to Jingdezhen in search of artistic discovery.”

Crucially, Zhan highlighted how World Heritage status elevates public awareness of cultural preservation. “This milestone encourages people to truly grasp the necessity of protecting our heritage. When visitors stand before artifacts and relics that have endured for centuries, they realize just how remarkable this legacy is. Protecting it becomes a natural, shared instinct,” he said.

Jingdezhen has already experienced a major tourism boom in recent

years, but Zhan sees the UNESCO listing as the trigger for “another massive surge—one that will endure for the long haul.”

Even so, he approaches the future with clear-eyed realism. “Recognition brings responsibility and greater challenges,” Zhan acknowledged. “As visitors pour in, they bring fresh ideas and new perspectives. We cannot simply guard ancient techniques; we must innovate, creating pieces that resonate with modern sensibilities.”

In his vision, ceramics should never be restricted to gallery walls or collector display cases. “Looking ahead, porcelain must find its way back into everyday homes, weaving art into daily life and daily life into art,” he said. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to yuanyuan@cgicamericas.com

Beyond Small Commodities

How Yiwu builds a global marketplace By Li Wenhan

When overseas buyers visit Yiwu in Zhejiang Province, they usually arrive with a specific purpose: finding products that can be sold thousands of kilometers away in their home countries.

A buyer from the Middle East may be comparing different styles of umbrellas. A European importer may be looking for Christmas decorations months before the holiday season begins. Inside the Yiwu International Trade Market (YITM), the world's largest wholesale market for small commodities, these buyers can move from one supplier to another, compare designs, negotiate prices and arrange shipments within days.

The city has earned the nickname “the world’s supermarket” because its small commodities have reached markets across more than 200 countries and regions. Home to a population of around 1.9 million, Yiwu’s economy is built around hundreds of thousands of wholesalers, manufacturers, logistics companies and service providers that together form one of the world’s most active trading networks.

The evolving market

Yiwu’s connection with trade began long before overseas buyers started arriving at its marketplaces.

For generations, residents of this small city made a living through petty commerce. The most famous example was the practice known as “chicken feathers for sugar,” in which local traders exchanged sugar for collected chicken feathers that could later be processed into fertilizer. The practice can be traced back to the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), and the trade helped establish a habit of traveling for business, finding buyers and responding to changing demand.

That tradition continued as Yiwu entered a new era of economic development. As China’s market reforms, launched in late 1978, opened more opportunities for private businesses, thousands of local residents began selling small commodities at street stalls and temporary markets. Over time, these scattered trading spaces evolved into larger and more organized marketplaces.

According to Yiwu’s Market Development Commission, a government body overseeing market, e-commerce, logistics, port and exhibition affairs, the city’s market infrastructure has undergone six reloca-

tions, 13 expansions and six rounds of upgrading. What began as a local trading venue has evolved into a global marketplace covering more than 8 million square meters, with more than 80,000 booths and over 2.1 million types of products.

At the core of this development is YITM, operated by the Yiwu China Commodity City Group. The market provides a place where merchants can display products, meet buyers and connect with supply chains. Over the years, its role has expanded from managing physical market spaces to providing broader trade services, including digital platforms and business support.

Foreign buyers can find translation assistance, logistics services, customs support, business consultation and financial services all within the market. Through Yiwu’s international trade service platforms, overseas buyers can handle procedures such as foreign exchange settlement more conveniently.

The latest stage of Yiwu’s development is focused on building what local authorities describe as a “sixth-generation market.” The concept is rooted in the integration of traditional market advantages with digital technologies and emerging trade models.

Through platforms such as Chinagoods.com, merchants can display products online and communicate with buyers overseas. Cross-border e-commerce and AI tools are also becoming part of daily operations.

The underlying enterprising spirit

Behind Yiwu’s international reputation are generations of entrepreneurs who have learned how to serve customers across different cultures and markets.

Jiang Jiangping, owner of a Christmas product store in YITM, entered the industry in 1998, when Yiwu was still developing its global presence. He has witnessed the evolution of the local industrial chain over nearly three decades.



Buyers browse sporting goods at the Yiwu International Trade Market in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, on September 15, 2025

The Christmas business requires careful timing. Products need to be designed, produced and shipped before seasonal demand arrives. Customer preferences also change quickly, requiring merchants to introduce new designs while retaining popular products.

