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A TRIBUTE TO HISTORY AND A CALL FOR PEACE



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The guard of honor of the three services of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) attends a parade in Beijing, capital of China, September 3. China holds commemorative activities, including a grand military parade, to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. *Wang Dingchang*





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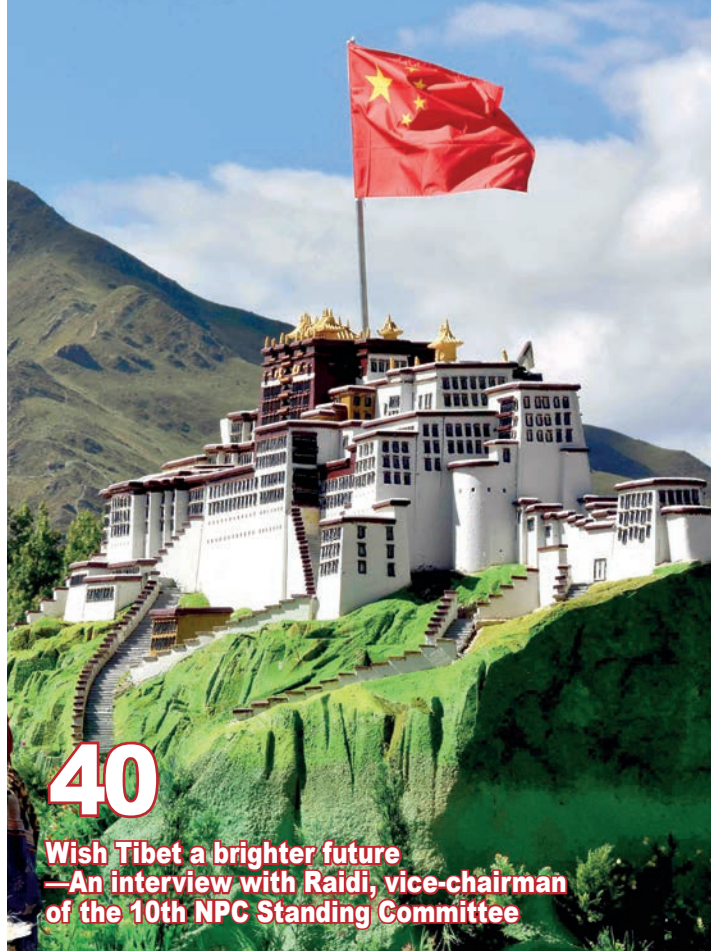




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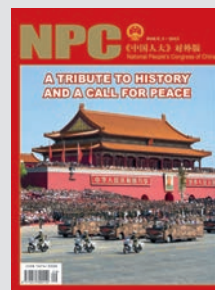
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COVER: Formations of veterans in vehicles march through the Tian'anmen Square during the military parade marking the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in Beijing on September 3. *CFP*



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Address at the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War

Xi Jinping
September 3, 2015

All my countrymen and women,
Your Excellencies heads of State and government and representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations,

Distinguished guests,
All officers and soldiers participating in the parade,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Comrades and friends,

Today is a day that will forever be etched in the memory of people all over the world. Seventy years ago today, the Chinese people, having fought tenaciously for 14 years, won the great victory of their War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, marking the full victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. On that day, the world was once again blessed by the sunshine of peace.

On this occasion, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the State Council, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the Central Military Commission, I pay high tribute to all the veterans, comrades, patriots and officers in China who took part in the War of Resistance and all the Chinese at home and abroad who contributed significantly to the victory of the War. I extend heartfelt gratitude to foreign governments and friends who supported and assisted the Chinese people in resisting aggression. I also warmly welcome all the foreign guests and representatives of the armed forces of foreign countries present today.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Comrades and friends,

The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War were a decisive battle between justice and evil, between light and darkness, and between progress and reaction. In that devastating war, the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression started the earliest and lasted the longest. In de-

fiance of aggression, the unyielding Chinese people fought gallantly and finally won total victory against the Japanese militarist aggressors, thus preserving China's 5,000-year-old civilization and upholding the cause of peace of mankind. This remarkable feat made by the Chinese nation was rare in the history of war.

The victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression is the first complete victory won by China in its resistance against foreign aggression in modern times. This great triumph crushed the plot of the Japanese militarists to colonize and enslave China and put an end to China's national humiliation of suffering successive defeats at the hands of foreign aggressors in modern times. This great triumph re-established China as a major country in the world and won the Chinese people respect of all peace-loving people around the world. This great triumph opened up bright prospects for the great renewal of the Chinese nation and set our ancient country on a new journey after gaining rebirth.

During the war, with huge national sacrifice, the Chinese people held ground in the main theater in the East of the World Anti-Fascist War, thus making major contribution to its victory. In their war against Japanese aggression, the Chinese people received extensive support from the international community. The Chinese people will always remember what the people of other countries did for the victory of their War of Resistance.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Comrades and friends,

The experience of war makes people value peace all the more. The aim of our commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War is to bear history in mind, honor all those who laid down their lives, cherish peace and open up the future.

Ravaging through Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania, that



President Xi Jinping delivers a speech at the Tian'anmen Rostrum before the parade marking the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War on September 3. *Xie Huanchi*



President Xi Jinping reviews troops participating in the military parade on September 3. *Li Xueren*

war inflicted over 100 million military and civilian casualties. China suffered over 35 million casualties and the Soviet Union lost more than 27 million lives. The best way to honor the heroes who gave their lives to uphold freedom, justice and peace and mourn the loss of innocent lives brutally taken during the war is to make sure that this historical tragedy will never repeat itself.

War is like a mirror. Looking at it helps us better appreciate the value of peace. Today, peace and development have become the prevailing trend, but the world is far from tranquil. War is the sword of Damocles that still hangs over mankind. We must learn the lessons of history and dedicate ourselves to peace.

In the interest of peace, we need to foster a keen sense of a global community of shared future. Prejudice, discrimination, hatred and war can only cause disaster and suffering, while mutual respect, equality, peaceful development and common prosperity represent the right path to take. All countries should jointly uphold the international order and system underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, build a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation and advance the noble cause of global peace and development.

In the interest of peace, China will remain committed to peaceful development. We Chinese love peace. No matter how much stronger it may become, China will never seek hegemony or expansion. It will never inflict its past suffering on any other nation. The Chinese people are resolved to pursue friendly relations with all other countries, uphold the outcomes of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against

Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, and make greater contribution to mankind.

The People's Liberation Army of China is the people's army. All its officers, men and women must bear in mind their responsibility of serving the people whole-heartedly, faithfully fulfill the sacred duty of protecting the nation's security and people's well-being, and carry out the noble mission of upholding world peace. Here, I announce that China will cut the number of its troops by 300,000.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Comrades and friends,

As an ancient Chinese saying goes, "After making a good start, we should ensure that the cause achieves fruition." The great renewal of the Chinese nation requires the dedicated efforts of one generation after another. Having created a splendid civilization of over 5,000 years, the Chinese nation will certainly usher in an even brighter future.

Going forward, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, we, people of all ethnicities across the country, should take Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development as our guide to action. We should follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, pursue the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, promote patriotism and the great spirit of resisting aggression and forge ahead as one to reach our goals.

Let us bear in mind the great truth of history: Justice will prevail! Peace will prevail! The people will prevail! ■

66 years of V-day commemorations

By Zhang Wei

On the morning of September 3, China organized a grand commemoration to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in Beijing. It is the first time that the commemoration was held in Tian'anmen Square, together with a grand military parade. The large scale of the commemoration indicates the significance of event.

A total of six national V-day commemorations have been held since 1949, to mark the 6th, 20th, 40th, 50th, 60th and 70th victory anniversaries, which varied greatly in arrangements and scales.

The Great Hall of the People witnesses four commemorations

Commemorating activities held in 1951, 1965, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015, had different names. The first two were called celebrations of the Victory of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression; The following four were called commemorations, which also gave equal importance to the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War.

On August 13, 1951, the Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government announced September 3 Victory Day of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The first celebration was held on September 2 at the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, attracting more than 5,000 attendees. A total of four commemorations were held on September 3 at the Great Hall of the People.

Last February, China's top legislature approved September 3 to be Victory Day of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. This year was the first time that the commemoration was held in Tian'anmen Square with a record of 55,000 participants attending the event.

Standing in silent tribute started in 1985

Important speeches by high-ranking officials were delivered on the occasions of commemorations. Starting from 1995, the keynote speech was addressed by the top leaders of the Party as well as of the State.

The year of 1985 marked the first commemoration instead of celebration of the V-day, during which Peng Zhen, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, suggested a minute of silence in standing to honor those who had sacrificed their lives in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

Ten years later, flower baskets were first laid to the Monument to the People's Heroes during the commemorations. On September 3, 1995, Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Li Ruihuan, Zhu Rongji, Liu Huaqing, Hu Jintao, Rong Yiren, and more than 10,000 people from all walks of life offered flower baskets to the monument in Tian'anmen Square. All the seven members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee attended the ceremony. During the commemoration

held in the afternoon, all attendees expressed respect to nearly 100 veterans standing on the rostrum. This was the unique arrangement in all six commemorations.

On September 3, 2005, all nine members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao, Jia Qinglin, Zeng Qinghong, Huang Ju, Wu Guanzheng, Li Changchun and Luo Gan offered flower baskets to the monument, also with over 10,000 people attending the event. Hu Jintao, who was the Chinese president, awarded the 60th anniversary honorary medals to 10 representatives of veterans, patriots, and the generals during the war against Japanese aggression.

Party and State leaders attended commemorations since 1985

On September 3, 2015, seven members of the the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, as well as former leaders Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Li Ruihuan, Wu Bangguo, Wen Jiabao and Jia Qinglin, present in the commemoration. The event was hosted by Premier Li Keqiang and President Xi Jinping made an important speech. The commemoration was joined by 65 heads of State and government or their senior representatives, leaders of international organizations including the UN, and former State leaders, as well as heads of foreign military delegations from 30 countries. It was the first time for such kind of commemoration.

One thing worth mentioning is that Chairman Mao Zedong did not attend such commemorations, and Deng Xiaoping only appeared once in 1965. All the top leaders of the Party and the State began to attend the events since 1985.

In 1985, Hu Yaobang, then general secretary of the CPC Central Committee attended the commemoration, the first time since 1949. Other attendees included Peng Zhen, Wan Li, Xi Zhongxun, Yang Shangkun, Hu Qiaomu, Qiao Shi and Bo Yibo. Families of Kuomintang generals who were killed during the war, veterans and martyrs as well as foreign diplomats were also invited. The commemoration was hosted by Xu Deheng, a vice-chairman of the NPC Standing Committee.

The commemoration in 1995 was of larger specification compared to previous ones, attended by all the seven members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and hosted by Premier Li Peng. President Jiang Zemin delivered a speech, the first time of its kind.

In 2005, all the nine members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee as well as former leaders, attended the commemoration. The then NPC Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo hosted the commemoration and then President Hu Jintao delivered a speech. A total of 10 representatives of veterans sat in the first row of the rostrum. It was the first commemoration held after the return of Hong Kong and Macao to the motherland, so Donald Tsang, then chief executive of Hong Kong SAR, and Edmund Ho Hau wah, then chief executive of Macao SAR also attended the event. (Beijing Youth Daily)

A tribute to history and a call for peace

—In commemoration of the victory won 70 years ago

By Yin Pumin

With a total of 12,000 troops and over 500 pieces of armaments marching through the Tian'anmen Square and nearly 200 military aircraft roaring across the sky, China concluded its massive military parade commemorating the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in Beijing on September 3.

It was the perfect opportunity to show the world how far the country has come since a costly victory won seven decades ago, in addition to how far the country is willing to go to preserve its hard-won peace and prosperity.

In his speech at the commemoration, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that the parade is a tribute to history and a call for peace honoring the Chinese who perished and those who contributed to victory in the deadly war against Japanese aggression.

"The experience of war makes people value peace all the more. The aim of our commemoration is to bear history in mind, to honor all those who laid down their lives, to cherish peace and to open up the future," said Xi, also chairman of the Central Military Commission and General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee.

Aircraft phalanxes attend the military parade in Beijing on September 3. *Li He*

International gathering

The participation of countries from Oriental, European and Pacific battlefields during World War II (WWII) made the military parade in China a major international occasion.

Along with Xi, 23 heads of State, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Republic of Korea President Park Geun Hye, watched the parade. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder were also present.

Attendees also included government representatives and heads of international organizations, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

In addition, more than 100 foreign VIPs or relatives of wartime heroes attended the event, including relatives of Canadian doctor Norman Bethune, who achieved fame in China owing to his service as a battlefield surgeon in the CPC-led Eighth Route Army, Japanese veterans who served in same army, and veterans of the Flying Tigers, the nickname given to the American Volunteer Group, the air corps that fought alongside the Chinese during WWII.

"The invitation of WWII veterans from other countries is a way for China to extend its solemn gratitude and tribute," said Peng Guangqian, deputy secretary-general of the Council for National Security Policy Studies, a research institution based in Beijing.

Meanwhile, nearly 1,000 troops from 17 countries also participated in the parade. It was the first time that foreign troops had been invited to participate in such an event.

Foreign formations were from Belarus, Cuba, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Pakistan, Serbia, Tajikistan and Russia.

Delegations from six other countries, namely Afghanistan, Cambodia, Fiji, Laos, Vanuatu and Venezuela, also marched in the parade.

The troops joining the parade came from Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania and Latin America, covering all the main battlefields of the war.

All of the participant countries suffered greatly in the conflict. Among them, Egypt, Russia and some members of the Commonwealth of Independent States carried on bitter struggles against the Axis troops and suffered tremendous



President Xi Jinping awards medals to Chinese and foreign veterans and civilians who fought for China in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 2. *Lan Hongguang*

It was the first time that foreign troops had been invited to participate in such an event.

casualties and losses.

Experts and politicians believe that the presence of international representatives indicates universal acknowledgment of China's long-ignored contribution to the Asian battlefield during WWII, as well as China's rising global status.

Ban said prior to his Beijing trip that the international community recognizes China's contribution and sacrifices in WWII, and that it is very important now for the world to learn from past lessons and look forward to the future in order to build a better world.

A number of WWII allied countries, including the United



President Xi Jinping presents commemorative medals to Chinese and foreign veterans and civilians who fought for China in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on September 2. *Pang Xinglei*



President Xi Jinping (11th L) and his wife Peng Liyuan (11th R) pose for a group photo with dignitaries of foreign countries and international organizations and their spouses during the commemoration to mark the 70th anniversary of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in Beijing on September 3. *Ouyang Kaiyu*

Kingdom, the United States and France, sent their government and diplomatic representatives to the event.

Qiao Liang, a professor with the National Defense University of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), said the participation of foreign armies will remind people that WWII victory was won through the efforts and sacrifice of many countries.

"The Chinese people will always remember what the people of other countries did for the victory of the war of resistance," Xi said in his speech.

According to Xi, the best way to honor the heroes who gave their lives to uphold freedom, justice and peace and to mourn the loss of innocent lives brutally taken during the war is to make sure that this historical tragedy will never repeat itself.

"Seven decades ago, peace-loving countries across the world joined forces in the fight against fascism and achieved victory. Today, it also needs the joint efforts of all people to safeguard justice and peace," Qiao said.

Qu Rui, deputy chief of the Operations Department of the General Staff Headquarters of the PLA, said that victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression was not only a victory for the Chinese people, but also for people around the world.

"The participation of foreign formations, representative teams and military delegations manifests the international nature of the war. We firmly believe that the commemoration activities will cement trust between the PLA and foreign troops participating in the parade," he said.

Zhao Qizheng, former minister of the State Council Information Office, said that cooperation between China and

'The Chinese people will always remember what the people of other countries did for the victory of the war of resistance,' said Xi Jinping.

other countries in WWII has long been remembered. "With new cooperation in process, we, the global family, can create a brighter future together," he said.

In a written interview with Xinhua News Agency, Schröder said China made a very important contribution to the victory in WWII, which is seldom known to Europeans.

"When people in Europe talk about WWII, the main focus is usually on their own continent. Few people there know specifics about how WWII also raged in Asia and how fascism also brought terrible suffering to the Asian people," Schröder said.

China was the first country in the world to fight against fascist forces when Japanese troops began their invasion of northeast China on September 18, 1931.

Japan initiated full-scale aggression in China in 1937. By the end of WWII in 1945, more than 35 million Chinese soldiers and civilians had been killed or wounded.

Japan signed its formal WWII surrender on September 2, 1945, and China celebrated its victory the following day.

"The victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression is the first complete victory won by China in its resistance against foreign aggression in mod-

ern times,” Xi said in his speech.

“This great triumph opened up bright prospects for the great renewal of the Chinese nation and set our ancient country on a new journey after gaining rebirth,” Xi said.

“I think commemorative events have their place,” said Odd Arne Westad, ST Lee Professor of U.S.-Asia Relations at Harvard University.

“If the end of WWII teaches us anything, it is that we have to avoid war in the future. In all wars, there are no winners, only losers,” he said.

The military issue

During the military parade, China displayed a host of new armaments ranging from intercontinental ballistic missiles to medium-long range bomber aircraft.

Twenty-seven phalanxes with Chinese-made main battle armaments including the DF-5B, an intercontinental strategic missile designed to carry nuclear warheads, and the DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile described by some media as the “carrier killer,” paraded through the Tian’anmen Square as nearly 200 aircraft including the H-6K medium-long range bombers and carrier-based J-15 fighter jets flew overhead.

Eighty-four percent of the 500 pieces of equipment of over 40 types on show were being displayed in public for the first time.

“The new domestically produced weaponry shown in the parade demonstrates the military’s modernization and innovation in China,” said Ge Lide, an expert on military equipment with the National Defense University of the PLA.

China has held more than a dozen military parades on the National Day to mark the country’s founding on October 1, 1949. It has typically unveiled its most advanced weapon systems during the parades.

Ge said China’s military parades have provided great opportunities to showcase development in weaponry and boost military morale.

The armaments displayed during China’s first parade in 1949 were all from other countries and had previously been used, including a Japanese tank captured by the Chinese army in 1945.

Yin Zhuo, director of the Information Technology Commission of the PLA Navy, said the weapons indicate that the Chinese military is moving from a phase of mechanization toward information technology.

Many experts believe that the most emphatic point the parade made is that China is committed to building a strong army as its defensive military policy in nature has remained unchanged.

Most of the Chinese aircraft displayed in the parade were multiple-role models that focus on air control.

The military parade in 1949 saw only 17 aircrafts. Last year, Xi urged accelerating

development of military equipment systems to help build a strong army.

In 1937, when Japan began its full-scale invasion of China, the number of aircraft that the then weak Chinese air force possessed constituted only one seventh that of its formidable Japanese counterpart. Most of the Chinese warplanes were outdated or had been imported from the West.

Qiao with the National Defense University of the PLA said that China learned a tough lesson during WWII: Without a strong army, a country is prone to predation; Without the capacity to stem war, historical tragedies are doomed to happen again.

“I’m happy China today has so many advantageous weapons. The situation makes our citizens feel safer,” said Yang Suming, an officer with the Beijing General Fire Team who took part in the military parade.

“China’s armaments are proportional to its level of economic development and its security requirements. Its military strategy will remain active defense,” said Chen Zhou, director of the National Defense Policy Research Center of the Academy of Military Sciences of the PLA.

In his speech, Xi said China will remain committed to peaceful development. “We Chinese love peace. No matter how much stronger it may become, China will never seek hegemony or expansion. It will never inflict its past suffering on any other nation,” Xi said.

Xi also pledged that China will cut the number of its troops by 300,000 and seek to cultivate the sense of “a community of shared future,” a phrase intended to express how countries might benefit from attempting to help one another in the process of pursuing their own individual development. (Beijing Review) ■



Representatives from various countries attend the parade. Wu Xiaoling



↑ National flag-raising ceremony is held during the commemoration on September 3. *Guo Chen*



↑ A huge military band and singers perform during the parade. *Huang Jingwen*



↓ Parade guards step in place. *Guo Cheng*



↑ China holds commemoration including a grand military parade, to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. *Yang Lei*

↓ Surface-to-air missiles attend the parade in Beijing on September 3. *Pang Xinglei*





↑ China holds commemoration including a grand military parade, to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. *Zha Chunming*

↓ Troops from Russia march through Tian'anmen Square as part of the parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the world's victory against fascism. *Li Ga*



↓ Soldiers from Pakistan *Liu Xiao*



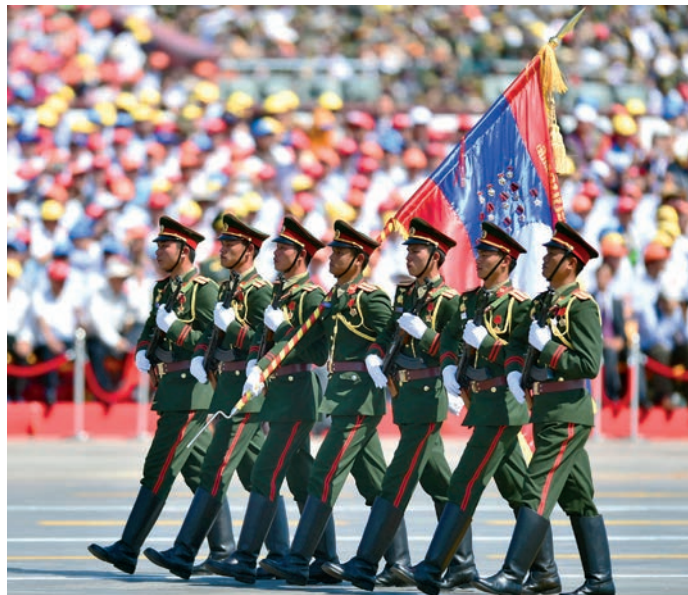


↑ Military helicopters perform during the military parade on September 3. *Lu Bingguang*

↓ The phalanx of Mongolia *Gao Jianjun*



↓ Laotian soldiers *Yang Qing*





Veterans, with medals on their uniforms, salute as their vehicles march through the Tian'anmen Square during the military parade on September 3. *Chen Fei*

A girl waves the Chinese national flag when attending the grand military parade. *Wang Jianwei*



The Great Hall of the People *Ma Ning*





President Xi Jinping (C, front), his wife Peng Liyuan (R, front), distinguished guests and other Chinese leaders attend a reception to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, in Beijing, capital of China, September 3. *Liu Weibing*

An evening gala is held in Beijing on September 3, to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

Lan Hongguang

Heeding the voice of the people and building a world of greater justice and democracy

Zhang Dejiang

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China
At the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament
New York, August 31, 2015



Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

It is my distinct honor to join colleagues from all over the world here in New York on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. We have a weighty responsibility to deliberate on major issues concerning world peace and development, with a view to advancing the cause of international democracy and justice.

Fifteen years ago, leaders of world parliaments gathered for the first time in the UN Headquarters with a solemn pledge to enhance international cooperation among parliaments, instill greater democracy into international decision-making and cooperation, find common solutions to the major challenges confronting the international community, and join hands in realizing the vision of the UN Charter.

Fifteen years on, the world has experienced profound and complex changes. The trend towards peace, development and win-win cooperation has grown stronger. Yet humanity still faces many difficult challenges on the road of development. The world economy has entered a period of deep adjustment. Local conflicts and turbulences keep flaring up. Non-traditional security risks and other global challenges are on the rise. Inequality and injustice remains a prominent issue in international relations.

The theme of this conference, "Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want", reflects the common aspiration of

the people around the world. The parliaments of all countries need to work together on the basis of consensus to build a world with greater justice and democracy and create better conditions for lasting peace and sustainable development. In this connection, I wish to share with you the following observations:

First, we should uphold equality and promote rule of law. Countries, irrespective of their size, strength and wealth, are all equal members of the international community. They should abide by the international law and universally recognized basic norms governing international relations, respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs, seek peaceful settlement of differences and disputes through dialogue and consultation, promote democracy in international relations, and uphold international equality and justice. As the legislative body, parliaments should observe, defend and promote the international law and basic norms governing international relations, and engage in equal-footed dialogue and democratic consultation. There should be no space for the "Law of the Jungle" in the 21st century.

Second, we should work for win-win outcomes through cooperation. In today's world, countries are interdependent and interconnected. No country can stand immune from global challenges or deal with them on their own. They should abandon zero-sum thinking, embrace a new approach of win-win cooperation, and together build a community of shared future. They should accommodate the interests of others while pursuing their own interests and promote the common development of all countries while seeking their own development. Parliaments should fulfill their duties by providing strong legal guarantee for building a more equitable and balanced new type of global development partnership and promoting mutually-beneficial cooperation at all levels and in all areas.

Third, we should promote inclusive development and mutual learning. The world civilizations are colorful and diversified. Every country is unique in its national condition, history, culture, development path and social system. Countries should respect the diversity in world civilizations and development paths, respect the right of the people of all countries to independently choose their development path and social system, and encourage different civilizations and countries with different social systems to learn from each other and draw on each other's strengths for common progress. The parliaments of all countries should strengthen the sharing of experience in governance, and play an active role in promoting people-to-people friendship and exchanges.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. History is the best textbook. What happened in the past, if not forgotten, can serve as a guide for the future. In three days' time, China, as the main theater of the World Anti-Fascist War in the East, will hold celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. By remembering the past and honoring the heroes, we can safeguard human justice and conscience, and demonstrate to the world the firm resolve of the Chinese people to cherish peace and create a better future.

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the oldest, largest and most influential international organization of parliaments. Over the years, the IPU has made tremendous efforts to uphold world peace, promote common development and advance democracy in international relations, which is widely recognized and supported. Under the new circumstances, the IPU needs to update its thinking, strengthen its interaction and links with the UN, continue to provide an effective platform for inter-parliamentary exchanges and cooperation, and play a more important role in international affairs.

As an IPU member, China's NPC attaches great importance to the IPU's role and influence in international affairs. We have taken an active part in IPU activities to contribute to its development. I am glad to announce that China will make a donation of US\$1.5 million in cash to the IPU to further support its work. We are also ready to strengthen exchanges and friendly cooperation with national parliaments and regional parliamentary organizations.

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

As the biggest developing country in the world, China has made great strides in its development. This progress has been possible thanks to the consistent pursuit of the Chinese people for a better future and their unremitting efforts to explore the right way forward.

To achieve national strength, rejuvenation and happiness has been the common aspiration of the Chinese people since the modern times and the greatest dream of the Chinese nation. To realize this dream, people of all ethnicities in China have made tireless efforts under the leadership of the Communist Party of China to turn the impoverished, backward and old China into an increasingly prosperous and strong country of today. Over the past three decades and more since reform and opening-up, China has achieved a remarkable growth rate of 9.7 percent annually on average. Between 1978 and 2014, China's GDP rose from US\$216.8 billion to over US\$10 trillion, making China the second largest economy in the world. The per capita income of rural and urban residents grew by 7.6 percent and 7.4 percent per year in real terms and people's lives have been constantly improved. The Chinese people have full confidence in the prospects of development and are working hard to implement the strategic plan of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, deepening reform, promoting rule of law and strengthening Party discipline in an all-round way, to meet the two centenary goals and realize the Chinese Dream of national renewal.