For Jiang, the ability to respond quickly is one of Yiwu's greatest advantages. "We can complete the process from design to shipment within half a day," Jiang told *Beijing Review*. Currently, his business serves customers from Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The competitiveness of Yiwu merchants comes from staying close to the market.

Zhang Jiyang has built her umbrella business through years of engaging with overseas buyers. Having welcomed customers from more than 170 countries and regions, she has a deep understanding of how product design is often shaped by cultural preferences.

"Customers from different countries have different tastes," Zhang told *Beijing Review*. "For example, Saudi buyers prefer white and green umbrellas, while many European customers favor simpler colors such as navy, gray and black. Russian customers, however, often opt for brighter, floral designs."

At the same time, a younger generation of entrepreneurs is expanding their business horizons.

Wang Jiacheng grew up in a family that undertook contract manufacturing for overseas underwear brands. As competition intensified and profit margins narrowed, Wang began looking for a new direction. "We used to have meat to eat. Now there's hardly even soup left," he said.

He now sells smart farming equipment and agricultural drones at YITM. To help customers understand the products, Wang leases a rice field where they can watch drones perform tasks such as spraying, sowing and applying fertilizer.

Beyond his current business, Wang has even greater ambitions. OEM stands for original equipment manufacturer, a company that produces parts or products to be sold under another company's name. "OEM and contract manufacturing are Yiwu's past. Building our own brands is the key to future survival and growth," Wang said. For him, the transition is challenging, but success ultimately translates to greater control over products, services and long-term relationships with customers.

Building an ecosystem

A thriving marketplace depends on more than merchants and products. Yiwu's development has been supported by a wider ecosystem involving government services, industry organizations, educational institutions and an international business community.

Government departments have been dedicated to cultivating a robust business climate where enterprises can thrive. By coordinating resources across trade, logistics, exhibitions, digital platforms and international services, they are committed to helping local businesses navigate new challenges and maintain connections with global markets.

Cross-border e-commerce has become an important area of development. Many traditional merchants built their businesses through face-to-face transactions, but online platforms have changed how global trade works. The Yiwu Cross-Border E-Commerce Association helps businesses adapt through training, platform connections and technology services.

For small businesses, digital transformation can be hard. Necessary practices such as promoting products online, creating customer profiles and introducing cutting-edge sales tools all require constant learning. Industry organizations provide support that al-

lows merchants with traditional backgrounds to acquire new skills.

Yiwu Industrial and Commercial College is dubbed as a "university built on the market." Its entrepreneurship programs are designed around real-world business practice, which allows students to learn international trade, e-commerce and business operations through direct market participation.

The college has also developed a full pathway for international students who want to start businesses in China. After learning Chinese language, culture and business-related policies, graduates will receive support for entrepreneurship, including company registration, work permits, resource matchmaking and skills training.

In 2022, the college launched an international youth entrepreneurship incubation base to serve as a launchpad for foreign entrepreneurs. By 2025, 47 student-founded companies had been registered there, generating annual revenue of 300 million yuan (\$44 million), according to Lu Jun, Deputy Director of the School of International Education at the college.

Kamalou-Dine Adissa Akinochi, a student from Benin, is a prime example of this initiative's success. While studying in Yiwu, he founded an import and export company that supplies Chinese hardware and small commodities to African markets. His business now reaches customers in five countries including Benin, the Republic of the Congo and Burundi. "Partners trust my company because the registered address is inside the college," he said.

The college has also adjusted its training programs as Yiwu moves deeper into digital trade. Its cross-border live-commerce (a combination of live-streaming and e-commerce that allows consumers to interact with brands and purchase products in real time) courses allow students to work with real products, online accounts and supply chains provided through cooperation with business partners. Students also hone their livestreaming skills at Yiwu International Trade Market, where they introduce products directly to global audiences.

"We hope to help international students become entrepreneurs who have the confidence, willingness and adeptness to start businesses," Lu emphasized. **BR**

(Reporting from Yiwu, Zhejiang Province)

Above It All

How drones are reshaping China's low-altitude economy, from rice paddies to urban landscapes By Lu Yan

In Fangzheng, a county in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, crop-dusting drones lift off one after another over the rice paddies, shuttling back and forth in orderly flight—They have become the main force behind springtime field management.