The future of a country is decided by the development path it pursues. After many decades of experiment and practice, the Chinese people have fostered a development path and system that suit China's national conditions and reflect distinctive Chinese features. China's national systems and institutions make it possible for people to enjoy more extensive rights and freedoms, be masters of their own lives and take a full part in the governance of the country and society. These systems and institutions can effectively regulate political relations, facilitate dynamic relations among political parties, ethnic groups, religions, social sectors and between people living in China's mainland and overseas Chinese. They are conducive to strengthening national cohesion and cultivating political stability and unity. They can help focus our attention and resources on major programs, effectively promote the development of social productivity, push forward the modernization drive and improve people's livelihood. They provide a strong foundation for upholding national independence, sovereignty, security and development interests and safeguarding the well-being of the Chinese people and nation. The Chinese people know full well how difficult it has been to find the right path. We will firmly follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and create a brighter future of our nation.

China cannot develop in isolation from the world and the world also needs China for its development. China is committed to the path of peaceful development and the independent foreign policy of peace and strives to develop itself in a peaceful international environment and maintain and promote world peace through its own development. This will benefit not only the Chinese people, but also people of the whole world. China follows a balanced approach between upholding justice and pursuing its own interests and honors good faith, friendship and moral principles. It is not only committed to its own development, but is also serious about fulfilling its international responsibilities. It has made important contribution to safeguarding the interests of developing countries and helping realize the Millennium Development Goals. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 has fully shown China's dedication to peaceful development and win-win cooperation, and offered a new approach and opportunities for stronger cooperation under the principles of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. The Chinese people sincerely hope to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and shared prosperity with people of other countries.

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

It is the common aspiration of people of all countries to let peace prevail over war, development over poverty, and cooperation over confrontation. To listen to their call and meet their expectations is the common responsibilities of parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries. China's NPC is ready to work with parliaments of other countries and international parliamentary organizations to strengthen cooperation in responding to global challenges and make new contribution to building a better world. We owe this to our peoples.

Thank you. ■



Zhang Dejiang (L), chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, meets with United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the UN headquarters in New York, the United States, August 31. Ju Peng

China pledges support for UN, active role in multilateral mechanisms

China's top legislator Zhang Dejiang pledged support for the United Nations and an active role in multilateral mechanisms while meeting UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The UN has played an irreplaceable role in international affairs in the 70 years since its establishment, Zhang said while meeting Ban on the sidelines of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

China attaches great importance to the UN, and it will work hard to promote peace and the common development of all countries and play a positive role in multilateral mechanisms, said Zhang, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC).

Commemorative events to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II will be held in Beijing on September 3 to shed light on history, and honor the martyrs in a bid to promote peace and work for a better future, he said.

The spirit embodied by the events is in line with UN norms and principles, Zhang said.

Ban praised China's important roles in regional and international affairs, and spoke highly of the NPC, which has made big achievements in promoting gender equality and ensuring women's rights.

For his part, Ban said he looked forward to attending the commemorative events in Beijing on September 3.

In a recent interview, Ban said the international commu-

nity recognizes China's contribution and sacrifice in World War II.

"China's contribution and sacrifice during the Second World War is very much recognized," Ban said, adding that China's sufferings are appreciated and that people around the world sympathize with the country.

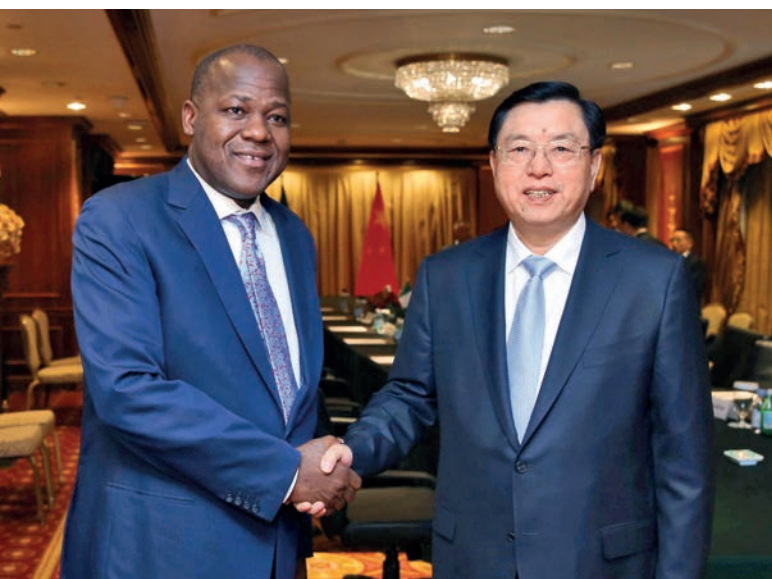
The UN chief will join 30 heads of State, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and President of Republic of Korea Park Geun-hye, in attending the upcoming celebrations of the victory in the Anti-Japanese War.

China, which won the war as the major eastern battlefield of WWII, will stage a grand military parade to mark the anniversary.

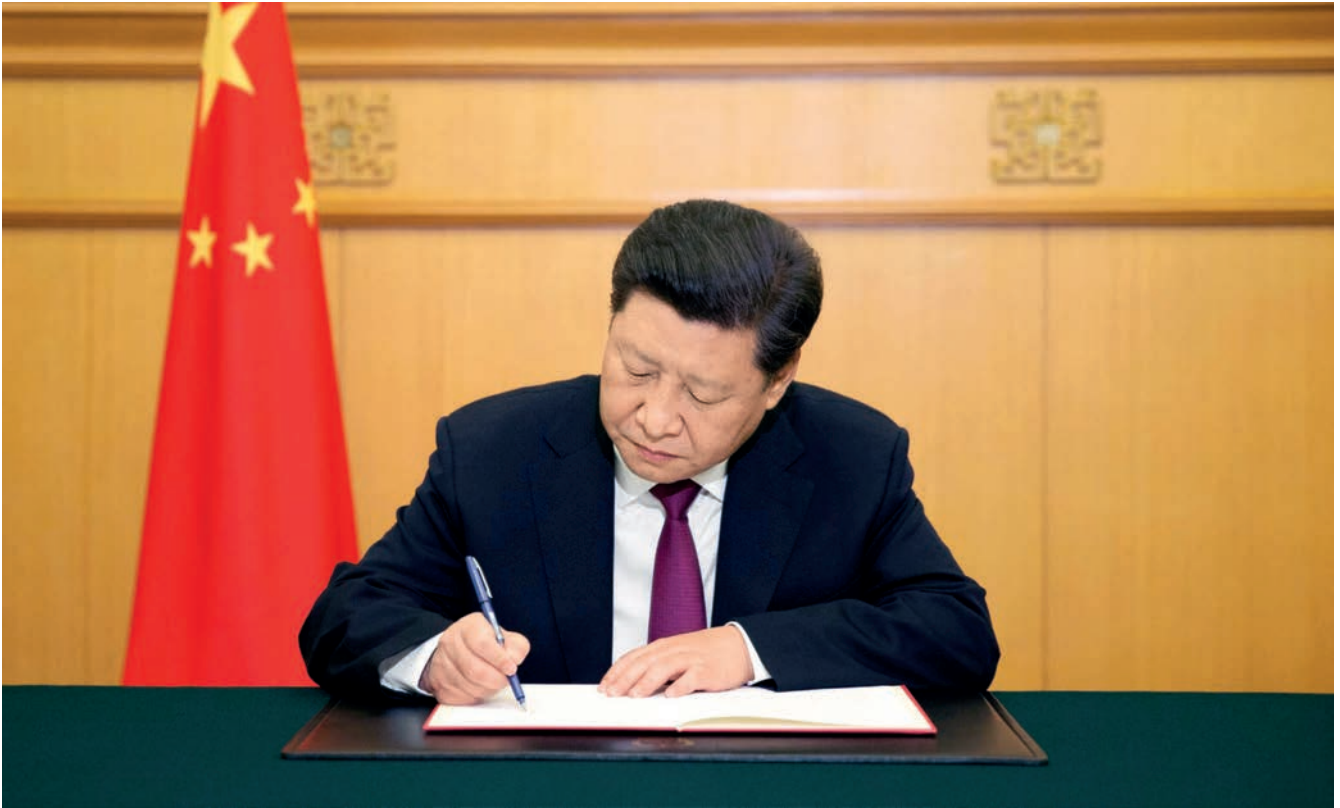
"It's important to look to the past, what kinds of lessons we have been learning, and how we can move ahead to a brighter future based on the lessons learned," Ban said.

Zhang also met with Speaker of the Finnish Parliament Maria Lohela, Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives Yakubu Dogara, National Assembly Chairman of Vietnam Nguyen Sinh Hung and Israeli Parliament Speaker Yuli Edelstein on August 30 and on August 31.

Zhang exchanged views with them on efforts to push forward pragmatic cooperation and parliamentary exchanges between China and their countries. (Xinhua) ■



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1. Zhang Dejiang (R) meets with Finland's Speaker of the Parliament Maria Lohela who came to attend the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, in New York, the United States, August 30. *Yao Dawei*
 2. Zhang Dejiang (R) meets with Nguyen Sinh Hung, president of the National Assembly of Vietnam, who came to attend the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, in New York, the United States, August 31. *Ju Peng*
 3. Zhang Dejiang (R) meets with Yakubu Dogara, speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, who came to attend the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, in New York, the United States, August 30. *Yao Dawei*
 4. Zhang Dejiang (R) meets with Yuli Edelstein, speaker of Israel's Knesset (parliament), who came to attend the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, in New York, the United States, August 31. *Ju Peng*
 5. Photo taken on August 31 shows the opening of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament at the United Nations headquarters in New York, United States. *Li Muzi*



The Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC) adopted a resolution to grant a special pardon to four categories of prisoners who are not deemed a threat to society and who were sentenced before January 1, 2015, including criminals who fought in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the civil war against the Kuomintang. President Xi Jinping signs the resolution in Beijing on August 29. *Lan Hongguang*

A special pardon granted to four categories of prisoners for WWII anniversary

China's top legislature has taken a decision on special pardon which will see thousands of war veterans as well as very old, young or infirm prisoners granted official pardons, in a move marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II on September 3.

The measure, promulgated by President Xi Jinping on August 29, comes 40 years after China granted an amnesty to war criminals in 1975, and 56 years after it granted its first pardon to non-war criminals in 1959.

This is the eighth amnesty since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Four categories of prisoners who are not deemed a threat to society and who were sentenced before January 1, 2015, will be considered:

1) Criminals who fought in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the civil war against the Kuomintang (KMT).

2) Criminals who participated in wars to safeguard national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity after 1949, with the exception of those found guilty of serious crimes including embezzlement and bribe-taking, terrorism and organized crime, as well repeat offenders.

3) Criminals who are 75 or above, and those with physical disabilities who are unable to care for themselves.

4) Those who committed crimes while under the age of 18 and received a maximum sentence of three years in prison, or who have less than a year of their prison term to serve, with the exception of those convicted of homicide, rape, terrorism or narcotics offences.

The National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee reviewed a draft of the resolution during a bimonthly session that started on August 24. The lawmakers voted on it on August 29.

Li Shishi, chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission

of the NPC Standing Committee, made clear while briefing the session that the amnesty is designed to exclude people guilty of embezzlement and bribe-taking, as China continues a campaign against official corruption.

Several thousand prisoners will qualify

Judicial authorities have been preparing for the amnesty since May and estimate there are “several thousand qualified prisoners,” with the oldest aged 95.

All pardoned prisoners will be released by the end of this year, said Prof. Chu Huaizhi of Peking University, one of the government’s consultants on the amnesty.

“For the aged who are unable to care for themselves, the government will offer help for their life out of prison,” he said.

The exact number of pardoned prisoners will not be known until provincial courts and prisons complete all the amnesty rulings later this year, Chu said, stressing how complicated their decisions will be.

Li urged strict and prudent selection of criminals fit for the amnesty.

Chu said all prisoners who fought in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the civil war will be more than 80 years old. Their number is very small and they do not pose a threat to society, so they should all be granted amnesty.

This amnesty reflects China’s tradition of respecting the elderly and caring for the young, and it is in line with the Criminal Law, which was amended in 2011 to allow leniency in the punishment of the aged, according to the professor.

Gao Mingxuan, honorary president of the China Criminal Law Research Society, said the amnesty “shows respect for human rights.”

Great political, legal significance

Li said amnesties are a humanitarian practice internationally recognized but this one has “great political and legal significance” due to its scheduling for the war anniversary.

Gao said the amnesty, along with the military parade and other events marking the anniversary on September 3, will remind people to “remember history, oppose war and cherish peace.”

Granting amnesty to war veterans is an apt recognition of their contributions to the conflicts, and it shows China’s resolution to safeguard world peace, according to Chu.

Gao noted other amnesties granted on the occasion of national festivities or big political occasions in other countries, including Germany’s Christmas amnesty, the Republic of Korea Liberation Day amnesty and the Thai king’s birthday amnesty.

Law experts and prison managers consulted by the government ahead of China’s amnesty thoroughly researched these international equivalents, he said.