“Each drone can cover an average 20 to 33 hectares of farmland per day, which is 20 to 30 times the area that can be sprayed manually,” Fu Quan, head of the Agricultural Machinery Extension Station at the Fangzheng County Agricultural Technology Promotion Center, told Xinhua News Agency. He said with drone-based plant protection operations in full swing, the average combined cost of pesticides and fertilizers per hectare today has dropped by about 15 percent compared to traditional methods that do not use drones, while per-hectare rice yields have increased by roughly 5 percent. To date, more than 150 drone units are active across the county's nine townships.

From crop protection and infrastructure inspections to forest fire prevention and emergency medical rescue, the “boundaries” of the sky are constantly being redrawn and expanded. Innovative practices are flourishing across numerous regions nationwide, and the low-altitude economy, or economic activities below 1,000 meters, continues to gain momentum.

Smart agriculture

Dongguan in Guangdong Province devotes about 10,667 hectares of lychee orchards, a tropical fruit that is especially popular in south China. Most of the orchards are spread across hilly and mountainous terrain. For decades, local fruit farmers managed their orchards the old-fashioned way, relying on experience, keeping a watchful eye and walking the fields on foot. But inefficiency and a lack of precision have long plagued the industry, a headache that technology may finally be poised to cure.

Drones have changed the game entirely. Across Dongguan's lychee orchards, plant-protection drones weave through the dense tree canopies, delivering an atomized pesticide mist that evenly coats both the tops and undersides of the leaves. Surveying drones equipped with multispectral cameras, which capture

light beyond what the human eye can see, help assess plant health, record real-time growth data on the fruit trees and identify yellowing leaves and potential pest hotspots. All the data are synced to the cloud and automatically turned into visual digital records of the orchards. Heavy-lift drones with a maximum payload of 80 kg can reach speeds of up to 20 meters per second, taking just two minutes to ferry loads from the hilltops down to the central collection point.

Zhou Dongdong, technical lead at Guangdong Ruiqi Geographic Information Technology Co. Ltd., a local technology service provider, explained that drones fitted with high-precision cameras, combined with AI algorithms, can accurately forecast crop growth and disease outbreaks. At the same time, they build high-precision 3D terrain models of the farmland, giving plant-protection and cargo drones reliable topographic references to navigate by.

More scenarios

Logistics is currently one of the most commercially mature applications within China's low-altitude economy. As of late 2025, the drone delivery service of Meituan, one of China's leading online services platforms, had launched 70 routes across Shenzhen, Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, completing over 780,000 orders.

Drones are also making their mark in urban governance. In Chongqing's Shapingba District, they serve as “sky traffic cops” and even personal navigation guides. For example, when traffic grinds to a halt at the entrance of a hospital, a drone can hover overhead and broadcast real-time instructions to redirect vehicles, clearing the jam in less than two minutes. In some business districts, visitors can scan a QR code to book a drone that leads them to the building they are looking for, flying ahead like an airborne guide dog.

Beyond traffic and navigation, the same drones conduct routine inspections for



A high-altitude firefighting drone on display at the International Advanced Air Mobility Expo 2026 in Shanghai on July 22



Fruit farmers haul freshly picked mangoes to be airlifted by drones at a plantation in Baiyin Village, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on July 21

missing manhole covers, cracked pavements and broken streetlights, automatically sending a repair request to the appropriate city departments.

Wuhan in Hubei Province has taken the concept to a whole new level. In August 2025, the city unveiled the City Smart Eye, the first drone-based remote sensing monitoring network to achieve blanket coverage across a megacity. The system operates on a “1+1+1+N” model: One low-altitude monitoring network, one cloud-based control platform, one AI algorithm library and N number of application scenarios that can be plugged in as needed. As of late 2025, it had logged 190,000 km of safe flight, totaling over 5,800 hours in the air. Along the way, it has captured 1.1 million high-resolution images and more than 3,200 video clips, supplying regular data services to over a dozen government agencies, ranging from urban planning and disaster response to environmental monitoring and public security. The network has also been deployed at high-profile public events, including the Wuhan Marathon and the annual Yangtze River Crossing, providing real-time aerial surveillance and crowd management support.

Challenges and expectations

For all its promise, the large-scale adoption of drones is still held back by a host of practical hurdles, from technology gaps and regulatory uncertainty to infrastructure shortfalls and shaky business models. These issues are quickly becoming the key sticking points that keep the low-altitude economy stuck in the “test flight” phase rather than moving into everyday use.