To mark the 70th anniversary of its independence from France, Vietnam has pardoned more than 18,000 prisoners, who will be released from August 31.

Gao said the amnesty also shows China’s criminal policy of “combining punishment with leniency” and that it would help promote rule of law.

In his briefing, Li told lawmakers the act would show the government and country’s confidence in its system of governance and give China an “open, democratic, civilized and legal” image.

Past Chinese amnesties included those granted to KMT war criminals as well as Puyi, the last Qing emperor who collaborated with the invading Japanese during the 1930s and 40s.

China’s Constitution specifies the process by which an amnesty must be granted. The NPC Standing Committee decides to issue one, the president promulgates the order, the courts handle respective cases, the procuratorates supervise the process and the police enforce the order.

Gao expressed hope that the process can be perfected 40 years since it was last applied.

“Released criminals will be grateful to society” and the move will alleviate pressure on prisons and save judicial resources, he said. (Xinhua) ■



A special pardon resolution is voted and passed by lawmakers at the end of a bimonthly session of the NPC Standing Committee in Beijing on August 29. Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, presides over the closing meeting. Liu Weibing

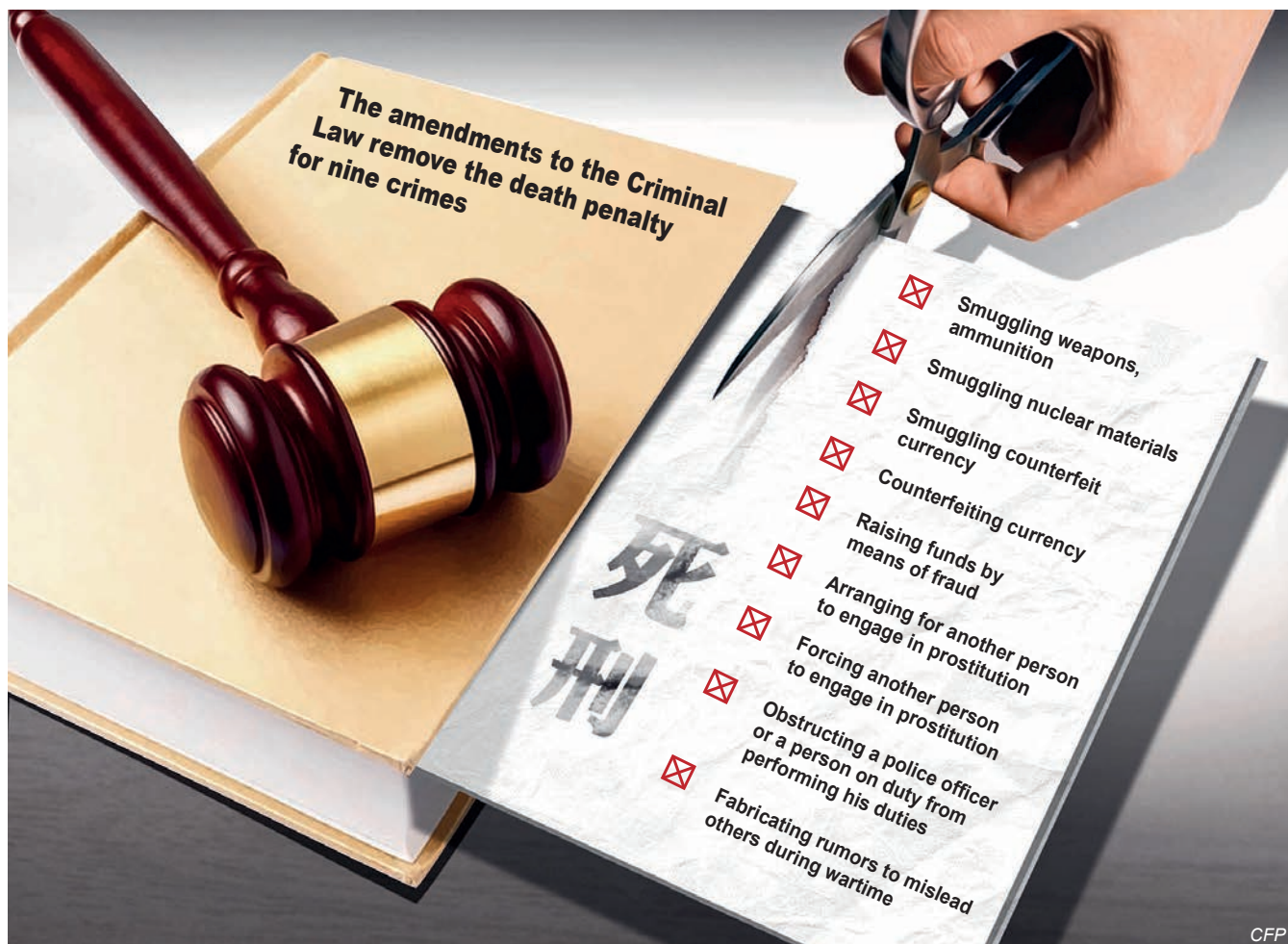
Amendments to Criminal Law remove death for nine crimes

After three rounds of deliberations, the 16th session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee approved the amendments to the Criminal Law in Beijing on August 29, with 153 votes of yes, 2 votes of no and 4 abstentions.

The amendments repeal nine crimes punishable for death penalty, to address some hot social issues. Through removing the crime of sex with underage prostitutes and reclassified it as rape, enhancing punishment to human traffickers of and protecting rights of the elderly, children and women. More-

over, the revised law stipulates tougher punishment to terrorists and extremists, and to corrupt officials.

“It is a major revision to the Criminal Law, in line with the requirements of the third and fourth plenums of the 18th CPC Central Committee and the demand of judiciary reform. The legislative process sums up the past judicial practice and echoes to social concerns,” according to Lang Sheng, vice-chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, at a press conference after the revised law was adopted.





The 16th session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) adopts amendments to the Criminal Law on August 29. Liu Weibing

9 crimes punishable for death repealed

Further reform of death penalty remains the major task. To better protect human rights and conform to the international practice, the top legislature has been adhering to the concept of "applying fewer death penalty in a more cautious way" in the legislation of Criminal Law.

As a result, the amendments remove nine crimes for death penalty, such as smuggling weapons, ammunition, nuclear materials or counterfeit currency; counterfeiting currency; raising funds by means of fraud; arranging for or forcing another person to engage in prostitution; obstructing a police officer or a person on duty from performing his duties; and fabricating rumors to mislead others during wartime.

Looking back, there were 71 crimes subject to death penalty before 1997. The Criminal Law adopted in 1997 stipulated 68 crimes for death penalty. A most significant reform happened in 2011 when the 8th revision to the Criminal Law repealed 13 economy-related non-violent crimes punishable for death.

Lang said that China takes a strict and prudent attitude toward death penalty and each revision reflects the demand of social progress as well as the changes of crime situations. He said that reducing death penalty crimes step by step is the direction of China's criminal law legislation.

Meanwhile, some people have expressed their concern that the removal of some death penalty crimes may lead to indulgence of criminals and disturb social order.

"Those death penalty crimes repealed are rarely committed in recent years, some of which are even never applied," Lang noted. In the amending process, the legislature has listened to opinions from all sectors and checked out a great deal of criminal cases. The removal of those death penalty crimes will be carried out in a very prudent way.

The revised Criminal Law aims to better safeguard human rights and people's daily life.

"In case the situation becomes deteriorated, other provision of the Criminal Law shall be applied. For example, though the death penalty for crime of smuggling weapons and ammunition is removed, the death penalty for the crimes such as illegally manufacturing, buying and selling, transporting and storing guns, ammunition and explosives remains," noted Lang.

Protection of women and children

The revised Criminal Law aims to better safeguard human rights and people's daily life. The amendments have positively responded to hot social issues covering a range of fields of personal rights, livelihood and social order.

For example, during the first and second deliberation of the amendments, the draft didn't tackle the crime of sex with underage prostitutes. In the group deliberation, some members of the Standing Committee strongly suggested its removal. Besides, NPC deputy Sun Xiaomei and other deputies, supported by the All-China Women's Federation and other social groups, have delivered a proposal for many years.

The crime of sex with underage prostitutes was first adopted in the Criminal Law of 1997, aiming to better protect underage girls. In recent years however, a number of controversial cases have taken place in this regard.

A most disputable issue is the charge of the crime. In the



“Lost and Love” is a Chinese drama film starring Andy Lau and Jing Boran focusing on child abduction cases and will hopefully attract more public attention to the children going missing in the country every year. Liu Junfeng

traditional culture, rape is a felony while whoring is an offense and the rapist is punishable while in whoring case both parties are despised.

The removal of the crime of sex with underage prostitutes and reclassified it as rape means an enhanced punishment toward the rapists who take the advantage of the loophole in previous Criminal Law.

To combat the increasing smuggling of women and children, the amendments strengthen the punishment of buyers. The original law exempts the behavior of purchasing women or children from legal penalty. Instead, the revised law stipulates that any forms of buying smuggled women or children will be subject to criminal penalty.

The amendment also adds several categories of crimes to fix the loopholes in the law. It stipulates, for example, that the crime of maltreatment is not confined to family members but expanded to caretakers looking after the elderly, children and under-aged. Besides, the victims of indecent assaults are enlarged to male. Both overloading and overspeed when students or ordinary passengers aboard are encompassed into the crime of dangerous driving.

Moreover, new crimes are introduced, such as organizing cheat on tests and fake litigation. Disturbing the order in hospitals intentionally will be punished. “Those clauses are hot topics that have irritated the public. Incorporating them into the new Criminal Law demonstrates the greater importance attached to the protection of all kinds of civil rights”, said lawmakers from the Standing Committee.

Combating terrorism crimes in an all-round way

In recent years a number of terrorist attacks have taken place at home and abroad, for example, the fatal attack in Kunming railway station on March 1 in the year of 2014, the terrorist attacks in France, Tunisia and Kuwait on June

26, and the explosion in Bangkok of Thailand on August 17. Those bloodshed cases indicate how severe the situation of fight against terrorism is.

To deal with these new types of terrorist crimes, the new law makes definitions to terrorism and extremism. It lists more than 10 crimes relating to terrorism, including providing support to terrorist organization or individuals or training for terrorist activities, recruiting or transporting people for terrorist activities, providing equipment for terrorists, contacting overseas terrorist organizations, forcing other people to wear clothes or marks to promote terrorism and extremism, and deliberately refusing to provide evidence of crimes committed by other people.

Meanwhile, the penalties for joining terrorist organizations, receiving training for terrorist activities or trespassing the national border for terrorist activities are toughened. The property penalties are added to crimes of organizing, leading or joining terrorist organizations.

The new amendments cover the whole process of terrorist crimes, ranging from organizing, plotting and enforcing, providing financial support, promoting and instigating terrorism and extremism, and making contacts with overseas terrorist organizations.

Most corrupt officials get no commutation

One of the most eye-catching revisions is the penalty to corrupt officials. According to the amendments, criminals convicted on serious corruption charges who have received a two-year suspended death sentence will face life imprisonment after two years. This aims to “safeguard judicial fairness” and prevent “the most corrupt criminals from serving shorter prison terms through commutation,” according to the top legislature. It targets at officials who illegally seek commutation, parole or non-prison sentences.

Ren Maodong, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, said that the revision gives a strong signal to punish corrupt officials.

Another revision is to abolish the former threshold of bribery, adopting three new categories, ranging from “big amount or in serious case”, “huge amount or in severe case” and “extraordinary huge amount or in especially severe case.”

Zhao Bingzhi, a legal expert, noted that this revision is more rational and scientific and concrete standards could be adopted through judicial interpretations with the social development and changes of crime.

On the one hand, conditions for a lenient penalty to bribery are further restricted and provisions of pecuniary penalties such as fines and forfeit added. On the other hand, it expands the scope of bribery and prescribes that offering bribes to close relatives and others close to government officials is to be punishable.

According to Zhao, bribery to personnel close to government officials may cause more serious harm. The UN Anti-Corruption Convention categorizes the acts of “deal of influence” into crime. As a signatory, China has the obligation to comply with the convention.

Besides, Zhao said that the revision is to meet the urgent requirements of enhanced punishment to corrupt officials and conducive to the rule of law through anti-corruption campaigns. (NPC) ■

State highest honor may be granted to foreigners

By Gui Tiantian

With the aim to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, together with related departments, submitted the National Medal and National Honorary Title Draft Act to the 16th session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee for review on August 24.

The draft makes it clear that the national medal and the national honorary title are the highest honor. President of the People's Republic of China shall grant national medals, national honorary titles and certificates to the qualified personnel following the decision of the NPC Standing Committee.

The draft stipulates that national medals will be granted to recipients who have made great contributions to the socialism course and national defense. Moreover, the national honorary titles will be awarded to those who have made major achievements in the fields of economy, society, national defense, foreign affairs, education, science and technology, culture, health, sports. The concrete honorary titles will be decided by the NPC Standing Committee before issuance.

As to those who have died, Chairman Li Shishi of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee

noted that mainly two types of people are involved. For veteran revolutionaries and outstanding people who had passed away before the promulgation of the law, no medals or titles will be granted. Meanwhile, for those who passed away after the law was adopted, lawmakers agreed that they deserve to receive the national medals and national honorary titles.

When speaking of foreign recipients, Li pointed out that the granting of honorary titles is an important means of promoting foreign relations and consolidating the friendship with related countries and peoples. When drafting the law, related parties reached consensus. Therefore, the draft law stipulates that the national honorary titles can be awarded to foreigners who have made major contributions to the socialist construction, foreign exchanges and world peace.

Experts noted that recipients of the national medals and titles deserve respect and compliment. The draft law stipulates that national record will be established to carry recipients names and their contribution. They will be invited to attend national ceremonies and festive gatherings.

If sentenced into prison for crimes or their honors tarnished, the recipients would be deprived of their honors upon decision made by the NPC Standing Committee. (Beijing Youth Daily) ■



The draft law on national medals and honorary titles is tabled to the 16th session of the 12th National People's Congress Standing Committee for the first reading on August 24. Du Yang

Top legislature tackles elderly care issues

By Hua Chunyu and Yu Xiaojie

On August 27, the 16th session of the 12th NPC Standing Committee heard a report delivered by the General Office of the NPC Standing Committee on its study of major issues concerning the drafting of the 13th Five-Year Plan Outline. Among the issues discussed in the report, care service for the elderly has attracted the attention of lawmakers.

China's population is aging at one of the fastest rates in the world. Statistics indicate that more than 200 million people are over 60 years of age and the aged population will increase by 3 percent yearly. The peak will come within 10-20 years. By the middle of the century, one in three Chinese people will be a senior.

Xin Chunying, deputy secretary-general of the NPC Standing Committee pointed out that elderly care services lag far behind the demand and social participation in the field is inadequate. She also noted that elderly care problem in rural areas is more serious due to lack of basic system and backward management.

The NPC Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee suggested to add elderly care issues into the drafting of the 13th Five-Year Plan. The committee also suggested that the government should play a dominant role in fiscal investment and policy making so as to provide good social services to the home-based elderly care service.

The report emphasized that the society should be fully mobilized to establish long-term social security system, push forward elderly care system in rural areas and improve legal service in this sector.

Deputy Civil Affairs Minister Zou Ming said in an interview that the promotion of home- and community-based elderly care system is expected to be a focal point of the 13th Five-Year Plan.

Reporters found that nurtured by traditional culture, family and kinship serve a bond of the society -- growing old with the companion of their children is mainstream wish for most Chinese people.

"Chinese people value their families very much, which determines that few people want to spend the retired life in a nursing center. Most seniors will depend on the care by families and communities," said Li Jiang, member of the NPC Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee. The difficulties of Chinese elderly care should be solved in a Chinese way.



Elderly spectators exchange experience in making handcrafts during the 4th China International Senior Service Expo on May 6 in Beijing. Pan Xu





Old people from a nursing home in Shunde, Guangdong Province, participate rehearsals to celebrate the 22nd anniversary of the establishment of the institution on September 17. CFP

Experts said that elderly care is a comprehensive system that involves the participation of all sides.

Cai Fang, member of the NPC Standing Committee, said based on domestic conditions and international experiences, the NPC Standing Committee clearly proposed the model of home-based elderly care in 2012 revising the Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly.

It is a very important move. It goes with the new explorations in the international community, Cai said.

“Home, community and institution are complimentary to each other”, Cai said. “Home and community are quite close to each other. Without the support of elderly care services provided by communities, home-based care will become individual old care.”

Speaking of elderly care in the future, Zou said that the aged can enjoy better caring services at home and in communities, lead a healthy, happy and decent life during the 13th Five-Year Plan period thanks to more services provided to the aged people.

Experts said that elderly care is a comprehensive system that involves the participation of all sides. The NPC Internal and Judicial Affairs Committee pointed out in its report that top-level decision making, systematic construction and rule of law are the key factors in developing elderly care service in China. (Xinhua) ■

Volunteers from aged welfare institutions teach senior citizens from Baizhifang community in Beijing know-how on the prevention of tumbling and treatment of acute chest pain on June 25. Jin Liwang



Water pollution control allows no delay

Lawmakers from the 12th NPC Standing Committee gathered at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on August 29 to review the enforcement of the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law.

At 8:30 am, members of the Standing Committee and special committees and officials from governmental departments, who received inquiries of the lawmakers, entered the conference venue.

At 9 am, NPC Standing Committee Chairman Zhang Dejiang, along with other 13 vice chairpersons Li Jianguo, Wang Shengjun, Chen Changzhi, Yan Junqi, Wang Chen, Shen Yueyue, Ji Bingxuan, Zhang Ping, Qiangba Puncog, Arken Imirbaki, Wan Exiang, Zhang Baowen and Chen Zhu, participated the inquiry. Vice Premier Wang Yang, on behalf of

the State Council, and Minister of Environmental Protection Chen Jining, Minister of Science and Technology Wan Gang, Minister of Finance Lou Jiwei, Minister of Industry and Information Technology Miao Wei, Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development Chen Zhenggao, Minister of Land and Resources Jiang Daming, Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu, Minister of Water Resources Chen Lei and Vice Director of National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Zhang Yong, all attended the event.

According to Chinese law, when the NPC is not in session, it may authorize its Standing Committee to listen to reports of inquiry committees. This inquiry was the eighth one of its kind conducted by the 12th NPC Standing Committee. It was also the second law enforcement inspection conducted by the



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of NPC Standing Committee, participates a panel discussion of the bimonthly session of the NPC Standing Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on August 29. Vice Premier Wang Yang and officials from the State Council receive inquiries on the implementation of the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law. *Liu Weibing*

top legislature. An official with the General Office of the NPC Standing Committee pointed out that such a special inquiry combines law enforcement inspection, report deliberation and questions with relevant departments, which fully reflects NPC's supervision function.

Zhang Dejiang attached high importance to this law enforcement inspection and special inquiry on the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law. He pointed out that preventing and controlling water pollution is in line with the fundamental interest of the general public as well as of the social and economic development. Efforts should be made to enhance water pollution prevention and control through law enforcement inspections and special inquiries. The implementation of the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law will do good to welfare of the people in an all-around way and to the realization of national rejuvenation.

NPC Standing Committee vice chairperson Shen Yueyue, who chaired the inquiry, said, "Both questions and answers should be brief and explicit. Please limit each question within 3 minutes, each answer 10 minutes and a follow-up 5 minutes."

Water pollution control, a responsibility of the government

First query, Gu Shengzu, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, asked "What concrete measures will the State Council take in water pollution prevention and control?"

Vice Premier Wang Yang picked up the question, "The saying, that those who pollute water will eventually be sickened by contaminated water, reflects the reality of water pollution in China. We are aware that the situation is very serious. The report submitted by the inspection team has put forward many feasible suggestions. The State Council will study the report carefully."

Wang then elaborated the measures to be taken by the State Council. The first is to track the sources, making water pollution prevention and control an important part of the 13th Five-Year Plan and upgrading the development mode. The second is to treat. Campaigns will be launched in dealing with the problems spotted out by the inspection team and in the protection of water sources and clean up illegal buildings and sewage outfalls within the drinking water protection zones. The third is to carry out reforms. Assessment process will be set up together with the surveillance, evaluation and early warning system and to seek the development of cities, lands, people and production by water supply. The fourth is to strengthen all-around support including policies, science and technology as well as funding. The fifth is to improve the polluted water treatment system through joint efforts among different departments.

"Water pollution pertains to the interest of the general public. It is of the responsibility of the government. It remains a daunting task that needs not only the fundamental change in our development outlook and methods, but also technological breakthroughs as well as support from financial investment and legislation. But no matter how difficult it is, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the General Secretary, as long as we put the people's interest in the first place, carry out our work, we can fulfill our targets of water pollution treatment on time and create a path of treatment with Chinese characteristics," said Wang.



The 16th session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) holds a joint group session to discuss an inspection report on water pollution prevention and control on August 29. Du Yang

Water pollution pertains to the interest of the general public.

Prevention, the priority of environmental protection

Liu Depei, another member of the NPC Standing Committee, said, "The principle of prevention in the first place and integrating prevention and control has already been stipulated in the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law. My question is how to carry out this principle? Are there any concrete measures and approaches?"

Chen Jining said, "Speaking of water pollution treatment, prevention is of primary importance and should be put ahead of control. Meanwhile, control is a more visible index than prevention, while prevention is more easily neglected. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the central government has put forward a series of new thoughts, ideas and requirements. The Ministry of Environmental Protection has, in collaboration with relevant authorities, drafted the Action Plan for Prevention and Treatment of Water Pollution which was promulgated in April. This action plan lays priority on prevention in which 105 out of a total of 238 measures are preventive in nature. Besides, the Ministry of Environmental Protection will adopt four rectification in measures including further optimizing space layout and tightening regional environmental access, promoting industrial restructuring, clarifying the responsibilities of local governments in project approval, and improving the draft of relevant policies and regulations."

Zhang Yong, the official from NDRC, added, "In recent years, NDRC has been highlighting plan and guidance, optimizing industrial structure, developing recyclable economies, improving price policies and promoting water conservation. NDRC will make joint efforts with relevant authorities in the



Workers aboard an environmental protection vessel remove water weeds at the Huangbai River, with the aim to ensure environment and water quality of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River in Yichang, Hubei Province on August 27. Zhang Guorong

enforcement of the 13th Five-Year Plan, further strengthen water pollution prevention and control and increase investment in treatment.”

Clean drinking water benefits millions of farmers

To ensure clean drinking water in the rural areas is of great importance in water pollution prevention and control. “What measures will the State Council take to ensure drinking water safety in the rural areas so that the farmers can enjoy clean drinking water?” asked Yuan Si, a member of NPC Standing Committee.

Minister of Water Resources Chen Lei took the floor, “The central government attaches great importance to drinking water safety and has, since entering the new century, implemented the rural drinking water safety project. Concrete measures include formulating plans in a more scientific way, increasing financial investment, solving special problems, accelerating infrastructure construction, prioritizing protection of water sources, and reinforcing water quality protection, improving long-term mechanism and strictly identifying responsibilities. By the end of this year, we will comprehensively accomplish the target of National Rural Drinking Water Safety Project for the 12th Five-Year Plan period and provide safe drinking water to 305 million rural residents and 41.52 million teachers and students in the rural areas. During the 13th Five-Year Plan period, we will continuously launch the project, and spend three years in tackling the problems such as low standard of infra-

Control is a more visible index than prevention, while prevention is more easily neglected.

structure construction, unstable supply of drinking water and low compliance rate of water quality so that the massive rural residents can enjoy clean and safe water.”

Chen said, “Ensuring rural drinking water safety is a project of livelihood and benevolent rule project that benefits hundreds of millions of farmers. The NPC has always been attaching great importance and conducting mighty supervision on it. We will further intensify our efforts and hand out a satisfactory answer to the people.”

Scientific allocation of water use

“At present, industrial pollution is still the most scaring forms of pollution. One enterprise can even pollute an entire river. My question is how to adopt targeted measures to further strengthen treatment on industrial pollution?” asked Zhang Xingkai, a member of the NPC Standing Committee.

Chen Jining said following measures would be adopted, such as strengthen pollution treatment on key industries, promote transformation and upgrading of industrial sectors, reinforce pollution treatment in industrial parks, comprehensively introduce discharge permit system, improve informa-

tion disclosure and public participation, as well as regular on-the-spot inspections on the discharge plants and disclose the results to the society.

Minister Miao Wei promised to take four rectification measures. The first is to improve industrial management system and optimize space layout. The second is to optimize industrial structure to effectively mitigate redundant production capacity and guide industrial sectors with redundant production capacity to develop in a regular way. The third is to intensify efforts in water conservation and pollution reduction as well as promoting green manufacturing. The fourth is to formulate supportive policies and actively promote relocation and transformation of enterprises with heavy pollution.

Minister Wan Gang added, "We have five proposals. The first is to continuously strengthen technological development on water pollution treatment. The second is to turn the up-to-date technologies into practical results as soon as possible. The third is to train a group of talented professionals and R&D bases. The fourth is to promote the development of environmental protection industries. The fifth is to provide more support to the treatment of industrial point source pollution and agricultural non-point source pollution, and include it in water safety innovation project."

With the steady progress of agriculture in China, agricultural non-point source pollution has become an outstanding problem in water pollution treatment. Wang Gang, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, made an inquiry on how to effectively tackle agricultural non-point source pollution as well as relevant ground water pollution.

Han Changfu answered, "Ministry of Agriculture will adopt five measures. Firstly, reduce the use of fertilizer and achieve the target of zero growth. Secondly, reduce the use of pesticide and accomplish the goal of zero growth. Thirdly, vigorously promote the treatment of livestock manure. Fourthly, make more efficient use of straw. Finally, intensify efforts in treating plastic sheeting pollution."

Jiang Daming added, "In order to deal with ground water pollution, the Ministry of Land and Resources will accelerate the implementation of national ground water surveillance, press ahead with pollution survey and evaluation, make scientific breakthroughs, participate in the formulation of relevant laws and regulations, control all kinds of pollution sources, make ground water limited use for industry, rational use for agriculture and mainly use for drinking. In particular, the deep confined ground water can only be used for emergencies and strategic reserve in principle."