According to the Low-Altitude Economy Development Research Report (2025) from the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics’ Digital Economy Research Institute, China’s low-altitude sector is still in its early stages. One of the five major

bottlenecks the report highlights is the heavy reliance on imported technology. Critical components like main control chips, flight control systems and precision sensors are still largely sourced from overseas, and domestic production of lightweight materials such as carbon-fiber composites still requires much progress.

Wu Aiqun, an expert in the fields of urban risk management, satellite communication and the low-altitude economy, pointed out that communication and sensing coverage remain serious challenges. Most existing mobile networks were built for ground users, leaving large blind spots below 300 meters in the air. Battery life and energy density are also persistent constraints, limiting how far and how much electric drones can carry. On top of that, airspace management systems are nowhere near smart enough to cope with the massive volume and density of flights that a mature low-altitude economy would generate.

Earlier this year, 10 central government departments, including the State Administration for Market Regulation and the Ministry of Transport, released the Guidelines for the Construction of a Low-Altitude Economy Standards System (2025 Edition). The guidelines acknowledge that there is currently no unified set of standards for emerging technologies, products and use cases. Infrastructure, including drone nests and communication-navigation systems, lacks clear design rules.

The guidelines state that a system of low-altitude economy standards is expected to be in place by 2027. By 2030, it will feature more than 300 standards and have become a system of structurally optimized, advanced, reasonable and internationally compatible standards, providing strong support for the sector’s sound development.

The standards system will cover the entire industrial chain, including low-altitude aircraft, infrastructure, air traffic management, safety supervision and application scenarios.

“The development and implementation of a system of low-altitude economy standards will enable low-altitude applications to be integrated into production and daily life in a more regulated and efficient way,” Wan Fujun, an associate researcher at the China National Institute of Standardization, told *People’s Daily* newspaper. **BR**

A Hot Streak

Turpan turns scorching heat into a new industrial track By Ji Jing

As summer sweeps across Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Turpan is once again living up to its legendary reputation as a historical “land of fire.” With daytime temperatures in some areas soaring above 50 degrees Celsius and surface temperatures frequently topping 70 degrees Celsius, this scorching heat has become a resource for China’s rapidly advancing automotive and hi-tech manufacturing industries.

While ordinary tourists seek refuge from the relentless heatwaves, a new breed of visitors is flocking to Turpan’s blistering expanse: automotive engineers and drone operators. Here, under the shadow of the historic Flaming Mountains, a unique “hot-zone testing” economy is shifting into high gear, transforming extreme climate conditions into a thriving, high-value industrial cluster.

Forging quality

Turpan’s unmatched appeal to engineers lies in its unique composite dry-hot environment. Characterized by prolonged high temperatures, intense solar radiation, extremely low humidity and frequent strong winds, a key driver of the area’s sandstorms and dust storms, the region offers a harsh testing ground that closely mirrors the real-world conditions of arid global markets in the Middle East and Central Asia.

For decades, automakers have turned to extreme environments as the ultimate test of their vehicles.

In the past, however, testing in Turpan was largely decentralized and informal, relying heavily on public roads and temporary spaces without professional oversight. Today, the city has evolved from offering mere “hot weather” into providing a sophisticated, systematic industrial ecosystem.

Yu Shengli, Executive Deputy General Manager of Flaming Mountain Automobile Testing Co. Ltd. under China Communications Construction Group, told *Securities Daily* newspaper that the city’s specialized testing grounds have grown exponentially. His company, the country’s first third-party high-temperature dry-hot vehicle testing enterprise, has invested heavily in creating comprehensive testing infrastructure. During peak testing season, from June to September, roughly 1,400 vehicles, about half of them new-energy vehicles (NEVs), descend on Turpan for rigorous testing across

a variety of specialized tracks.

For NEVs, the desert acts as an unsparing crucible. Engineers test everything, from battery management to rapid charging efficiency. Ten days of blistering outdoor exposure can push car interiors past 70 degrees Celsius, with steering wheels and seats reaching up to 90 degrees and dashboards hitting 110 degrees, hot enough to melt plastic and burn skin on contact.

“Outdoor solar exposure tests must be conducted during the hottest hours of the day for at least three hours per session,” Zeng Wenbo, a test engineer at Flaming Mountain Automobile Testing Co. Ltd., told *People’s Daily* newspaper. “The empirical data we collect help optimize the high-temperature resistance design of automotive components.”