Improving the awareness of water pollution prevention and control

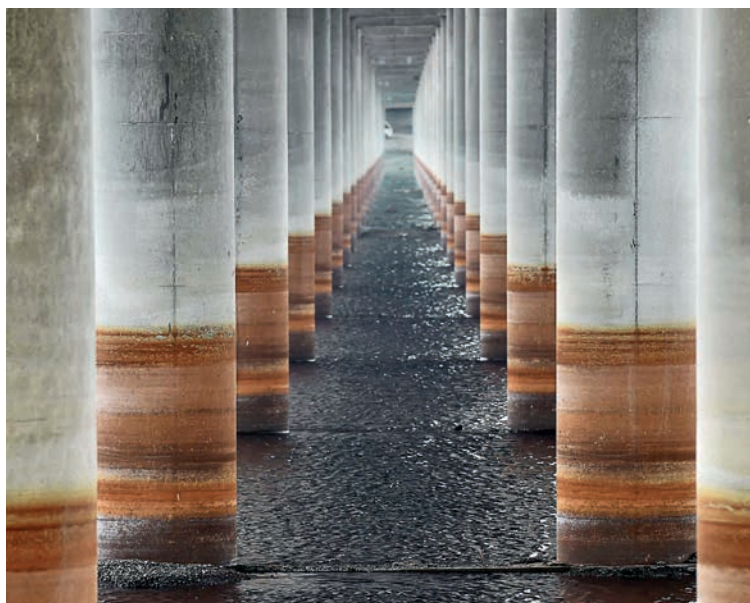
Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development Chen Zhenggao and Minister of Finance Lou Jiwei also answered questions from members of the NPC Standing Committee. Vice Premier Wang Yang noted that those questions touched upon the core of water pollution treatment issues and were of great importance for the government to improve its work. The supervision conducted by the NPC Standing Committee served as both pressure and driving force for the State Council.

NPC Standing Committee Chairman Zhang Dejiang said that the prevention and control of water pollution allows

no delay, and relevant authorities had to enhance their responsibility and sense of urgency in this regard. The country should widely publicize and abide by the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law. We should hold local Party and government chiefs accountable for water pollution, set up the goals and tasks of treatment, and adopt pollution treatment and environmental protection in the evaluation system for major officials at local levels. We should strengthen the authority of law enforcement, increase the means of enforcement, conduct stricter enforcement and bring the violators to justice. We should combine efforts from all walks of life to enhance supervision on water pollution through project approval, infrastructure construction, corporate operation and daily management. We should also enhance public, social and media supervision in combating pollution behaviors, and thus create the social atmosphere that no one dare to pollute. We ought to lay greater emphasis on providing safe drinking water to the people, get first-hand information, formulate measures and solve the problem before the deadline. What's more, we should perfect water conservation mechanism, make better use of price leverages and form the habit of water conservation.

Vice chairperson Shen Yueyue, as moderator of this inquiry, requested relevant authorities under the State Council to seriously investigate and implement the recommendations made by the NPC Standing Committee, and offer feedback in time according to the legal proceedings.

After the inquiry, some comments that the inquiry were highly interactive with both sides being fully prepared and making very informative remarks, and thus positively responded to the public concern and encouraged the government to fulfill its duty according to law. The use of full-fledged supervision methods, from law enforcement inspection to report deliberation and special inquiry, has again strengthened the supervision work of the top legislature. (NPC) ■



Pollutants could be seen on the bridge piers at upper reaches of the Du-liujian River in Tianjin on July 9. The 67-kilometer-long river is one of the major flood discharge river courses as well as a major source of Beidagang wetland. Enterprises on both sides have discharged polluted water into river for more than 10 years. Yue Yuewei

Evolution of immunity right for deputies to people's congresses

By Kan Ke

Those who are familiar with China's people's congress system may know that there were four secret meetings held in the history of NPC. I am going to tell the story about one of the meetings, which I believe few people have heard of before. Then I will comb the formation and development of deputy's immunity from arrest or prosecution.

Secret agenda of the NPC Standing Committee

In July 1986, I started to work with the NPC Standing Committee as a staff member. In order to understand the history of NPC, I began to collect articles and archives in this regard. One day, I accidentally read a report on the Review of Counter-Revolutionary Hu Feng Clique, which reads: On May 18, 1955, Hu Feng was arrested upon the approval of the NPC Standing Committee.

This article arouses my interest. In order to get more detailed information I searched all the materials of the meetings of the NPC Standing Committee. However, I was disappointed that the agenda of the 16th Session of the 1st NPC Standing Committee held on May 18, 1955 mentioned nothing about Hu Feng's case. Neither the People's Daily reported it. I determined to find the truth behind the mystery. After checking various archives for a long time, I finally restored the real picture of the history.

According to the Organic Law of the NPC of 1954, the NPC Standing Committee holds two meetings every month, and more or less if necessary. During the early days of the Standing Committee, it did not hold meetings regularly and the duration of a meeting was not long, sometimes only half a day. As result, the agenda of each meeting was short -- for some meetings, the only task was to review a work report.

On May 18, 1955, the 1st NPC Standing Committee held the 16th session, adopting some documents on the convening of the 2nd Session of the top legislature. After that, it announced to convene a secret meeting under the request of Zhang Dingcheng, the Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate. Based on article 37 of the Constitution, the meeting passed a decision to arrest Hu Feng, who was a NPC deputy. Special approval process should be followed in the arrest of a NPC deputy. The decision was not made public immediately after being approved by the NPC Standing Committee.

On July 16, 1955, a plenum of the 2nd session of the 1st NPC was held, during which the Standing Committee made its work report and announced the arrest of Hu Feng. This plenary session on Hu Feng's arrest was included in the agenda of the 16th session of the 1st NPC Standing Committee. That's why the secret meeting could not be found in the publicized materials nor can people find such agenda in that of the 16th meeting. On July 18, the full text of the work report of the NPC Standing Committee was published on the People's Daily, meaning the arrest of Hu Feng was made public two months after the meeting.

Discussion on deputies' immunity right from arrest in 1954

Learned from Hu Feng's case, we get to know that according to the Constitution of 1954, a special procedure should be followed if a NPC deputy is to be prosecuted. Such a procedure protects the personal freedom of the deputies -- the so-called immunity right. A thorough discussion was held on this issue when drafting the Constitution of 1954.

On March 23, 1954, the draft constitution submitted by the CPC Central Committee stipulates that the NPC deputies should not be arrested or placed on trial without the consent

of the NPC or its Standing Committee, except those who are active criminals. For those deputies who have violated laws, relevant agencies should report reasons of arrest to the NPC or its Standing Committee for approval.

During the discussion, several suggestions were proposed as follow:

First, it suggested this article be amended to: NPC deputies should not be arrested or placed on trial without consent of the NPC or its Standing Committee. However, such consent is not needed if deputies related are active criminals caught red-handed and agencies should immediately report cause of arrest to the NPC or its Standing Committee for approval.

Second, it suggested the expression "not be arrested or placed on trial" be amended to "not be detained, arrested or placed on trial".

Third, it suggested additional sentence be added: Agencies should set free those whose arrests are not approved by the NPC or its Standing Committee.

Fourth, it suggested the expression "deputies to the NPC should not be arrested or placed on trial...except those who are active criminals" be amended to a more precise one. Because such expression may cause misunderstanding, people may think deputies to the NPC should not be arrested or placed on trial, others may think deputies should not arrest or bring others to trial.



The 5th session of the 7th NPC concludes at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 3, 1992. Liu Jianguo



NPC deputies from the Hunan provincial delegation deliberate the draft amendment to the Constitution when attending the 5th meeting of the 5th NPC on November 27, 1982. *Xie Fengquan*

Fifth, it doubted what the expression “those who are active criminals” refer to.

Sixth, it raised the question whether administrative punishment on deputies should also be approved by the NPC or its Standing Committee.

Seventh, why immunity right is not applied to deputies to local people’s congresses. They suggested such right be enjoyed by deputies to all local people’s congresses.

Eighth, it argued that deputies are also citizens, so the provision is unnecessary. The initial draft of the Constitution has already stipulated that the freedom of expression and personal freedom as well as homes of citizens are inviolable. In addition, such provision of immunity right seems like an additional power and protection of deputies, which is unnecessary. Last but not least, deputies are carefully selected, so there are usually no active criminals among them.

Ninth, it doubted such provision is against article 78 which stipulate “all citizens are equal before the law”.

On September 20, 1954, the Constitution got approved by the 1st session of the 1st NPC, which stipulates that “No deputy to the NPC may be arrested or placed on criminal trial without the consent of the Presidium of the current session of the NPC or, when the NPC is not in session, without the consent of its Standing Committee.”

On the same day, the Organic Law of the NPC was approved by the session, which stipulates that deputies should not be arrested or placed on trial without the consent of the NPC; when the Congress is not in session, such consent should be made by the Standing Committee of the NPC. If deputies commit crimes and are detained, relevant agencies should apply for consent from the NPC or its Standing Committee.

On September 21, The Organic Law of the Local People’s Congresses and Local People’s Governments was approved by the 1st session of the 1st NPC (short for Local Organic Law), which rules the immunity right of deputies at local people’s congresses: During the session of local people’s congress, without consent of the Presidium, deputies should not be arrested or placed on trial. If a deputy commits crime and is to

be detained, relevant agencies should get consent from the Presidium. Such stipulation is also applicable to deputies to people’s congresses at township level.

On one word, we can see the Constitution of 1954, the Organic Law of NPC of 1954, and the Local Organic Law of 1954 have all included various suggestions from various aspects during discussions.

Does the trial include civil trial? On November 6, 1957, the 83rd session of the 1st NPC Standing Committee approved a report on whether NPC deputy Bi Mingqi should be summoned by court due to his civil dispute. In this report, it clarified that article 37 of the Constitution aims to protect personal freedom of deputies, so as to facilitate the deputies in fulfilling his or her function and duty. However, for civil cases, they have nothing to do with personal freedom, so the court can summon deputies according to law, which need not be approved by the NPC Standing Committee.

Amendment and specification of the immunity right

After the 3rd plenum of the Central Committee of the 11th CPC National Congress held in December 1978, the urgent task faced by the NPC was to provide legal basis for the recovery and reconstruction of China. Six months thereafter, in July 1979, it approved the amended Local Organic Law. In this law, it stipulated that local people’s congresses at or above county level should establish Standing Committee. Meanwhile, the Presidium, which is responsible for giving consent to arresting, detention or placing deputies on trial is replaced by the Standing Committee. In addition, the immunity right for deputies to people’s congresses at township level is annulled. This marks the first change of immunity right of deputies to local people’s congresses.

In December 1982, the amended Constitution and the Organic Law of the NPC further defined the immunity right of deputies to the NPC. First, the right to give consent during the session of the NPC is exercised by the Presidium instead of the session itself so as to be more practical and deputies



NPC deputy Li Liansheng (R) from Hong Kong speaks about his proposal on developing and improving the system of people's congresses on March 30, 1992. *Lan Hongguang*

If a deputy commits crime and is to be detained, relevant agencies should get consent from the Presidium.

are better protected when they fulfill their duties; second, the expression of trial is amended to criminal trial; third, the agency responsible for detaining deputies is defined as public security organs. This marks the first amendment and specification of the immunity right of deputies to the NPC since 1954.

The Local Organic Law amended in 1986 made some changes to the immunity right of deputies to local people's congresses. Such right was originally stipulated in the Local Organic Law of 1979. As a result, deputies at or above county level also enjoy the immunity right as those at national level. The changes are as follow: No deputies to people's congresses at or above county level may be arrested or placed on criminal trial without the consent of the Presidium of the current session of the people's congress or, when the people's congress is not in session, without the consent of its Standing Committee. If the deputy commit crime and is detained, relevant public security organs should report to the Presidium or Standing Committee of the corresponding people's congress.

The Law on Deputies to the National People's Congress and to the Local People's Congresses approved in 1992 made supplement to the immunity right in two aspects. First, if personal freedom of deputies to people's congresses at or above county level are to be restrained by other means (such as administrative attachment, residential surveillance, judicial detention, education through labor), agencies should apply for consent from the Presidium of people's congress or its Standing Committee. Second, if a deputy at township level is to be arrested or put on trial by a criminal court, or his or her personal freedom is to be restrained by other means pre-

scribed in law, agencies should report to people's congress at township level. The second supplement is different from the Local Organic Law of 1954 in two aspects: first, if the personal freedom of a deputy is to be restrained, agencies should report instead of getting consent; second, the scope of protecting personal freedom of deputy is widened, which include not only arrest or criminal trial, but also include other means.

The amended Law on Deputies to the National People's Congress and to the Local People's Congresses approved on October 28, 2010, provides additional stipulation on the immunity right of deputies: when the Presidium or the Standing Committee review applications for consent submitted by relevant organs, they should examine whether deputies are called to legal account for their speeches or votes at the meetings of the people's congress, and should make decisions accordingly. Such stipulation improves procedures of getting consent on protection of personal freedom of deputies.

It is worth noting that when amendment of the Law on Deputies to the National People's Congress and to the Local People's Congresses was submitted to the Standing Committee of the NPC for the first reading on August 23, 2010, it had such a stipulation: When the Standing Committee of people's congresses at or above county level is not in session and the personal freedom of deputies is to be restrained, relevant agencies may get consent from the Chairmen's Council in case of an emergency, and such consent should be reported and confirmed by the next session of the Standing Committee.

On October 25, the Law Committee made a report on the review of the draft law, in which some members of the Standing Committee as well as some local people's congresses pointed out that in practice, relevant agencies normally get consent from the council of chairmen of the Standing Committee in case of an emergency. And such consent is reported and confirmed by the next session of Standing Committee.

On October 28, the Law Committee made a report on the amendment of the draft Law on Deputies to the NPC and to the Local People's Congresses, in which some members of the Standing Committee, deputies as well as some local people's congresses pointed out that the current stipulation on restraining personal freedom of deputies is applicable. It is unnecessary to amend such stipulation. As a result, the amendment was annulled, which means in the current Law on Deputies to the NPC and to the Local People's Congresses, when the personal freedom of deputies is to be restrained, it is the Presidium or the standing committee that is entitled to give consent.

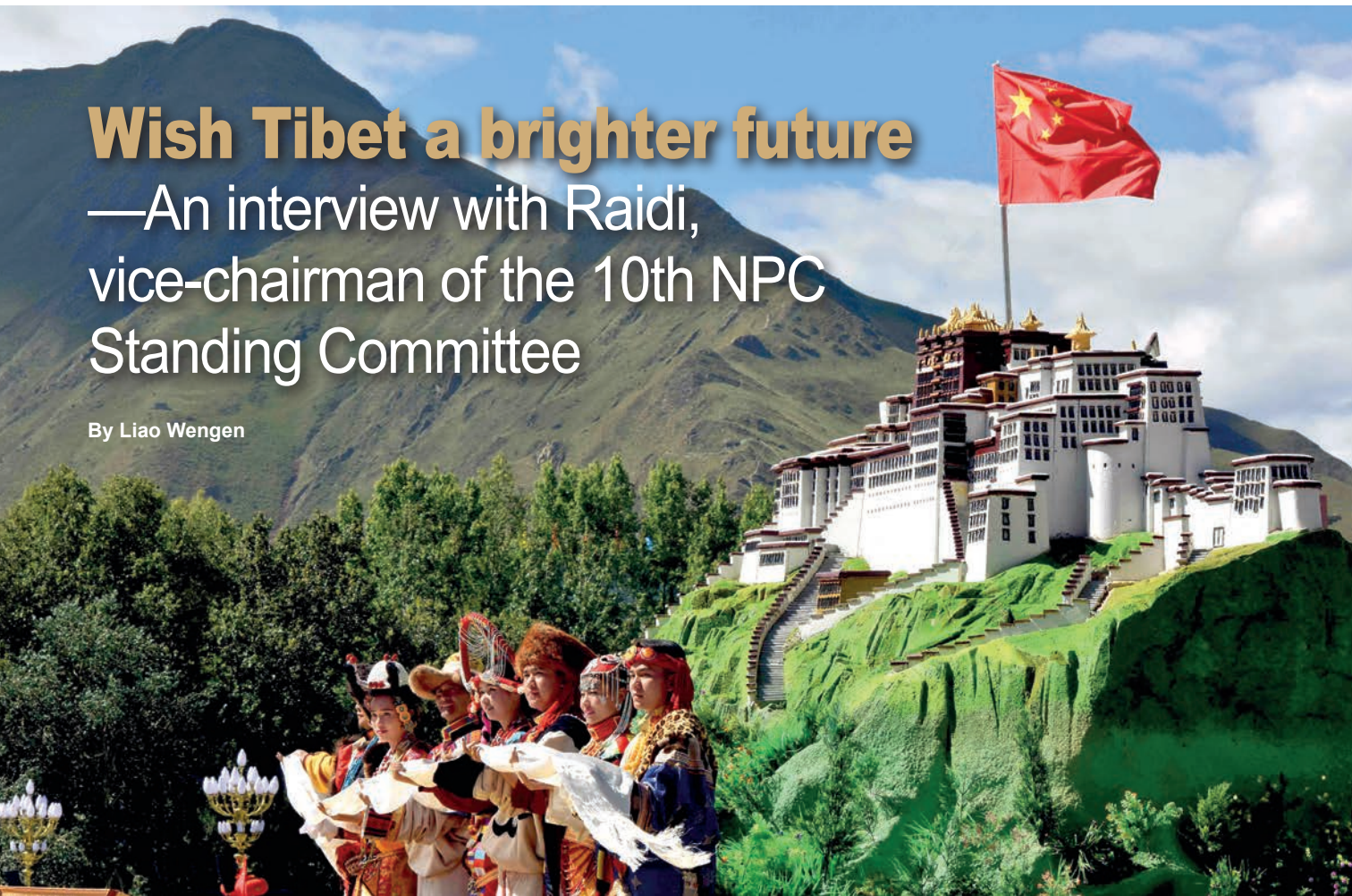
According to some materials, in June 1986, the 16th Session of the 6th NPC Standing Committee made a decision by voting, which gave consent to arresting a deputy to the NPC. This happened one month before I went to work with the NPC. After that, in my memory, the Presidium of the NPC and its Standing Committee never made consent on measures restraining personal freedom of deputies to the NPC. The current practice is that if a deputy to the NPC is suspected of violating law and discipline, it is the deputy that request to resign from the unit that elect him or her, or it is the unit that recall deputies whom they elected. ■

(The author is vice-chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee)

Wish Tibet a brighter future

—An interview with Raidi, vice-chairman of the 10th NPC Standing Committee

By Liao Wengen



With white hada in hand, Tibetan people participate in a grand parade at the Potala Palace Square on September 8 to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. *Li Tao*

He witnessed the cruelty of old Tibet ruled by feudal serfdom, as a wretched serf with no personal freedom at all. Later he participated in the construction of new Tibet, and millions of serfs have become their own masters and enjoyed happiness and prosperity.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Raidi, 77, who was a vice-chairman of the 10th NPC Standing Committee, depicted the remarkable changes in the region.

'For centuries, the feudal serfdom in old Tibet was the darkest, most reactionary, brutal and merciless system in human history, worse than that of the Medieval Europe'

Born into a poor herdsman's family in August 1938 in Biru county, Naqu, Raidi never saw his father. He and his mother lived a vagrant life as beggars. He used to be the servant for head of the tribe, herd owner and Living Buddha, even the little monk in temples.

"For centuries, the feudal serfdom in old Tibet was the darkest, most reactionary, brutal and merciless system in hu-

man history, worse than that of the Medieval Europe," said Raidi.

"In old Tibet, government officials, nobles and upper-ranking lamas accounted for only 5 percent of the region's population, but they owned almost all of Tibet's farmlands, pastures, forests, mountains, rivers, and most of the livestock. More than 95 percent of old Tibet's population was made up of serfs and slaves, who had no means of production and suffered cruel economic exploitation.

"At that time, we didn't have enough food to eat and what I wished every day was to have a full meal. When I was a servant and beggar, I was bitten frequently by the dogs of the Living Buddha and the tribe head. One time I was bitten by the dog of a tribe head and my legs began bleeding. The injury was so serious that I couldn't walk for several months, almost killed. Due to shortage of food, a younger brother of mine was starved to death in my mother's arms."

At the time when Tibet was peacefully liberated Raidi heard of the Communist Party of China for the very first time in his life.

"I was 10 years old and was a servant in a tribe head's family. The People's Liberation Army came to my hometown and

they were called 'Red Han People'. Some heads of the tribe and Living Buddha said that the 'Red Han' were bad and we should never speak with them. Later on, I found out that the army men were kind and especially to the poor. They gave us food and clothes, taught us knowledge, and from them I felt the warmth I never got before.....From then on, I believed they are my relatives. The CPC and Chairman Mao sent them to save us. From the Army, I got to know the Party. So in my mind, the Army is the Party and vice versa."

In 1959, Raidi was 21 years old but still a serf. That year, he came across the turning point in his life, like other Tibetan people.

The armed rebellions organized by a handful of separatists of upper society were put down and democratic reform was carried out. Finally, millions of serfs were liberated.

At that time, the Tibetan officials were encouraged by the People's Liberation Army to get trained inland. Raidi was one of the first to have the chance to study in Central Political and Legal Cadre School (the predecessor of People's Public Security University of China) in Beijing.

Being young and eager to study, he could read and write in Chinese soon. "When I started to learn the Chinese characters, the three phrases I remembered best were Chairman Mao, Communist Party of China, and Liberation Army."

He learned the knowledge and came to understand that the wretched suffering of poor people in Tibet was not because they were destined but exploited to be so. To study hard, work hard, support the leadership of Communist Party of China, and help people in Tibet living a better life, this dream has been deeply rooted in his heart.

In October 1961, he became a member of the Party. From then on, he would bear in mind that only the Party could save the people and lead them to the life of happiness.

After graduation from university, he came back to Naqu and became an investigator, devoting all his passion to his beloved hometown. His team once pursued the rebellious bandit heads in the unpopulated zone of Tibet for seven consecutive days. Exposed to the frozen weather of minus 40 degrees and with neither food nor rest, he almost collapsed and his stomach bled massively. However, he still fought until the bandit who refused to surrender was finally shot dead. The Ministry of Public Security wrote to commend him as the pioneer fighter.

In 1975, he was promoted from Naqu Prefectural Party Secretary to the Party Secretary of Tibet Autonomous Region. The following nearly three decades recorded what he

had done for the development of the Region.

"To speak for the Tibet Autonomous Region when I am in Beijing and vice versa," he said.

Unity and autonomy are not contradicted with each other. Unity is the utmost interests of the nation and the shared interests of all ethnic groups, without which the regional autonomy for ethnic minorities is like a tree without roots. Meanwhile, the exercise of autonomy shall be protected in accordance with the law.

To put it specifically, "to speak for the Tibet Autonomous Region while in Beijing" is about reflecting the real difficulties and requirements of Tibet to the Party Central Committee and the State Council, asking for resolution and improvement. "To speak for Beijing while in the Tibet Autonomous Region" is about informing Tibetan people of the work done by the Party Central Committee and the central government to improve their livelihood and pooled national resources to support construction in Tibet, building a sense of unity among the local people.

In March 2003, the First session of the 10th National People's Congress was held, during which Raidi was elected vice-chairman of its Standing Committee.

The destiny of a serf was utterly rewritten as Tibet was liberated and developed in the path of socialism.

'For more than half a century, Tibet has undergone tremendous changes from darkness to light, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity, from autocracy to democracy, and from seclusion to openness'

What's most mentioned by him was the "Pairing-up" support program for Tibet which went all through different periods of peaceful liberation, democratic reform and establishment of the autonomous region, covering various areas and aspects.

"Cared by the Party Central Committee and the central government and aided by the whole nation, Tibetan people easily felt about the superiority of socialist system, the unity of all ethnic groups and the future of common prosperity." He said.

"The Han people came here one batch after another, without any hesitation, suffering altitude sickness, overcoming difficulties of hard life and tough tasks, only for the national unity and better life of people here. Some of them stayed for several decades, spending their best part even the whole of their lives for Tibet. Their children and grandchildren followed suit. Their loyalty to the Party, the lofty ideals, and deep feeling towards the Tibetan people are so impressive that they represented the 'spirit of Tibet', hardworking, capa-



Raidi (C), vice-chairman of the 10th NPC Standing Committee, the 11th Pan-chen Erdeni Qoigyí Gyaibo (R) and Chen Feng attend a donation ceremony on June 8, 2013 in Beijing. Chen donated a batch of overseas Buddhist sutras which had been lost from the Sakia Temple in Tibet. Ma Zhancheng



Raizi meets with retired cadres in Naqu Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region on August 10, 2011. Jue Guo

ble, united and dedicated. The years after reform and opening up enriched the spirit even more by adding loyalty, innovation and responsibility into the characteristics of the CPC members in the Tibet Autonomous Region in new times.”

“Tibetans and Hans are brothers of one family.” He said, “Over the past five decades, the Han people working in Tibet, including the PLA troops garrisoned there, shared experience and helped training the local officials of ethnic minorities. I am one of the beneficiaries. We should and will never forget what we got from them.”

“Tibet made fundamental changes in social system; people of various groups there got liberated and became masters of their lives, living a prosperous and happy life. Starting from scratch, many social undertakings in Tibet achieved great progress. The rapid changes took place in Tibet was indeed breathtaking.” He said, “My experience over the past half century tells the truth that Tibet has changed from darkness to light, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity, from autocracy to democracy, and from seclusion to openness.”

From darkness to light is to say that under the leadership of CPC, Tibet was liberated, rebellion quelled, democratic reform carried out, autonomous region founded, all people in the Tibet Autonomous Region got rid of imperialist aggression, the conspiracy of imperialist powers and upper-level reactionary forces to separate Tibet from the whole country was crushed, the wretched system of feudal serfdom abolished, socialist ethnic relationship featuring equality, unity, mutual aid and harmony built. People of all ethnic groups together embarked on the socialist road to unity and prosperity.

From backwardness to progress is about shattering the shackles of feudal serfdom, improving infrastructure, education, public health, science, technology, social security, and public service, preserving and carrying forward Tibetan

culture, bringing benefit of socialist civilization to the whole people.

From poverty to prosperity is to abolish the production relationship of feudal serfdom, let serfs and slaves become owners of their land and livestock. Social productivity was liberated to an unprecedented level, a good momentum of economic and social development was maintained with the support from the Party Central Committee and the central government and people of other areas. People live a better life, heading towards building a moderately prosperous society.

From autocracy to democracy is about wrecking theocratic feudal serfdom completely, abrogating feudal hierarchy, personal attachment relationship and savage punishment. Millions of enslaved Tibetans were liberated, taking a historical leap in social system reform. System of regional ethnic autonomy was put into practice; local people fulfilled the right to handle affairs within their own region and participate equally in the management of State affairs, enjoying civilian rights and freedom as stipulated in the Constitution and laws.

From seclusion to openness is to say that people in Tibet emancipate their minds and renew ideas, develop transportation and telecommunication, exchange with inland and open to the world, with deepening reform and enhancing socialist market economy, pursuing a socialist path with Chinese and also Tibetan regional characteristics, better integrating itself into the historic process of modern times.