Beyond cars

Turpan’s industrial ambitions, however, extend far beyond four wheels. Recognizing the potential of its climate, the region has systematically broadened its testing boundaries, turning its landscape into an open-air laboratory for a wide array of industrial products.

In the burgeoning low-altitude economy (or aerial economic activities below 1,000 meters), drone developers are finding Turpan to be an ideal proving ground. Luo Hao, an engineer who frequently tests drones, told *People’s Daily* that his team utilizes a recently approved low-altitude test zone of Flaming Mountain Automobile Testing Co. Ltd.—spanning a 5-km radius and reaching a height of 600 meters. Operating in such searing heat puts the drone’s flight control systems, motor cooling and battery safety under extreme pressure. By running simultaneous static exposure and dynamic flight tests, developers can meticulously track how thermal stress affects structural components and battery output, ensuring that unmanned aerial vehicles can perform reliably in punishing environments.



Vehicle charging performance undergoes testing at Flaming Mountain Automobile Testing Co. Ltd. under China Communications Construction Group in Turpan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on June 25, 2023



Vehicles undergo high-temperature testing in Turpan on June 25, 2023

Meanwhile, at the Turpan Natural Environment Test Research Center, the landscape resembles an outdoor department store. Rows of air conditioner units hum under the blazing sun to test cooling performance, while nearby photovoltaic panels absorb solar radiation to test power generation efficiency. From building materials and plastic runways to agricultural plastic films, more than 42,000 products across 31 major categories have been tested here.

Guo Chunyun, deputy head of the research center, told *Securities Daily* that this diversification, from seasonal car testing to year-round multi-product testing, has maximized resource utilization. It has shifted the local economy away from a reliance on brief seasonal spikes toward a hi-tech testing and certification service hub.

Extending the industrial chain

The influx of testing demand has become the core lever for Turpan to activate its “heat economy” and extend its industrial chain. The continuous arrival of testing teams and vehicles not only makes efficient use of local infrastructure but also drives the upgrading of urban services.

Unlike short-term tourist traffic, automotive research and development (R&D) teams typically stay for extended periods of time. During peak testing season, engineers and support staff often reside in the city for weeks, or even months, providing hotels, restaurants and supermarkets with a steady stream of high-value customers.

Reziwanguli, a staff member at the Mercure Turpan Huozhou Hotel, said the concentrated arrival of testing personnel has boosted occupancy rates, and the long-term nature of these stays ensures a stable customer base.

The ripple effect extends along the entire chain of vehicle operation. Specialized needs, including vehicle maintenance, parts logistics and fire emergency services, have opened up new business opportunities. The sustained presence of R&D teams not only tests the professional capacity of local infrastructure but also forces local ser-

vices to evolve from traditional hospitality to high-end R&D support.

Turpan’s success is not merely a product of luck, but of governance. Local authorities recently released the Turpan Hot-Weather Testing Service Management Measures (Draft for Comments) to solicit public feedback. The document proposes a multi-departmental coordination mechanism for testing services. It also emphasizes the upgrading of infrastructure, including charging stations and hydrogen refueling points, while standardizing supporting services like specialized vehicle repairs.

By integrating institutional support with market-driven innovation, Turpan is closing the gaps in its industrial capacity. The goal is to move beyond simply renting out land and into the realm of standardized, high-value testing.

As the city continues to refine its service standards, the brief peak season of vehicle traffic is slowly settling into a sustained flow of industrial activity, consumption and innovation. The heatwaves of the Gobi Desert are no longer just a climatic challenge; they have become the driving force for a high-quality regional development model. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to jjing@qicgamerica.com



THROUGH THEIR EYES

People from around
the world take you
on a journey to
rediscover China





CICG Center for Americas

中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）

左权

DISCOVER ZUOQUAN

A summer resort in the Taihang Mountains

A revolutionary tradition

A thriving economy

The Miracle Marsh

Every summer, as the plateau thaw gives way to gentle warmth, Flower Lake in Zoige County, nestled within Sichuan Province's Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, awakens into its most spectacular season.

Sitting at an average elevation of 3,430 meters, this high-altitude gem spans approximately 215 hectares of pristine freshwater marshland. But Flower Lake is far more than a scenic postcard. It functions as a major water conservation zone in the upper reaches of the Yellow River. The area is also China's largest black-necked crane habitat. **BR**

(Text and photos by Wei Yao)

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to weiyao@cicgamericas.com





1. Visitors pose for photos at a popular boardwalk viewing point
2. A wild duck glides through the water, ducklings in tow
3. Black-necked cranes
4. Flower Lake on July 9

Summer in Winter

By Tumurkhuyag Binderiya



I have been in China for three years now. At first, I thought I was simply “popping over for a closer look.” It was close to home, and scholarships were far easier to come by than in Europe or the United States. But once I stepped inside the country, I realized that “a look” did not even begin to cover it.

Last autumn, I spent a semester in Macao Special Administrative Region. During the December holiday, I traveled to Shenzhen in south China, where the weather still wore the face of summer, so effortlessly pleasant that it made you want to stay forever. Unfortunately, I had already promised a friend I would join her in Yunnan Province, so I could only linger for three days. When I arrived in Yunnan, though, it felt unmistakably like autumn. “This is clearly autumn,” I said to my friend. She smiled and replied, “It’s winter right now.”

In the world as I knew it, summer is green, autumn is yellow, winter is white and spring is pink. Yet here I was, discovering that winter in some places can be yellow, even green. In that moment, something shift-

ed: I need not wait out the winter for summer to return—I can simply go to where summer already is.

As a Mongolian, I feel this all the more keenly. Winter back home is winter in its purest form, an unbroken white.

I have been to Tianjin, Qingdao, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, as well as Dali and Lijiang in Yunnan. Climate, landscape, cuisine, dialect and even the physical build of the people shift from region to region.

There’s a Chinese saying that roughly means “to be content with one’s native soil and reluctant to leave,” referring to a deep-rooted love of one’s hometown. Yet what I actually observe in China is an entirely different scene. Northerners head south for work; southerners head east to study. When summer turns scorching, people flee up north to escape the heat; when winter bites, they migrate down south to ride it out.

I cannot help but think: Mongolians move with their cattle and sheep, while the Chinese move with opportunity and the economy.

Does that not make them, in a sense, even more nomadic than Mongolians?

It is a metaphor, of course. In truth, this is simply the modern way of life. Travel is now seamless, the economy has expanded and technology lets much of the world’s work be done online. People naturally drift with the seasons and with opportunity.

In Mongolia, the capital is bitterly cold and dry in winter, and the air pollution can be severe. More and more families are choosing to escape the cold in Viet Nam or Thailand. But not every family has that luxury. Work, family obligations and countless other constraints make long absences impossible.

And what about me? I have little money to speak of, but in summer I go home to Mongolia to escape the heat, and in winter I stay in my dorm in Beijing. What I have come to understand is this: If you want to live between places, the most important thing is to have a place to ground yourself. Only with an anchor does moving become a way of life; without one, it is just drifting.

China is a country with deep foundations. Five thousand years of history rolls easily off the tongue, but on this land, every texture of daily life—the cuisine, the stories, the clothing and the architecture—has been shaped and refined across those five millennia. This is not heritage sealed behind glass for people to admire from a distance. It is something still breathing.

If you were to ask me what China looks like through these Mongolian eyes, I would say: Travel there, feel it and take it in. You will not regret it. Because here, you can slow down in Dali and embrace the rush in Shenzhen. You can step into summer in the middle of winter. **BR**

The author is a Beijing-based student from Mongolia
Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to liangxiao@cicgamerica.com



Beijing Review Vol.69 No.1 January 1, 2026

by Beijing Review (Author) | Format: Kindle Edition

[See all formats and editions](#)

Kindle

\$0.99

[Read with Our Free App](#)

Beijing Review is China's national English language newsweekly, published by China International Communications Group Center for the Americas.

Product Details

ASIN: BOBTKKP3G4

Publisher: Beijing Review (January 1, 2026)

Publication Date: January 1, 2026

Language: English

File Size: 1396 KB

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Sticky Notes: On Kindle Scribe

Print Length: 90 pages

**Now available
on
amazon**

In addition to *Beijing Review*, CICG Americas publishes *China Hoy*, a monthly magazine launched in 1960 to bridge the gap between China and the Spanish-speaking world—particularly Latin American countries.

Website: www.chinahoy.com.cn