“Taking the train back to Lhasa, safe, comfortable and convenient, it is an unforgettable experience. I feel so proud what all people in the Tibet Autonomous Region dreamed for over half a century eventually comes true.” He was rather excited when talking about taking Qinghai-Tibet railway train for the first time. “This railway is one of the greatest projects in the world nowadays, an unprecedented feat in the railway construction history of human kind, and a miracle in Chinese modern history as well. It is the first railway in Tibet, also a

milestone set up by the CPC on the roof of the world.”

In his hometown, Biru County, in northern Tibet, there was no road in the modern sense before liberation. People or cattle carried the stuff on their back from one place to another. They never saw bicycles, not to mention the cars. Now highways lead to all directions. There are more than 40 thousands cell phones and nearly 20 thousands cars, trucks and motorcycles in the county. Fixed telephones, washing machines, color TV sets and refrigerators have entered ordinary households. The total population increased from over 20 thousands before democratic reform to more than 70 thousands now. Education, culture, and public health develop well. “From what happened in my home county, we can easily see the whole picture of socialist development in Tibet.” He said.

In the late 1950s, Raidi studied in Beijing. His mother missed her son very much and wrote a letter to him. Beijing is quite far away and the mail delivery service at that time was backward, so half a year passed when he got the letter. “Now, I can call my family in my office, and in a few seconds, I can hear their voice over the phone. Amazing and unimaginable.”

‘History has proved that the Party’s general plan for administering Tibet is correct and rational, taking the local situation into consideration, fully representing the fundamental interest of various ethnic groups in Tibet’

“Looking back at history, from peaceful liberation to democratic reform, from establishment of autonomous region to reform and opening-up, it’s proved by history and practice that the Party’s general plan for administering Tibet is correct, taking the local situation into consideration, fully representing the fundamental interest of various ethnic groups in Tibet. It’s good practice of the Party’s ethnic policies in Tibet.”

Since the 3rd plenum of the Central Committee of the 11th CPC National Congress, the National Conference on Work in Tibet has been held for 6 times, and he participated in all.

“Each time, the conference has clear-cut theme, mainly about resolving outstanding issues which hampered Tibet’s development. During the meeting, we summarized good experience, analyzed new situations, and discussed a series of preferential policies which was in the fundamental interests of Tibetan people, so as to make them more coherent and united. The outcomes of these meetings accelerated the development of economic and social undertakings in Tibet, improved their living standards, heavily cracked down the separatist force and safeguarded the overall stability of the region.” He said. The National Conference on Work in Tibet has become a major approach to stabilize the border situation in Tibet and is quite expected by people there.

Since the 18th Party Congress was held, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as General Secretary, attached great importance to the work on Tibet affairs, based on new historical conditions both domestic and abroad, and the strategy of the great renewal of the Chinese nation, aiming at realize the target of comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society in Tibet as in other parts of the country. General Secretary Xi Jinping once said that “to govern a country, one needs to govern the border first; to govern the border, one needs to stabilize Tibet.” Tibet has been given high priority in the overall strategic arrangement of the Party Central Committee and the central government.

In August this year, the 6th National Conference on Work in Tibet was held which emphasized the importance of rule of law and building Tibet into a more united and prosperous society. Participants agreed that it was a major decision to hold this meeting, conforming to the new situation both domestic and abroad, as well as real condition in Tibet and surrounding provinces, targeting at building a moderately prosperous society. “The meeting is of great historic significance because it addressed the real issues related to the lasting peace and stability of the region and encourages local people to spare no effort in pushing forward reform and development of Tibet.” He said.

Different ethnic groups unite, different religions harmoniously coexist, border defense is consolidated, people enjoy a good and happy life. This is what we see in Tibet nowadays.

“I am looking forward to an even brighter future in Tibet.” (People’s Daily) ■



A farmer couple participate in a ploughing ceremony at a village in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region on March 16. Liu Kun



Doctors from the Peking Union Medical College Hospital and Tibetan Oral Medical Hospital hand out tooth sets and pamphlets on oral health to pupils from Lhasa No. 1 Primary School on August 24. They also conducted oral examinations of the Tibetan students. Liu Kun

Regional ethnic autonomy a success in Tibet

By Bianbalamu



People from all ethnicities attend a celebration at the Potala Palace Square on September 27. Jue Guo

In theocratic old Tibet, where political power and religious power combined, law was nothing but documents. People's behaviors in daily life were regulated by the will of the ruling class, which accounted for 5 percent of the total population. Law was no doubt luxury in a society where even basic survival right could not be protected.

Tibet was liberated peacefully in 1951, when the central government and the Tibetan local government signed the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (also known as the "17-Article Agreement"). The signing of this agreement not only meant that the local government was under the jurisdiction of the central government, but also laid legal foundation to implement the system of regional ethnic autonomy. In 1959, Tibet launched democratic reform

and abolished theocratic political system, setting social foundation for implementing regional ethnic autonomy system. In September, 1965, the 1st People's Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region was held in Lhasa. The establishment of Tibet Autonomous Region signaled unified implementation of regional ethnic autonomy system in regions where ethnic groups inhabited, hence the completion of the legal unification in the People's Republic of China.

Legal construction in Tibet

Tibet Autonomous Region is the fifth and the last founded autonomous region in China. Since the system of regional ethnic autonomy was adopted, its legal system has basically established whose foundation was the Constitution of the

People's Republic of China and Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy. According to local political, economic and cultural characteristics, laws and regulations were enacted to adjust issues in fields such as ethnic relations, culture inheritance, economic development as well as social stability. The legislation played active role in safeguarding China's political unity, accelerating local economic and cultural development, consolidating ethnic unity and national safety.

Since Tibet Autonomous Region was founded, the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region and its Standing Committee have enacted and approved 300 local regulations, decisions and resolutions that have the same standing of regulations, in consideration about the region's economic and social development, border stability and safety. Among these legislative documents, there are 123 currently effective local regulations, 148 resolutions and decisions that have the same legal standing as regulations, and 29 regulations, resolutions and decisions that have been repealed. 77 regulations (8 of which are repealed) adjust social relations in fields such as culture, society, environment, traffic, energy and hygiene. According to the legislative power of Tibet Autonomous Region, the regional legislative body formulated three alternative regulations such as Alternative Regulations on Implementing Marriage Law of People's Republic of China in Tibet Autonomous Region, Several Alternative Regulations on Implementing 'Civil Procedure Law (Trial) of PRC' in Tibet Autonomous Region, and Alternative Regulations on Implementing 'Adoption Law of PRC' in Tibet Autonomous Region. Considering about local social and economic development, legislative body of Tibet Autonomous Region formulated more than 200 rules, measures, decisions and resolutions that of local regulatory nature, by specifying and supplementing national laws and national administrative regulations.

Legal construction facilitates comprehensive and long-term social and economic development in Tibet

Exercising legislative power of the autonomous region is the crucial part for effectively implementing the system of regional ethnic autonomy. The People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region and its Standing Committee formulated series of rules, regulations and by-laws in accordance with local conditions so as to guarantee the region's rights and interests related to political, economic and social issues.

First, safeguard national unity and ethnic solidarity. Tibet Autonomous Region formulated series of laws and regulations, providing strong legal support for national unity and solidarity. After "3·14 incident" occurred in Lhasa in 2008, the Standing Committee of People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region formulated Resolution on Strongly Condemning Dalai Lama for Plotting and Inciting Minor Separatists to Hack, Smash, Loot and Burn, Firmly Upholding National Unity and Opposing Separatism, Promoting Harmonious and Stable Social Development. On March 20, 2012, the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region approved 'Regulations on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress in Lhasa', which is formulated by the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Lhasa.

Second, legally protect rights and interests of ethnic minori-

ties. Ethnic autonomous regions enjoy the right of autonomy. Protecting minorities' rights and interests according to the laws is the core part of regional ethnic autonomy system. Tibet Autonomous Region strengthens legal construction and exercises legislative power to protect ethnic minorities' rights entitled by the Constitution. For example, the region promulgated Regulations on Learning, Using and Developing Tibetan Language in order to protect the ethnic minorities' freedom to use and develop their own languages as entitled by the Constitution. The region promulgated the Alternative Regulations of Tibet Autonomous Region on Implementing the Marriage Law of PRC in 1981, and Alternative Regulations of Tibet Autonomous Region on Implementing the Adoption Law of PRC in 2002. As stipulated in the Constitution that every ethnic group has the freedom of remaining or changing their own customs, these alternative regulations protect ethnic minorities' customs about marriage and family in accordance with practice and prevailing conditions in Tibet. In order to inherit and develop precious ethnic culture of Tibet and protect cultural rights and interests of ethnic minorities, the Standing Committee of People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region promulgated Measures of Tibet Autonomous Region for the Protection and Management of the Potala Palace and Regulations of Tibet Au-

Exercising legislative power of the autonomous region is the crucial part for effectively implementing the system of regional ethnic autonomy.

tonomous Region on the Protection of Cultural Relics, which accelerated the legalizing progress of ethnic culture development in Tibet.

Third, provide legal guarantee for sound and long-term economic development in Tibet. In order to promote sound and long-term development of the region's economy and to strengthen system building in economic field, the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region and its Standing Committee actively carry out legislative activities in economic field, as authorized by national laws and in accordance with the practical demands of Tibet's economic development. 14 percent of local regulations in Tibet Autonomous Region are related with economic development, which play active role in promoting sustainable economic development and social stability in Tibet.

Fourth, protect the safety of ecological barrier. Tibet Autonomous Region attaches great importance to protecting ecological environment as well as scientific and overall-planning development of natural resources. It has formulated 48 relevant legal documents, accounting for 12 percent of total legislation. On the Fifth National Conference on Work in Tibet in 2010, Tibet was selected as national ecological safety barrier and crucial strategic resources storage base. In the same year, the Standing Committee of People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region amended Regulations on Environmental Protection in Tibet Autonomous Region. People's Congress of Lhasa and its Standing Committee promulgated Regulations on the Management of Lhasa's Lahu Wetland Nature Reserve (Amendment) and other regulations, which play



Authorized representatives from the central government and the Tibetan local government sign an agreement of peaceful liberation of Tibet on May 23, 1951. *Xinhua*

an important role in protecting ecological environment and natural resources.

Outlook at Tibet's legal construction under the rule of law

Since Tibet Autonomous Region was founded 50 years ago, ethnic legal system started from nothing, covering more and more fields. The Central Work Conference on Ethnic Affairs in 2014 pointed out that we should strengthen the research on regulating and improving laws and system about regional ethnic autonomy, to give full play to the advantages of regional ethnic autonomy. The Sixth National Conference on Work in Tibet decided that Tibet's governance should follow the principle of the rule of law. This requirement is consistent with the nation's overall goal of promoting rule of law and building a socialist country under the rule of law, which sets higher requirement for Tibet Autonomous Region's legal construction.

The Party Central Committee and the central government required that border areas where ethnic minorities inhabited should be governed under the rule of law. Facing with new situation, Tibet Autonomous Region should enact and perfect regulations in line with the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy. The region should advance some policies that are beneficial for economic development, social stability, ethnic unity and border security to laws and regulations. Moreover, the region should build efficient ethnic Law implementing and supervising system. (People's Daily) ■

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Regional ethnic autonomy

Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, adopted on May 31, 1984 at the 2nd Session of the 6th National People's Congress, is the basic law for the implementation of the system of regional ethnic autonomy prescribed in the Constitution.

China is a unitary multinational State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Regional ethnic autonomy is the basic State policy and one of the four fundamental political systems.

Throughout the country, there are 5 autonomous regions, namely Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Tibet Autonomous Region, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, plus 30 autonomous prefectures, 120 autonomous counties.

Regional ethnic autonomy means that the minority nationalities, under unified State leadership, practice regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities and set up organs of self-government for the exercise of the power of autonomy.

Regional ethnic autonomy embodies the State's full respect for and guarantee of the right of the minority nationalities to

administer their internal affairs and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity for all its nationalities.

Regional ethnic autonomy has played an enormous role in giving full play to the initiative of all nationalities as masters of the country, in developing among them a socialist relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance, in consolidating the unification of the country and in promoting socialist construction in the ethnic autonomous areas and the rest of the country.

The Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy has seven chapters and sixty-seven articles. Major provisions are on such important matters as the establishment of ethnic autonomous areas and the structure of the organs of self-government, the power of autonomy of the organs of self-government, the people's courts and people's procuratorates of ethnic autonomous area, the leadership and assistance from State organs at higher levels.

The Constitution, the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, and 837 local autonomous regulations and implementing rules filed to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for record are in place, which has laid down a solid foundation for ethnic minority in China enjoy their political, economic, social, cultural rights and the social economic development ensured.

Development of local people's congresses

Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Zhang Dejiang said more should be done to support the development of county- and township-level people's congresses at a symposium held from September 15 to 16.

Zhang said local departments of the Communist Party of China should play a better role in the supervision and assistance of local people's congresses. Deputies to county and township people's congresses should receive better training that focuses on the decision-making skills integral to local affairs and supervision.

He urged deputies to establish and maintain close contact with residents, and to be willingly supervised by the local community.

Zhang also promised to allocate more resources to county and township people's congresses.



↑ Zhang Dejiang (C), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), speaks at a symposium on the development of county- and township-level people's congresses in Beijing on September 15. Yao Dawei



← Officials from the Tongpu Township People's Congress chat with herders in Qinghai Province.

↓ On Monday, residents and community representatives report the findings and problems they have met with to local people's congress deputies in Tuojiang Township, Fenghuang County, Hunan Province. Ou Jiezhong



↑ Local legislators attend a meeting to evaluate the most practical efforts to benefit the people organized by the Jingchuan County People's Congress in Gansu Province.





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